

The Dolphin Gazette

Volume 11, issue 2 (May 2007)



From the Dolphin Communication Project
Mystic Aquarium & Institute for Exploration
55 Coogan Boulevard, Mystic CT 06355

www.dolphincommunicationproject.org and www.thedolphinpod.com

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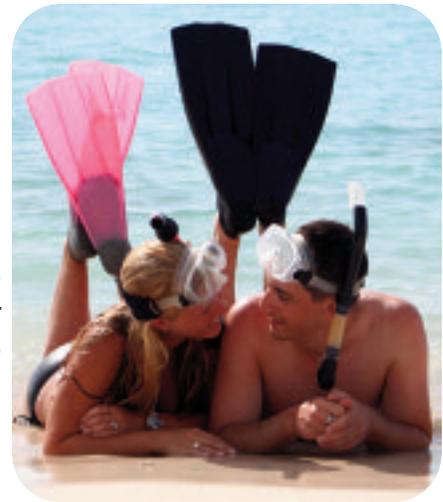
- * General updates
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A Note From Kathleen:

Summer is just around the corner! As many of you may know, summer is my most favorite season; I love the three H's - hot, hazy and humid. Also with summer comes DCP's field seasons and data collection of dolphin behavior and communication. You'll read inside this issue of the Dolphin Gazette that Kelly arrived to Bimini at the beginning of May while Justin landed at Mikura on 19 May. Kelly has already spent several hours on and in the water with observations of both spotted and bottlenose dolphins. Justin has a new HD camera and audio recorder to test out in the MVA4 (technology keeps advancing!). For those of you who are interested in joining one of our field teams, the September ecotour to RIMS has been discounted thanks to AKR providing DCP a special offer. This year will mark out 5th season at RIMS on Roatan. We have two really exciting educational trips planned for this summer. In August, 10 members of Boys & Girls Clubs from across the nation will join me at DE in Nassau to learn about DCP's research at DE and experience a bit of Bahamian culture. In June, 13 Pine Point students, also known as DRTs, will travel with me to Mikura and Tokyo. We will spend 4 days on Mikura and 4 days in Tokyo. The DRTs will spend a day at the Mikura school sharing with the students there, hike the mountain and to Nango, and spend an afternoon on the water learning about DCP's dolphin studies. So, stay tuned for the next issue of the Dolphin Gazette and to the DCP web site (which is getting a face lift this spring/summer) for trip and field report updates. Cheers and thank you for your continued interest and support!

Kathleen

The *Dolphin Gazette* is now printed on 100% recycled paper!



Congratulations!!

The DCP team would like to extend our best wishes to Darcie Blanding and her fiancé, John Folsom.

Darcie and John will be married this May - what a kickoff to our summer field seasons! As they head off on their honeymoon, we will be heading back to work. Best of luck to you both!!

DCP's web site gets a new look!

Keep your eyes on the DCP website: this summer, we will transition to a new look. All the traditional favorites will still be available; field reports, Adopt-a-Dolphins, and information on all our research and Research Associates will have new photos and updated info. The site will have a more streamlined look, and we hope you will enjoy it as much as we do!

The Dolphin Pod

The Dolphin Pod has been a huge success! With over 40 audio podcasts and 12 video podcasts available for play or download, Justin Gregg has done a fantastic job with this endeavor. Thanks, Justin! Check out our podcasts at www.thedolphinpod.com.



This Year's Field Seasons

Once again, members of the DCP team are preparing for this summer's field seasons. This year, the Mikura and Bimini seasons will begin in May; there will be an extended trip to Dolphin Encounters in August; and research in conjunction with an ecotour trip to Roatan occurs in September. Justin Gregg returns to Mikura Island on 20 May. Kelly Melillo is in Bimini from 30 April until mid-September. This summer, Kel will be joined in Bimini by two college interns: María Baetti from the University of Georgia, and Tabitha Baker from Roger Williams University. María and Tabitha will spend three weeks each in Bimini, and the remaining summer in the DCP office in Connecticut, where they will assist with data entry and analysis. This summer represents DCP's first field intern program in Bimini, which we hope to continue in future summer field seasons.

