

**United States Small Cetacean
Rehabilitation Policy:
Driving forces
behind a socially motivated policy**

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Abstract

Within the United States the policy reflects the importance society as a whole places on an issue. Cetaceans hold a special status in American society as a cultural icon due to their intelligence, social interaction, and extensive ability to communicate. Cetacean rehabilitation policy exemplifies the construction of a socially driven policy. The rehabilitation of cetaceans is a high cost endeavor with a low success rate, but is still a formal component of marine mammal protection. The structure of the stranding and rehabilitation network illustrates the socially motivated nature of rehabilitation policy. In an examination of major newspapers over the last five years in the U.S., three major themes driving the development of cetacean rehabilitation policy emerge.

Responsibility/moral obligation, emotional connection between humans and cetaceans, and anthropomorphizing of cetaceans all play an essential role in the construction of cetacean rehabilitation policy. Understanding the social function that cetacean rehabilitation policy plays within U.S. society is crucial to tailoring it in order to adequately meet the needs of the public and society. It is essential to describe and legitimize rehabilitation policy for its inherent worth within the social and political framework of the United States.

Introduction

Although the development of policy in the United States results from the interplay of many different factors, including economic and political influences, the direction of policy making is often fueled by the cultural values of American society. An issue of importance in American society will attract more attention than one that has no such social stronghold. Public interest will also force particular issues to the forefront of the policy arena resulting in legislative activity being “one indicator of [an issue’s] social; and political importance” (Garner,1998;16). The prominence of animal protection legislation speaks to the esteem that American society places on animals. Legislative action has arisen in several forms within the past four decades. The passage of the Endangered Species Act (ESA) in 1973, the Marine Mammal Protection Act (MMPA) in 1972, as well as other laws and policies, demonstrates the federal involvement which reflects a national interest in wildlife protection and conservation legislation. Additionally, more localized efforts such as wildlife protection initiatives have increased, leading national groups to invest considerable time, energy and financial resources into efforts promoting their passage (Garner, 1998).

In many cases the intrinsic value placed on a particular group of animals may drive the creation of protection measures. However, policy regulations designed to conserve or enhance the well-being of animals also stem from the perceived benefits that society gains from the implementation of such regulations. The vested interest in protecting wild animals follows from the fact that “we [as a society] get some aesthetic pleasure from observing animals in their natural habitats” (Garner,1998;40). The appeal of natural observation applies only to those animals which garner special interests by the

society as a whole. Often termed ‘charismatic megafauna,’ certain species or groups of animals hold special status in society. These animals evoke a strong emotional reaction in people, and often elevating the animals to an exalted status. Animals such as these benefits greatly from socially motivated legislation and policy. The ESA illustrates this preference well as it “has largely concentrated on...mammals, probably because these are the creatures most people care about” (Gibbons, 2001;28). Federal and state spending (1989-1993) on protection of endangered species of mammals accounts for over half of expenditures for all species (Hayward, et.al. 2001;13). However, the number of mammal species considered endangered falls below that of other, less charismatic animals such as fish or birds (Beissinger, 2001;57). The disparity between funding and number of species listed illuminates the willingness of government to honor the values of the public. The ability of people to identify with particular species of animals can foster policies that, on paper, appear economically or ecologically infeasible.

The MMPA represents a prime example of the weight placed on the importance of protecting certain species of animals. The act prohibits the ‘take’ of any species classified as a marine mammal. The crucial portion of this legislation is the definition of the word ‘take,’ which the MMPA defines as, not only, the killing or injuring of a marine mammal, but also harassment which “has the potential to disturb a marine mammal or marine mammal stock in the wild by causing disruption of behavioral patterns, including, but not limited to, migration, breathing, nursing, feeding, or sheltering” (16 USC 1362 Sec.3). This legislation is indicative of the unique status that marine mammals have attained in American society.

The further protection and care given to marine mammals is evidenced in the policies that dictate the process and potential for rehabilitation of these animals, and in particular cetaceans. The prohibitive cost of rehabilitating just a single animal, combined with the extremely low rehabilitation success rate would seem to eliminate the development of policy encouraging the rehabilitation of stranded or sick animals. However, because cetaceans are held in such high esteem by American society, the non-essential ecological need and the high costs are overridden by the emotional appeal and identification with cetacean species.

I believe that the cetacean rehabilitation policy in the United States serves as an illustration of a policy that possesses a strong social impetus. Because of the complex process involved in constructing policy, an elucidation of several components will be critical to adequately examine cetacean rehabilitation policy.

In order to evaluate the conglomeration of factors within rehabilitation policy, I will first look briefly at the general costs of individual animal rehabilitation and the national success rate for rehabilitated animals. I will examine the background and structure of the National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) rehabilitation program as it relates to society's valuation of rehabilitation programs. In addition, I will give a brief overview of the functions that rehabilitation of cetaceans fulfills with an extrapolation of the sociocultural role.

To further explore the importance of the perception of cetaceans in American society, I will develop a brief history of the cetacean as a cultural icon with examples pulled from popular culture. Finally, I will gauge the current cultural climate and thought

in American society towards cetaceans by analyzing newspaper coverage of cetacean strandings and rehabilitation over the past five years.

