

# On Effort

September 1, 2009  
P.O. Box 60753  
Savannah, GA 31420

## TDP BOARD of DIRECTORS

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Elections

**MANDY Coward**

Promotions

## From The Helm...

Ahoy there Crew!

What a busy year we've had and it's not over yet! ...a license plate to protect our dolphins! ...our 20<sup>th</sup> anniversary! ... great publicity! ...lots of new members! ...Education Outreach is in demand! ...Adopt A Dolphin breaks records! ...new sponsors and alliances! Read all about it!!!

Be sure to mark your calendars for our October 17<sup>th</sup> dinner social. Brian Balmer will give us an update on his research in Brunswick and Sapelo. TDP member Penn Clarke writes here of his experiences assisting Brian this summer.

Looking forward to seeing you in October!

Peach

## Elections...

Members are encouraged to nominate members for the upcoming 2010-2012 term. There are five positions available so in accordance with the Bylaws there can be up to 10 nominees. Nominations are due no later than September 10, 2009. The election process will begin as soon as the nominations are in. Ballots will be sent via email in late September and the new Board of Directors will be announced on October 17<sup>th</sup> at the Quarterly dinner.

Submit nominations to Karla Johnson at [elections@tragus.org](mailto:elections@tragus.org)  
5230 Orchard Court, Cumming GA 30040, 770-888-8342

## PROTECT WILD DOLPHINS...

The PROTECT WILD DOLPHIN license plates are available for South Carolina and Georgia. Your tag office may have the forms for this plate. If not, you can go to [www.protectdolphin.org](http://www.protectdolphin.org) and register for the specialty plate. You will receive a registration in the mail from Earth Echo and Philippe Cousteau– the sponsor of five SouthEast coastal plates for protecting inshore/estuarine dolphins.

The SC plate is a revenue plate – meaning the funds will go towards dolphin research and protection within South Carolina. The GA plate is not yet revenue, having been “shot down” by the Camo Coalition of the GA wildlife fund, which promotes hunting preserves and the Georgia Aquarium which is building a concrete cage for captive dolphins. The Dolphin Project will support Philippe Cousteau in his efforts before the next legislative session in Georgia to obtain revenue status for the Georgia plate.



*Did you know?.....*

That your volunteer time is valued at \$20.25 per hour!

## NFWS Permit...

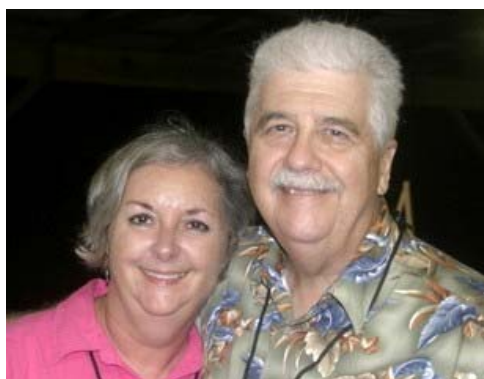
Our NFWS – NOAA permit to conduct surveys within the Marine Mammal Protection Act (MMPA) guidelines has again renewed. Our permit is valid for five years. Thanks to Fran LaPolla for his patience and perseverance in obtaining our renewal. This permit authorizes experienced Team Leaders to conduct their surveys within the 50 yard MMPA limit. We are pleased to add Steven McCulloch to our list of Photo-ID Team Leaders. Steve is the director of Harbor Branch Oceanographic Institute in Florida and a staunch supporter of The Dolphin Project.

## 20<sup>th</sup> Anniversary...

If you missed the 20<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of TDP on July 18<sup>th</sup> – you missed a great party! The venue was perfect – JF Gregory Park in Richmond Hill....thanks to the park crew for setting up the picnic tables. The food was delicious – Papa's BBQ and low country boil. The music was delightful – Savannah Steve. Thanks to Joe Powers for arranging both. Merchandise in our 'Bottlenose Boutique' was tirelessly offered by Cheryl Tilton and Ted Henning giving TDP a nice profit. Roy 'Captain Hub' Hubbard diligently manned the bar. The auction was a profitable success with over 50 items, featuring original art, gifts, trips and gift certificates. Many thanks to all the donors and sponsors for the auction and the anniversary event. Beau Cutts, TDP founder introduced Susan Shipman, Director of GA-DNR-Coastal Resources who gave a presentation to the crowd. The evening was topped off with a gorgeous sunset! Deepest gratitude to all who helped with the setup, check-in, auction check-out and cleanup. We're already looking forward to TDP's 25<sup>th</sup> Anniversary!!!!



