Then two large dolphins appeared and chased the sharks away. Then these two watchdogs escorted Yvonne, one at each side. The sharks came back, and again the dolphins charged them.

Yvonne eventually arrived at a navigation buoy. She tried to climb on to it but was too tired. The dolphins understood her plight and began to prop up her body. With great gentleness they held her until she was able to grab the upper portion of the buoy and haul herself up. She was rescued by a Greek freighter.

MOIST AIR

Dolphins are used to breathing moist air at sea level. Dust laden air is alien to them and so are fluctuations in temperature. Just as humans like a tot of whisky with their water, the dolphin finds a little aluminium sulphate and chlorine mixed with its water most acceptable!

A report from New York in 1977 disclosed that dolphins are being used in military-connected experiments in at least two research establishments — Hawaii and Key West, Florida.

Stories of dolphins capable of killing swimmers and ferrying weapons have been written. The dolphins are trained to kill forgmen by injecting high pressure gas into them. The gas canisters and a needle are carried on the dolphin's beak.

However, dolphins are mostly being trained for non-offensive purposes, such as taking air tanks to trapped scuba-divers; attaching grappling hooks on disabled submarines, accidentally dropped boms, missile sections or other objects on the ocean floor.

But there is no doubt about it, dolphins are a sell-out when they perform with their human trainers. Remember Speedy and Pronto? Pronto, 362 kg in weight was the largest dolphin in captivity in the world and measured 3,5 m from snout to tail. He had all his 90 teeth brushed daily by his trainer, petite Marion Mallia, and was looked after like a king. He ate 12 kg of fresh fish daily. Pronto, interestingly, had a brain one-seventh larger than that of a human being.

COMMUNICATION

Marion was completely at home with the dolphins and they simply loved her. She even rose on their backs. She explained that dolphins could communicate with one another and in teaching them to do so with humans, the trainer had to be patient for it took about 18 months. But the most impor-

tant thing, Marion said, was love. For love had to flow from the human to the animal — and then it was returned.

And dolphins, according to Marion, love to hear the applause of their audiences.

• Footnote: Dolphins overseas have been trained to find and photograph large creatures like sea turtles and sharks. Two dolphins were trained to carry their cameras in a search for the Loch Ness monster. But the monster seems to have been pretty elusive, as always!





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