

# The Dolphin Gazette



MYSTIC AQUARIUM  
INSTITUTE  
FOR EXPLORATION



volume 8, issue 2

May 2004

Newsletter of the Dolphin Communication Project

**Dolphin Communication Project at Mystic Aquarium & Institute for Exploration**  
55 Coogan Blvd., Mystic, CT 06355

## *In this issue you will find:*

- \* An article about a remote island from Lance Milbrand, Cinematographer
- \* Haiku from Umi
- \* The spring edition of our photo/video tips column
- \* Information about our 2004 field seasons & our research teams
- \* A puzzler for your summer afternoon

## **Thank you to DCP's volunteers!**

Without you, we'd be hard pressed to get so much data processed. Thanks to Aggie, April, Binti, Darcie, Erin, Kathy, Kelly, Michelle, MP, Robin, Shawn, and especially to John & Umi.

## *Volunteer Opportunities*

Opportunities are available to volunteer with DCP researchers primarily in the office working on data processing and analyses. For more details, please see the Education page of the DCP web site. All DCP volunteers coordinate their time through Mystic Aquarium & Institute for Exploration (MAIFE) and Kathleen Dudzinski. MAIFE also offers volunteer opportunities on site at the aquarium facility. The Volunteer Manager is Tim Robbins. Tim can be reached by calling 1-860-572-5955 x209, or by email at [trobbsin@mysticaquarium.org](mailto:trobbsin@mysticaquarium.org) to inquire about volunteer opportunities at MAIFE.

[www.mysticaquarium.org](http://www.mysticaquarium.org)

[www.dolphincommunicationproject.org](http://www.dolphincommunicationproject.org)

## **Summer Field Research**

Once again this summer we head to the field: Mikura Island, Japan; Bimini Island, The Bahamas; Roatan, Honduras; and Dolphin Encounters, Nassau, The Bahamas. As in previous years, we will post daily or weekly field reports to DCP's home page, specifically on our field reports page. Follow along as we gather more data, observe our dolphin *friends*, and learn more about communication and behavior among dolphins in the wild and in human care.

Kathleen returns to Japan from ~27 May to 27 July. Besides observing the Indo-Pacific bottlenose dolphins around Mikura Island, Kathleen will also give 4 to 5 workshops for children and 1 or 2 lectures. The workshops will focus on dolphin and ocean conservation and will occur in Tokyo, Enoshima, Takato & on Mikura. Especially exciting is the fact that our third annual workshop on Mikura Island will include an exchange between students from Camp Zama (a US military base in Tokyo) and the children of Mikura.

Kathy DeStefano, Kelly Melillo, Darcie Blanding & Justin Gregg will conduct our research on Atlantic spotted dolphins around Bimini this summer. Kathy & Kelly will be on Bimini from 7 June to late September. Darcie and Justin each will visit for one month to learn

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## *What was I thinking?*

*by Lance Milbrand*

Clipperton is a coral atoll, a true sunken volcano that is totally encircled by the sea. This atoll is shaped like a rectangular donut, consisting mostly of broken corals and bird guano. An enigma, Clipperton is named after an 18<sup>th</sup> century English pirate, located in the Eastern Tropical Pacific (700 miles off the coast of Mexico), and owned by France. The majority of the atoll contains poisonous hydrogen sulfide water, undrinkable at best. It takes seven hours to walk Clipperton's perimeter.

I consider myself an explorer and natural history filmmaker. And, yes, I volunteered to be left alone on this uninhabited atoll for six weeks. My mission: create a first-person narrative documentary about this isolated, remote, oceanic outcropping – the birthplace of hurricanes. Excluding my drop-off and retrieval dates, I had to videotape myself. There were calculated risks to consider, not the least of which revolved around me being the one-person crew on this remote shoot. I had to assemble complex natural history sequences including animal behaviors rarely, if ever, seen. Additionally, as part of the National Geographic funding, I have to plot a new map for their Maps Division. The last map of Clipperton was created in 1935.

Eight years in the planning, including four self-funded trips to National Geographic in Washington, D.C. to pitch the film. Finally, I wrote a grant to the National Geographic Expedition Council and everyone said yes. What did I get myself into?

