

“ON EFFORT”

Newsletter 2024 Wrapup & Early 2025

From the Helm

Ahoy Crew!

2024 was our 35th year of dolphin research! This is an amazing accomplishment for an all-volunteer organization. We had planned on celebrating in January but were iced out by the weather. We'll reschedule for later in 2025. *Time to party!!!*

Many of you already are aware that 2024 was a challenging year for me personally. Surgery and physical disabilities slowed me down and then last summer my daughter, Laura, her husband and my two young grand boys were killed in a plane crash. That tragedy has been further complicated by probate nightmare and waiting on reports from the FAA & NTSB (National Transportation Safety Board) which might take another year? And yet, life goes on... and so does The Dolphin Project...

Our Education Outreach program was busy this year with lectures and festivals....Sun City Kayak Cub, JEA Lunch Club, Liberty Elementary, Garrison Elementary, Joseph Martin Elementary, Friends of Sapelo Island, Burton 4H Fair, HHI Land Trust, May River Cleanup, Bull Street Tacos, Tybee Summer Movies, CCA Kids Fishing Day, Bradwell Institute, Tybee Marine Science Center, SkIO Marine Science Day...to name a few events.

Zoom Trainings remain successful and convenient for attendees. 2025 Research Survey dates are posted on the website. As always—it's first come, first served based on availability, so mark your calendars soon.

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.

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 2025 with the efforts of our very special members.

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.
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2025 Survey dates

Please sign up online via our website calendar as soon you know you might be available. As always, it's first come ~ first served.

January 18, February 8, March 22, April 12, May 17,
June 7, July 19, August 16, September 13, October 11,
November 8

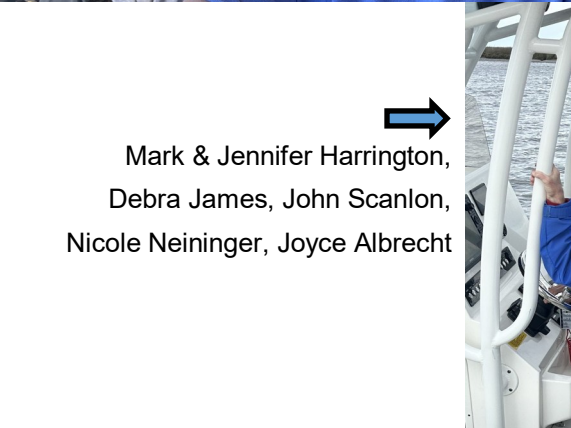
Some of our 2024 Survey Crews...



← Carl Ericsson, Nicole Neining, Lisa Martineau, Larissa Phillips



→ Cheryl & Alan Shedd, Kasey Russell, Lisa Martineau



→ Mark & Jennifer Harrington, Debra James, John Scanlon, Nicole Neining, Joyce Albrecht



A whale of thanks to all our survey crews. TDP couldn't complete our mission without YOU!!!



← Sandy & Tom Workman, Nicole Neining, Nancy Contel, Tracy LaRosa,

2025 Training dates:

Invite your friends and family to learn about the local Bottlenose dolphins and The Dolphin Project through our Zoom Workshops. Sign up via our website calendar:

**January 18, February 22, March 8, April 12, May 17,
June 7, July 19, August 9, September 20, October 4,
November 8**

2025 Outreach events

Thursday, March 20, 5:00-7:30

STEM night @ Joseph Martin Elementary School, Hinesville, GA

Saturday, March 22, 10:00-4:00

Coastal GA DNR's



Mary Ross Waterfront Park, Brunswick. For info. <https://www.coastalgadnr.org>

TDP volunteers needed to host our booth. Sign up for a shift via our calendar

Friday, April 25 4:00-7:00

Earth Day in Savannah. Daffin Park

TDP volunteers needed to host our booth. Sign up for a shift via our calendar

Saturday, May 3, 9:00-11:30

May River Cleanup @ Oyster Factory Park, Bluffton, SC. Includes lunch.

TDP volunteers needed to host our booth. Sign up via our calendar

More events to be announced... stay tuned

2025 Science Conferences

April 4-6

SEAMAMMS

SouthEast And Mid Atlantic Marine Mammal Symposium

At University of North Florida with Jacksonville University in Jacksonville FL

November 14

GAME

Georgia Association of Marine Educators at Jekyll Island Conference Center

December 5

College of Coastal Georgia Symposium

Brunswick

Pave Paradise??? Say NO!!!