(above) The Murphy's (below) Silent Auction



(above) The Warlicks  
(left) The Workman's & friend  
(far left) Savannah Steve



## Adopt A Dolphin...

Charlotte Keenoy reports that the Adopt-A-dolphin Program has broken records for sales and the year's not over yet. The packages have been updated. Interestingly, we've sent dolphin adoption packages to the west coast, New England and even the UK! Dolphin adoptions make great gifts – It's not too early to think Christmas!

## Brunswick –Sapelo dolphin study...

*The following is an account of recent activities on the Brunswick-Sapelo dolphin study by long-time member, Penn Clarke:*

A dream of a lifetime has come true. I got to capture, radio tag and release wild bottle nosed dolphins. Through The Dolphin Project I got to meet and work with Brian Balmer, who is getting his PhD studying dolphins in the Brunswick and Sapelo Island areas of Georgia.

In one of my early experiences volunteering with Brian Balmer, Kate Sparks, Suzanne Lane and I saw the birth of a wild calf with the mother pushing it on her rostrum to breathe with its dorsal fin still down. This experience on the Folly River west of Sapelo Island on March 31, 2009, made me vow to help these dolphins anyway I can.

NOAA has found that the Brunswick Dolphins have high levels of PCBs like the Orcas (killer whales) in the northwest Cook's Strait, Canada. Dolphins around Sapelo Island have as many PCBs as the ones in Indian River, Florida. Because of this and other reasons NOAA decided that a health assessment was needed.

August 2009 about 50 people with six boats were assembled to serve one or two weeks on the project. Participants represented NOAA, Mote Lab, the CDC, Savanna State University, University of Georgia, University of Florida, North Carolina State University, University of Connecticut, Navy & Army military, DNR (GA & SC), Georgia Aquarium and lucky me. During week 1, I was on Brian Balmer's chase boat with a skipper, vet & four other people.

When one of the boats finds a dolphin to capture Eric Zolman's boat comes to assess the situation before giving the okay to Larry Fulford on his catch boat. Larry then quickly circles the dolphin with his 400 foot long net with floats on the surface and a lead line 18 feet below.

The four chase boats are 21 foot inflatables with a hard bottom and twin 90 hp engines and go to the four points of the compass on the net. When the dolphin hits the net trying to get out it becomes entangled. The closest boat comes alongside to hold and calm the dolphin making sure it can breathe. If the water is shallow enough some get in the water or it is all done from the boat.

A large floating Navy mat is towed over and the dolphin with as many as eight people on the mat is towed over to Megamouth, a specially built boat that looks like a landing craft where the front lowers into the water. Non-pregnant dolphins are put in a stretcher and hand lifted into the craft to be weighed. All dolphins' breathing is observed, and a monitoring system is attached with suction cups to measure heart rate. This is to be sure they are not getting stressed out during the procedures which last from 45- 90 minutes.

Of the 14 dolphins captured and released my week, I helped hold two through all the procedures. After weighing, the dolphin is lowered onto a mat on the boat. The lead of the five vets, Forrest Townsend put a tube through the mouth to the dolphin's stomach to get a sample of the food it ate and removed one tooth to see how old it is. I helped another vet get samples of its urine & fecal matter before he took a sample of blubber.

All procedures are performed with sterile gloves; sterilizing and deadening the area before a procedure is performed. If the dolphin is female they ultra sound (3 on board at \$30,000 each) to see if she is pregnant. If she is pregnant procedures are limited to blood work and a few samples, all of which are taken without bringing her aboard.

Randy Wells, head of the Sarasota Bay dolphin study that is ongoing for 39 years, is freeze-drying numbers and letters on the captured dolphin's dorsal fin and attaching a radio transmitter. Two sound people are recording all the sounds the animal makes. Samples are taken from its blowhole before it is lowered by stretcher into the water and then hand carried free of the stretcher where it is carefully monitored as it is released.