My analysis will illuminate the public perception of cetaceans as the driving force behind continued efforts and programs to rehabilitation small cetaceans in the US.

Rehabilitation Costs and Benefits

Cost of Rehabilitation

The rehabilitation of a stranded, ill, or injured cetacean can be a costly endeavor. Most animals require twenty-four hour a day care for a critical period after they are brought into a facility. Often the faltering health of an animal requires a person in the tank with it at virtually all times; this critical period may last for weeks. Volunteers provide most, if not all, of the labor, dividing round-the-clock care into six, four-hour shifts so that only two or three people need to be there at a time (Gabriel 2003). Even with volunteers donating labor, the care of a cetacean may reach up to \$1,000 per day (Sommer 2002). Overall, the total expense of rehabilitating a cetacean may range from \$50,000-\$120,000 depending on the length that the animal must be captive and the type of care it requires (NOAA 2003). The facilities required to care for these animals are massive, necessitating tanks able to hold thousands of gallons of water as well as an animal weighing several hundred pounds.

While the effort to save and rehabilitate a stranded cetacean may be expensive, the likelihood of success remains low. Even rescuers such as Katie Touhey, coordinator for the Cape Cod Stranding Network, recognize this: “Rescues are extremely difficult... You can be optimistic, but the reality is the survival rate is very low” (Martinez 1999). Nationally, less than ten percent of live stranded animals survive to be

released back into the wild. Often a substantial amount of money and energy may be expended over a period of months only to have the animal die.

Background of the Marine Mammal Stranding Program

NMFS has addressed issues of balancing cost and benefits of marine mammal rehabilitation. NMFS recognizes that the rehabilitation of marine mammals does not have a significant impact at the population level. However, NMFS does recognize that rehabilitation efforts can, and do, play a key role in marine mammal protection efforts. According to the NMFS' Marine Mammal Health and Stranding Response Program (MMHSRP) marine mammal rehabilitation efforts:

- 1.) have made a significant contribution to our understanding of diseases affecting marine mammals and treatment methods.
- 2.) may help with critically endangered animals faced with catastrophic events (such as a harmful algal bloom)
- 3.) perform a humane function

Although NMFS does point out certain biological and potential ecological benefits of engaging in marine mammal rehabilitation, a crucial component of their statement centers less on a scientifically valuable result, but rather on the awareness of the social implication associated with the rehabilitation of marine mammals. By citing that part of the justification for the rehabilitation of cetaceans lies in the humane function, NMFS has explicitly spelled out the importance of the social function of their rehabilitation program and policy. Cetacean strandings are a highly visible issue, particularly in the case of mass strandings. NMFS acknowledges that its role in addressing social and political interests provides a valuable opportunity to create a positive image for the agency.

The structure of the stranding and rehabilitation program, a component of the more extensive MMHSRP, provides insight into the social motivation behind cetacean rehabilitation.

Structure of Rehabilitation Program

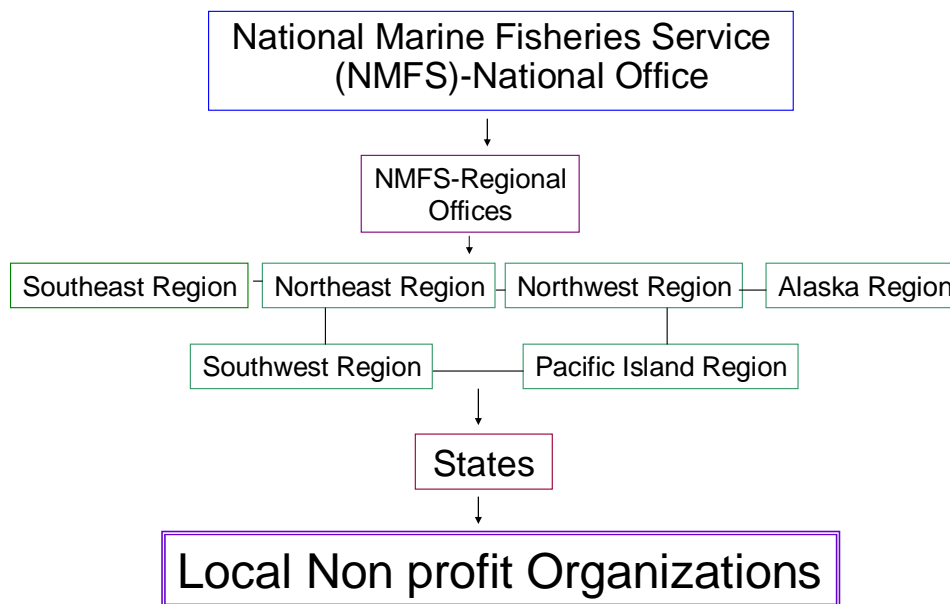


Figure 1. Diagram of the structure of the United States rehabilitation program from the national to local level.

