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The Dolphin gazette

NEWSLETTER FOR THE DOLPHIN COMMUNICATION PROJECT

The Dolphin Communication Project (DCP) is focused on the dual goals of scientific research and education.

So much to do ... so little time!

As usual, we've been very here at The Dolphin Communication Project. Of course, lots of our activities have been research-based: data continue to be processed, the Bimini field site is thriving, a new paper has been published and more manuscripts are in the works. But, much of our work has been done just for you!

We have many new and updated sections of our website. We redesigned our adoption kits - they rock! (If we do say so ourselves!) Our 2010 eco-tour schedule is set (come join us!).

We also are offering more education programs than ever before with our new college courses and soon we will begin a new program for high school students, all in addition to middle school programs in Connecticut and online programming for all ages.

Check out the continuing field reports and exciting updates from DCP on our web site. Listen to a podcast and learn more about dolphins. And of course, share the Gazette with your friends ... Enjoy!

In this issue

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The DolphinGazette is printed on 100% recycled paper!

Mailing Address

Dolphin Communication Project
P.O. Box 711
Old Mystic, CT 06372-0711
USA

Thank you to DCP Volunteers!!

DCP would like to thank Binti Ackley, Marliese Friedman for all their help this summer. Without your effort & assistance, DCP's office could not run so smoothly. You all do a great job processing data and helping to keep things organized. Well done!

Internships

If you are interested in interning with DCP during an autumn, fall or summer semester, more information is available on our website. Please note, most internships are office-based and do NOT include field work. Check out the web site or contact us at info@dcpmail.org.



In the thick of Summer ...

A message from Dr. Kathleen Dudzinski, Director of the Dolphin Communication Project

Summer is speeding by!

Time seems to be flying by faster than ever. It seems that we only just yesterday finished teaching the Wallingford DRT program! We have much to share with you in this issue of the *Dolphin Gazette*. Our 2009 interns, Vicki and Alexis, finished their month stay on Bimini early this month, which completed their full internship with DCP. Check out page 5 to read their thoughts and memories of their time with DCP. Also in this issue, Kelly provides a mid-season report from Bimini. The study populations of bottlenose and spotted dolphins are both healthy and thriving.

In 2010, DCP will again offer the college course program "Cetacean Field Ecology" from Bimini. Kelly will oversee this program and we look forward to welcoming several students back to Bimini. Additionally, in January 2010, DCP will offer a college course in Animal Behavior - with a focus on dolphins. I will lead this class to RIMS, Honduras and student participants will learn about animal behavior via direct observation of dolphins, fish and other critters. Check out page 4 for details on both of DCP's college courses. Or, you can visit the College Course pages for both programs on the DCP web site.

Two years already?!

It is true! Two years have just about passed already since the last Biennial Conference on the Biology of Marine mammals. In October, DCP will be represented in two poster presentations at the 17th Biennial Conference to be held in Quebec, Canada. We share with you our accepted abstracts on the last page of this issue of the *Gazette*. (It is true, we have substituted the abstracts for the puzzle page ... but only in this issue.)

DCP is offering some exciting new programs - two eco-tours for 2010, more Bimini Cetacean Field Ecology opportunities and a new Animal Behavior class to be held at RIMS!

Read on and enjoy!

DCP will be launching a new educational program later in 2009. We are designing a program for high school students. Stay tuned for the next issue of the *Gazette* for the latest information on this exciting new program for high schoolers.

Cheers,

Kathleen
Director, DCP



Bimini's Mid-Season Summary!

The end of the summer is on the horizon: A report filed from Bimini ...

Every year I say the summer has flown by. Well, this time I really mean it! It seems like only last month I was greeting students from the University of New Brunswick (UNB) for the first university field course of 2009. And surely, it was only a couple of weeks ago that students from Sacred Heart University (SHU) arrived for field course #2.... What? The interns are telling me that the UNB course was in May, SHU was in June and that they are getting ready to wrap up their month assisting in the field because it is August! How can this be?



