

The Dolphin Gazette



Newsletter of the
Dolphin Communication Project



volume 6, issue 4
November 2002

Field Summaries - notes from work in the field

Bimini Times - Dispatches from a Sandbar - from TJ & Susan McCue, DCP Field Researchers

God's Airline brought us to the Bahamas. In addition to the prayers that got us here, Chalks Ocean Airways has this local divine nickname due to the well-known fact that only God knows when they will fly. Luckily, our flight was only an hour late. They loaded 195 pounds worth of our gear onto the small seaplane that flew us and ~12 other passengers to Bimini. Chalks operates a couple of cool, older-style seaplanes where the belly of the plane splashes down first.

Over the course of our season in Bimini, Bahamas, we spent about 250 hours at sea. We are analyzing the video and other records for dolphin ID's and will have updates for the next issue of the Dolphin Gazette. We are indebted to Bill & Nowdla Keefe's Bimini Undersea. Bill and Nowdla are fun and generous people. We appreciated their generosity and enthusiasm for our work and the project. We also owe a great deal to one of the Keefe's best customers – DolphinSwim – run by Mike Cowan and Colleen Patrice. They allowed us to join them on their special tours. They also shared their excellent video footage with us. Mike is a world class videographer. We owe special thanks to several Bimini Undersea guests: Mark Coby for some great still images. Russell and Melissa Holm for video footage and stills.

Fluid. Graceful. Elegant. Smooth. Raw energy. What can we say about the dolphins? Most of you already know how amazing they are. We were fortunate to have a lot of encounter time this season. We frequently swam with the very pregnant White Blotch. In the beginning of September, she gave birth to a calf and brought her near to show us. It was amazing. We didn't get in the water, but she swam nearby for a good ten minutes showing off her beautiful baby.

For those of you who've seen the movie "O' Brother Where Art Thou" you'll remember the colorful band – the Soggy Bottom Boys. We had encounters with the same group of 4 Spotteds nearly every week. They were goofy and energetic and for some reason, Susan decided to name them the Soggy Bottom Boys. We then discovered, one by one, that they are all girls. So, we renamed the group – The Soggy Bottom Girls. Most of the guests onboard enjoyed their company and antics, too. There was one encounter involving Swoosh and two bottlenose dolphins: Swoosh was being mischievous and bit the fluke of one bottlenose. This started a short, but playful, reaction by both bottlenose. They spun him around a couple of times and pushed him down to the sea floor with their rostrums. He got the message and swam off...

Getting technical is the tedious, time-consuming portion of the project. We bring video home and watch it, laughing at our inability to shoot steady or focus on just one animal. "Oh, there's a dolphin, & another & another ..." As for our video capabilities, well, let's say that we're still learning. In our first 10 encounters, we had a mish-mash of subject matter. It goes something like this: Dolphin, dolphin, surface, sandy bottom, TJ's face (with TJ filming and checking to see if indeed he is recording), someone's fins, sandy bottom, oh – dolphin, remora, TJ's face, dolphin, surface. And so on. Quite entertaining and humbling. We take Dramamine before we review our day's work.

We then hook the camera to our laptop and download digital video into the PC. From there, we scrub the footage clean – i.e., get rid of junk. Then, we take the edited footage and review it, over & over & over, to find good quality stills of dolphins that differentiate individuals. As we watch this footage, we flip through existing ID photos from last year to find matches. Data processing is ongoing and is what fills hours during the time away from the field. Our next dispatch will be in a few months.

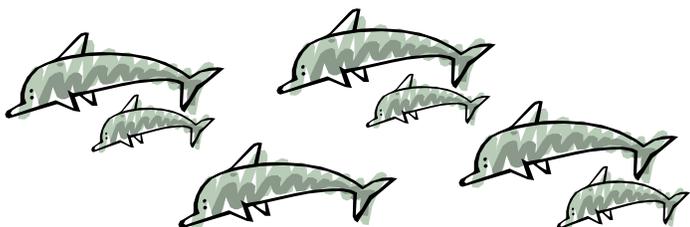
Guest Column ...

