



# "On Effort"

Newsletter  
March 2011

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All members in The Dolphin Project are volunteers and receive no compensation for their services

## FROM THE HELM

Ahoy there Crew!

The weather is warming up and so is The Dolphin Project with its research surveys, training workshops and Education Outreach Programs and Festivals. We're adding some new festivals to our schedule this year: Bahia Blue Boat Show, Tybee Seafood Festival and the Woodbine Crawfish Festival. We need your help to make these events successful for TDP, getting out the information about protecting our dolphins. The list of upcoming events and volunteer schedules are posted on this newsletter and our website.

Speaking of the website, we've streamlined it a bit. Hope you find it easier to navigate. If you have any problems or suggestions with it, let us know. We're still tweaking it.

We've been busy communicating with marine scientists all over the Eastern seaboard regarding two dolphins...one that was sighted on one of our surveys in the Hilton Head area. It's covered in bumps!!! The other dolphin of concern is one that has been repeatedly fed and abused near the south end of Wassaw and Delegal Marina. Read inside about the responses.

Gayla and I will be off to the South East and Mid-Atlantic Marine Mammal Symposium (SEAMAMMS) the first weekend of April at Coastal Carolina University. This symposium offers an opportunity for Marine Science students to showcase their Masters and PhD dissertations. It is held at a different venue every year. This event affords us the opportunity to hear about new dolphin research, meet marine mammal scientists, ask questions, seek answers and get ideas for improving TDP. We'll put a report of our trip in the next newsletter.

Cya soon, Peach

Comments? Ideas? Critiques? We're open to it all:  
[info@thedolphinproject.org](mailto:info@thedolphinproject.org)

# FUN FOLKS NEEDED...

The Dolphin Project needs your help to make our Outreach Education successful. These events require a little bit of work but they're really mostly fun. We set up our display which consists of our flat screen TV to show our auto-run power point, inflatable dolphin, brochures, dolphin skull, fin-match game and children's coloring contest. At some events we're permitted to sell TDP merchandise and/or books to raise funds to support our education efforts. Check out our website for pictures of some of our 2010 events. To volunteer, contact Joe Powers at [events@thedolphinproject.org](mailto:events@thedolphinproject.org)

**APRIL 9, Saturday**                    **BAHIA BLUE BOAT SHOW/ Thunderbolt** 8am-6pm  
Shift-1) 7:00—11:00                    Shift-2) 10:45—3:00                    Shift-3) 2:45 —6:30

**APRIL 10, Saturday**                    **BAHIA BLUE BOAT SHOW / Thunderbolt** 8am—6pm  
Shift-1) 7:30—11:45                    Shift-2) 11:30—11:45                    Shift-3) 3:00—7:00

**APRIL 23, Saturday**                    **SAVANNAH EARTH DAY / Forsyth Park** 11am-4pm  
Shift-1) 9:30—12:45                    Shift-2) 12:30—3:45

**MAY 7, Saturday**                    **TYBEE SEAFOOD FESTIVAL** 11am-7pm  
Shift-1) 10:00— 1:15                    Shift-2) 1:00-5:00                    Shift-3) 4:45-8:00

**MAY 20, Friday**                    **THUNDERBOLT ELEMENTARY MARINE SCIENCE DAY**  
Shift-1) morning TBA                    Shift-2) afternoon TBA

**MAY 30, Saturday**                    **WOODBINE CRAWFISH FESTIVAL** 8:00am-6:30pm  
Shift-1) 7:00-11:00                    Shift-2) 10:45-3:30                    Shift-3) 3:15-7:30



If you know of a festival that would be good for TDP to attend, let us know. Additional festivals may be added to our schedule. We'll send you updates via email. Check our website for changes

Our October schedule so far will involve COAST-FEST in Brunswick, (Skidaway Institute of Oceanography) SkIO SCIENCE DAY and the BLUFFTON ART & SEA-FOOD FESTIVAL. Details will be published at the end of summer.