Mikura Island, Japan

Mikura Island here I come! The 2007 research season on Mikura Island, Japan begins on May 20. I've dusted off my snorkel gear and am ready to go! Flights have been booked, new audio equipment has been ordered, and our lovely databases are awaiting the mounds of data that will surely flood in. As always, I am curious to see how much the calves have grown and how my favorite dolphins are faring. I have been preparing for the field season by eating lots of fatty foods. This is for two reasons: 1) to add on some extra insulation against the chilly Mikura waters in May, and 2) to have enough reserves to get through the many weeks of a fat-free Japanese diet. Last year, I lost 10 pounds thanks to my fish-centered, fat-free diet. For many people that might sound like a good thing, but as a skinny guy, I can't afford to lose weight! This summer, the season will be slightly shorter, but more action-packed than usual. Eleven students from DCP's Dolphin Research Trainee program at Pine Point School in Connecticut will be traveling to Mikura in June. They'll get a crash course in Japanese culture and participate in our research on the island. Be sure to follow along with our field reports to see how the research is progressing, and hear how our Trainees manage on Mikura.

Justin

Justin Gregg, Research Associate

Dolphin Research Trainees:

The Dolphin Research Trainee program, also known as the DRT or "dirt" program, is a coordination between DCP and Pine Point School. The DRT program premiered in Spring 2006 and continues this spring (Jan-May) with students in 6th-8th grade. Students have spent one day a week since 25 January learning about about DCP, dolphin behavior, how dolphins communicate with each other, and Japanese language, food, and culture. The DRTs visited a local Japanese restaurant for an introduction to sushi and sashimi, and the New Bedford Whaling Museum to learn more about the connection between Mikura and New Bedford that began in 1863. Information on that connection is available in the DVD *Bridging the Ocean Divide*, for sale on the DCP website or available as a four-part podcast on www.thedolphinpod.com. The DRT program culminates in June with the opportunity for the students to travel to Tokyo and Mikura Island, Japan, to participate in the first part of an exchange program with Mikura students.



Bimini, The Bahamas

An old field site with some new players!

As you can see from this entire newsletter, it is time to formally begin the 2007 field seasons. Things will be a bit different for Bimini this year, but I keep telling myself that change is good. I arrived in Bimini 30 April (I'm actually writing this at the airport). Hopefully, I'll be on one of Bimini Undersea's dolphin trips tomorrow afternoon (1 May). The field season is scheduled to continue until mid-September.

This summer will be without DCP alumni Kat DeStefano and Darcie Blanding. Kat has left her post with Bimini Undersea and is now working on a beautiful live-aboard dive boat. Hopefully, we'll see her on the occasional port night in Bimini! Darcie, as you may have already read, is finishing up her Master's at URI and getting married! Everyone at DCP is so happy for her, but I'll miss living and working with her in Bimini.

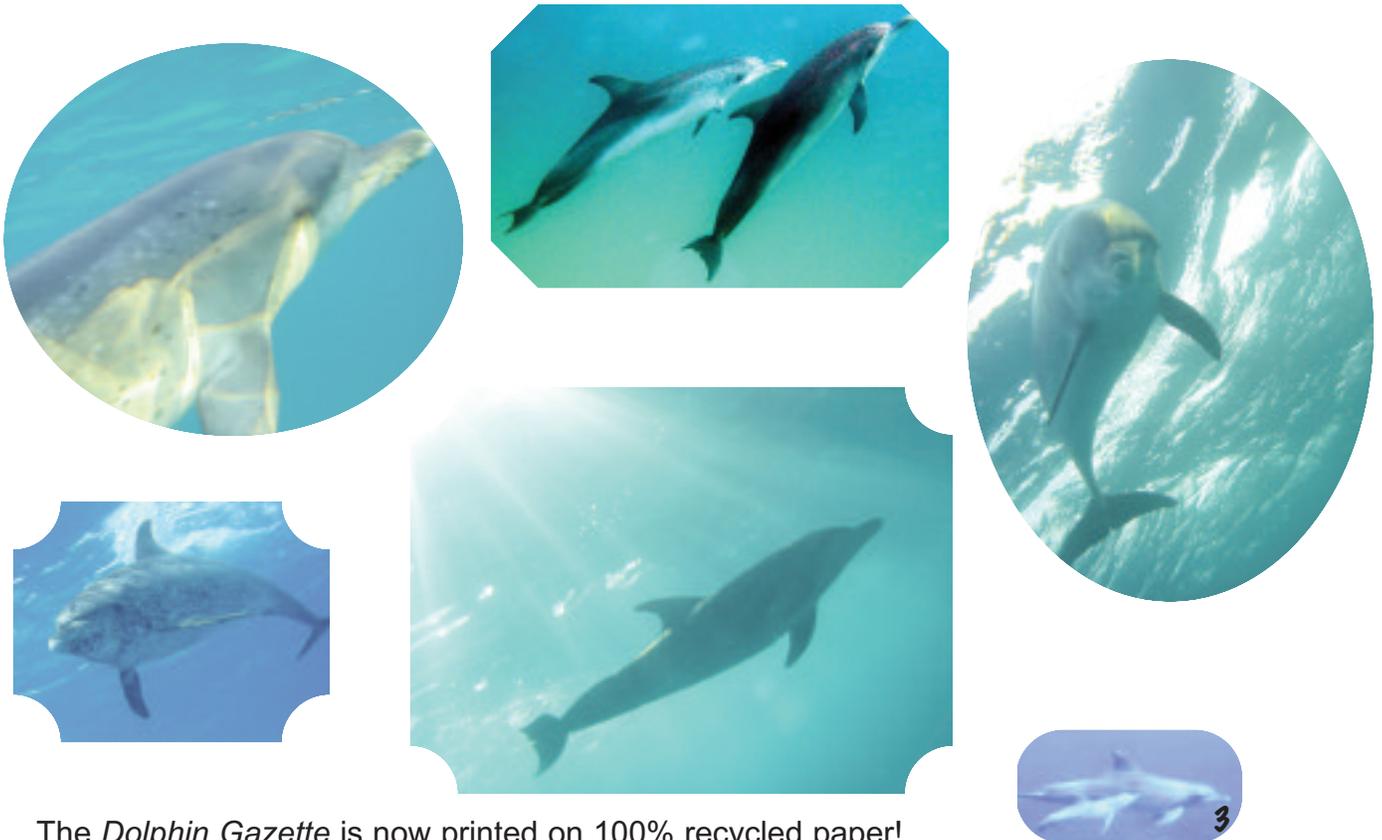
Thus, a new chapter for DCP begins. We have two summer interns, each of whom will spend approximately 2 months at the DCP office in CT and three weeks in Bimini. It will be great to have the assistance, provide a new opportunity for these two students, and gain fresh faces. As for me, I can't wait to see the Atlantic spotted and bottlenose dolphins off Bimini. Who will we see and what will they be doing this year?