REFLECTIONS

by Bernd Würsig, PhD.

As I approach the mid-fifties and senior citizen status, I find myself reflecting ever-more on what might be most important in life. For the past 30 years, since 1972, I've been fortunate enough to study dolphins and whales in many parts of the globe. Wherever I've encountered these magnificent social mammals, my wife Mel and I have enjoyed not only learning about the animals, but about their fragile ecosystems as well. We have published and lectured and helped to make movies; disseminated information in different modes and manners. Yet, it seems to me that what one or two people can accomplish is not – or should not be – as highly rated as what many well-minded, caring, thinking folks can accomplish. This includes all of you readers of this Gazette, for I think it likely that if you did not thirst for knowledge and care for the marine environment, you would not be reading these pages.

My contentment of accomplishment concerns especially my students of the past, and I prize none more highly than those who are making a real difference in conservation of nature, by dedicated research, writing, teaching at all levels. One of my former grad students is leading ecotours into the mountains of Nepal, another two are doing the same in the lovely Marlborough Sounds of New Zealand. One is head of conservation at a European Greenpeace branch, one works with the International Fund for Animal Welfare to save marine birds and mammals of the North Sea. Many are naturalists aboard whale and dolphin watching vessels, and some work for governments – in the US, Mexico, Canada, New Zealand, Australia, Hong Kong, and China – to help those governments and its people learn more about how to conserve their marine life.



Kathleen Dudzinski, the writer and editor of this newsletter, is right there among them: learning, disseminating information and ways to protect nature, making science not only useful, but also fun. With her involvement in movies and writing for children, she is doing perhaps the greatest service of all: reaching a wider audience, especially of the impressionable young who still have all that energy to do good ahead of them.

