



From the Helm

I am honored to step into the role of President of The Dolphin Project and grateful for the trust placed in me by our board, volunteers, and supporters. This organization means so much to me and to so many others. I am excited to continue the important work already underway.

As I step into the role of President, I want to recognize and thank Peach for her many years of dedicated leadership as President of The Dolphin Project. Her commitment, vision, and care for this organization have helped shape where we are today. Peach has transitioned into the role of Vice President and will be working closely with me during this leadership transition. I am incredibly grateful for her continued involvement and support as I learn my new role and build on the strong foundation she has established.

Looking ahead, 2026 is shaping up to be a big year for The Dolphin Project. We have several important goals to strengthen and grow The Dolphin Project in meaningful ways. Our focus includes expanding our volunteer base, increasing the number of survey boats going out each month, and raising awareness of our work within our community. Completing and launching our new website will further support these efforts by strengthening communication, improving outreach, and making it easier for our community, volunteers, and supporters to stay connected with our mission and activities.

Volunteers and committee members play an important role in our work, and there are many ways for everyone to contribute and make a meaningful impact. Whether you've been involved for years or are considering joining for the first time, we would love your help. To learn more about ways to get involved with The Dolphin Project, please email us at info@thedolphinproject.org We would love to hear from you!

Thank you for being part of The Dolphin Project community. I'm excited to see what we can accomplish together in 2026, and I look forward to another year of working alongside all of you who make this organization so special.

With gratitude,

Nicole Neininger

President, The Dolphin Project

"ON EFFORT"

Newsletter
Winter 2025



OFFICERS

President	Nicole Neininger
Vice President	Peach Hubbard
Treasurer	Debra James
Recording Secretary	Joni Chastain

DIRECTORS

NOAA Liaison—Lori Muskat
 Corresponding Secretary—Charlotte Keenoy
 Technology & Digital Strategy—Scott Craig

COMMITTEE CHAIRPERSONS

Adopt A Dolphin	Joni Chastain
Data Review	Joni Chastain
Education	Peach Hubbard
Elections	Karla Johnson
Publicity	Nicole Neininger
Survey Logistics	Peach Hubbard
Training	Peach Hubbard

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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

BOARD UPDATES for 2026

Note From Peach: I'll always be involved in The Dolphin Project but due to medical reasons for myself and my husband 'Hub', I need to step down from my role as President and pass it on to **Nicole Neining** who will bring her young ideas and enthusiasm to her new assignment. I'll be close by to lend a hand when needed. I'll see you back on the water soon.



PEACH



NICOLE

Lisa Martineau has stepped down from her role as TDP Treasurer. She managed our finances for several years and we are most grateful for all her efforts, not only as Treasurer but as a devoted Team Leader. We'll see you back on the water, Lisa! Thank you!



LISA

Debra James has assumed the role of Treasurer and put her CPA skills to work for TDP. Debra is also a TDP Photographer and assists with Education Outreach events. Thank you, Deb!



DEBRA

Charlotte Keenoy is a long-time veteran of TDP. She has rejoined our Board of Directors and will serve as our Corresponding Secretary. Charlotte is a long serving veteran of TDP not only as a director but as a Team Leader. We are grateful for her expertise.



CHARLOTTE

Joining our Board of Directors is **Scott Craig** who is our IT Specialist and is currently putting the finishing touches on our new and greatly improved website.



CARL

Skipper **Carl Ericsson** has resigned from the Board due to work restraints. We deeply appreciate his efforts as a Director and hope to see him back on surveys soon.

Joni Chastain continues as TDP Recording Secretary and Coordinates our research data. We're so grateful for her continued support.



SCOTT

Lori Muskat is our liaison with NOAA. We're grateful for coordinating our new LOI.



JONI

We'd love to have you join the Board of Directors and share your ideas to help TDP. We're an easy going crew and typically meet via Zoom 4-6 times a year.



LORI

May you share in the Joys of the Season

Merry Christmas! Happy Hanukkah!

Happy New Year!

We're looking forward to an exciting 2026!

REMEMBERING...



CAROL HARTLEY, 79, passed peacefully at her home in Richmond Hill on August 8, 2025. Carol was a devoted mother, grandmother and friend. She was a gifted artist and inspiring art teacher for 31 years. A leader in the Savannah art scene, Carol's passion for making art accessible and meaningful helped build a strong creative community. After retiring, she founded 'Picasso for a Night', a creative painting experience that became a local favorite in Richmond Hill and Savannah. Her classes were filled with joy, energy, and the warmth she brought to all aspects of her life. Carol shared her talents with The Dolphin Project as a photographer and artist.