But, it must be true – as of 5 August, we completed 47 boat trips in 2009 in search of wild Atlantic spotted (*Stenella frontalis*) and bottlenose (*Tursiops truncatus*) dolphins.

On those 47 boat trips, we saw dolphin groups over 100 times! The sighting success rate (trips with dolphin sightings) is almost 90%. We must, as always, express our sincere gratitude to **Bill & Nowdla Keefe's Bimini Undersea** and **Al Sweeting, Jr.** at **Sea Crest Hotel & Marina** for welcoming DCP on their wild dolphin excursions. Without their generosity, our field work in Bimini would not be possible. We also have once again enjoyed meeting all of the dolphin trip passengers. Sharing stories about Bimini's dolphins is still one of my favorite parts of the job...

For those **adopt-a-dolphin** parents out there, we saw lots for your friends: Buster (#04), Finn (#09), Romeo (#10), Vincent (#11), Juliette (#12), Tina (#14), Lumpy (#17), Split Jaw (#22), White Blotch (#29), Lil' Jess (#35), Swoosh (#36), Cleopatra (#41), Niecey (#48), Lone Star (#56), Trudy (#57), Prince William (aka Billy, #64), Tim (#69), Nemo (#76), Leslie (#80), Stefran (#82) AND Tilly (#87). We also saw quite a bit of un-named #78 and #86, two Bimini dolphins that are ready for naming through our **Name-A-Dolphin** program. We continue to see Finn and Romeo together quite often and enjoyed Tina's continued (apparent) fascination with the sea grasses of Bimini. We were thrilled to see Juliette, Swoosh and Niecey all with calves and were particularly pleased to see that Swoosh's (her first) made it past the one year mark. White Blotch continues to keep her calf close, although independence is likely not far away – the calf just turned five years old! The good thing (for us) about this slightly longer association is that we were able to add the calf to the catalog, as she now has quite a few spots. Welcome ID#94! We also added three other animals to the catalog so far this year – all young dolphins with permanent scars (but, don't worry, they are doing just fine). Of course, we've also enjoyed all of our bottlenose dolphin sightings – and have tons of ID pictures to sort!

As the research season winds down, we at DCP are preparing for another great season in 2010! Be sure to check out the rest of the newsletter for details on our college courses, eco-tours and reflections for our 2009 summer interns. And a big thank you to everyone who has been following along with our Bimini research via our online field reports!

Kelly

Bimini Field Research Manager



Swoosh (#36) and her male calf

Field Season: DE '09

DCP was delayed in getting to Dolphin Encounters (DE) this past winter, but will continue our dolphin studies at Dolphin Encounters in November.

DCP usually conducts data collection on the dolphins at Dolphin Encounters in January; however, this was not the case in 2009. I will travel to Dolphin Encounters (Nassau, The Bahamas) in November this year to observe the dolphins who call Dolphin Encounters home. I'll post updates about our observations in November within field reports and the last issue of the Gazette for 2009 will also have a brief update about our data and observations. Until then, cheers!

-Kathleen

DCP Director

DCP's Wish List

- DVD burner (TV)
- Hand-held marine (waterproof) VHF radio
- Software license – CS4 or InDesign (version 4)
- “Rite-in-the-Rain” paper
- DVDs, CDs – print-on variety
- AA, 9V batteries
- LCD projector - mac & PC adaptable
- Portable projector screen

Dolphin Research Courses

GET OUT OF THE CLASSROOM.... And get into the field!

Looking for an exciting, university-level field course?

The Dolphin Communication Project is pleased to offer:



FIELD COURSE IN CETACEAN ECOLOGY

Bimini, The Bahamas

Cost: \$1645 per person (USD)
Dates: Contact us for availability

Included:

6 nights accommodation at Sea Crest Hotel & Marina (double occupancy, single occupancy additional fee)

3 meals a day (Family Style)

5 half-day boat trips in search of wild Atlantic spotted & bottlenose dolphins

Morning lecture space

Course instruction (if requested)

Gratuity

Transportation to/from airport to hotel

Certificate of completion (upon request)

Not included: Airfare to/from Bimini

Participants must be at least 18 years old.