I enjoy what I'm doing with science and teaching, but – upon reflection – it occurs to me that I enjoy especially what others are doing. Thanks for this, my former students and “all you others out there”. Thanks for keeping alive our thirst for knowledge – especially of those lovely delphinid mammals of the seas – and our need to conserve and protect nature in all ways.

~~~~~Guest Bio

Bernd Würsig is Professor of Wildlife and Fisheries Sciences at Texas A&M University, and Professor of Marine Biology at Texas A&M University at Galveston. He is also Director of the Marine Mammal Research Program and of the Institute of Marine Life Sciences. But, instead of all this “professoring” and “directing”, he mainly enjoys undergraduate teaching, spending time in the lab and field with his graduate students, and giving lectures and writing papers aimed in large part at the intelligent lay audience of non-biologists – people who care about dolphins, whales, other sea mammals, and environmental issues in general. For more on Dr. Würsig, please go to the newsletter page of DCP's web site.

*Dusk, adrift at sea ...
why look back at those lesser
hills hiding Fuji?*

Joso

*We rowed into fog,
and out through fog ... O how blue
how bright the wide sea!*

Shiki

Video & Photo Tips

from John Anderson

Several years ago I was lucky enough to participate in the making of an IMAX documentary expedition to Patagonia to film dusky dolphins. Patagonia is in Argentina and closer to the South Pole than we are to the North. Spending six weeks south of the equator, at the forty-second parallel in an area known to mariners as the "roaring forties", may not sound appealing to some but to me, it was a dream come true. With camera case in hand, I spent the better part of 26 hours in transit (by plane, smaller plane, and car) to the small wind blown town of Puerto Pyramides on the shore Golfo Nuevo.

My responsibility to the production came first. Shooting stills came second. And, even though the production sometimes took ~18 hours of each day, I still found time to grab a frame or two. The days flew by and the exposed rolls continued to accumulate at an astounding rate. Images of dusky dolphins, Southern fur seals and Magellanic penguins stuck in my mind, nicely framed by the edges of my camera's viewfinder. I retain a vivid recollection of certain images from each trip and look forward to seeing them on the light table when I return. Reliving my adventures through the editing process gives me a feeling of satisfaction, especially when seeing those same images just the way I remember them in the viewfinder.

Editing slides can be very rewarding and satisfying but also frustrating and discouraging. The norm for me is to view all the slides through a good loupe, pick out a select few that I actually like and shelve the rest in disgust. A week or more later I will take a second look and usually am able to make objective choices regarding which images to add to my library (from those that were shelved after the initial peak). Some photographers are disciplined enough to file the "close but no cigar" shots in the round file at this time. Not me! I have a file for selects or "A" images then one for "B & C" images. Although these extra files take up precious storage space, I find innumerable uses for them in other projects. Have you ever looked at a nicely framed or nicely lit image only to discover that it is "slightly soft", i.e., out of focus? Or, a poorly framed image that is tack sharp? I'm not encouraging sloppy photography here, but

that image doesn't have to be tossed out. Say that you shot a picture of a dolphin and it looks great, but your subject is on the extreme right hand side of the frame. Round file or keeper you ask your self? What about scanning that image into your computer and writing a short story, poem or haiku about it, filling in the negative space on the left side with the text option in your photo processing program? (assuming you have a computer and scanner) Or, that image with poor focus, try rendering it with 50% opacity and calling it stationary or the background for other "select" images. A slightly soft image may be indistinguishable as a graphic on a computer screen. My point here is that those "less than perfect" images can have a use, only limited to your imagination. Often times, I even heed my own advice and re-edit my "B and C" images only to find that I move many to what I call an "elements" file. Since I began doing my own graphic and print work I found these elements to be invaluable in creating layouts with depth. Just remember that each photograph has its own uniqueness. By pressing that shutter release, you've captured a tiny little slice of time that no one else has.

*Little Bahamas Bank - from Kathleen Dudzinski,
DCP Director & Scientist*

