

A&M professors on the lookout for washed-up marine mammals

By **ROBIN BLACK**
Staff Writer

There was a time when no one took much notice of anything that washed up on Texas beaches. In the recent past, however, the Texas Marine Mammal Stranding Network has been keeping a more watchful eye on such incidents.

The network, which was created under the National Marine Fisheries Service in 1980, watches for any dolphins or whales that beach themselves or are washed ashore.

Because marine mammals are protected by federal law, the network not only is a way to help the mammals, but it also is a vital research outlet for scientists at universities and museums since specimens cannot be obtained from biological supply houses.

The Texas program is one of the regions of the national stranding network.

In order to make residents and others who frequent the beaches aware of the network and what can be done to help a beached animal, notices that tell what to do if an animal is found are posted by the network in coastal cities near the beaches.

Instructions range from what to do and who to call if a dead mammal is found to giving first aid to a whale or dolphin that is still alive.

The Texas program is coordinated by Texas A&M professors Raymond Tarpley and David Schmidly, and the bulk of the work of salvage or, if the animal is alive, rehabilitation is done through Texas A&M University at Galveston.

Whale and dolphin carcasses are usually transported to

College Station for further identification and research.

Although most mammals are discovered after they have died, live whales were found in November and again in January.

The whales that beached in

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November at Port Aransas, some of which were found alive but could not be saved, belonged to a rare species of pygmy killer whales. This species is especially rare in the Texas Gulf region.

Tarpley pointed out the important role the network can play in research in a case such as this.

"It was very unusual that we would be able to observe a mammal as rare as the pygmy killer whale, especially a live specimen," he said.

Tarpley said the network provides the opportunity for scientists to study the mammals first-hand, hopefully enabling them to learn more about the animals and why they beach themselves.

The network is operated on a volunteer basis, most of the volunteers being professors and students, and gets no direct support from the federal or state government or from the University.

Texas A&M does, however, provide its facilities for the network's research.

Schmidly, a wildlife science professor, said the cost of the majority of the work is covered by the volunteers.

"If we drive down to the coast to pick up an animal and bring it back, that much of the cost comes out of our own pockets," he said. "But we are able to use the resources here at the University for necropsies, identification, and further research."

Schmidly and Tarpley work as a team with the network. Tarpley does the initial identification and necropsy, which is the animal equivalent to an autopsy, and Schmidly does the in-depth research and classification.

"Ray (Tarpley) is concerned with finding out what happened to the animal; why it died," Schmidly said. "When he's through, I identify and classify the animal."

After the initial research on each animal is completed, Schmidly collects as many specimens from it as possible. The specimens are then placed in the archives in the basement of the Sterling C. Evans library.

"Since we have one of the largest collections of specimens anywhere — specimens of birds, fish, reptiles and land mammals as well as marine mammals — we will loan them to other universities and scientists if they so request," Schmidly said.