## Brunswick –Sapelo dolphin study...continued...

You really appreciate what these scientists go through to get this information. Up early in the morning, leave in the vans at the hotel in Brunswick at 6:15 AM to drive 45 minutes to Darien, load the gear from the trailer and house onto the boats and on the water by 7:30 AM. One chase boat leaves early by 4:30 PM to get the blood and other samples back to the house and onto FedEx by 6 PM each night. The blood work is done by one lab but there are 24 other labs that will be involved in analyzing the samples.

Holding dolphins in mud with oyster shells, Rod Hobbs, NOAA for Beluga whales in Seattle and Alaska, received multiple cuts up to his thigh. Brian Balmer's foot was cut right through his booty. I gave him my hard sole booties and wear his cut ones for the rest of the week. Brian Balmer has a badly bruised thumb from a large male dolphin he was trying to calm in the net, and Darren Wray, our captain, deeply cut his index finger trying to cut the net away from our propellers. I was fortunate with only a few small scrapes and bruises and a very tired body for the week. These were all the major injures for the whole 2 weeks.

It was hot with 90+ degrees but you could be in the water for 3 to 4 hours of the day. Part of our job was to pull in the net or watch and be ready for other dolphins that might get entangled in the net until it was pulled in. Being in the marshes you always kept an eye out for alligators or poisonous snakes. Our chase boat did not have a ladder and you could not use the engines to climb back into the boat. It was comical to watch the different ways people got back in with me being the worst.

28 dolphins were caught and radio tagged during the two week project and the scientists and vets have gone. It's week three, and I've returned to the Brunswick area to assist Brian Balmer. For four days Brian and I cast off at 7 AM in a center console boat with 150 hp engine to listen for dolphins. We both wear earphones each listening for our assigned half of the 28 dolphins. We can hear the sound of the radio transmitter only when the dolphins surface to breathe.

A sound leads to a visual search and Brian Balmer takes photographs of that dolphin and any others around it. They have set up 12 radio receiving areas in the marshes. When a dolphin swims by a receiver it sends a text message to Brian's cell phone that the dolphin just swam by. Three male dolphins also have a satellite tag which sends their position to a satellite which Brian Balmer can look at on his computer.

Please come hear and ask questions when Brian Balmer speaks to TDP at our dinner October 17, 2009.

Written by Penn Clarke, a member of The Dolphin Project for 20 years.

## OCTOBER Dinner & Speaker...

Be sure and join us at the quarterly dinner on October 17<sup>th</sup> at 6:30pm for camaraderie and good food at the Shellhouse Restaurant (I-95, Exit 94-Rt.204/Abercorn Extension). Our speaker for the evening will be Brian Balmer who will update us on his dolphin research in Brunswick & Sapelo. Brian is with UNCW and Mote Marine Labs and is working on his PhD thesis. The Bottlenose Boutique will be open with lots of wonderful new dolphin items – THINK CHRISTMAS GIFTS!

*Kate Sparks, Brian Balmer, Suzanne Lane >>*



## SURVEYS...

Regrettably the August survey was cancelled due to bad weather. September's survey teams are already confirmed. Be sure to get your registrations in for the October 17<sup>th</sup> and November 21<sup>st</sup> surveys. Herb Joe has done a fabulous job organizing the surveys teams. While we have many Team Leaders in training, we need experienced Team Leaders to sign up for our surveys. Special thanks to all our skippers who donate the use of their boats for our research.

## Education Outreach...

TDP's Education Outreach program is going strong. Presentations this year have been offered to Tybee Volunteer Day, Richmond Hill Elementary School, Savannah Earth Day, Blue Ocean Film Festival Street Fair, May Howard Elementary School, and other schools and events. Upcoming programs will be at Richmond Hill High School, Blackbeard Scuba Club, Skidaway Science Day, Coastfest, Coastal Conservation Association and the Ogeechee Sailing Club.

If you know of an organization in need of a speaker, give Peach a call or an email: 912-727-3177, [GAdolphin@comcast.net](mailto:GAdolphin@comcast.net) to book a date. The dolphin power point presentation is geared towards varied age groups: preschool, elementary, middle school and adult. The dolphin program lasts about 40 minutes but can be tailored to the venue. Take-home literature is offered about our dolphins.