We spent two weeks on the Little Bahamas Bank looking for and observing spotted dolphins this past summer. The weather was less than cooperative during our first field week (10-16 Aug.) but improved for the second (17-23 Aug.). We had a total of 40 dolphin sightings and 14 encounters with 6 short encounters (less than 3 min with dolphins underwater). We spent a total of 84 minutes in the water observing dolphins. We saw about 50 different spotted dolphins and more than a dozen bottlenose dolphins. Some of the dolphin ID's confirmed to date include: concordia, double point, mia, little gash, echo, and a few adult females (#45, #64) with calves. Photo-identification confirmations from slides and video are ongoing. We are also processing the videotapes for behavioral data from focal follow analyses. Updates will be posted later this fall to DCP's web site and included in the January issue of the Dolphin Gazette. Thank you to all participants who shared photos from their trip this season. See you next summer!

Wilderness Education Program

The Wilderness Education Program (WEP) is a not-for-profit educational organization. For the past 13 years WEP has provided year-programs that focus on teaching stewardship and developing leadership have hiked & climbed throughout our Rockies, Africa, Europe and the works with the Junior Blind, strive to teach participants how to think discover solutions by drawing on diverse disciplines. Safety and teamwork are built into each course. Programs range from 1/2 day to multi-week and are adaptable for a wide range of physical and emotional capabilities and interest levels. Most especially, the programs are FUN!!



see page 5 for exciting news about joint programs between DCP and WEP!

**Wilderness Education Program
267 South Laurel Street
Ventura, CA 93001**

**Tel: 1-805-667-2057 fax: 1-805-667-2062
www.wildernesseducationprogram.com**



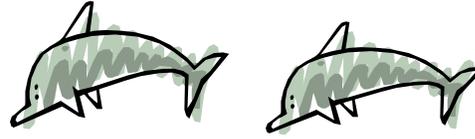
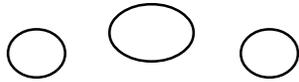
Ocean Issues



- 1 UNEP. Nairobi, 25 Sept 2002 (AP)
Nations attending the Convention on Migratory Species (CMS) tri-annual conference supported a priority Appendix 1 listing for the Fin, Sei, & Sperm whales. The Antarctic Minke, Bryde's and Pygmy Right whales were placed on Appendix II. These decisions mean that a new, regional agreement is likely to emerge in the South Pacific giving greater protection to all six species of whale and their habitats, breeding grounds and migration routes. For more information on these listings and to learn what other terrestrial and avian species have been listed, contact Eric Falt, UNEP Spokesperson/Director of the Division of Communications and Public Information: eric.falt@unep.org
- 2 from *Currents*, the newsletter of the Bahamas National Trust 8:1 6/02
At the 43rd annual general meeting of the Bahamas National Trust (April 02), it was confirmed that 10 new protected areas were being created. This doubles the size of the country's national park system - an unprecedented event in world conservation history.

The new areas to be protected include: Central Andros, Little Inagua, New Providence, Walker's Cay and areas around Great Exuma. Protection of marine environments by the Bahamian government has shown marked success. For example, previous protection of Cat Island has yielded a population of conch nearly 31 times greater than outside the protected park area. With only 5,300 square miles of land from within the 124,000 sq. mile archipelago, the Bahamas is taking great strides to protect their marine territory and the animals relying on it.

- 3 from the LA Times, 1 October 2002
Sonar Tests a Likely Link to Whale Deaths
In late Sept., 15 beaked whales beached on the Canary Islands off NW Africa. Postmortem exams provided evidence possibly linking the deaths to a multinational naval exercise. The bodies showed signs of ear and brain trauma that may have been caused by high-intensity sonar. The exercise was hosted by the Spanish Navy with 11 other NATO countries invited to participate. Detailed tissue analyses are currently ongoing. For the entire LA Times story, please see: <http://www.latimes.com/la-fg-whale1oct01004430,0,4713502.story>



DCP's Wish List - every little bit helps

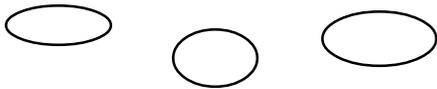
Like most non-profit organizations, DCP relies on grants, sponsorships, & donations. Donations can be **monetary** or “**in kind**”. “**In kind**” are items donated instead of the funds to purchase such items. What is neat about “in kind” donations is that these may be items you have lying around the house (or garage). Some suggestions follow:

Supplies

2-hr VHS tapes

8.5 x 11 paper

Printer cartridges (BW & color) -
Epson Stylus 740 printer



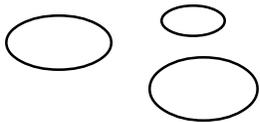
Equipment, Etc.

VCR - for DV
tapes OR for VHS
tapes.

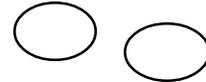
TV - w/ stereo
RCA
connections

A 12-16 ft dinghy with motor
(for use in Bimini).
(e.g., zodiac or hard-bottom)

If you have other items to donate, but aren't sure, give us a call or send an email.



You can reach us at: 1-805-283-0747 or at
www.dolphincommunicationproject.org

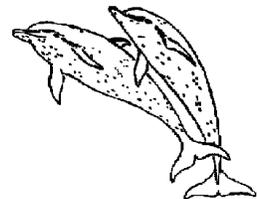


WEP - DCP collaborate to bring the oceans & mountains together for kids