Working closely with Maya Laurinaitis, Producer for National Geographic Natural History Unit, we came up with a logistical plan, a shooting plan and a storyboard. The toughest part of filmmaking is capturing actual sequences of animal behavior, and not forgetting attention to details. I had to place my camera at certain angles to capture drama while at the same time respecting the animals' space.

My departure was at the beginning of the American planned Iraqi Invasion (in 2003), and for weeks the French Government denied me permission to go. Finally, Maya convinced them that I was not a threat to the French national security on Clipperton.

Assembling necessary supplies took months but just getting to the location requires six days by fishing boat. Getting ashore could have easily led to disaster. There are only two cuts (openings) in the reef and conditions have to be perfect. Many previous skiffs missed the cuts because of waves or current and met the bottom of the reef, causing injury to their crew and a loss of all their supplies. Once I finally made it ashore, my camera assistant and I set up camp near an old palm grove. I set my tent within a colony of what must have been 5,000 roosting sea birds. It was brown booby mating season, and I was not going to miss any of the action. It is estimated that one million seabirds live on Clipperton while five million orange land crabs patrol the shores. Soon after setting up my tent and camp, my assistant departed and I was left to explore my surroundings. The atoll has one high vantage point, a volcanic rock. From high atop this rock, it is possible to see several palm groves, passing rain clouds and remnants of unlucky sailors and their shipwrecks.

I knew that I would experience extreme heat (110°F in the shade), driving rain, high humidity, and both underwater and topside camera work. I had been asked to design and build a wireless system to fly a camera attached to a kite. I had to learn how to use a satellite telephone and be well versed in case of medical emergency. I brought along seven cameras, destroying two. Electronics and 100% humidity often caused my video cameras to stop working. But, I pressed on. To accomplish my goals, I pondered what it might be like to be the animal I was trying to film. Too often in today's television, correspondents place an animal being filmed in distress. I did my very best not to handle my subjects: I was patient and waited, moving slowly and trying to grasp the big picture. Understanding the big picture meant moving away from base camp and living out in the elements on different parts of the atoll. Did I mention some days it is 110°F, while other days are torrential downpours with 40 knot winds? What I was NOT prepared for were the large, unwelcome rats, which have taken over nearly

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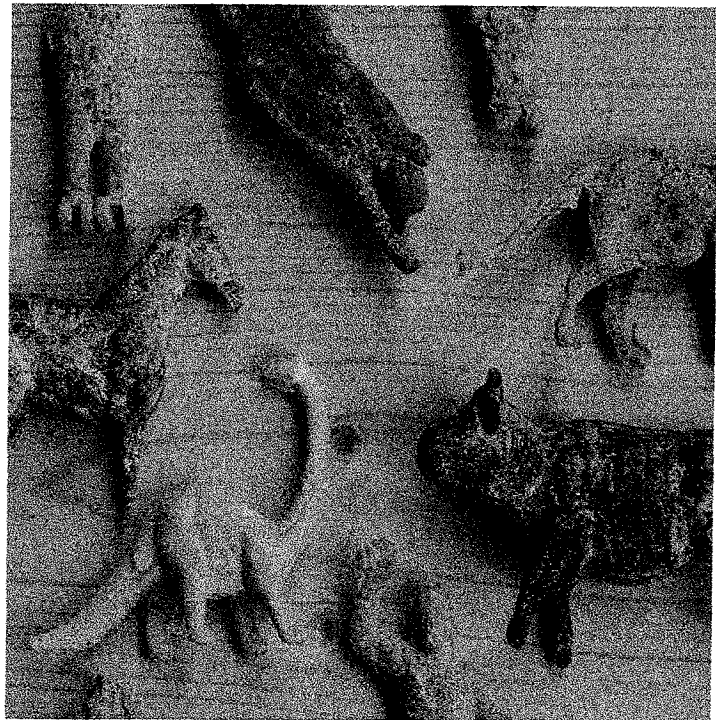
the entire atoll, and unexpected human visitors. The human visitors came on two occasions. Once they came ashore from a shark long liner boat and another time from a passing tuna boat. At one point, four men were walking into my camp carrying a speargun. One man asked if I was alone, I told him no. The second man asked if I had any pot, I told him no. I took their picture, told them my imaginary friend was coming back very soon. Then, I hunkered down in my camp, waiting for their ship to depart. I knew at that moment that I was not making enough money.

