

Kidnapped penguin 'Dirk' rescued from sharks, dogs

April 16 2012



Dirk, a fairy penguin at Sea World on Queensland's Gold Coast, who was stolen from the Australian marine park before been found and returned a day later, but not before being hounded by a dog and chased by another animal, possibly a shark.

Dirk, a fairy penguin stolen from an Australian marine park, has been safely returned, but not before being hounded by a dog and chased by another animal, possibly a shark.

Police allege three young men broke into Sea World on Queensland's Gold Coast on Saturday night, swam in the dolphin enclosure and then stole seven-year-old Dirk as they made their escape.

The little bird was found, exhausted but otherwise well, on Sunday after a couple spotted him in a nearby shallow estuary.

"They heard a scuffle in the water, and this penguin came out onto the sand," Sea World's director of [marine sciences](#) Trevor Long told reporters.

"They thought it was very, very unusual, so they got on to their iPhone and googled 'lost penguin'. That came up with the story, and from there they were able to contact us."



Dirk, a fairy penguin at Sea World on Queensland's Gold Coast, has never been in the wild and is part of a breeding colony. Dirk has been reunited with his mate Peaches.

Long said the couple saw the captive-bred penguin get chased out of the water by another animal -- possibly a shark -- before it was then herded back in by a dog. Sea World workers eventually came to retrieve him.

"Had we not got him it wouldn't have been a good situation at all in the long term for Dirk," Long said.

The penguin, who had never been in the wild before and is part of a breeding colony, has since been reunited with his mate Peaches.

"These [penguins](#) do mate for life and that's why it was so important to get this bird back," Long said.

Police have charged three men over the theft after they were tipped off by a member of the public, after the trio reportedly posted about their exploits on Facebook.

The three, aged 18, 20 and 21, have been charged with trespassing, stealing and unlawfully keeping a protected animal. They allegedly told police they released Dirk into the Broadwater, a [waterway](#) known for its [sharks](#).

The penguin, meanwhile, is recovering.

"He was extremely dishevelled, he was quite exhausted last night after we did catch him but

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