As always, keep tabs on me, the island, and the dolphins by viewing our regular field reports at: www.dolphincommunicationproject.org/FieldReports/FieldReportsBimini2007.asp. I know it's going to be a great season!

~Kel

Kelly Melillo, DCP Research Associate

Can you ID these Bimini dolphins? We'll give you a hint... they are all part of our Adopt-a-Dolphin program!



The *Dolphin Gazette* is now printed on 100% recycled paper!



DCP's Bimini Name-a-Dolphin Program

The Bimini Name-a-Dolphin program through the Dolphin Communication Project has been so popular, that we were forced to suspend it because of a lack of suitable dolphins. This is about to change!

As you may be aware, there is a lot that goes into each of our Adopt-a-Dolphin packets. The Name-a-Dolphin program feeds DCP's Adopt-a-Dolphin program. As such, we require that we can consistently identify a dolphin in the field, have appropriate photos and video, and know whether it is a male or a female, before a dolphin is offered as a part of our naming program.

If you have been keeping track of DCP and our research team, you probably have some idea of how much time and effort that takes. Our researchers spend between 3-4 months each summer in Bimini, The Bahamas, collecting video data of the Atlantic spotted dolphins found there, and adding to DCP's Photo-ID catalogue. This time in the field generally yields between 13-16 hours of video, which are then analyzed upon our return to the US (or on the occasional bad weather days in Bimini). We spend approximately 30 hours analyzing each hour of video collected, including identifying each dolphin on the tapes. Video for dolphins offered in our Name-a-Dolphin program are also located and imported to the computer for addition to our Adoption DVD.

The exciting news: we plan to resume offering dolphins as part of DCP's Name-a-Dolphin program in the Fall of 2007! Because of the limited number of dolphins available for naming, and the high demand for this program, it has been revised. DCP will offer 1-2 dolphins per year as part of our Name-a-Dolphin program. Because of the limited number of dolphins, we have struggled to design a program that allows everyone the option of naming a dolphin. We determined that the best solution is an *auction*.

We will hold two auctions this fall: the first from **1-31 October** and the second from **1-31 November**. This allows everyone ample time to place their bids to name a dolphin. As always, DCP reserves the right to turn down inappropriate names. In order to support this program, the minimum auction bid will be \$750 per name.

Adopt-a-Dolphin

DCP currently has 25 dolphins from our catalog of Atlantic spotted dolphins residing around Bimini, The Bahamas available for adoption. While adoptive parents do not get to take their dolphins home, they will receive a certificate of adoption, a photo of their adopted dolphin, some facts about Atlantic spotted dolphins, information about DCP and our research around Bimini, and a dolphin video. They will also receive the most recent edition of the *Dolphin Gazette*, DCP's quarterly newsletter, with three more issues to be mailed or emailed over the one-year adoption period.