The subject matter, Clipperton Atoll, is important because there are so few places left in the world that are uninhabited. In the 21<sup>st</sup> century, what is it like to be really alone? Could I be alone? I had to grapple with these questions and also bring home a great video story and map. One of my personal goals was to help document this location before the inevitable tourist development. If there is one place on Earth that is more difficult to live, I have never heard of it. If there is one place that is more fragile to slight changes to the environment, I have not seen that place. One good thing this location has going for it are that hurricanes devastate its shores every winter. One bad thing is yellow gold: yellowfin tuna, some weighing near 300 pounds, swim in schools around these shores. A hotel development would surely devastate the fragile ecosystem. No one lives here, yet the atoll is literally trashed with junk.

Clipperton atoll is a very thin ring of coral that supports a large amount of animals, but represents relatively few species. Often times in the design of a land park, the surrounding waters are not protected. I think these waters and the coral reef inhabitants should be protected. Clipperton atoll is a spot in the ocean that acts as a magnet. More types of floating trash end up here than can be imagined. Many, many hundreds of tons of fishing lines, plastic drinking bottles and worn out shoes line the shores and go over the banks into the atoll. It is disgusting and shameful. If there is any silver lining in the trash, I discovered that the brown booby birds have adapted (Figure 1).

Somehow, somewhere a child left a small army man, a clown, a superman, a dinosaur on the beach and they all drifted away. Ocean currents made Clipperton their final resting place. Brown booby birds pick up these discarded plastic *treasures* with their beaks and decorate their nests in an attempt to attract mates. Can you imagine a young booby chick, growing up with a discarded toy? Spending about seven months living at this nest site with such an ornament? As the chick matures, it too must think these items are important in courtship. As adults the cycle repeats and they too seek out special shapes and colors of plastic for their nests. Let's be grateful the booby birds don't pick up fishhooks.

A few days before I was to return home, the French Navy appeared in a 400' ship with helicopter and men. The fishing boat that was to pick me up was denied fishing rights and asked to leave. It was for the best actually as Andrea, the first true tropical depression of the season, was heading straight towards Clipperton. Yes, I had a satellite phone for emergency, but if the fishing boat had not appeared, I would have had no way to know about the approaching storm. Andrea hit Clipperton dead on with 200 miles of rain and 55 knot winds. Certainly, many of the wildlife inhabitants perished.



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## 2004 Data Ecotour Updates

DCP has arranged our schedule for the 2004 season to continue our research on the dolphins at RIMS, Anthony's Key Resort in Honduras.

One-week trips are available: **11-18 September & 25 September - 2 October.**

Darlene Allen & Bill Sperling are handling details.

You can reach Darlene at MAIFE's reservations office: 860-572-5955 x215.

You can reach Bill at bsperling@idyllwild.com or at P.O. Box 2400, Idyllwild, CA 92549.

[www.dolphincommunicationproject.org/ecotours](http://www.dolphincommunicationproject.org/ecotours)

## MAIFE Teen Trip to Roatan!

Here is your chance to spend a week learning, observing and swimming with dolphins! Travel with us to Roatan, Honduras and become a student at their Institute for Marine Sciences. You'll spend your days interacting with knowledgeable staff as they teach you everything from dolphin anatomy, identification, and physiology to training these amazing animals. You'll get up-close learning experiences with these fascinating marine mammals and even the opportunity to swim with them! You will also become a reef biologist as you spend time snorkeling on the 2nd largest barrier reef - an absolutely amazing underwater world! A focus on coral reef ecology, mangroves, conservation and species identification will be sure to strengthen your marine biologist skills. Don't miss out on this fantastic educational adventure!

**WHO?** Teens: ages 14-17

**WHAT?** An intensive, immersive, weeklong marine science program involving dolphin and coral reef ecology.

**WHEN?** Saturday, 3 July - Saturday 10 July 2004

**WHERE?** The Institute for Marine Sciences on the island of Roatan, Honduras

**HOW?** Call Reservations at (860) 572-5955, ext 520 to register now!

**COST?** \$2,199.00 - includes domestic and international airfare, transfers, room & board, lectures, activities, taxes, tips

CALL NOW TO REGISTER!!