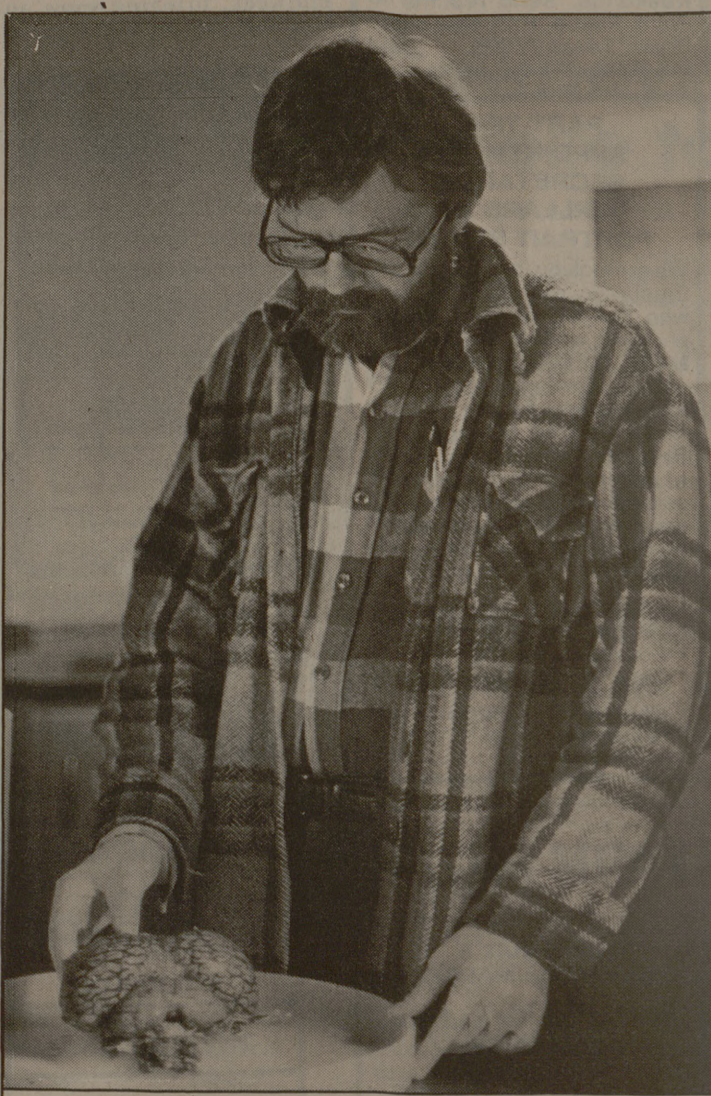


Photo by ERIC EVAN LEE

Texas A&M professor Dr. Raymond Tarpley examines the brain of a pygmy killer whale, which was found in November on a beach at Port Aransas.

Prosecutors close case, punishment still stands

United Press International

DALLAS — The prosecution will not review the case of a woman serving a life prison term even though her accomplice now says the woman was not involved in the robbery murder and was unjustly punished, a prosecutor said Wednesday.

Norman Kinne, Dallas County assistant district attorney, agreed the case of Joyce Ann Brown was similar in some aspects to that of Lenell Geter, a black engineer sentenced to life and later released on bond for a new trial on armed robbery, but added there were also "a number of dissimilarities."

"We don't have any plans in the Brown case, and we don't believe the wrong person was sentenced to life," Kinne said. "This new thing doesn't affect us."

Rene Taylor, who pleaded guilty in 1981 to the slaying of North Dallas furrier Rubin Danzinger during a robbery in May 1980, said Tuesday Brown, her alleged accomplice, was innocent and that she was prepared to sign an affidavit and testify so in a court.

Taylor, who was also sentenced to life, said she pleaded guilty because she was afraid she might be sentenced to death on the murder charge.

Taylor said another woman, whom she did not identify, was her accomplice in the robbery and that accomplice and not she presumably shot the man.

Brown, whose appeal of her conviction has been rejected, said her case is similar to the Geter case but she has not received the same publicity. Brown said she passed a private polygraph

test before her trial but was convicted largely on the testimony of Mrs. Danzinger.

Another similarity to the Geter case is that Brown's fellow employees said she was at work at the time of the robbery. But, there was a 33-minute time gap when Brown could have pulled the robbery.

"Mrs. Brown has a lengthy police record," Kinne said. "She got up on the stand and admitted so. There are a number of dissimilarities, but that is the main one because Geter doesn't have a prior police record."

Kinne said Taylor also has a lengthy police record and used at least eight different names throughout the country.

Taylor's testimony is expected Friday when a Dallas judge will decide whether to order prison officials to give Brown a polygraph test.

The Latter-Day Saint Student Association (L.D.S.S.A.) announces the beginning of L.D.S. Institute courses January 24 - April 17

Daytime

Tuesday 6:50 - 7:45 a.m. Sharing the Gospel
Wednesday 9:30 - 10:45 a.m. Israel's Major Prophets
Friday 12 noon - 12:45 p.m. Forum (Sandwich Seminar)

Evening

Tuesday 7:00-8:15 p.m. Israel's Major Prophets
Wednesday 7:00-8:15 p.m. From Casual Date to Celestial Mate - On preparing for Celestial Marriage
Wednesday 7:00-8:15 p.m. JOY: Special Evenings for Young (or Older) Marrieds

All classes held at Institute Building, Dexter Drive in College Station. For more information, visit or call 696-8202.

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Lady Swingster Short \$8⁸⁸

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Mens Swimwear-\$8⁸⁸
Baseball Gloves-\$10⁸⁸
Shoes-\$5⁰⁰, \$10⁰⁰, \$15⁰⁰
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A TAKE OFF

G'DAY, EH? LIKE OUR TOPIC FOR THE DAY IS BUSINESS WEEK.



LIKE, HOW CAN OUR TOPIC FOR THE DAY BE A WHOLE WEEK, EH?



TAKE OFF! I'M TRYING TO TELL EVERYONE ABOUT IT AND YOU'RE BEING A LOSER.



LIKE, NOW LOOK WHAT YOU'VE DONE - YOU TOOK UP ALL THE SQUARES ASKING DUMB HOSEHEAD QUESTIONS!



OK, SORRY, EH?

I NEED A BEER.