University groups accepted.

Minimum 8 students required.

Includes Free Instructor Space!

Looking for a longer course? We customize!

FIELD COURSE IN ANIMAL BEHAVIOR

Roatan, Honduras

Cost: \$2200 per person (USD)
Dates: 7-16 January 2010 (field portion)
4-25 January 2010 (including online work)

Included:

9 nights accommodation at Anthony's Key Resort (quad occupancy)

3 meals a day

2 Dolphin swims/encounters with bottlenose dolphins

2 Field trips (Gumba limbo, Iguana farm)

Lectures & instruction by Dr. Kathleen Dudzinski and Dr. Stan Kuczaj

Gratuity

Transportation to/from airport to hotel

Certificate of completion (upon request)

Not included: Airfare to/from Roatan

Participants must be at least 18 years old.

Individual students accepted.

Minimum 8 students required.

Maximum 16 students.



Non-refundable deposit of 20% required when booking.

Need more information? Email info@dolphincommunicationproject.org

DCP's Intern Team sums up their 2009 program

Bye, Bye DCP & Bimini (for now)! Final thoughts from DCP's 2009 summer interns...

As most of my friends have spent their summer staring at computer screens and filing mindless paperwork while working in offices in cities like New York or Boston, I have spent my summer doing dolphin research in Connecticut and in the Bahamas! There aren't words to describe the amount of jealousy that most of my fellow classmates and friends feel toward me, and honestly, I can't blame them! This experience has been the best experience I have had thus far in my life and I have learned so much from it! As my internship is starting to wind down (and by the time you will be reading this, it will unfortunately be over) there is so much I would like to share. My internship started June 1st in Connecticut, where my fellow intern and I got to work closely with Dr. Kathleen Dudzinski. We quickly picked up skills such as photo identification and data entry. We would spend most of our mornings watching data of bottlenose dolphins from RIMS (Roatan Institute for Marine Science) in Roatan, Honduras and quickly learned unique identifying marks on each dolphin in the group. After observing video we would then go do data entry to give our eyes a break. Toward the end of our 6 weeks in CT we spent time learning about pectoral fin contact between dolphins and began recording this behavior ourselves. In addition, we even got a small taste of Dr. Dudzinski's acoustic sound analysis of the dolphins.

After our 6 weeks in the north, we headed south to Bimini, Bahamas and began working with Kel Melillo and the research with Atlantic spotted and bottlenose dolphins. We got to be out in the field here and frequently went out on a boat in search for wild dolphins. After finding them we entered in the water and took still pictures, while Kel recorded video. These days were long, but unbelievably fulfilling. In the mornings before these trips and evenings after them we would go through these pictures, identifying the dolphins, recording pectoral fin contact, and entering data from the previous trip. The field portion of the internship is what everything is worthwhile for! It is an amazing thing to be able to go out and swim with wild dolphins and to be able to say I did it frequently while researching them is something very few can say. Working with DCP has given me a once in a lifetime opportunity and I am eternally grateful. I have learned so much and this has been hands down the best summer I have ever had. I am so proud to say that I helped contribute to the amazing research they are doing and hopefully I helped further their advances toward learning more about dolphins and their behavior.

-Alexis

DCP Intern, Summer 2009

So here I am, a week left in Bimini and I find that the hardest part of the whole trip will be leaving. Wanting to become a marine biologist and living in Chicago doesn't exactly go together and having the opportunity to be somewhere where it does is an amazing experience. That's probably my favorite part of the internship, being able to really do what I love and have been working towards for so long.