### Umi's Haiku Corner



Umi has not written many *Haiku* lately, or at least not ones that we can readily translate from her kanji nose marks on our back door. Since our move to Connecticut, Umi has been enjoying the sights, smells & sounds of her bigger yard. She nudged me (Kathleen) the other day, asking if I'd share the following *Haiku* with you. A few notes: Umi's "nanny" & "poppop" are Kathleen's parents.

*Run fast, dig deep, play!  
Wind blows, sand flies, water sprays.  
Catch me, if you dare.*

*Me in back, shackled.  
All good smells, sights speedy - woof!  
Their ears I tackle.*

*Nanny and Poppop  
Smile and cocked ears get me all.  
May it never stop.*

*Hey, can you hear me?  
LISTEN TO ME! I AM RIGHT!  
ARF! ARF! WOOF! It's ME!*

## The Basic Edit

by John Anderson

So, you wanna make a movie?! You got a brand new shiny digital camera and a super mondo 46Ghz titanium tzx 4000 with dual super drives and four processors. YOU ARE READY!!! Do you know what to do next? Probably not! Perhaps the next little bit of dribble will help guide and clarify some of the questions that you will no doubt have.

Anyone that has a reasonably new computer will likely have some sort of video editing software installed on it. Most machines now come with a standard, free editing program already installed. While many are very good, some are better than others. I started with Apple's iMovie and then graduated to Final Cut Pro, once I had figured things out a bit.

Now that our program is open in front of us, a myriad of transitions, effects and filters meet our eyes and tease our brain by making each previous video clip swirl and melt into the next. This is awfully tempting, but don't! While they are fun to play with and throw into a home movie once in a while, they scream amateur. Take a look at a well-shot feature film or documentary. Specifically watch for the transitions and you will start to see a pattern. For fast moving sequences, "butt" cuts are often used. Simply put, this means there are two clips back-to-back with no transition. For slower moving sequences, a "cross dissolve" is appropriate, anywhere from a few frames to several seconds, with standard length being about one second (30 frames). Sometimes a cross dissolve can be so long that it tends to look more like a composite than a transition, but more on that some other time. You never want to use a jump cut! This occurs when you have two very similar clips, back-to-back that, when played, they almost look like you just dropped a few frames somewhere. If you must use these clips, they must be separated by what are called insert shots. This will interrupt the time line in the viewer's brain and most likely they won't connect the two clips.

What I am suggesting here is a very simple concept. Keep it simple and basic! You can't go wrong with simplicity and I guarantee you less frustration! Things will go faster and your project will look more professional. I even try to heed my own advice. Last year I edited more than 34 video

projects that were anywhere from a short one minute commercial to a 22 minute educational piece. Except for cross dissolves, and the basic fade in/fade out, I can count the other types of transitions on one hand. And, if you're wondering, I shot nearly all of the media for these projects myself, last year. To quote Lance in his article ... WHAT WAS I THINKING!?!



## Internships

We offer internships to students for personal development & college credit. Credit is arranged by each intern with their school. Internships are offered on a semester basis. Please visit the Education page of DCP's web site, which is linked directly to the college internships section of the MAIFE web site, for details on applications & internships. DCP is offering limited field internships beginning Summer 2004.

*continued from page 1 ...*

*DCP field seasons (2004)*

from Kathy & Kelly. This autumn, Darcie begins graduate school in Animal Science at The University of Rhode Island. Justin begins graduate school at Trinity College in Dublin, Ireland. Both will work with DCP for their studies. We welcome them to our fold as budding scientists! In July, Kathy, Kelly & Darcie will begin preliminary observations on the dolphins at Dolphin Encounters in Nassau.

Kathleen returns to Roatan in September for 5 weeks. DCP will continue our work studying the bottlenose dolphins housed at the Roatan Institute for Marine Sciences. Similarly, with Dr. Tracy Romano & Dr. Lisa Mazzaro from the Research Department at MAIFE as well as Dr. Peter Scheifele from the University of Connecticut, DCP will continue our work studying the RIMS dolphins. As mentioned above, we have been invited to study the dolphins at Dolphin Encounters in Nassau, The Bahamas. So, this brings our research field sites to four: Mikura, Bimini, Roatan and Nassau.

