

"ON EFFORT"

Newsletter Fall 2023

From the Helm

Ahoy Crew!

Gracious, it's been a busy fall season - as you will see within this newsletter.

August 28th, a TDP program was presented to the Oceanography students at Bradwell Institute. Planning and work began in August for TDP's 34th Anniversary fundraiser scheduled for September 30th. In September, a 2-hour program was presented to the Osher Life-Long Institute (OLLI) at the University of South Carolina-Bluffton. It was a packed house of over 100 seniors and very well received.

Mark & Jennifer Harrington and I attended the 3-day 'State of The Georgia Coast Symposium' on Tybee hosted by UGA Sea Grant. Jennifer gave a great talk about the estuarine dolphins and TDP. We networked and made some excellent connections.

On September 30th, our hard work paid off with a successful fundraiser at Debellation Brewing Company in Richmond Hill. October events began with the Skidaway Marine Science Day with Ruth & Peach and ended with a great crew helping host our tent at the Great Ogeechee Seafood Festival for 3 days. Added to all those events were Zoom workshops and Research surveys every month.

Behind the scenes, our Data Committee has been, and continues to be, hard at work to process our photos and data to upload into Duke University's databases. Ever grateful to Jennifer Harrington, Joni Chastain, Nicole Neiningner and Lisa Martineau.

Shout out to Scott Craig who's been working hard, in his spare time, to build a new awesome website for TDP.

The Dolphin Project volunteers are an awesome group of dedicated people who care about the dolphins and our shared environment. We come from all walks of life, from all over the USA and varied backgrounds...working together, to make a difference for the future of our coast. We're looking forward to great things in 2024 with our very special members.

Wishing you and yours Blessed Christmas and Hanukkah Seasons and a Happy, Healthy New Year!

Gratefully,

Peach

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The Dolphin Project is an all-volunteer, non-profit research, conservation and education organization, founded in 1989, dedicated to the protection of wild estuarine Bottlenose dolphins and our shared environment. Tax ID# 58-1914176



Some of our Fun Survey Crews...



Christina, Lisa & Skipper Ed



Skipper Carl, Nicole, John



Skipper Tom, Sandy, Ruth, Tracey



John, Nicole, Skipper Ed >>>

<<< John, Lisa, Kasey, Carol, &
Skipper Jim



Thanks to all our survey crews.

TDP couldn't complete its mission without you!!!

2024 Survey & Training dates:

*** December 2023**

Dec 9 Zoom Training Workshop This is the last Zoom Workshop for 2023. Tell your friends!

2024 Zoom Workshops:

January 20, February 10, March 9, April 13, May 4, June 22, July 20, August 10,
Additional dates TBA

2024 Surveys

January 27, February 24, March 23, April 27, May 18, June 8, July 13, August 10
Additional dates TBA

Be sure to sign up as soon as you know you are available for surveys. First come-first serve

Leaping Dolphins off Tybee Island

Leaping dolphins delight beachgoers on Tybee. Watch video via this link:
<https://www.wjcl.com/article/leaping-dolphins-on-camera/45001141>

TDP Fundraiser at Debellation Brewing Co.

The Dolphin Project's 34th Anniversary Celebration was an amazing success thanks to the extraordinary hard work of Lisa Martineau, Ed Johnson and Peach Hubbard. Special thanks go to Kasey Russell, Nicole Neiningner, Scott Craig, Doug Martineau, Mark & Jennifer Harrington, Mary Cirincione and Boyd & Jennifer Stanley. The accounts from the auction and sponsors are still being tallied but the total is around \$4000.00. Check out our sponsor's names and logos in this newsletter and please support them.



TDP is most grateful to Dave and Theresa of Debellation Brewing Company for hosting our event on September 30th. Dave even produced a special 'Bottlenose Brew' with \$1.00 for each glass sold donated to TDP.

