



**Education,
Research,
Stewardship**

Beach Log

APRIL 2006

WASHINGTON STATE UNIVERSITY
ISLAND COUNTY EXTENSION

WSU Beach Watchers P. O. Box 5000 Coupeville WA 98239 360-679-7391 ; 321-5111 or 629-4522 Ext. 7391 FAX 360-678-4120
E-mail: Kcooley@wsu.edu meehan@wsu.edu beachwatchers@wsu.edu Web address: www.beachwatchers.wsu.edu



Dall's Porpoise Installed at Coupeville Wharf

The Dall's porpoise washed up dead on South Whidbey on Valentine's Day 2004. Hence the name "Rudy Valentino". (Matt is such a romantic.) Most of the flesh was removed on day one when samples were taken by marine mammal researchers. The skeleton was hung in Matt Klope's chicken coop (minus chickens) for cleaning by insects and little critters until July when the rearticulation crew started the process. The skeleton had to be cut into pieces in order to fit into the boiling drum. Then the tedious job of scraping off the beef jerky-like meat began. After cleaning, the bones were sealed with a mixture of Elmer's glue and water, then painted off-white. One little glitch along the way was when Matt's dog ate the sternum. Without a place to anchor the ribs, all work halted until a substitute sternum could be obtained from the National Marine Fisheries Service. But, all's well that ends well, and Rudy's skeleton was finally completed.

Rudy was an "elderly" porpoise as evidenced by the deterioration of some of his vertebrae and



Rudy the Dall porpoise hangs from the Coupeville Wharf ceiling.

the extremely worn teeth. He had a number of bone-breaking adventures during his long life. A close look at the skeleton shows several broken ribs and vertebral processes, healed, but askew.

Sandy Dubpernell, BW Class of 1993



"Oh, Rosie had a baby!" That was the comment by several tourists as they passed beneath the skeletons. No, Rosie did not have a baby. The little Dall's porpoise, now hanging in the Coupeville Wharf Discovery Center looks a lot like a whale calf swimming in its mother's slipstream. But, look more closely at the difference in the vertebrae. Rosie is built for slow steady swimming for very long distances. Rudy is engineered for sprinting at speeds up to 35 miles per hour, throwing up a rooster tail of spray. Rudy is the latest addition to the wharf. There are many more exciting displays to come.

Sandy Dubpernell, BW Class of 1993



Rudy is finally here... for those of you who remember that it took 3 trucks to haul Rosie's bones to the wharf, Rudy, on the other hand, is just a little guy that came in the back of Matt's pick up truck