JOHN SCANLAN

passed peacefully on October 12, 2025 from complications due to diabetes and a heart condition at age 66. John grew up in rural Stoutsville Ohio and graduated from the US Naval Academy. John retired with the rank of Lieutenant Colonel in the Marine Corps, having served twenty years. He was a decorated Weapons Tactics Instructor. John was active in the Knights of Columbus at St. Francis By The Sea Catholic Church in Hilton Head where he lived. He loved kayaking, hiking and cycling all over the United States. John served The Dolphin Project as a meticulous Team Leader for many years. He was always willing to help with research surveys and Education Outreach events too.



RON SATTELE, 81, passed peacefully on November 9, 2025, after a brave battle against cancer. He was a beloved brother, father, grandfather, great grandfather, friend, neighbor and devoted husband to his wife Gerry of 60 years. He was a Commercial Real Estate Developer in the Roswell/Atlanta area. He also coached girls' and women's basketball at St. Pius X High School and Oglethorpe University. Ron was known for his incredible generosity and larger than life personality. He served The Dolphin Project on the Board of Directors, as a Photographer and Skipper. Ron and Gerry supported several special projects for TDP over the years. Most of all, we'll miss his friendship, sharing his Kilkenny dock for surveys, fishing, evening drinks, stories and laughs.

Sandra Bath

passed quietly on November 27, 2025 at the age of 78. After surviving polio at age five, she faced challenges with remarkable resilience and courage, proving that a disability does not impact the God given abilities we all possess. Sandra taught high school English and drama in Savannah for 30 years with a passion admired by all who knew her. After retiring she became a Court Appointed Special Advocate for foster care, mentored L.I.F.E. Inc to help special needs students transition from school delivered Meals On Wheels and participated in many other community programs, including The Dolphin Project. Sandra served TDP as a Data Reviewer for many years, making sure that the Event sheet coordinates corresponded with the charts and that the film canisters were labeled correctly. She also assisted with the fin matching which was done by hand, before we had software!



GOOD TIMES in 2025...



Alan, Lisa, Skipper Ed & Debra



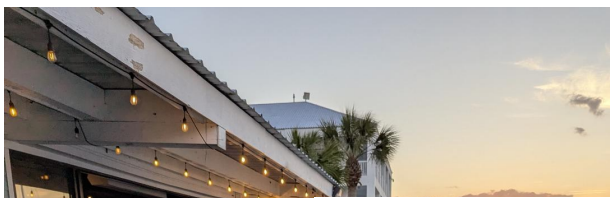
Sandy, Tom, Skipper Jacquie & Paul



Casey, Skipper Cheryl, Alan, Lisa



Debra & Nicole at Joseph Martiin Elementary



Cheryl, Carol, Carol, Peach & Nicole at SEAMAMMMS in Jacksonville FL



GOOD TIMES in 2025



Earth Day in Savannah...
Debra, Nicole, Carlos, Peach & Ruth

Isle of Hope Art & Music Festival...
Debra, Dave & Marilyn



Kenneth Jenkinson, Savannah Bee Company's 'Mead Magistrate' with Cheryl & Peach



Earth Day...
Charlotte & Carlos



Coastfest...Debra

LOVE DOLPHINS?

Show your support by Donating and/or Volunteering at thedolphinproject.org

Your support is vital to our Research and Education Outreach Programs.

Please think of TDP for year-end donations.

2026 CALENDER

JANUARY

- 10 Zoom **TRAINING** Workshop
- 24 Research **SURVEY**

FEBRUARY

- 7 Zoom **TRAINING** Workshop
- 28 Research **SURVEY**

MARCH

- 7 Zoom **TRAINING** Workshop
- 14 TDP CELEBRATION!!!**
- 21 COASTFEST, Brunswick
- 28 Research **SURVEY**

APRIL

- 11 Blessing of the Fleet, Darien
- 18 Zoom **TRAINING** Workshop
- 18 Research **SURVEY**
- 24 EARTH DAY, Savannah
- 24—26 SEAMAMMS at UNCW