As shown in Figure 1, the national office of NMFS has overall jurisdiction for stranded animals. The national office then grants authority to the six regional offices. The regional offices then grant letters of authorization (LOA) to state organizations or local non profit organizations, permitting these organizations to respond to strandings and, if equipped, to carry out rehabilitation procedures at their facilities. The local non-profits comprise the bulk of the cetacean rehabilitation network. Although 400 organizations are authorized to respond to marine mammal strandings, only 42 centers are authorized to rehabilitate marine mammals. Almost all rescue efforts are fueled by

volunteers and non-profit organizations. The federal government must authorize all rehabilitation efforts, but rarely provides funding. Much of the funding support for rehabilitation comes from private donations and/or community-based fundraising while labor is mainly comprised of volunteer hours.

Functions of Rehabilitation

It is essential to understand the functional role of a policy within the structure of the society. In addition to the official position given by NMFS, the rehabilitation of cetaceans fulfills several other functions, each with their own unique needs and characteristics.

First, animals that are undergoing rehabilitation and those that can no longer be released back into the wild due to physical impairments, represent a unique opportunity to inform the public about marine mammals. Cetaceans can serve as a platform to promote the conservation of marine mammals as well as the marine ecosystem as a whole. This is particularly apparent for strandings that have occurred directly and blatantly as a result of anthropogenic activities. Facilities that engage in rehabilitation activities may, for instance, display the monofilament line removed from a dolphin currently undergoing rehabilitation (*personal observations*). Linking the attractive dolphin with the visible cause of injury produces a strong illustration of the hazards humans have introduced to the marine environment.

Cetaceans that can no longer live in the wild also provide opportunities to engage the public in educational activities. In particular, individual dolphins held in captivity such as Sunset Sam at the Clearwater Aquarium in Clearwater, FL, form a bond with the

community, promoting awareness about dolphin behavior and biology and encouraging wider conservation measures. Essentially, they become a spokesperson for the species.

Another function deals with accessibility. Rehabilitating animals allows scientists extraordinary access to animals that may otherwise be unavailable. Although an artificial environment, animals in captivity can produce studies on physiology and behaviors. In addition, releasing rehabilitated animals offers possibilities for long-term studies on movements and social behaviors through tracking programs (Wells, et.al. 1998).

The largest component of rehabilitation function is the sociocultural aspect. As evidenced, cetaceans play an important role in American culture. By placing cetaceans on levels comparable to humans, we must also seek to protect them as vigorously as we would human life. People are willing to go to extreme measures to fulfill responsibilities, mitigate harmful activities, and eliminate suffering.

Cetaceans as Cultural Icons

Exploring the role of cetaceans in American culture is essential to understanding the basis for cetacean rehabilitation policy. Although cetaceans themselves are held in high esteem, mammals, in general, often captivate the public's attention more so than other animals. "One of the reasons why campaigns in defense of the 'higher' non-human mammals tend to be more successful is precisely because we recognize their similarity to us" (Garner,1998;72). Cetaceans, in particular, exhibit characteristics that are highly prized in humans themselves, and "people tend to gravitate towards animals that...act like us" (Wilson 1996). Not only are cetaceans intelligent, but they also develop strong bonds and complex social structures. In addition, the use of sound and communication play an integral role in their behavior. Alan Beck, a Purdue University biologist, sums

up the fondness of humans for cetaceans by asserting that “we’ve always held a special place for three categories of animals-ones that are cute, ones that are social, and those *who* appear intelligent. I think a lot of us just have a kind of rescue reflex (Lazar 2002)” (emphasis added). Beck’s quote alone gives insight into the perception of animals, in this case cetaceans, as more human than object by substituting the use of the word “who” for “that.” This statement reveals that even as Beck discusses the perception of animals, he himself has granted them a status similar to that of humans.

Cetaceans have been painted as a friend of humans, from accounts of dolphins rescuing sailors to modern day programs that assert the therapeutic nature of interacting with the animals. They “hold a unique power over the human imagination” (The Futurist 1998). The way in which individuals and the media structure the image of cetaceans, relates directly to how we perceive their relationship to people and the societal value we place on them. Throughout the 20th century several specific examples of individual cetaceans have left an indelible impression on the American populous.

Flipper the bottlenose dolphin has left his mark on American culture. The purveyor of eight movies, one television movie, and three television series over the past fifty years, the name “Flipper” has become virtually interchangeable with the word “dolphin”. Aside from introducing America to the bottlenose dolphin, the image of Flipper established the dolphin as a friend of humankind. Known as “the dolphin who nudged wayward boats to safety, knocked guns out of poachers’ hands with well-timed leaps, and warned Bud and Sandy whenever danger lurked...”(IMDB), Flipper was clearly an intelligent animal who willingly befriended humans. He existed to benefit humans, to be their friend and to keep them out of danger. Despite being a dolphin,

Flipper seemed to communicate very effectively with humans. He particularly understood what his human friends wanted or expected from him, and proved eager to meet their every need. In some instances Flipper actually exhibited many qualities superior to his human counterparts. He clearly performed better in the water, and, in addition, gained insight into situations that exuded danger far earlier than the humans, and quickly warned his human friends.