## Dolphin Disease — HHI...

Our survey boat in Hilton Head Waters photographed a dolphin covered in bumps! Sometimes dolphin injuries or illnesses are not seen by the crew or even the photographer depending on the distance between the dolphin and the boat. There was no indication on the Event sheet about bumps on a dolphin. When reviewing the survey pictures, Donnissa Busch alerted me to this dolphin. I contacted several of the marine scientists that have assisted The Dolphin Project in the past—Dr. Tara Cox / Savannah State University, Charles Potter / Smithsonian Institute, Dr. Rob Young / Coastal Carolina University. These folks in turn contacted other specialists: Leslie Burdett/ NOAA-Hollings Marine Lab, Wayne McFee /NOAA National Ocean Service, Brian Balmer/UNC-Wilmington, Dr. Randall Wells/ Mote Marine Labs, Dr. David Rostein, DVM/ Department of Pathobiology-University of Tennessee, Dr. Tim Walsh/Smithsonian Institute-DVM supervisory Pathologist. *Impressive—eh?!*

Unfortunately there was no firm conclusion among these specialists as to what the disease is without a biopsy. Best observation is that it is a Pox Virus and probably not fatal unless there is something else wrong with the dolphin. Being a virus, it could be contagious. Adam Fox, (CCU grad student who shared his mudding video with us) spent 2 years researching the mudding habits of dolphins in the same area as our 'bumpy' dolphin. He photographed two dolphins which had a couple bumps on their dorsal fins, but saw nothing as serious as our 'bumpy' dolphin. Notice to all who are doing Photo-ID surveys in the HHI-Bluffton area—take special notice of any dolphins with bumps and let Peach or Donnissa know about them immediately after the survey so we can alert the scientists ASAP. I recommend using binoculars, especially in this area, when dolphins are sighted in case there are special circumstances that should be noted on the Event sheet. Using binoculars might be a good way in general for the Assistant Team Leaders to help contribute to the survey.





## Dolphin in Distress — Skidaway/Ossabaw Sound...



When on our dolphin survey in February, we covered Ossabaw Sound. At the south end of Wassaw Island is a dolphin we've nicknamed 'Joey'. He's been fed for many years from a local charter tour boat. Having been in these waters for 8 years now with The Dolphin Project and our SaltyDawg Adventures Eco-tours, Hub and I have seen 'Joey' on a regular basis. We have also witnessed dolphin abuse by this charter captain and reported him to NOAA-NMFS. Scientists at SkIO who regularly take tours of students to Wassaw Island have seen the abuse as well. No doubt other boats have fed 'Joey' too since he now comes begging to any boat in the area.

In February 'Joey' came to our survey boat. It broke my heart to see him. He looks very sickly. When he opened his mouth, the foul stench nearly knocked Assistant Team Leader Krystal Goodwin off her feet. It seemed to me that the health of this poor dolphin has seriously declined over the past year. He did not seem as animated as in the past and his teeth were stumpy and looked rotten.

Once again I alerted the 'troups' (same folks I contacted about the bumpy dolphin). Suggestions are that Joey may have kidney disease (a sign of raunchy breath), probably gum disease as well. There were lesions on his face and in his mouth. I fear there may be nothing at this point that can help poor 'Joey'.

My fear is that there are now younger dolphins begging with 'Joey'. The dolphin abuse needs to stop. The Dolphin Project arranged for the installation of 'Do Not Feed Dolphin' signs at Delegal Marina last year. People must not be reading the signs even though they are on the landing right above the violating boat. The best thing we TDP members can do - is to educate the public against supporting businesses who abuse dolphins. This is where our Education Outreach comes in. Hosting booths at community events gets the word out. We need your help. The abuse must stop!

~Peach

## Dead dolphin calves in the Gulf...

Many of you may have heard in the news about the high mortality rate of dolphin calves in the Gulf this year. The exact cause(s) are not confirmed but one hypothesis could be a morbillivirus!!! That's what contributed to the high dolphin mortality event in 1988-89 which killed an estimated half of the coastal dolphin population. Another suggestion is a cold water plume.