Here's to an excellent field season!

[www.dolphincommunicationproject.org/  
fieldreports.asp](http://www.dolphincommunicationproject.org/fieldreports.asp)

**What have I gotten myself into?!**

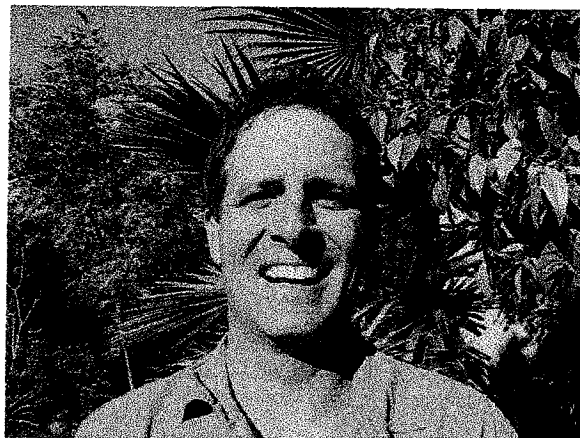
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I doubt that I will ever top my adventure of living alone on Clipperton with any other world-class adventure. I am grateful to both the National Geographic Expedition Council and National Geographic Explorer for giving me the opportunity to share my adventure in the documentary "Island Castaway." I also dread that I might hear about major change at this special place. I hope that humankind has the common sense and courtesy not to develop this jewel in the rough.

As an endnote: When I first proposed this film to National Geographic, Clipperton atoll was not listed on their globes. The NGS logo was placed over the atoll. In the NGS 2004 globe edition, Clipperton is visible. I hope that my story and program has also put this location in the minds of conservationists as a place worth saving.

**Guest Column Author Bio:**

Lance Milbrand is President and CEO of Milbrand Cinema based in Carlsbad, CA. For more information on Lance and his other projects, please visit the newsletter page of the DCP web site.



**Marine Mammal Word Find**

There are more than 70 words hidden below related to marine mammals. A list of those hidden will be published in the next newsletter. See how many you can find. They are listed forwards, backwards, up, down, and diagonally. Have fun!

E Z E N O B L U B B E R B J D U M S E L T S I H W A T H Q O  
 L R A S E A B I R D S C E R U P I H T E E T E V A W X I D P  
 A E M B V K C D D L P A S E A L G R S S F U N T T Y Z O O E  
 H L N O R L Y R O A O P T A G O R T N E A B D S E L N T P D  
 W L O W E H E H L R I T R N U N A S O N A R A U R T U E P U  
 C E O H S H U A P O S I E U O M T A I E C I N O O L B C Z N  
 E P P E B Y O M H T R V A T B D I A L M S G G C R H O H E C  
 T O R A O D R V I C U I M D S K O J A G E H E A F A H O D L  
 O R A D N R B O N E T T L N E L N R E H D T R E N R U L E E  
 L P H O T O G R A P H Y I U H S I F S I E U E M A B M O E A  
 O E T O H P G N I V I D N O S N G B O A F R D Z L O P C F G  
 G M N D A H R B O A T P E S E R R D Y H L Z P O R R B A R N  
 Y Y N G E O N O T E S Q D M A R S E K U L F W O W X A T E I  
 E S C I E N C E T A C E A Y I L A U L L L H I Y R V C I T D  
 N T C R W E D A P A S M V T A N U G A A O V E N U P K O L A  
 O I R A X O Q W L R M I U U H G K G C L A U T E A T O N I H  
 L C P E R U E L A A K V Q C N R U E E H L Y E D L O D I F S  
 E E L L A S O L L E S R A I A L A K E E O N C L I C K S S R  
 M T J R N S U S R P O E D S E L H B E T A L U G N U O C E E  
 A E I A I C U T E R R N S B L P J L A S O C I A L U Q I J T  
 A U E T O Y R C X B A L E E N I L U B C R E P P I L F S H N  
 M C I N Z A I T E R A E N A A C O U S T I C S D D E I F G U  
 O E I M T E C E T C N E E M A M M G N I L A H W A B E R C O  
 S B Y S S T I S R M T I C O U S T E A U C A M E R A I R K C  
 S T L O B E V O T S A R O S B O T T L E N O S E H G F L I C