These representations secured the dolphin as an intelligent creature with a special connection to humans. People now see dolphins as an extension of Flipper. Dolphins should exhibit the same qualities and be willing acquiesce to human demands. For instance, dolphin watching, individuals will yell “hey, Flipper” in a frustrated attempt to bring the dolphins closer (personal observations). Although they know, in reality, the dolphins will not respond, people have been programmed to think of dolphins in this manner.

Another icon on the American landscape, not surprisingly, comes from the Disney institution. In 1965, Sea World acquired a female orca whale named Shamu. Over the years Shamu has become the mascot for Sea World and is trademarked by the company(Whale Web 2000). Despite having individual names, all orcas at the Orlando Sea World are referred to as Shamu. For instance, the first killer whale born in captivity in 1985 has always been called “Baby Shamu” despite having what Sea World refers to as a “real name” (Zoo News Network 2001).

Both Flipper and Shamu engender cetaceans with strong ties to the human world. Rather than representing wild animals of their species, these icons exhibit behaviors which ally them with the human world while maintaining the enigmatic characteristics

that pique the interest of the American public. Thus, humans develop a strong sense of kinship and awe with not only individuals cetaceans, but also, by extension, their entire species.

Methods

Newspapers as a Reflection of Public Sentiment

It is often hard to gauge the political and social pulse of the entire United States. However, newspapers can serve as a proxy indicator for the overall sentiment of the general public on issues that foster a general consensus. I considered the amount of coverage of a topic in the newspapers as indicative of the overall level of interest in the topic. Furthermore, the general attitude presented in the article (i.e. positive or negative) reflects the larger outlook of the public. Thus, I feel that newspaper articles serve as an appropriate means of determining the public perception and thoughts on the issue of cetacean rehabilitation.

Article collection

In order to gauge an accurate reflection of public opinion regarding cetaceans and the importance of rehabilitation, I felt it essential to select a representative sample of newspaper articles. Using the search engine Lexis Nexis, I conducted four searches to adequately cover all relevant topics. All four stipulated that the articles must be from newspapers, contained within the general news category, and printed within the five year period prior to October 28, 2003. Each search employed a combination of two words; stranded and dolphin, stranded and whale, rehabilitation and dolphin, and rehabilitation and whale. A comprehensive list of papers used in the search process can be found in Appendix A. Once all searches were completed, articles from papers distributed outside

of the U.S. were eliminated. I also reviewed all of the articles and threw out any that matched the criteria, but did not fit the subject matter (such as rehabilitation for injured Miami Dolphin players). Finally, I screened for duplicated articles to ensure that only a single copy of each entered my analysis. A complete list of articles used in my analysis can be found in Appendix B.

After establishing the set of articles to be used in my analysis, I read through each article and identified ideas and quotations that exemplified topics that pertained to social perception of cetaceans. In particular, I focused on human/cetacean interactions as well as human reflection on the nature of cetaceans. Once I had examined the articles in their entirety, I sorted the themes addressed within the articles into three overarching categories; moral/humane responsibility, emotional connection, and anthropomorphization. I then assessed each article for the presence or absence of each theme. The use of words commonly found throughout the articles was also noted.

Results and Discussion

Over the past five years over three hundred newspaper articles have been written about stranded whales and dolphins. Incidents of mass strandings gained the most attention, with emphasis on Pilot Whale strandings, in the summers of 2002 and 2003. Overall the articles served two main functions; to extol the perseverance and dedication of volunteers and rescue workers, and/or lament the tragedy of a dying animal or failed rescue attempt.

The search methods I used yielded results of a number of articles. Stranded/dolphin resulted in 78, stranded/whale 281, rehabilitation/whale:20, and rehabilitation/dolphin:83. Using the selected criteria, these articles were pared down to 70 relevant sources.

Main Themes

Three main themes emerged throughout the content of the articles indicating the underlying motivations for continuing efforts aimed at rescuing and rehabilitating cetaceans. First, as stated by NMFS, rehabilitation serves a humane function. The public feels a moral obligation to the stranded animals, resulting both from the desire to treat cetaceans as humanely as possible as well as from a sense of responsibility. Humans are beginning to realize the extent of their affect on the marine environment. As evidence of human induced strandings comes to light, people feel more of an obligation to rectify negative situations that they, as a species, have incited. Secondly, humans, particularly those who have contact with cetaceans, feel an emotional connection to the animals. People believe that they, as individuals, have developed a relationship with the animals. Finally, contributing to the desire to rehabilitate cetaceans is the process of anthropomorphizing. Humans assign certain animals human characteristics which allow the public to strongly identify with animals. These three categories of motivations overlap in a variety of ways creating a framework that fuels the maintenance of a cetacean rehabilitation program.