Check out these links to read more about it:

[http://blog.al.com/live/2011/03/dead\\_dolphins\\_measles\\_related.html](http://blog.al.com/live/2011/03/dead_dolphins_measles_related.html)

[http://blog.al.com/live/2011/03/cold\\_water\\_may\\_have\\_delivered.html](http://blog.al.com/live/2011/03/cold_water_may_have_delivered.html)

<http://www.sunherald.com/2011/02/22/2885719/4-dead-dolphin-calves-found-on.html>

## New venue for Coastal training...

We've been holding our coastal training workshops at AASU for 21 years at no charge and have been very grateful for the gift. However, this year they outsourced building operations and need to charge us for the rooms. After an exhausting search for a place to hold our training workshops here on the coast, we hit the jackpot with Memorial Health University Center. They have a lovely education building at the back of their campus. The classrooms and auditoriums offered to us are FREE. I attended several Coast Guard Auxiliary courses there and the facilities are very nice. The location is convenient for Savannah and SC residents due to the connecting Interstate and parkways. Most folks in the area know where Memorial Hospital is located. I was also able to book dates for the entire year which I wasn't able to do at AASU. The facility coordinator, Krystal Rogers is a delight to work with and very accommodating. The link to the hospital venue is on our website on the [training page](#) under the [research survey tab](#).

We are constantly revising and updating our training program and Education Outreach power-points with new information. We were able to use clips from the SCAD documentary 'Beneath The Surface' which was about our area dolphins. We expect to glean more updates from SEAMMAMS in April. If you haven't been to a training workshop in the past few years, we urge you to attend to reacquaint yourself with the new survey methodology and the latest in dolphin research.

## TDP Promo...

On our February survey we added a reporter for SOUTH magazine to our crew. We expect to have an article featuring TDP in their next issue. If you know of a publication that might welcome an article about TDP and local dolphins, please let us know. Again—it's all about getting the word out about protecting our dolphins. We could use the help.

# MAY DINNER-MEETING...

We're having a change of date and venue for our quarterly dinner-meeting. Our Dinner-meeting will be held on **MAY 21, 2011** in a private banquet room at **JOHNNY HARRIS RESTAURANT** on Victory Drive in Savannah.

A fixed price buffet will be served and reservation are required to insure a minimum attendance requirement.

## MENU

Tossed Salad, Cole Slaw, Carrot Salad  
Green Beans, Mac & Cheese, Red Rice  
Baked Chicken, Crab Au Gratin, Roast Pork Loin  
Key Lime Tarts, Peach Cobbler  
Coffee & Tea included  
Cash Bar

**\$26.00 per person includes tip**

The seafood is local. We will have the banquet room all to ourselves, so external noise will not impose upon our conversations, guests and speaker. Guests are always invited. Directions to the restaurant will be posted on our website.

Please make your reservation by making your check to **The Dolphin Project** and mail it to

**TDP Dinner c/o Dolores Engle, 621 East 51st Street, Savannah, GA 31405**

**RSVP deadline: May 14, 2011**

Don't wait until the last minute to RSVP. Space is limited.

Our speaker for the evening will be Dr. Eric Montie of the University of South Carolina-Beaufort, who will share with us his research on dolphin acoustics and how toxic chemical affect dolphin brains. He will start his acoustic research project in the Hilton Head area this spring. The Dolphin Project is sharing our data on dolphins from that area with Dr. Montie.



Eric Montie received a B.S. in Zoology from the University of Rhode Island in 1993. After graduation, he continued post-baccalaureate studies in Biochemistry at Harvard University and performed an internship at the Environmental Protection Agency, studying how toxic metals affect two species of shrimp. During this time period, he volunteered in the Research and Veterinary Science Department at Mystic Marine Life Aquarium with Dr. David St. Aubin, where he became interested in the effects of environmental pollutants on marine mammals. In 1999, he received a M.S. in Environmental Toxicology from Clemson University under the supervision of Dr. Mike Hooper and Dr. Ed Pivorun; his thesis research focused on the effects of dieldrin on the biochemistry and control of cold adaptation in the deer mouse. He is currently a postdoctoral fellow at the University of South Florida and an Assistant Professor of Marine Science at USC-

Beaufort

### **Current work**

The intersection of marine biology, neurobiology, bioacoustics, toxicology, and conservation biology

Particularly interested in how anthropogenic chemicals, harmful algal blooms, and noise pollution affect the sensory and neurobiology of marine wildlife