Be sure and check out this fun brewery: www.DebellationBrewing.com
822 Longwood Drive, Richmond Hill, GA 31324 [I-95 & Rt 144]

2023 Education Outreach

We **LOVE** talking to kids (of ALL ages) about the coastal environment and our Bottlenose dolphins. TDP hosts booths at festivals and environmental events and we offer programs for schools, STEM & STEAM nights and community groups and clubs. We spread the message about protecting the dolphins and our shared environment.

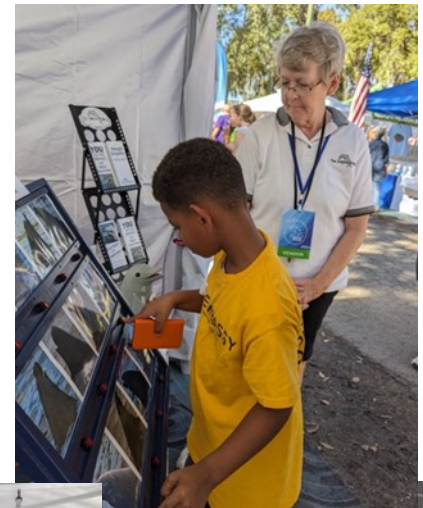


<<< The Dolphin Project was represented once again at the [Skidaway Marine Science Day](#) on October 14th at the Skidaway Institute of Oceanography campus. Ruth Goldstein and Peach Hubbard hosted our booth on the grounds of the UGA Marine Center Aquarium. Gusty winds prevented our full display but we prevailed with two banners and our fin match battery game. We enjoyed sharing dolphin facts with visitors of all ages.

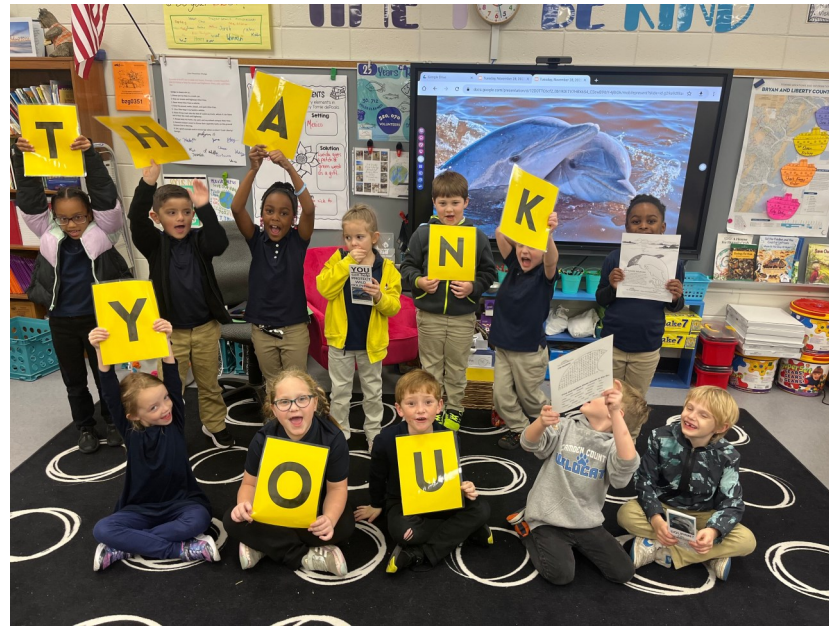
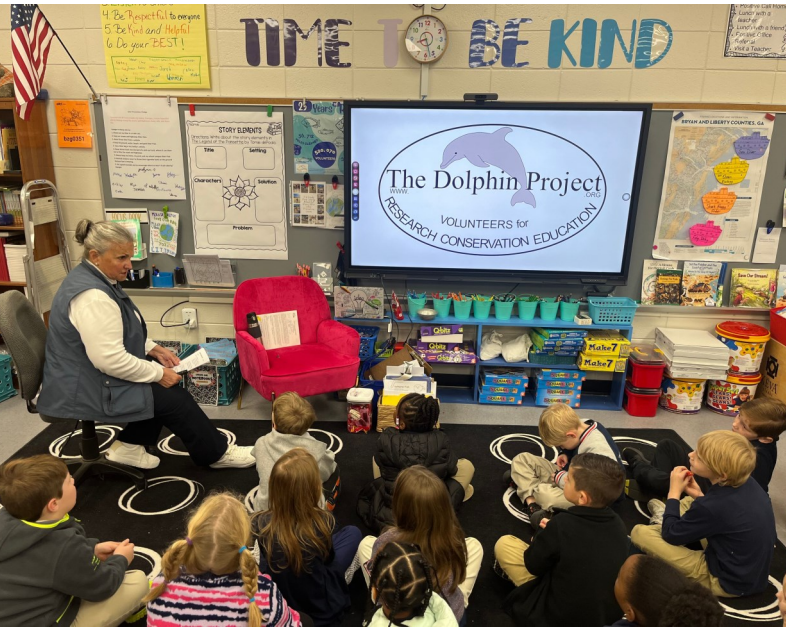