Humane and Moral Responsibility

Concepts of humane actions and moral responsibility occurred in approximately 9% of the articles, a high incidence of the use of the word 'humane' or a synonym occurs. Even when animals must be euthanized, it is described within the articles as "the right thing to do, as a humane gesture" (Crittenden 1999). Implicit in this statement is the desire of the public to offer cetaceans the best treatment possible. Public sentiment indicates that efforts should be undertaken in order to save stranded animals as evidenced

by the massive amounts of volunteers that respond to strandings of all sorts. Incidents of mass strandings such as the pilot whale stranding in Cape Cod in July of 2002 inspire hundreds of volunteers to devote large amounts of time and energy in sometimes futile attempts to save stranded cetaceans. Bob Prescott director of the Audubon Society's Wellfleet Bay Wildlife Sanctuary articulates the changing public attitude by saying "it isn't acceptable anymore to the public to just stand and watch animals flopping around on the beach dying. About 25 years ago, there was no one doing this [rescue and rehab work]. Now there are a host of organizations" (Preer 1999).

Much of the shifting public sentiment stems from an increased awareness by both scientists and society in general with regards to the negative manifestations of human actions on the marine environment. The public realizes that their actions may very well be the cause of these respected and loved animals stranding on the beaches. An underlying sense of responsibility to rectify the perceived wrongs caused by humans underlies programs that seek to help stranded marine mammals. In a highly visible political move, Congress passed a bill granting \$4 million in funding for marine mammal stranding centers. Appropriations authorized by Congress theoretically reflect the overall desire for political action expressed by the general populous of the US. Jim Saxton, the Congressman from New Jersey who introduced the bill, characterized the rationale for the bill as "both a responsibility and a necessity. People are utilizing the coastal areas at a level unseen in history, which directly effects marine mammal and turtle populations. We have a responsibility to save injured animals..." (Jim Saxton Press Release 2003). This burgeoning sense of responsibility, both on the political and social fronts, not only

prompts increased actions to rescue and rehabilitate animals, it also stimulates discussion on preemptive measures to prevent future stranding events.

Emotional Connection

The emotional connection that people feel with cetaceans drives much of the attitudes both towards the animals and towards the policy decisions that affect them. 30% of the articles examined featured the emotional connection between people and either individual cetaceans or species.

Word choice throughout the newspaper articles envisages the extent and intensity of the emotional connection people feel with cetaceans. In particular, the use of words including “tragic,” “heartbreak” and “sad” pervade the language of many articles focused on cetacean strandings. Additionally, articles include much about the emotional experiences people have in dealing with the animals. The emotional ties exhibited by humans towards cetaceans often supercedes other factors in the making of necessary decisions or, at least influences the outcome. In one particular article, Darlene Ketten, a scientist at Woods Hole research center, exemplifies the sometimes substantial schism between emotion and logic. “On a personal level, ‘I’d always do everything I could’...As a scientist, however, ‘I’d think harder about it-and take each case blow by blow’” (McLaughlin 2002).

Emotions come into play particularly for the people working directly with the stranded animals as evidenced through the reactions and assertions presented in a selection of articles. “Volunteers get very passionate and very attached to these whales” according to NMFS representative Laura Engleby. In fact, stranded whales, especially those that are taken into rehabilitation facilities, are given nicknames rather than just

using a designated number (LeClaire 2003). Naming cetaceans grants them an individual identity and intensifies the bonds that humans feel with the animals. A one-on-one encounter inspires intense reactions on the part of people and fosters a feeling of awe and connectivity. Descriptions such as “if you look in the whale’s eyes one time, you’re hooked” (LeClair 2003) and “when you see an orca, it’s kind of something you feel in your soul” (Sorenson 2002) capture the sentiment towards cetaceans.

Cetaceans have achieved a high status in American society. They are seen as intelligent animals and a group that holds a special relationship to humans. The strength of this relationship allows for the involvement of emotions on many levels. Not only do massive rescue and rehabilitation efforts inspire great physical efforts, but they also exact a substantial emotional toll as well. These stranded creatures arouse superhuman efforts because we identify with them emotionally. “Everyone loves a dolphin, and you hate to see one that’s sick” (Rodgers 2000). Society’s emotional connection with these animals leads directly to a need to heal sick and injured animals.

Anthropomorphizing

The differentiation between the emotional connection people feel with cetacean and the tendency to anthropomorphize the behavior of cetaceans is sometimes very difficult. People who develop an emotional bond with an animal often see reflective actions and feelings in the animal. However, eliminating the overlap between the emotional connection and anthropomorphizing resulted in around 15% of articles using the anthropomorphizing of cetaceans to deliver their message. The differentiation between the two themes remains important to understanding how humans develop personal connections with individual animals versus how humans perceive cetaceans as a

whole. In some instances individual animals serve as a surrogate for the entire species, but assigning human characteristics to animals encompasses a much larger potential for the public to identify with cetaceans as a species.

Cetaceans exhibit intelligence and the ability to communicate with one another through a complex system of sounds that humans have yet to fully understand. These features strongly resemble qualities that humans prize in their own species. As such people often see reflections of themselves in cetaceans. This, coupled with the tendency to assign human values to other beings incites people to anthropomorphize members of the order *cetacea*. The social nature of various cetacean species is reminiscent of human interactions leading people to believe that the emotions and communication between animals mimics that of humans.