Let your voice be heard **NOW!** **STOP** GA DNR from authorizing the paving of sand dunes and wetlands on St. Simons for a parking lot! For more info: onehundredmiles.org/take-action/

2024 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.

7

Some of our 2024 events:

- 1 & 2) Garrison Elementary STEM night hosted by Tom & Sandy Workman, Jennifer Harrington.
- 3) Joseph Martin Elementary STEM night hosted by Debra James & Peach Hubbard.
- 4 & 5) Skidaway Institute of Oceanography Science Day hosted by Charlotte Keenoy, Peach Hubbard, Hillary Salmon, Paul Abel & John Scanlon.

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- 6) Peach hosting TDP display at Tybee's Burton 4-H Volunteer Fair

- 7) One of four daily displays at Bull Street Tacos hosted by Peach & Jennifer.

We love educating folks of ALL ages about the amazing Bottlenose dolphins

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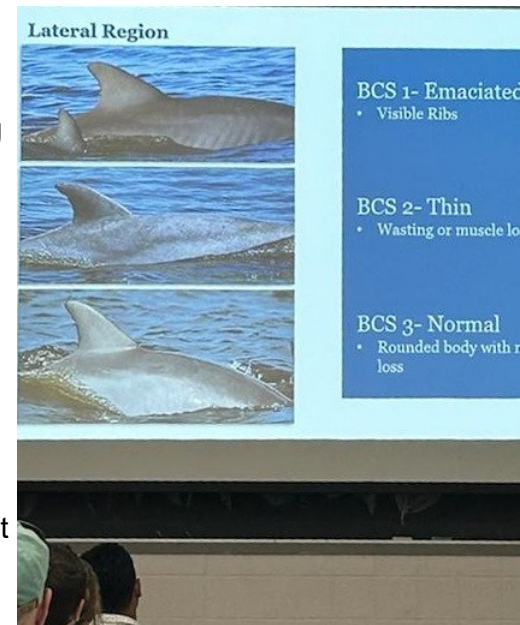


2024 Science Conferences

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

In April, the **SouthEast And Mid Atlantic Marine Mammal Symposium** was held at Duke University. **SEAMAMMS** is a regional, scientific meeting focusing on marine mammal research conducted in the mid-Atlantic and Southeast United States or conducted by students and other researchers from this region. This offers TDP a fabulous opportunity to see and hear about coastal marine research and network with professors and students. SEAMAMMS is held at a different coastal location every year, typically university or aquarium venues.

The Duke symposium was attended by Joni Chastain, Carl Ericsson and Peach Hubbard. Regrettably the photos taken of us were blurry so we can't share our excited faces with you..



Duke U. Marine Research Vessel

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 scientists 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.

Cheryl & Alan Shedd and Jennifer & Mark Harrington attended the 2024 GAME conference.

Skipper Cheryl is holding Peach's name tag. Peach was unfortunately unable to attend.



Tom & Karen Stack



Karen & Tom with Kevin Carroll, VP of Hanger Prosthetics and designer of the prosthetic tale for *Winter, the dolphin* as featured in the 'Dolphin Tale' movie



Karen & Tom hosting TDP's booth at Richmond Hill Career Day event

We celebrate the lives of two very special TDP people that we lost in late 2024, Tom and Karen Stack. Karen had been in hospice for months due to post-op complications and was cared for at home by Tom (with some help), who had his own health issues. Near the end of 2024, they moved into a facility where Karen could have more care than Tom was able to provide. Tom passed in December, followed days later by Karen.

Karen was our Treasurer for several years. She and I *literally* worked side-by-side on the accounts. Tom and Karen were eager volunteers when it came to Education Outreach with kids.

The Stacks were two of the nicest people I've ever met! They are missed.Peach



Sick Bay



Sending Healthy Healing Vibes to Paul Abel, Ron & Gerry Sattelle, Ted Henning, Carol DeFelice, Roy Hubbard and all our other crew members who are currently in sick bay. Hope to see you back on board soon! Bee Well!