As for the actual work itself I can't say that there's anything I really don't like to do, except maybe data entry, but hopefully someday I'll have my own interns to do that for me! Somebody recently asked me what my favorite part of the work was. I replied, "If I say swimming with the dolphins is that a cop out?" I mean, who wouldn't love to get to do that a few times a week, having the ocean as their office? Being in the water with them and observing them in their natural habitat is definitely one of the attractions to



Alexis and Vicki spent about 6 weeks in the DCP office with Kathleen, Binti and Marliese. In mid-July, they left for Bimini and spent about 4 weeks with Kelly learning the ropes in the field Thank you Vicki and Alexis for all your help and dedication!!

doing work like this. But, my favorite part is what comes after. I enjoy sorting through the pictures and video we take; matching a number, or in some cases a name, with a face or dorsal fin. Identification is the first step to any long term research and will be the first step I will take in conducting my own someday. I get excited when I think about the research that will be a little easier to conduct because of the small amount of time and the huge amount of effort I have put in here.

So, like I said, I've got a week left and it's been everything I expected and more. The only thing left on my to-do list, funny enough, is eating at the many places people have told me "you have to eat there before you leave!" Pizza on Bimini bread from Edith's; BBQ ribs from Honey Bun's; Saturday breakfast at Ena's; lobster at The Anchorage; and Charlie's Bimini bread. So much to eat, so little time! This week will be full: a couple dolphin trips, lots of good food, kayaking the mangroves, hanging out at the beach, a fun day on the boat, and a lot of goodbyes. It's weird, leaving a place that's become like home to go to a place that is home, kind of sad and exciting at the same time. I will miss Bimini, the people I've met, and the work I've done here. 'Til next time, Bimini!

-Vicki

DCP Intern, Summer 2009

DCP's 2010 Eco-tour schedules set!

RIMS - January 2010

Saturday 16 January 2010 (Arrival)
Saturday 23 January 2010 (Departure)

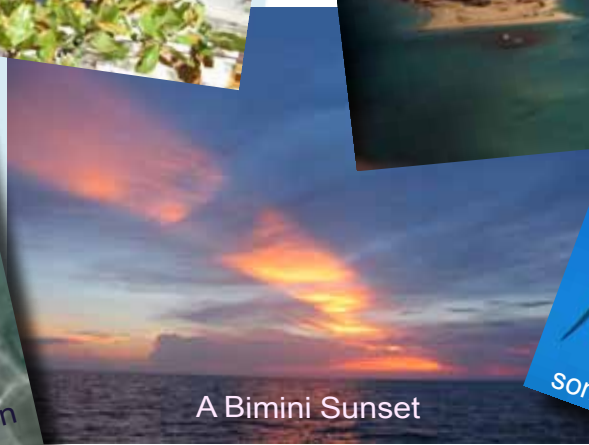
Join DCP Director Dr. Kathleen Dudzinski at the Roatan Institute for Marine Science (RIMS) at Anthony's Key Resort in Roatan, Honduras. Here, you can get up-close and personal with the bottlenose dolphins that call RIMS home. Assist in data collection and preliminary analysis as well as enjoy two dolphin swims and one dolphin encounter. This trip costs \$1,765 (USD, per person) and includes accommodations (double occupancy), 3 meals/day, entrance to Bailey's Key Wildlife Sanctuary, horseback riding, kayaking, SCUBA diving and more! Learn more or sign up by visiting the DCP web site at the **RIMS eco-tour page!**

Please note: Airfare is NOT included in any DCP eco-tour. All U.S. participants are required to travel with a valid passport. Participants from other countries should check travel requirements.

Bimini - May 2010

Sunday 16 May 2010 (Arrival)
Friday 20 May 2010 (Departure)

Join DCP researcher Kelly Melillo at our Bimini field site in search of wild Atlantic spotted and bottlenose dolphins. Enjoy 5 afternoon boat trips and learn about photo-ID and conducting researching studies. No SCUBA certification is needed as all dolphin swims are completed with mask, fins and snorkel. Comfort in the water is a plus, but prior experience is not needed. This exciting trip costs \$1,220 (USD, per person) and includes 5 boat trips, snorkel gear rental, 5 nights' accommodation (double occupancy), 3 morning lectures/data activities, transportation to/from airport/hotel in Bimini and hotel taxes. **Learn more or sign up by clicking here.**



DCP's Adopt-a-Dolphin Program

DCP currently has ~20 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, announced quarterly by eblast. Be sure to send us your email address, or subscribe online at the newsletter page!