Communication is one of the celebrated interactions between cetaceans. People compare vocal interaction of stranded animals with their own communications. In fact, language within articles deliberately parallels the communication between people and that between whales consciously equating them. “The humans communicate via cellphones and two-way radios. The whales constantly click and squeak and chirp at each other” (McLaughlin 2002). While ensconcing cetacean communication in the same rubric as human communication, people also contextualize it by interjecting human emotions. Whales are “mournfully calling out to each other” (Lazar 2002) rather than just exchanging vocal information. By placing cetacean communication in the context of human emotion, it elevates the status of cetacean to that on par intellectually, emotionally, and socially with humans. Nowhere is this more exemplified than in the public’s response to a stranding event of two orca whales. A scathing editorial in the

Northwest Voice scolded rescuers and scientists for their lack of humanity to a stranded whale:

Did everyone connected with this (whale) rescue lose sight of basic common sense and humanity?...Is there no room in anyone's heart to see that maybe one whale was grieving for the other? That possibly they were the last of their family unity? Could it be more important to immediately remove the deceased whale for a necropsy...than to tow the whale out to deeper waters and allow the surviving whale to grieve for a few days?...What makes them (researchers) think they know so much about how a whale grieves for a family member" (Matz 2002)

This tirade represents the ultimate in anthropomorphizing a cetacean; assigning emotion, familial ties, and even an allotted grieving period. Clearly the author identifies with the whale on a personal level rather than viewing it solely as a wild animal.

If animals can interact with each other on such an intelligent level, it stands to reason that human intelligence coupled with cetacean intelligence could produce meaningful interactions. People have indirectly voiced this theory by discussing their significant communication with cetaceans, particularly in the case where they share emotional exchanges. When interviewed one volunteer at a mass stranding states, "you can talk *with* them, and they kind of settle down. You just tell them, 'everything is going to be fine, and you'll be OK.' When their eye looks at you, *it's as if they fully understand* (emphasis added)" (Crittenden 2002). People tend to interact with cetaceans as an equal who harbors the same emotions, ideas, and even an intrinsic understanding of communication.

Anthropomorphizing occurs most frequently with individual cetaceans that have interacted with people over a long period of time. Sunset Sam, a resident dolphin at the Clearwater Marine Aquarium, exemplifies these human/cetacean relationships. Sunset Sam blurred the line between human and animal. Many people who interacted with him

felt a kinship and deep friendship with him. Additionally, people described many anthropomorphic traits to Sunset Sam. For instance “Sunset Sam learned to paint, and he really enjoyed it” (Kellenberger 2001). He also had an inherent understanding with the people around him, “he knew you, and knew you cared” (Kellenberger 2001). Throughout his time at the aquarium people developed intense relationships with him and, upon his death in 2001, responded very emotionally. “I was comforted by the peaceful look on his face and in his eyes, and somehow it allowed me to let him go” (Koberna 2001). To the individuals he worked with at the aquarium Sunset Sam was less animal and more an equal in their eyes, exhibiting human emotions and developing relationships with the humans he met.

Sometimes cetaceans are seen not only as comparable to humans, but they actually should inspire us to act at a higher level. People often point to cetacean behavior as something to aspire to. In this scenario, cetaceans exhibit not only intelligence, but also a greater sense of what humans would refer to as morality. One newspaper article points to orcas as an example of an animal that could kill humans easily, but refuses to do so (Sorensen 2002). While people often see the flaws within human society, they tend to idealize animal relationships since much of the interaction remains enigmatic. Because animals have strong social bonds, but people do not understand the intricacies, humans are able to attribute positive characteristics to all of their interactions. “Orcas are really a magnificent animal. They’re extremely intelligent. They’re a really social animal. They travel in pods. If only human being could emulate them, we’d do a helluva lot better” (Stuart MacRobbie as quoted in Sorensen 2002).

“Animal behavior is open to widely differing interpretations and the risks presented by anthropomorphism...are great” (Garner, 1993;9). Because cetaceans exhibit behavior patterns reminiscent of humans, people tend to assign animals human motivations for parallel behaviors. It then follows that humans feel increased empathy towards the plight of stranded and/or sick cetaceans. They reconcile cetacean behavior with comparable human behavior invoking an emotional response along with the desire to alleviate suffering.

Other Article Topics

The three main themes identified account for approximately 54% of the total number of articles. However, virtually all additional articles within the analysis focus solely on the fact that an animal has stranded or has been taken into a rehabilitation facility. These articles featured very little injection of information beyond basic facts, thus eliminating the potential to include human connotations.

Conclusion

Clearly the motivations behind rehabilitation projects are complex and involved. Cetaceans and humans have a unique connection which inspires massive rescue efforts and endless dedication to alleviating suffering and repairing injuries. People view rehabilitation efforts as a larger part of a humane effort to reverse the inimical consequences of anthropogenic actions. Humans identify with cetaceans through emotional connections that they establish with the animals. Both of these aspects of rescue and rehabilitation relate to the anthropomorphizing of cetaceans. Through assigning them human characteristics, people place cetaceans on a parallel intellectual, emotional, and social level with humans.