HUGE THANKS to all those who volunteered to help host our tent at the [Great Ogeechee Seafood Festival](#) from October 20-22 in Richmond Hill GA

Jim DeFelice helped setup and take down the tent and display. Debra James, a newcomer to Georgia, came to help Friday night and to learn more about TDP. Saturday, Jim and Carol DeFelice helped host our booth. After crewing on the Johnson research survey, new member Christina Curtis joined Peach at our tent for Saturday night. *Now there's a trooper!!!* On Sunday, Tom Workman joined Peach; Joni Chastain came to help all the way from Atlanta! Jim, Tom, Joni and Peach worked together to pack it all up after the festival. It was a successful event - spreading the word about protecting the estuarine dolphins, making connections with teachers, several who have already booked TDP for classroom lectures and STEM nights, and meeting potential members, some of whom have signed up for the Zoom Workshop.



2023 Education Outreach, cont....



I was offered **2 hours!** to speak to Mrs. Jessica Cook's 1st grade class at **Liberty Elementary School** in Midway Georgia in November. It made me a bit concerned that those young ones could stay focused on our program that long. The script as written didn't quite work—even though it was geared to that age group. So I just talked a bit about each slide, kept it moving and it went really well. The students were educated and entertained. The teachers told me that they "learned a lot" from the program. **SUCCESS!**

2024 Education Outreach Programs

We're receiving Education Outreach bookings for schools and community groups for 2024. If you know of a school or community group that would be interested in a program, please let us know soon. If you'd like to help with any of our events, we'd love to have you join us! FYI: We can't accommodate more than 2 STEM events on one night due to supplies.

JEA luncheon—February 15

Sun City Kayak Club—winter TBA

Liberty Elementary School STEM night, Midway GA—March 14

Garrison Elementary School STEM night, Savannah GA—March 21

Joseph Martin Elementary School STEM night, Hinesville GA—March 21

Earth Day—April 22

Classroom Programs in the fall

Additional events TBA

Microplastics found in issues of whales & dolphins

Microscopic plastic particles have been found in the fats and lungs of two-thirds of the marine mammals in a graduate student's study of ocean microplastics. The presence of polymer particles and fibers in these animals suggests that microplastics can travel out of the digestive tract and lodge in the tissues.

Read more here: <https://www.sciencedaily.com/releases/2023/08/230810180115.htm>

Science Conferences



The Dolphin Project Routinely attends and participates in science conferences along the Eastern US seaboard.

From September 21-23, the '[State of the Georgia Coast Seminar](#)' was held on Tybee Island, hosted by [UGA Sea Grant](#). It was attended by scientists, government agencies, politicians, educators and environmentalists concerned about the Georgia coast and marine environment, including Board members Peach Hubbard and Mark & Jennifer Harrington. TDP Vice President, Jennifer Isaak-Harrington, gave an informative mini-lecture about the estuarine dolphins and TDP research. Not only was it greatly received but it afforded TDP some valuable network connections in the community. Additionally, Ruth Goldstein joined Peach in hosting a TDP display at the Tybee Aquarium on that Saturday morning .