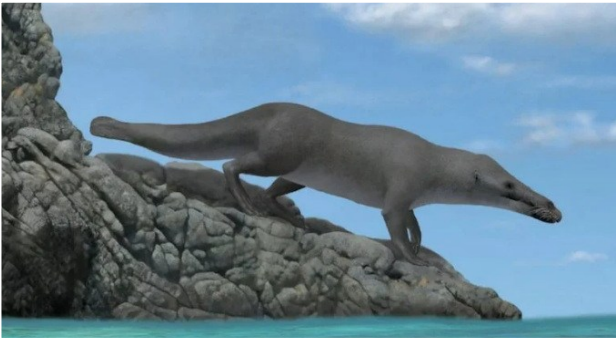
Adopt A Dolphin

The Dolphin Project has an **ADOPT A DOLPHIN** program that makes a great gift for ALL AGES... birthdays, holidays, anniversaries, mothers' day, fathers' day, get well, etc, <https://thedolphinproject.org/adoptadolphin>

**Adopt A
Dolphin**

Marine Mammal NEWS

Four-legged Whale Species That Lived 40 Million Years Ago Discovered in Peru



This prehistoric quadruped discovered on the coast of Peru was similar to a modern-day otter or beaver — except it was 13 feet long. Scientists have discovered evidence of a 42 million-year-old whale species on the coast of Peru. While this find would be stunning enough in and of itself, this particular whale had one astoundingly distinct characteristic: four legs likely used to walk on land. The discovery of this new *Peregocetus pacificus* species has shed new light on the evolution of these seafaring mammals.

Fossil evidence has established that modern dolphins and whales derived from small, four-limbed, hoofed animals that lived in South Asia during the Eocene around 50 million years ago.

The scientific community had previously established that these animals made it to North America 41.2 million years ago. What makes this latest discovery so significant is that this quadrupedal whale is 42.6 million years old — thus forcing evolutionary biologists to reassess established timeframes.

Additionally, this discovery, published in the journal *Current Biology*, makes it clear that ancient whales originally called South America — not North America — their first home in the Western Hemisphere. The new species is called *Peregocetus pacificus*, which suggests “the traveling whale that reached the Pacific” in Latin. Its remarkably well-preserved remains were found in 2011 at a site called Playa Media Luna, where paleontologists recovered most of its skeleton, including its jaw, front and hind legs, bits of spine, and tail.



To learn more about this new discovery: <https://allthatsinteresting.com/peregocetus-pacificus-prehistoric-whale>

Whale Seen Cradling Newborn Calf Like Human Mom



How sweet is this? This North Atlantic right whale mom is "cradling" her calf, swimming belly up while the calf rests between her flippers.

On February 5, 2025, an aerial survey team from Clearwater Marine Aquarium Research Institute saw 'right whale 3292' "Cashew" and her calf approximately 7 miles off Nassau Sound, Florida. Cashew was named for the part of her callosity at the tip of the head that resembles the curved shape of a cash-

ew nut. She is 23 years old and this is her third known calf. Her 2015 calf was never catalogued; her 2008 calf, a male, has been seen in recent years.

Photo: North Atlantic right whale 3292 (Cashew) and her 2025 calf swimming approximately 7 miles off Nassau Sound, Florida. Cashew is seen "cradling" her calf, a common mother-calf behavior in which the mother is belly up and the calf rests on or above her belly between her flippers. Credit: [@cmaq](https://twitter.com/cmaq), taken under NOAA permit 26919

Brave Woman Helps Whale

Watch the video here: <https://youtube.com/shorts/rpm6HpaKkw?si=q6mVd3KOsMSu489K>

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.

Amazon River Dolphins Pee Straight Up Into The Air: They May Be Sending Messages To Their Mates!?



Scent marking is an important business in the land animal world, it can tell others to keep out, signal all sorts of things to do with mating, and even be something that increases social bonding in [chimp society](#). For aquatic mammals, though, urination is not usually considered a means to communicate.

“We first observed this behavior in 2014 while doing our regular field work. We first saw a male flip his belly up out of the water and expose his penis and then proceeded to urinate into the air. We were really shocked because it was something that we have never seen before or heard of from other researchers,” study author [Claryana Araújo-Wang](#) told IFLScience. “We believe that aerial urination may have a social function but further understanding of the functions of this behavior will require more research.

However, we hypothesize that aerial urination helps in advertising male quality in terms of social position or physical condition possibly mediated through hormones,” finished Araújo-Wang. To read more about this behavior and see the dolphins pee(!): <https://www.iflscience.com/watch-amazon-river-dolphins-pee-straight-up-into-the-air-they-may-be-sending-messages-to-their-mates-78002>

Japan's Captive Dolphin Trade

The dolphins we see in marine parks were caught in brutal round-ups, torn from their families and their freedom. Or they were bred in captivity from other captives, never to know the freedom of the sea. Small concrete tanks are like purgatory for dolphins – they swim in circles or lie motionless on the surface until they die. They are forced to perform the same routine tricks time and time again, three to four times a day, every day, for the rest of their lives. Because if they don't perform, they don't eat.