Understanding the basis for rehabilitation policy will allow managers to create and modify policies to adequately address the functions it fulfills. Public support for the rehabilitation of cetaceans leads to the development of socially driven policy. Legislation in the United States is designed to reflect the desires and will of the public. Cetacean rehabilitation serves as the quintessential example of a policy that bases itself as a product of social and political ideals. Extolling rehabilitation policy for its scientific virtue dangerously underscores its importance in the American society. Rather it is essential to describe and legitimize rehabilitation policy for its inherent worth within the social and political framework of the United States.

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- Rodgers, Terry and Sherry Parmet. "Beached Dolphin in Encinitas Dies Despite Rescue Attempt." *The San Diego Union-Tribune*. 2000 Feb 4. pp. B-3:1, 7; B-2:2.
- Sea World History. *Whale Web*. 2000
- Sommer, David. "Insurance Company Sees Dolphins, Whales in Terrorists' Sights." *The Tampa Tribune*. 2002 Sep 29. pp. 2.
- Sorensen, Eric. "Orca Makeover: 'Killer' to Icon." *The Seattle Times*. 2002 Jan 6. pp. A1.
- Wells, R.S., K. Bassos-Hull, and K.S. Norris. 1998. Experimental Return to the Wild of Two Wild Bottlenose Dolphins. *Marine Mammal Science*. 14(1):51-71.
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Appendix A

Newspaper content Used in Lexis Nexis Database Search of Major Papers

Asian Wall Street Journal
Atlanta Journal and Constitution, The
Baltimore Sun, The
Boston Globe, The
Boston Herald, The
Buffalo News, The
Chicago Sun-Times
Christian Science Monitor, The
Columbus Dispatch, The
Daily News (New York)
Daily Yomiuri (Tokyo), The
Daily/Sunday Telegraph (London), The
Denver Post, The
Dominion (Wellington), The
Dominion Post (Wellington, New Zealand), The
Evening Post (Wellington), The
Financial Times (London)
Gazeta Mercantil Online
Guardian (London), The
Hartford Courant, The
Herald (Glasgow), The
Houston Chronicle, The
Independent and Independent on Sunday (London), The
Irish Times, The
Jerusalem Post, The
Journal of Commerce
Los Angeles Times
Miami Herald
New Straits Times (Malaysia)
New York Times, The
New Zealand Herald, The
Newsday (New York, NY)
Observer, The
Omaha World Herald
Pittsburgh Post-Gazette
Plain Dealer, The
Press (Christchurch, New Zealand), The
San Diego Union-Tribune
San Francisco Chronicle, The
Scotsman & Scotland on Sunday, The
Seattle Times, The
South China Morning Post
St. Louis Post-Dispatch

St. Petersburg Times
Star Tribune (Minneapolis MN)
Straits Times (Singapore), The
Tampa Tribune, The
Times and Sunday Times (London), The
Times-Picayune, The
Toronto Star, The
Toronto Sun, The
USA Today
Washington Post, The

Appendix B.
Complete List of Articles Used in Analysis

Date	Author	Title	Paper
10/30/1998	Wire Reports	New Zealand Shoots Whales Dying on Beach	Milwaukee Journal Sentinel
3/20/1999	AP	27 Dolphins Die in Strandings on Cape Cod	The Boston Globe
3/20/1999	Martinez, Jose	Stranded Dolphins Meet Tragic End on Cape	The Boston Herald
3/21/1999	O'Brien, Ellen	Dolphin Strandings Continue on Cape	The Boston Globe
3/21/1999	Crittenden, Jules	Dolphin Deaths Mount-High Tides-, Winds May Have Led to Strandings	The Boston Herald
3/23/1999	AP	Dolphin Strandings Appear to End After Killing 44	The New York Times
7/11/1999	Preer, Robert	N.E. Aquarium Rehab Center to Fill a Need	The Boston Globe
8/13/1999	AP	Group Says Dolphins Safely Back in Deep Sea	The Boston Globe
8/20/1999	Jones, Michelle	Aquarium Protects Creatures from Deep	St. Petersburg Times
10/24/1999	McFadden, Robert	Motherless and Stranded, Baby Whale is Put to Death	The New York Times
1/19/2000	Hollingsworth, Jan	Dolphin Deaths Point to Trouble in the Gulf	Tampa Tribune
1/21/2000	Hollingsworth, Jan	Mass Stranding of Dolphins in Keys Puzzles Scientists	Tampa Tribune
2/4/2000	Rodgers, Terry and Sherry Parmet	Beached Dolphin in Encinitas Dies Despite Rescue Attempts	The San Diego Union-Tribune
9/17/2000	Wire Reports	Baby Whale Might be First to Live in Captivity	St. Petersburg Times
9/23/2000	Byrne, Maureen	Aquarium Nursing Whale Back to Health	St. Petersburg Times
10/19/2000		Dwarf Sperm Whale Dies at Clearwater Marine Aquarium	St. Petersburg Times
10/29/2000		Whale Eased Out of Shallow Water	St. Petersburg Times
10/1/2001	Sommer, David	Aquarium Tries to Nurse Baby Whale to Health	Tampa Tribune
10/9/2001		Stranded Whales 'Doing Fairly Well'	Tampa Tribune
10/12/2001	Wire Reports	At Least Two Pilot Whales Die After Nine Beach Selves	St. Petersburg Times
10/13/2001	reuters	Stranded Whales Die	The New York Times
10/14/2001	News Services	News	10/14/2001
12/10/2001	Kellenberger, Dennis	Aquarium Mourns Loss of Beloved Sunset Sam	St. Petersburg Times
12/10/2001	Koberna, Melissa		St. Petersburg Times
12/10/2001	Klingel, Marianne		St. Petersburg