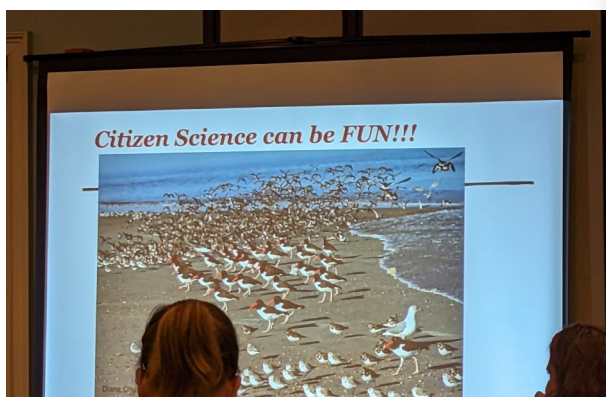
In November, the [Georgia Association of Marine Educators](#) hosted their '[GAME' Annual Conference](#)' on Jekyll Island. It's an event for teachers across Georgia to learn about some of the latest marine research and get teaching tools from teachers and scientist to help their students. Attendees were offered tours of The Jekyll Sea Turtle Center and nature walks to the marsh and forest after the meetings. It was another networking opportunity for TDP to connect to students and our environmental partners.



Adam MacKinnon/GaDNR Education Coordinator



Diana Churchill/coastal bird expert & Yank Moore/JIA Director of Conservation



TDP researchers are citizen scientists — and we're having fun!!!

On December 1st, The [College of Coastal Georgia](#) in Brunswick hosted their [2023 Coastal Science Symposium](#). Students displayed their research posters and we had a chance to talk to most of them about their studies. TDP had a display hosted by Debra James, Jennifer Isaak-Harrington and Peach Hubbard, giving us a chance to talk to some of the students about our research. We were also able to make connections with some of our environmental partners like DNR and 100 Miles. The speaker of the symposium gave a talk about the White Oak Conservation Center - located on 1700 acres on the Florida northern border. For info about this amazing organization: www.whiteoakwildlife.org



Debra James and Jennifer Isaak-Harrington >>

Local Bottlenose NEWS

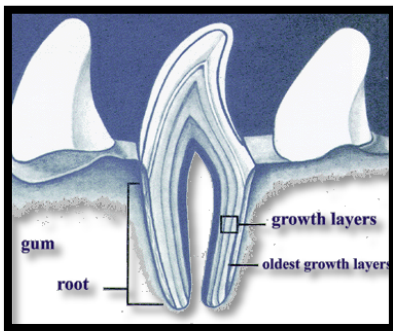
East Coast Bottlenose Dolphins Re-classified as Different Species!!!



Scientists have designated that the Bottlenose dolphin found near the U.S. East Coast is a different species, distinct from the offshore Common Bottlenose dolphins [*Tursiops truncatus*]. Coastal and estuarine bottlenose dolphins have been reclassified after a ten-year study as **Tamanend Bottlenose dolphins** [*Tursiops erebennus*]. TDP researchers always felt the dolphins here were 'special' - and now they truly ARE!!! Read more about it: <https://www.fisheries.noaa.gov/feature-story/bottlenose-dolphins-along-east-coast-proposed-be-different-species>
You can also read a local SC news story here. https://www.postandcourier.com/moultrie-news/community-news/Immn-announces-new-dolphin-species/article_29f16588-4044-11ee-abbc-d7a079125fbd.html

Wikipedia also has an article on Tamanends: https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Tamanend%27s_bottlenose_dolphin