MAY

- 16 Zoom **TRAINING** Workshop
- 16 Research **SURVEY**

JUNE

- 6 Zoom **TRAINING** Workshop
- 13** Research **SURVEY**

JULY

- 11 Zoom **TRAINING** Workshop
- 18 Research **SURVEY**

AUGUST

- 8 Zoom **TRAINING** Workshop
- 15 Research **SURVEY**

SEPTEMBER

- 5 Zoom **TRAINING** Workshop
- 19 Research **SURVEY**

OCTOBER

- 3 Zoom **TRAINING** Workshop
- 10 SKIO MARINE SCIENCE DAY
- 17 Research **SURVEY**
- 24 Isle of Hope Art & Music Festival, Savannah

NOVEMBER

- 7 Zoom **TRAINING** Workshop
- 13-14 GAME /Ga. Assoc of Marine Educators Conference
- 14 Research **SURVEY**

DECEMBER

- 4 Coastal Science Symposium at College of Coastal Georgia

MARK YOUR CALENDARS!!!

More events will be posted online as the dates are confirmed.

Additional School events, lectures and conferences will be added for 2026.

Stay tuned!!!

MARCH 14, 2026

CELEBRATE THE DOLPHIN PROJECT

EXTRAORDINARY VOLUNTEERS for 37 YEARS!!!

JOIN US FOR AN EVENING OF FUN, FOOD, BEVERAGES, SILENT AUCTION, and a SPECIAL GUEST
DETAILS COMING SOON

TDP success depends on YOU!

Register for Photo-ID surveys as soon as you think you'll be available.

For surveys, it's '*First Come-First Served*' due to limited space on the boats.

We also need to get the word out to the public about protecting the local estuarine dolphins and our shared environment. We need your help at community events and festivals.

Please volunteer



ENTANGLED WHALE



Georgia Department of Natural Resources staff work to disentangle right whale No. 5217 off Jekyll Island on Dec. 3, 2025. Credit: Clearwater Marine Aquarium Research Institute/taken under NOAA permit 24359.

On December 3, 2025, staff from the Georgia Department of Natural Resources (DNR) helped disentangle a North Atlantic right whale, No. 5217, known as “Division,” off Jekyll Island. The three-year-old male was caught in fishing gear that had become embedded in his skin around his head and jaw, passing through the blowhole and around his flipper, posing a serious threat to his survival. Division is one of approximately 380 North Atlantic right whales believed to remain, making them one of the rarest species left on Earth.

For more than two decades, wildlife officials from Georgia and Florida have surveyed North Atlantic right whales as they migrate from Canada to the Southeastern United States during the winter to give birth. Mothers give birth in waters stretching from North Carolina to near Cape Canaveral, Florida, but Georgia’s coastal waters—particularly around Savannah and Brunswick—are considered core calving grounds for the species.

While females and calves are commonly seen in the area, males and juveniles like Division are rarely spotted due to limited food sources.

The rescue began when DNR survey teams observed two adult whales and a mother-calf pair near St. Marys, Georgia. Soon after, they received a report of an entangled whale off Jekyll Island. Aerial observers from the Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission spotted Division and relayed information to partner agencies, including NOAA, allowing the rescue team to track his movements in real time.

Within an hour, teams used satellite buoys and a sea anchor to stabilize the fishing lines while attempting to cut them safely. The fishing gear had been wrapped around Division for some time and was believed to have originated from the Northeast.