## DCP Sponsorship Levels

The following list defines the benefits for each level of sponsorship in DCP:



- **\$15 Student:** welcome packet
- **\$25 Individual:** welcome packet
- **\$35 Foreign:** welcome packet
- **\$45 Family:** 3 notecards, 3 postcards, & welcome packet
- Note: Family sponsors consist of 2 or more individuals living in the same household.
- **\$75 Supporting:** 3 notecards, 3 postcards, copy of *Dolphins* video (while supplies last, then the *DCP Season Summary* or *Dolphin Spirit*) & welcome packet
- **\$250 Contributing:** 1 DCP t-shirt, 3 notecards, 3 postcards, copy of *Dolphins* video (while supplies last, then other) & welcome packet
- **\$500 Patron:** Limited edition matted print suitable for framing, 1 DCP t-shirt, 3 notecards, 3 postcards, copy of *Dolphins* video (while supplies last, then other) & welcome packet
- **\$1000 Benefactor:** 25% discount for individual sponsors on a DCP Ecotour trip, Limited edition matted print suitable for framing, 1 DCP t-shirt, 3 notecards, 3 postcards, copy of *Dolphins* video (while supplies last, then other) & welcome packet

### Welcome Packet

1 packet of 5 bookmarks, welcome letter, DCP flyer, one-year subscription to the *Dolphin Gazette* (DCP's newsletter), and a 10% discount on DCP-related merchandise.



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## *Support DCP's research & education programs with your purchases of ...*

### notecards & postcards

notecards: \$2.50 each    postcards: \$1.00 each  
*packet discounts available*

### bookmarks -

*remember us each time you sit  
down with a good book*  
cost per bookmark packet: \$1.25

2001 or 2002 Bahamas Summary Videos,  
*Dolphin Spirit*, or *Dolphins* (the film)  
cost varies depending on video.

*Check out our website for views of  
items, sponsorship information, &  
details on our ecotours.*



Shipping fees not included in price.  
for shipping arrangements,  
contact DCP.



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## *Adopt-A-Dolphin*

DCP offers Bimini Atlantic spotted dolphin Adopt-A-Dolphin and Name-A-Dolphin Programs. These programs help fund our Bimini dolphin research and education programs. Each one-year adoption costs \$30. A dolphin name purchased is entered into DCP's permanent database and costs \$200.00. Packets include a certificate, a photo of your dolphin, a spotted dolphin fact sheet, biographies of our named dolphins, a DCP flyer, & a copy of our most recent issue of the *Dolphin Gazette*.

**Become a spotted dolphin parent today & support valuable scientific research!**

*For more information about adopting a spotted dolphin, look to the back page of this issue of the Gazette OR contact DCP at [www.dolphincommunicationproject.org](http://www.dolphincommunicationproject.org)*

**Yes! I want to sponsor the work of the Dolphin Communication Project.**

Please enroll me at the level checked.

- New Sponsor
- Renewing Sponsor
- Gift sponsorship
- Student \$15
- Individual \$25
- Foreign Individual \$35 (outside USA)
- Family \$45
- Supporting \$75
- Contributing \$250
- Patron \$500
- Benefactor \$1,000

**I would like to offer an additional gift of \$ \_\_\_\_\_.**

*Sponsorships to the Dolphin Communication Project are for one year.*

- My check made out to DCP/MAIFE is enclosed.

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

if a gift, note gift recipient at left & your name, address here:

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

City: \_\_\_\_\_ State: \_\_\_\_\_ Zip: \_\_\_\_\_

**Yes! I want to adopt a dolphin.**

- Freckles
- Split Jaw
- Swoosh
- Juliette
- Cleopatra
- Nemo
- Teardrops
- White Blotch

**Circle your choice, fill out the information above & send \$30.00 per adoption.**

Dolphin Communication Project  
at Mystic Aquarium & Institute for Exploration  
55 Coogan Blvd.  
Mystic, CT 06355 USA