Our new illustrated children's activity book has been sponsored by Edna Watson and Document Support, Inc. The book will become available this fall for distribution at Coastfest and elementary schools. The activity book will also be included in the Adopt A Dolphin packages.

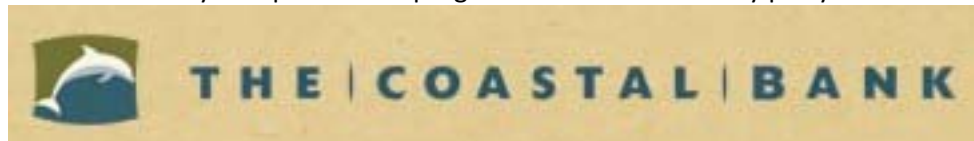


*Edna Watson  
of Document  
Support at  
TDP's 20<sup>th</sup>  
Anniversary*



## Sponsorships...

We're thrilled to be working with our new sponsors: Coastal Bank and IBM. Coastal Bank (which has a dolphin on its logo!) has offered to help TDP with fundraising and promotions. They will also be making it easier for the Atlanta group to make deposits easier. Edna Watson has offered to print our activity books and membership brochures for us. They also printed the programs for our anniversary party.



## Website...

The website is being updated to offer more TDP information, allow membership and survey payments via PayPal, some TDP merchandise and access to sponsor and related links. We hope to have it up and running before the end of the year. Stay tuned!

## Data Entry...

TDP is excited to have Dr. Lori Muskat (TDP VP) and Dr. Tara Cox (TDP Science Advisor) and their students working on entering and updating our data entry. Dr. Lori Muskat, Argosy University in Atlanta, and her students will record the abundance data. Jim Buchanan (VIP Staff) will process the film and then give it to Dr. Tara Cox and her students at Savannah State University for Photo-ID data entry. TDP data will also be used for current and future marine mammal research projects.

## Bottlenose Boutique...

Cheryl has been working hard on updating the merchandise for the Bottlenose Boutique... more books, costume and sterling jewelry, t-shirts, caps, plush dolphin toys, dolphin print carry-alls, purses, canvas bags and other gifts. Check out our new stock at the October dinner. TDP can accept credit cards for your convenience through PayPal Virtual Terminal

## The COVE...

**A note from Peach.....**If you have the opportunity to see the movie, 'The Cove', I recommend it – to see and hear the facts about the slaughter of dolphins in Japan. The movie is about how an undercover team filmed the slaughter event in Taiji Japan. Rick O' Barry (the original trainer of Flipper) and Director Louie Psihoyos appear in the film and serve as narrators.

Undoubtedly O'Barry, though well-intentioned, is somewhat radical in his personal efforts to release all captive dolphins in the world – breaking laws, including the MMPA. In this film, however, there is no effort to release dolphins.

This film is about bringing awareness to the Japanese people and the world about this horrific event that lasts seven months out of every year with tens of thousands of dolphins being slaughter or captured for sale to dolphin theme parks around the world. While the graphic visuals are disturbing, they last about 90 seconds. I've seen much worse on other undercover videos. I don't recommend this movie for children under the age of 12 – partly for the brief graphic nature of the film, more for the complicated politics and greed involved in the dolphin trade.

The movie has received many awards including the Sundance Film Festival award. It recently opened in many major American cities to rave reviews. Being a documentary-style film, it is usually shown in small theaters with limited runs.

The COVE premiered in Atlanta with TDP members in attendance including Lori Muscat, Peach, Starr & Jimmy Camp, Joni Chastain, Deanna & Wayne, Sharron Reeves, Don Nelson, Linda Porros and others. Peach and Michael Towner of EarthEcho hosted a Q&A after the movie

TDP Board members, Cheryl Tilton, Jackie Huffman and Peach Hubbard recently met with Philippe Cousteau and Michael Towner in Charleston to promote the movie and the Protect Wild Dolphin license plate.

After the national run of the movie, EarthEcho and TDP will work together to bring The COVE to Savannah as a fundraiser for The Dolphin Project. [www.thecovemovie.com](http://www.thecovemovie.com)



*(top) Peach & Michael Towner Q&A in Atlanta*

*(center) Deanna, Peach & Lori at reception*

*(left) Jackie, Cheryl, Philippe & Peach in Charleston*