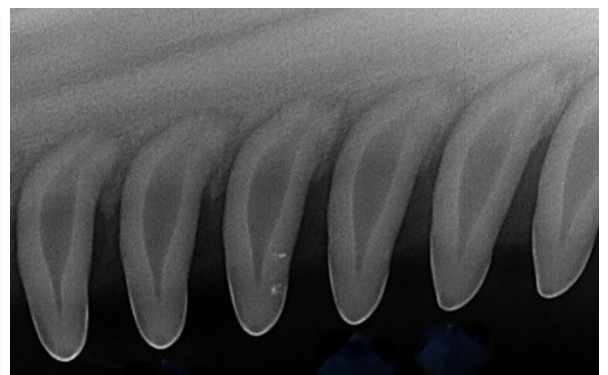
How do you know the age of a dolphin?



Until recently, Scientists would pull out a tooth of a dolphin to determine its age. If the dolphin was alive, this was very invasive. The age could not be determined immediately. The tooth would go back to a lab, cut in half and the rings within it were counted—like cutting a tree down and counting the rings in the stump. The tooth did not grow back.

Scientists have now improved on this method by using periapical radiology to measure the ratio of the pulp area to the tooth area (pulp:tooth area ratios). This method was successfully applied to European skeletal remains and has since been validated as an accurate method for aging in diverse human populations, with both skeletal remains and living individuals. This straightforward and rapid analysis is relatively objective: by using digital images of the

tooth and pulp cavity to determine a ratio of areas, the technique is not sensitive to variations in the angle of image capture. The analysis does not require highly specialized software or specially trained personnel beyond basic dental X-ray experience. <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC7678971/>



Additionally, a new study published by the National Marine Mammal Foundation (NMMF) is allowing scientists to determine the chronological age of a dolphin merely by taking a simple blood or small skin sample.

<https://www.nmmf.org/scientists-now-able-to-determine-a-dolphins-real-age-using-novel-techniques/>

THANK YOU ED!



THANK YOU ED for all your dedicated help to TDP Board of Directors! Ed Johnson has been invaluable as the Director of Membership—keeping our database updated. Ed is resigning the Board due to family obligations but will continue as one of our research skippers in the Medway River area. We'll miss you on the board but look forward to seeing you on the water!!!

IN THE NEWS...

Disclaimer: The news articles in this newsletter do not represent the views or opinions of The Dolphin Project organization or any individual member. All content provided within is for informational purposes only.

Meet the “Wholphin”: Unlikely Hybrid of Mingling of Cetaceans

The "wholphin" is the nickname for a hybrid born as a result of some unlikely canoodling between different species of cetacean, most often a bottlenose dolphin and a false killer whale. However, this isn't the only known example of interspecies mingling that's been documented among this infraorder of animals. From the narluga to dolphin hybrids, a handful of examples of cetacean hybridization have been documented in recent decades. Read more: <https://www.iflscience.com/meet-the-wholphin-the-unlikely-hybrid-of-intermingling-cetaceans-70843>

baby wholphin at the Sea Life Park in Hawaii, born from the "surprise coupling" of a false killer whale and a dolphin. Image credit: Mark Terrante



Meet the Pink, Piranha-Eating Amazon River Dolphin

Hold onto your swim caps, we're about to dive into the world of the **Amazon river dolphin, aka the pink river dolphin** (*Inia geoffrensis*) - the most fabulous and flamboyant member of the dolphin family. Found only in the murky waters of South America's Amazon River basin, these barbie-pink creatures are a fantastic sight, but as with much that is out of the ordinary, they're also shrouded in mystery and folklore. Read more:

<https://www.sciencefocus.com/nature/amazon-pink-river-dolphin>

Groups Demand Emergency Rules to Protect Rare Whales from Ship Collisions

PORTLAND, Maine (AP) — A coalition of environmental groups is calling on the federal government to enact emergency rules to protect a vanishing species of whale from lethal collisions with large ships. The groups filed their petition with the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration on Sept. 28 in an effort to protect the North Atlantic right whale. The whale, which can weigh more than five school buses, numbers less than 340 and has been in steep decline in recent years. Read more: <https://www.pbs.org/newshour/politics/environmental-groups-demand-emergency-rules-to-protect-rare-whales-from-ship-collisions>