			Times
12/10/2001	Butler, Ed		St. Petersburg Times
1/3/2002	Green, Sara Jean	One Killer Whale Stranded, Another Dies	The Seattle Times
1/5/2002	Matz, Charli	Stranded Leviathan Needs a Chance to Grieve Companion	The Seattle Times
1/5/2002	Rush, Dan	Seawold on the Horizon	The Seattle Times
1/6/2002	Sorensen, Eric	Orca Makeover: 'Killer' to Icon	The Seattle Times
3/5/2002	Sorenson, Eric	Options Weighed for Ailing Orca in Sound	The Seattle Times
7/29/2002	Feldman, Claudia	Stranded Hopes; Valuable Lessons Surface in Race to Save Whale Beached on Texas Coast	The Houston Chronicle
7/30/2002	Graham, Kevin	Rescuers Save 46 Stranded Whales on Cape	The Boston Globe
7/30/2002		Whales Beach Themselves on cape Cod	The Seattle Times
7/31/2002	Crittenden, Jules	Cape Whale Rescue Turns Tragic	The Boston Herald
7/31/2002	Rose, Derek	45 Whales Die as Rescue Fails Pod Beached 3 Times on Cape Cod	Daily News
7/31/2002		Pilot Whales Aground	The New York Times
7/31/2002	Belluck, Pam	Stranded Whales Dying Despite Rescuers' Efforts	The New York Times
7/31/2002	AP	Anguished Rescuers Can't Free 45 Whales: All Die After 3rd Stranding	The Seattle Times
8/1/2002	Arnold, David	Study Says Efforts to Save Stranded Whales Effective	The Boston Globe
8/1/2002	McLaughlin, Abraham	Lost in the Shallows, Whales Refuse Rescue	Christian Sience Monitor
8/3/2002	Tyack, Peter	Stranded on the Cape	The New York Times
8/4/2002	Lazar, Kay	Critters Inspire Super Human Efforts	The Boston Herald
8/4/2002	Belluck, Pam	Joy Turned to Grief	The New York Times
8/23/2002	Sorenson, Eric	Former Handlers Fear Keiko's a Bit Too 'Free'	The Seattle Times
9/27/2002		Rescued Pygmy Sperm Whale Dies at Aquarium	St. Petersburg Times
9/29/2002	Sommer, David	Insurance Company Sees Dolphins, Whales in Terrorists' Sights	Tampa Tribune
11/18/2002	Geanacopoulos, Daphne Palmer	Grass Roots; They Rush to the Rescue When Whales Wash Ashore	The New York Times
4/16/2003	Szaniszlo, Marie	Stranding Kills, Hurts 19 Dolphins in Bay State	The Boston Herald
4/19/2003		Nation in Breif	The Washington

			Post
4/19/2003	News Services	4 Pilot whales Have Died From Stranded Pods	St. Louis Post-Dispatch
4/19/2003		A Struggle to Save Stranded Whales	St. Petersburg Times
4/19/2003		Pilot Whales Trapped Off Florida Keys	The Seattle Times
4/19/2003	AP	Whales Stranded Off Florida Keys	The San Diego Union-Tribune
4/19/2003		Whales Stranded Off Florida Keys	The San Francisco Chronicle
4/19/2003	AP	Stranded Whales	The New York Times
4/20/2003	Wire Reports	Some Whales Still Stranded Off Keys	St. Petersburg Times
4/21/2003	Wire Reports	Rescue Tried for 7 Ill Beached Whales	Milwaukee Journal Sentinel
4/21/2003	Wire Reports	Rescuers Doubt Remaining Pilot Whales Will survive	St. Petersburg Times
4/22/2003	Wire Reports	Hope Fading for Seven Pilot Whales	St. Petersburg Times
4/23/2003	AP	Stranded Whales Improve	The New York Times
4/29/2003	LeClaire, Jennifer	Whales Elicit Sea of Emotion	Christian Science Monitor
7/20/2003	AP	Five Whales are Ready to Return to the Wild	The San Diego Union-Tribune
7/20/2003	Wire Services	Stranded Pilot Whales to Be Freed Within Weeks	Los Angeles Times
8/11/2003	AP	5 Saved Pilot Whales Put Back in Atlantic	The San Diego Union-Tribune
8/11/2003		A Whale of a Tale	Rocky Mountain News
8/11/2003		Free At Last	Newsday
8/12/2003		None of Them Was Named Willy, but Now They're All Free	The Washington Post
8/21/2003	Gabriel, Cindy	Volunteers Wade in to Help Out with Rescued Dolphin in Galveston	The Houston Chronicle
8/21/2003		Young Pilot Whale Falls Prey to Bull Sharks	Los Angeles Times