Study: Dolphins can problem solve like humans

August 9 2013, by Suzette Laboy

In this Wednesday, July. 3, 2013 photo, a blindfolded Atlantic bottlenose dolphin named Tanner copies the behavior of trainer Wade Davey, left, during a demonstration at the Dolphin Research Center on Grassy Key in Marathon, Fla. Dolphins may be known for their intelligence and playful behavior. But turns out they can also switch on other senses to figure out a problem, just like humans. A new study indicates that when one of their senses is blocked, they can make decisions to use other senses to mimic a human's movements. (AP Photo/Wilfredo Lee)

A dog may be man's best friend, but dolphins can imitate human actions, and even how they solve problems.

A recent study shows that when a dolphin has one of its senses blocked, it can use other senses to mimic a human's movements.

A bottlenose dolphin named Tanner was blindfolded and instructed to mimic the actions of a trainer in the water with him. When Tanner wasn't able to use sight to figure out the movement, he switched to another technique: emit sounds, listen to the echo and interpret the resulting sound waves. This ability—known as echolocation—allowed Tanner to replicate movements by the trainer.

In this Wednesday, July. 3, 2013 photo, Emily Guarino, Administrative Director of Research, congratulates an Atlantic bottlenose dolphin named Tanner after he

copied a behavior while blindfolded during a demonstration at the Dolphin Research Center on Grassy Key in Marathon, Fla. Dolphins may be known for their intelligence and playful behavior. But turns out they can also switch on other senses to figure out a problem, just like humans. A new study indicates that when one of their senses is blocked, they can make decisions to use other senses to mimic a human's movements. (AP Photo/Wilfredo Lee)

The study, conducted at the Dolphin Research Center in Florida, expands on previous studies on how dolphins are able to imitate other dolphins while blindfolded.

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