DCP & WEP are collaborating on an education program for students in the Ventura County area. The proposed program will run for three months and be offered in the spring 2003 and fall 2003. We plan to offer three 3-hour lecture-style classes during the week and different field trips on Saturdays during the program. Topics will include and focus on the oceans and her marine mammal inhabitants, mountaineering and climbing, survival techniques in the wild, and environmental stewardship. We aim to provide students the opportunity to learn about and experience the natural community while working as a team and building self-confidence and esteem. We are currently writing applications for grant money to support our educational programs. As a team, DCP and WEP plan to introduce students to nature and the wonders of the wild environment. As students learn more about nature, the ocean, mountains and the environment, we hope they will develop a respect and love for the natural world. Not only will this lead to a

more refined view of their role in today's society as caretakers of the environment, but they will discover and learn more about themselves and their peers.

Follow along with the Wilderness Education Program and the Dolphin Communication Project as we develop education programs for kids. Check out our web sites for updates and details.





Support D.C.P. with your purchases of ...

D.C.P. membership
see next page for details &
sign up today!

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

note cards & postcards

t-shirts & tank tops

(M L XL)

shirts are 100% cotton.

\$15.00 per t-shirt

\$10.00 per tank top

notecards: \$2.50 each postcards: \$1.00 each

packet discounts available

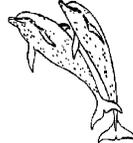
bookmarks -

remember us each time you sit down with a good book

cost per bookmark packet: \$1.25



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



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

Adopt-A-Dolphin

We all love dolphins. We love their grace, their speed, their playful natures. We are drawn to them. DCP offers Bimini Atlantic spotted dolphin Adopt-A-Dolphin and Name-A-Dolphin Programs. These programs will help fund our Bahamas dolphin research and education programs.

Each adoption costs \$30 and lasts for one year. Each name purchased for a dolphin goes into DCP's permanent database and costs \$200.00. The adoption & naming packet includes a certificate, a photo of your adopted 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

Some puzzlers: can you spell 15 words using only the letters in "porpoise"?

a numerical quiz ... what might each phrase mean??



9 = P. in the S. S.

24 = H. in a D.

1 = H. on a U.

90 = D. in a R. A.

57 = H. V.

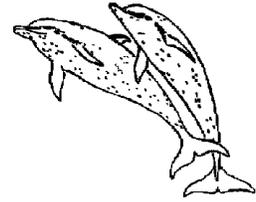
26 = L. in the A.

7 D. in a W.

13 = S. on the A. F.



DCP's membership programs: Join us to learn about exciting new programs, research eco-trips, & member discounts.



MEMBERSHIP LEVELS

The following list defines the benefits of each level of membership with DCP.

- **\$15 Student:** welcome packet
- **\$25 Individual:** welcome packet
- **\$35 Foreign:** welcome packet
- **\$45 Family:** 3 notecards, 3 postcards, & welcome packet
- Note: Family memberships 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 tank top, 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 tank top, 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 members on a DCP Bahamas' Ecotour trip, Limited edition matted print suitable for framing, 1 DCP tank top, 1 DCP t-shirt, 3 notecards, 3 postcards, copy of *Dolphins* video (while supplies last, then other) & welcome packet

Welcome Packet

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



2003 Ecotour Updates

DCP is currently discussing options for our 2003 field season. We will post updates and our 2003 schedule to the Ecotour page on DCP's web site as soon as details are set. Thank you for your patience. Most likely, during the 2003 field season, we will also offer land-based trips to begin expand our studies of the spotted dolphins at Bimini. We should have our schedule posted by late November.

Check us out online for an ecotour (or membership).

www.dolphincommunicationproject.org

Yes! I want to become a member of the Dolphin Communication Project.

Please enroll me at the level checked.

- New member Renewing member Gift membership
- \$15 Student \$75 Supporting I would like to offer an additional gift
of \$ _____.
- \$25 Individual \$250 Contributing
- \$35 Foreign (outside USA) \$500 Patron
- \$45 Family \$1000 Benefactor

Memberships to the Dolphin Communication Project are for one year.

- My check made out to Dolphin Communication Project is enclosed.
- You may also use your credit card to pay for your DCP membership online at the member page.
A \$1.00 handling fee will be added

Name: _____ if gift, note gift recipient at left & **your** name

Address: _____ & address here: _____

City: _____ State: _____ Zip: _____

Email: _____ I want to receive newsletter via email or postal mail .

Your gifts support DCP and are tax-deductible. For more details, see www.dolphincommunicationproject.org

Yes! I want to adopt a dolphin.

Freckles Split Jaw Swoosh Juliette White Blotch

Circle the name you want to adopt, fill out the above information and send \$30.00 per adoption packet.

Dolphin Communication Project
3600 South Harbor Blvd., #429
Oxnard, CA 93035 USA