In Japan, Taiji's dolphin hunting began in 1969, according to the town's own history (catching and eating dolphins was NEVER a tradition in Taiji). Slaughtering dolphins in a welter of blood is secondary to the captivity trade. A live trained dolphin can sell for \$50,000 or more on the open market. A dead dolphin for meat brings in less than a \$1,000.

Kunito Seko, who lives in Taiji, photographed the capture of several Bottlenose dolphins in Taiji, taken to spend their lives in concrete tanks. The Bottlenose population along the Japanese coast is now severely depleted, yet the slaughter continues.

The Taiji hunters will sometimes release the remaining pod members of dolphins back into the ocean, after picking out the best-looking female dolphins (males are harder to tame) in hopes to capture more dolphins later. However, the traumatized dolphin pod is unlikely to thrive, mourning its lost members. This is only done for the Bottlenose dolphin species, not any other species, which are ruthlessly killed. Other dolphin species that are not so highly valued are being relentlessly pushed towards local extinction, including pilot whales, Risso's dolphins and spotted dolphins, sold in local meat markets. The current season for hunting lasts 6 months, concluding at the end of February, 2025. In that time, hundreds of dolphins will meet their deaths at the hands of the dolphin hunters in the notorious “Cove”.

The Taiji dolphin drive hunts must end. It is cruel beyond words and is decimating Japan's dolphin populations. Keeping dolphins captive for entertainment purposes is cruel, but people continue to buy tickets. **Don't buy a ticket.**



*The dolphin hunters pull the net tight around the dolphin, and will then drag it, kicking and **screaming**, to pens and tanks set up around the town of Taiji, where the dolphin will be trained to eat dead fish and obey trainers (or they don't eat). Eventually, they will sold into captivity at some aquarium.*

IN THE NEWS...

Georgia Lawmakers Pass New Bill Involving Seafood In Restaurants

It was a big win for Georgia's shrimping industry at the state capitol on February 19th. The Georgia House of Representatives passed a new bill involving seafood in restaurants.

The legislation requires restaurants to let people know what country their seafood comes from. "I want consumers to know what they're eating. And so, when you go in a restaurant and you're feeding your family and your children, if that shrimp is imported I want you to know what that is, I believe that's right and just. That is what this measure does," said Rep. Jesse Petrea (R-Savannah).



Lawmakers say this will help support local shrimpers, amid an influx of shrimp imports. "There's no shortage of shrimp on the Georgia coast, but when you flood the market with imports, the price drops so low, they have to stop, and if we don't get them back pretty soon, they're gone forever," said Representative Buddy DeLoach (R-Townsend).

The bipartisan bill passed the House in a vote of 165-7. The bill will now head to the Senate.

Great News for Local Shrimpers!

The International Trade Commission and the Department of Commerce have released a 354 (!) page report in December 2024 in which they have determined that the shrimping industry in the United States is materially injured by reason of subject imports of frozen warmwater shrimp from Indonesia that are sold in the United States at less than fair value, and subject imports of frozen warmwater shrimp from Ecuador, India, and Vietnam that are subsidized by the their governments.

Now, the Department of Commerce is set to impose tariffs on the product, something that's meant to level the playing field for local shrimpers. "This is great news for the industry, but I wouldn't say it's unexpected. The industry has been struggling for a long time," said Jennifer Smith-Veluz, lead council for the U.S. Shrimpers Coalition. Shrimpers have struggled to keep up with low prices for their product after the U.S. imported a record of more than 1.8 billion pounds of foreign shrimp in 2021. "These unfairly traded imports have come in at unfairly low prices because of practices that foreign countries are engaging in," said Smith-Veluz. (*including farmed shrimp*)

Now, the Department of Commerce will impose anti-dumping and countervailing duties on shrimp imports from four countries. Anti-dumping duties are a tariff placed on goods that are priced less than fair value. This will be applied to shrimp imported from Indonesia. Countervailing duties are placed on goods that are subsidized by foreign governments. This will apply to shrimp imports from Ecuador, India, and Vietnam.

"The hope is that the increased cost will reflect the unfair trade practices and counteract the unfair trade practices, so they will now be priced as they should be to be competing fairly with U.S. domestic shrimp," said Smith-Veluz. For the consumer, the price for frozen imported shrimp will likely go up. "It may not be a lot, given what the current rates are, but it's likely to increase somewhat," said Smith-Veluz.

It's something local leaders are calling a win for local shrimpers.

Buy local. Wild caught US shrimp tastes the BEST!

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