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Dolphin Watch Nature Tours

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the whole
family!

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749-6969

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ARK director Tony Amos, a research fellow at UTMSI, shows a turtle recovering at the ARK during one of the presentations during the Celebration of Whooping Cranes and Other Birds in February, one of the few times the ARK is open to the public.

ARK is island haven for injured wildlife

The Animal Rehabilitation Keep in Port Aransas took in and cared for 1,093 sick or injured animals in the year 2008.

A recent visitor to the ARK was a male bald eagle rescued from a roadside in Refugio County.

The eagle, unable to fly when it arrived at the ARK, was transferred to a bald eagle sanctuary after it was stabilized.

The ARK has an ever-changing menagerie that ranges from pelicans to turtles, even the occasional dolphin. The staff consists mainly of volunteers. It costs nearly \$30,000 for enough food to sustain the animal residents at the ARK, which is located at The University of Texas at Austin Marine Science Institute in Port Aransas.

A dozen Texas diamondback terrapin hatchlings were discovered washed up on the beach after Hurricane Ike, in September 2008, and they are living at the facility until they are ready to be released into the wild.

The ARK's mission is to accept animals that are injured or ill and rehabilitate them so they can be returned to their natural habitat. In some cases this is no more than a few days' care; in

other cases it requires months of feeding, observation and care for 24 hours a day.

The ARK has been rescuing and rehabilitating injured and sick wildlife in the Coastal Bend of South Texas for nearly 25 years. While the University of Texas provides utilities and some help from maintenance personnel, the ARK is financed entirely by donations from individuals and foundations. Expenses include construction of facilities and materials for any maintenance and operations, supplies, medicines, food for the animals, pumps, filters, heaters, air conditioners, washing machines, ice makers, and salaries for animal attendants and coordinator.

Although the ARK isn't open to the public, group tours can be arranged in some instances.

Call (361) 749-6793 for more information or to arrange for a tour. ARK officials ask that tours be limited to 20 or more; a donation will be requested to help defray expenses. Tours will usually be scheduled on Wednesdays or Saturdays.

The ARK can always use more volunteers, also. If you have time to spend helping a disabled animal (or money to donate, of course!) call the same number.

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