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

Each adoption costs \$30 and lasts for one year. Become a spotted dolphin parent today & support valuable scientific research!

Yes! I want to adopt a dolphin! Some of our dolphins are listed below. For a complete list & all dolphin biographies, check out www.adoptawilddolphin.com
 Juliette | Niecey | Tilly | Swoosh | Nemo | Lone Star | Trudy | Tina | Lumpy | Lil' Jess | Freckles | Split jaw | Vincent

I would like to adopt a dolphin: \$30 for one year. **Dolphin name:** _____
 Please cut out and mail your order form, with check, to DCP at P.O. Box 711, Old Mystic, CT 06372-0711.
 Credit card payment is available online through our web site at www.dolphincommunicationproject.org

Please **SEND** my adoption package to: If this is a gift, please note gift **GIVER** address:

Name: _____
 Address: _____

 City: _____ State: _____ Zip: _____
 Email: _____

Name: _____
 Address: _____

 City: _____ State: _____ Zip: _____
 Email: _____



Postcards

\$1.00 each/ 3 for \$2



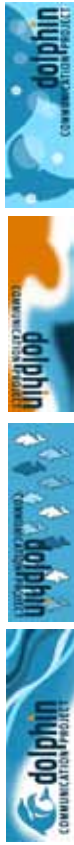
Iruka Gear

To purchase Iruka gear visit www.cafepress/irukagear



Bookmarks

\$0.25 each/ 5 for \$1.00



Membership

- \$15 Student** welcome packet
- \$25 Individual** : welcome packet
- \$35 Outside US** : welcome packet
- \$45 Family** : 3 notecards, 3 postcards, & welcome packet
- \$75 Supporting** : 3 notecards, 3 postcards, copy of Dolphins The Lighter Side & welcome packet
- \$250 Contributing** : 1 DCP tank top, 1 DCP t-shirt, 3 notecards, 3 postcards, copy of Dolphins The Lighter Side & 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 The Lighter Side & welcome packet
- \$1000 Benefactor** : 25% discount for individual sponsors 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 The Lighter Side & welcome packet

Notecards

\$2.50 each/ 3 for \$6



DCP Gear

To purchase DCP gear, visit www.cafepress/dcpgear



Support DCP's research efforts buy purchasing some of the many products that we offer for sale..All products seen here are also available on our website: www.dolphincommunicationproject.org All profits from the sale of these products will directly fund DCP's research and education efforts. DCP is a nonprofit organization.

Online Classroom Connections

As the 2009/2010 school year begins, DCP is pleased to once again offer our Online Classroom Connections program to classrooms around the world. Through this program, teachers can bring dolphins into their curriculum without ever getting wet! Through a series of field reports, online Q & A posts, and internet phone connections your students can learn valuable information on the biology and behavior of dolphins, as well as see science in a way that extends beyond the classroom. The full program includes three internet connections with a DCP researcher and special access to online videos and resources to help you explore the topic of dolphins. Alternatively, we can provide A Dolphin's Word (DVD) and Dolphins Activity Guide - for "offline" use.

Fees:
Full program (3 connections, online activity guide & videos): \$175

Abbreviated program (2 connections, online activity guide & videos): \$125

Don't have the internet in your classroom? You can order A Dolphin's World (DVD and activity guide) for only \$30!

Requirements: An interest in the ocean, dolphins and/or conservation; internet access (high-speed required for Skype and online video viewing)

Recommendations: Connections 1, 2 & 3 should be separated by at least 1 day (ex: Monday, Wednesday, Friday) to allow for DCP web posts and classroom reading and discussions.