...ENTANGLED WHALE

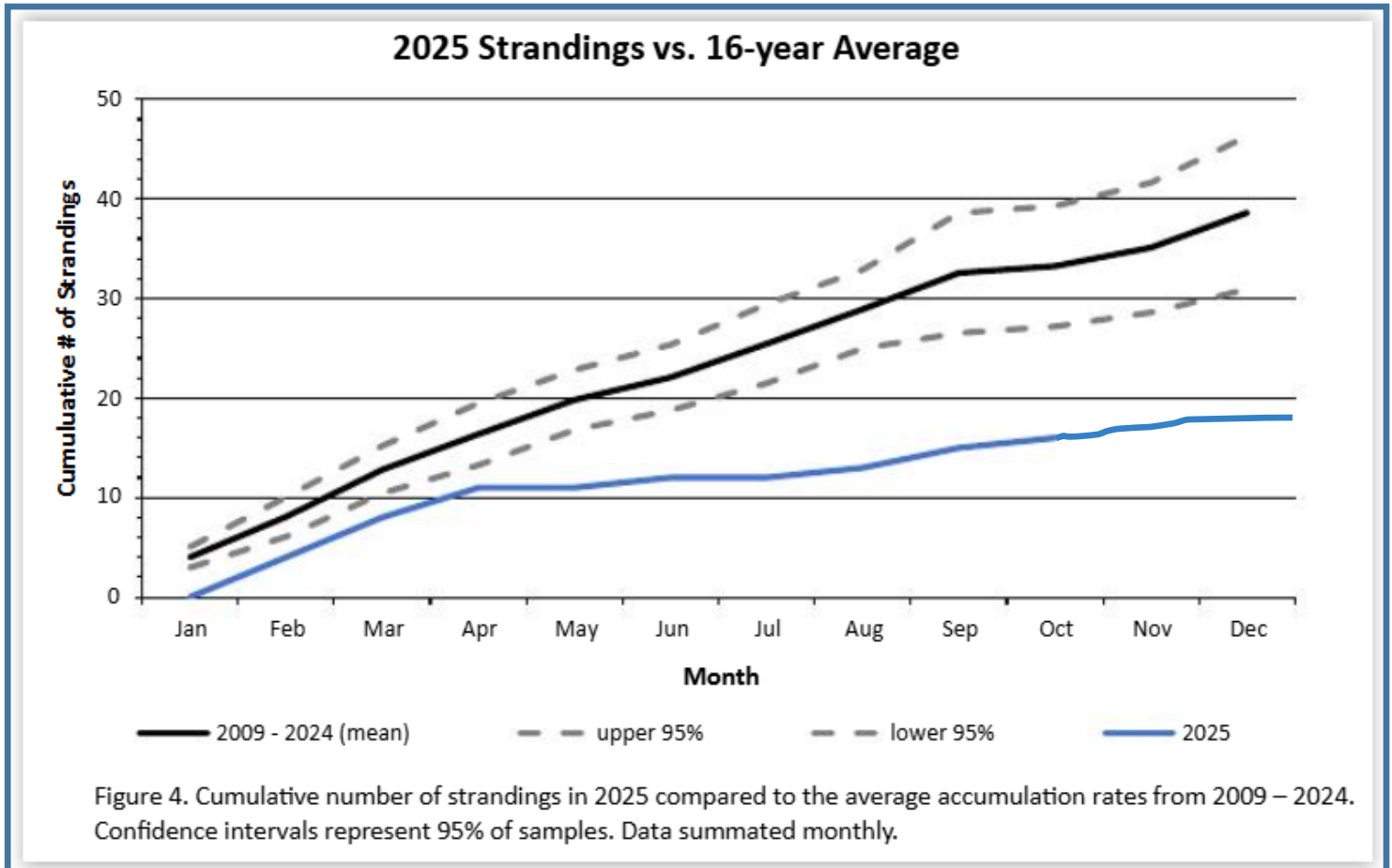
Division was clearly distressed and attempted to evade the boats trying to assist him. Rescue efforts were unsuccessful on the first day, requiring teams to return the following day with additional vessels. During the second attempt, Division began breaching, propelling himself partially out of the water. Responders waited until he calmed before making precise cuts to the lines. After careful coordination, teams were able to remove the gear from Division's head and flipper.

The whale's current condition remains uncertain, but officials are hopeful he will recover. This rescue highlights the dedication of state and federal agencies working together to protect one of the world's most endangered whale species and underscores the importance of ongoing monitoring and conservation efforts along the Southeastern U.S. coast.

For details read: <https://www.ajc.com/business/2025/12/two-day-effort-helps-free-endangered-right-whale-off-georgia-coast/>

2025 STRANDINGS

This past year, Georgia Department of Natural Resources Coastal Division reported 20 strandings. This number is down from previous years. Keep in mind these are the reported sightings. There is no way to know how many actual strandings there may have been due to our tides and currents. Deceased animals often wash up into the marshes where they are never seen.



Of the strandings recorded, 14 were *Tursiops truncatus* (Tamanend) Bottlenose dolphins; 5 adults, 3 subadults, 3 calves and 3 neonates. Also recorded were 2 *Kogia brevis* (Pygmy sperm whales), 1 grey seal, 2 manatees and the recent entangled Right whale. Sometimes the animals are found too decomposed to determine the sex or cause of death. Human intervention (HI) was determined to be the cause of stranding for 7 animals, two of which were rescued—the Right whale and an adult male dolphin entangled in a crab pot line.

Much of the data accumulated is a result of The Dolphin Project's Photo ID Research which has monitored the health and abundance of our estuarine dolphins for the last 37 years - thanks to our awesome volunteers!!!