All dolphin adoptions through DCP help support our dolphin research throughout the world, as well as the creation and implementation of local, national, and international education programs for students of all ages.

Biographies of the 25 dolphins available for adoption can be read on the DCP website at: <http://www.dolphincommunicationproject.org/Adopt.asp>. Adoptions can be purchased via the website or by using the form at the end of this newsletter.

Answers from page 3, clockwise from top left: Splitjaw, Nemo & Leslie, Cerra, Tim, Vincent.



Ways to Support DCP

DVDs

Bridging the Ocean Divide ~~\$30~~ \$19.95 + \$4.95 S&H

Dolphin Spirit VHS ~~\$25~~ \$9.95 + Free Shipping!

Note cards \$2.50 each/ 3 for \$6

Postcards \$1.00 each/ 3 for \$2

DCP T-Shirts \$15 + \$4.95 S&H

DCP Long Sleeve Shirt \$20 + \$4.95 S&H

Ecotours at Roatan Institute for Marine

Sciences (RIMS) in Roatan, Honduras, and at

Dolphin Encounters, Nassau, The Bahamas.

(See below & the Ecotour page of the DCP site)

Please send check or money order to DCP at 55 Coogan Blvd, Mystic, CT 06355. Products can be purchased online through PayPal at www.dolphincommunicationproject.org/support.asp.

EcoTours

Roatan Institute for Marine Sciences, Honduras:

This year's trip to RIMS will be from 9-16 September 2007. The trip cost has been discounted from \$1,600 to **\$1495** per person per week, which includes lodging and three meals a day at Anthony's Key Resort. Airfare & Honduran departure taxes are NOT included. Information on what else is included in the trip is available at: www.dolphincommunicationproject.org/ecotours.asp. Contact Bill at bsperling@idyllwild.com for more information or to sign up.

Dolphin Encounters, Nassau, The Bahamas:

We are currently planning a new ecotour joining DCP at Dolphin Encounters during January 2008. This trip will be a long weekend, arriving on Thursday and departing on Monday, and joining DCP researchers in data collection Friday-Sunday. Stay tuned to the *Gazette* and the DCP website for more details!



Yes! I want to Adopt a Dolphin!



Buster

Cerra

Cleopatra

Dolphin Dandy

Finn Cusimano

Freckles

Juliette

Leslie

Lil' Jess

Lone Star

Lumpy

Nemo

Niecey

Padre

Picky

Prince William Joseph

of Wyckoff

Romeo

SplitJaw

Swoosh

Stefran

Teardrops

Tim

Tina

Vincent

White Blotch



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

Learn more about these dolphins at www.dolphincommunicationproject.org



I would like to adopt a dolphin: \$30 for one year. Dolphin name: _____

Please mail your order form, with check, to DCP at 55 Coogan Blvd, Mystic, CT 06355. Credit card payment is available online through PayPal, or by phone at (860) 535-8031 x156.

Please **send** my sponsorship package to:

Name: _____

Address: _____

City: _____ State: _____ Zip: _____

Email: _____

If this is a gift, please note gift GIVER address:

Name: _____

Address: _____

City: _____ State: _____ Zip: _____

Email: _____



Volunteering

DCP accepts **local** volunteers for data analyses any time during the year at our office in CT. We **DO NOT** accept volunteers for field work at any of our field sites. If you'd like to become a DCP volunteer, opportunities may be available for processing data and working with DCP's video and sound files in our office. For more details, see the Education page on the DCP web site, or contact Cherly Lemay, Volunteer Coordinator at MAIFE at: 860-572-5955 x209. All DCP volunteers coordinate their schedule through the Volunteer Coordinator and Kristy Beard, DCP Project Assistant. If you are interested in joining us in the field, check out our ecotours (www.dolphincommunicationproject.org/ecotours.asp).

Internships:

Internship positions for Summer 2007, based at our office in Stonington, CT, are currently filled. If you are interested in interning with DCP during the Fall 2007 semester, more information is available on our website. Please note, internships are office-based and do NOT include field work. Applications can be found at: <http://www.mysticaquarium.org/index.cgi/788>.

Thank you to DCP Volunteers!!

DCP would like to thank *Binti Ackley, Jim Gerber, and Grace Hernandez* for all of their help. Without your effort and assistance, DCP's office could not run so smoothly throughout the year. You all do a great job processing data and keeping things organized. Well done!

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To:



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