DCP's PUZZLE PAGE will return in the last issue of the year. Here, we share with you two abstracts for a conference in October ...

Biennial Conference on the Biology of Marine Mammals 11 - 16 October 2009 in Quebec City, Canada

A comparison of pectoral fin contact behavior for three distinct dolphin populations

Kathleen M. Dudzinski, Justin D. Gregg, Stan A. Kuczaj, Robin D. Paulos

Underwater video recordings of three species of dolphin were analyzed to compare frequency and type of tactile contact involving the pectoral fin. Given that tactile contact serves varied functions in dolphin social life, including bond maintenance, stress reduction, discipline, and signalling, comparisons of different groups and species living in different conditions are necessary to distinguish potentially universal and population specific behavioral patterns. The data were obtained from two wild study populations (12 seasons, 1,514 minutes video) and one captive group (6 seasons, 4,484 minutes). Sub-sampled to avoid pseudo-replication, the number of contact episodes documented was 139 for *Stenella frontalis* in The Bahamas, 450 for *Tursiops aduncus* in Japan, and 1,479 for captive *Tursiops truncatus* in Honduras. Each episode involved the pectoral fin as the identified unit of interest; both initiator and receiver during each exchange were documented. The most striking aspect of the results concerned the similarities among the three groups. Overall, contact rates were similar for all groups, with roughly three quarter of contacts initiated by the rubber (dolphin whose pectoral fin was involved) as opposed to the rubbee (dolphin whose body was involved). Similarly, dolphins in all groups were most likely to assume a horizontal posture for the majority of contacts. In addition, rubbers and rubbees were most likely to assume the same posture during a contact event. Differences between the three groups concerned rubber/rubbee demographics: initiator's age/sex category was similar for dolphins in Honduras and The Bahamas, whereas younger dolphins from the Japan population were far less likely to initiate contact. Overall, these findings indicate that there are more similarities than differences in tactile behaviors for the studied populations, suggesting that pectoral fin contact is a universal component of dolphin social life that takes a common form.

Recent Observations and Management of a West Indian Manatee (*Trichechus manatus*) off Bimini, Bahamas

Kelly Melillo, James Reid, Lester Gittens, Nicole Adimey, Jared Dillet

West Indian manatees (*Trichechus manatus*) are uncommon in the Bahamas, including in Bimini where only three sightings have been reported in the last century. The close proximity of the Bahamas to the United States necessitates cooperation on many issues, including the management of protected or listed marine mammals. An adult male manatee was observed and monitored from 28 November 2008 to 24 January 2009, enabling us to present details on this rare occurrence and the subsequent bi-national management of this errant individual. TBH-02 "Harold" (aka "Kodi") was radio tagged with an Argos-linked GPS tag and monitored for 41 days. Observations and photo documentation revealed the animal to be in good body condition. Despite five distinctive scar patterns, no match to previously photo-cataloged Florida or Bahamian manatees was possible. Frequent daily GPS tag location fixes were associated with local resources including foraging and resting areas within the North Bimini harbor, and periodic trips to seagrass beds and canals of South Bimini. Despite his frequent visits to specific sites, adequate freshwater sources for drinking could not be identified. His tolerance for human presence, multiple propeller markings, close proximity to peninsular Florida, and preliminary genetic analyses strongly suggested an association with the Florida subspecies *Trichechus manatus latirostris*. Based on evidence of a Florida origin, the rare occurrence of manatees in Bimini and an apparent absence of conspecifics and reliable natural fresh water, the Bahamas Department of Marine Resources and US Fish and Wildlife Service arranged capture and transport to Florida. The US Coast Guard, Miami Seaquarium and local volunteers conducted the capture and transport. Assessed to be in good health, after a brief rehabilitation, he was radio tagged and released in Crystal River, Florida. This process marks successful marine mammal stranding cooperation between individuals, private businesses and government agencies in two countries.