IWC Releases First Ever Extinction Alert for World's Smallest Marine Mammal

Many people may be unfamiliar with the vaquita, a small porpoise that is the most petite marine mammal and only lives in the small northern corner of the Gulf of California. But this little relative of whales and dolphins is demonstrating the critical dangers many modern species face. Down from about 570 individuals in 1997 to only about 10 today, the species is the subject of the International Whaling Commissions' (IWC) first-ever extinction alert. Read more here:

<https://iwc.int/resources/media-resources/news/first-ever-extinction-alert-from-the-iwc>



IN THE NEWS...

Georgia Oyster Reef Project May Help Sequester Carbon

The Georgia Department of Natural Resources Coastal Resources Division (CRD) launched its latest oyster restoration project Monday in **Liberty County west of St. Catherines Island**. Approximately 10 tons of bagged oyster shell are being stacked on pallets and placed at two locations on a northern bank of the North Newport River to encourage the growth of new, native Eastern oysters (*Crassostrea virginica*). In addition to creating new essential habitat for marine life, the restoration project may help researchers determine the carbon-sequestration potential of oyster reefs in Georgia. Read more here: <https://coastalgadnr.org/new-dnr-oyster-reef-project-part-carbon-sequestration-study>



Oyster-Inspired Sponges Can Scoop Up Nanoplastics in the Ocean

Humans have used dried natural sponges to clean up, to paint, and as vessels to consume fluids like water; we've even used them as contraceptive devices. Whether synthetic or natural, sponges are great at ensnaring tiny particles in their many pores. And as scientists around the world are beginning to show, sponges' cavity-filled forms mean they could provide a solution to one of our era's biggest scourges: microplastic pollution. In August, researchers in China published a study describing a synthetic sponge that makes short work of microscopic plastic debris. Though the sponges' effectiveness varied in experiments, optimal conditions allowed the researchers to remove as much as 90 percent of the microplastics. Read more here:

<https://www.popsoci.com/environment/plastic-pollution-sponge/>



An Island Getaway...

Day trip pf Ossabaw Island's North End—Saturday, April 6. 9:00-4:30 \$95.00

Explore Ossabaw Island -- Georgia's third largest barrier island and first Heritage Preserve. The day begins with a one hour boat ride through the Moon River District's rivers and creeks, across Ossabaw Sound to Ossabaw Island's North End. Tour includes the history of the Native American era, colonial-era indigo cultivation, the lives of enslaved and free African Americans, & Sandy West's 1970s era creative program. Learn about Sandy West's involvement in protecting the Georgia marshes and coast in the 1960s. A visit to Ossabaw Island offers possible sightings of a variety of wildlife including migratory birds, wading birds, and feral hogs, as well as free-roaming domesticated donkeys, and perhaps an alligator. Bring your own picnic lunch to enjoy on tables under the trees or on the porch of the 1890s-era Club House. There will be time to wander the North End on your own before returning to the mainland.

About one week before the trip, an email will be sent to all who registered, with specific information on where to meet the boat to Ossabaw, what to bring, and more. This trip does not include a tour of the Torrey West House interior.

<https://ossabawisland.org/visit/day-trips/>

[If you are interested—sign up ASAP. They don't run these tours very often]

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West Marine
Wheel of Fortune



Remember TDP for Gift-Giving

Adopt A Dolphin

The Dolphin Project has an **ADOPT A DOLPHIN** program that makes a great gift for ALL AGES. Order online NOW for the holidays:

<https://www.thedolphinproject.org/adoptadolphin>

Please think of The Dolphin Project for a year-end tax deductible donation. Tax ID#58-1914176