Marine mammal bone displays serve as a learning tool to teach the public about marine mammal biology, natural history and conservation. They provide us with the unique opportunity to get a close look at the bone structure of marine mammals and learn about their importance in our environment.

This dolphin was found in the Spring of 2013 by a Prescott College Marine Biology class on the beach in New Kino near Punta Ignacio. In order to make the bones into an educational display, they first had to be cleaned. One of the most efficient and easy ways to clean bones is to bury them in the ground and let the flesh decompose. The class buried the bones and came back to check on them a year later. They made sure to bury them in a screen so that none of them would get lost.

The next step was to learn how to preserve the bones and make them into a display. We were lucky to have the help of Francisco Gomez, Director of The Whale Museum in La Paz, Baja California, Mexico, and the expert in bone repair and reconstruction in the region. First we rinsed off the sand from the bones and were happy to discover that almost all of the bones were there! Only the teeth and some tips of the fin bones were small enough to fit through the holes of the screen.

Next we bleached the bones by soaking them in hydrogen peroxide overnight and then putting them in the sun all of the next day. They got whiter right away, but we repeated the process many times to get them extra clean and white. Then we reconnected the skull and certain parts of the vertebrae.

Finally, we laid out the bones in order and made them into the display.

Behavior: *Delphinus capensis* forms groups of a few individuals up to thousands. The MMP has seen groups up to 3,000 in one pod.

Distinguishing Characteristics: *Delphinus capensis* are distinguishable by their small size and unique coloring. They have a yellowish hour-glass shape on their sides.

Size: Adults of this species can reach up to 2.5m in length and weigh just over 100kg. The babies are about 80cm in length and a weight is not available.

Marine Mammal Displays

The Research and Conservation Program (RCP) at the Prescott College Kino Bay Center conducts and supports monitoring and research in the Midriff Island Region of the Gulf of California. The Marine Mammal Program (MMP), which is part of the RCP, works towards protecting critical habitat for resident and migratory species of marine mammals in the region. The MMP’s consistent monitoring and documentation of the diversity and movements of marine mammals in the region provides unique and valuable information about resident populations and species that use the area seasonally. In the last five years the MMP has sighted 12 different species of marine mammals. The long-beaked common dolphin, *Delphinus capensis*, is one of the most abundant.

Story of our Dolphin

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Long-beaked Common Dolphins - *Delphinus capensis*