Post-Assessment: Dolphin Smarts

UNIT: Investigating Asteroids

TRANSCRIPT

It takes a special kind of thinking to solve a problem with a tool like that. A kind of thinking that only a few animals have, like this dolphin.

See that thing on its beak? That's a sea sponge. The dolphins in Shark Bay Australia were getting cut by sharp rocks at the bottom of the ocean. That's a problem. So, some of them started wearing sea sponges on their beaks like helmets so they wouldn't get hurt while hunting for food.

Problem solving like that takes more thinking than just finding a bowl of food. And it's not just the dolphins in Australia that can problem solve. Dolphins all over the world are pretty incredible at thinking like that.

For example, these dolphins thought up a great way to trap fish.

See how that dolphin is making a wall of mud? The other members of its pod chase the fish into the wall of mud and the fish are getting trapped like in a big net—what a great idea!

Working as a team to hunt and trapping fish like that definitely takes a special kind of thinking, but that's not all these dolphins are doing. They're communicating while they're looking for food, and that takes thinking to a whole new level.

Hear those whistles? Those whistles aren't just random sounds. They mean something. See, dolphins use different whistles and chirps to communicate where they are when

they're hunting. Some types of whistles mean they're happy. Some mean they're scared. And some types mean they've found a large school of fish to eat and need help rounding them all up.

Get this, dolphins are such good communicators that they even have a special whistle to identify themselves. It's like their name. They use this special name-whistle to tell their pods where they are, so they don't get lost. Kind of like saying, "Hey mom, I'm over here." Pretty cool!

Dolphins have to think in a special way to communicate like that, which makes animal experts believe they're some of the best thinkers in the animal world.

Communicating takes thinking. So observing how animals like dolphins communicate is a good way to tell how smart they are.