

“In Their World...On Their Terms...”

PHOTO: BRITTINI HILL

EAVESDROPPING ON DOLPHINS IN THE BAHAMAS



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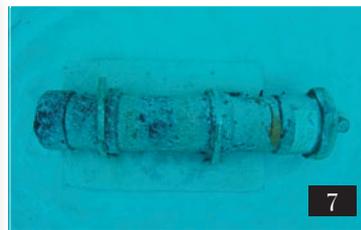
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One of our big adventures this year was enlisting the help of passive acoustic monitoring technology to help us find our elusive dolphins on Little Bahama Bank. As many of you know, in 2013 we documented a major displacement of 50% of our resident spotted dolphin community from Little Bahama Bank (LBB) south 100 miles to Great Bahama Bank (GBB). Although they seem to be doing okay in their new residence, this move has made it more difficult to track and observe the remaining dolphins on LBB. We do monitor both study sites now, however our time is now limited on LBB.

Partnering with colleague Dr. Marc Lammers and his team in Hawaii (Oceanwide Science Institute), we deployed two Ecological Acoustic Recorders (E.A.R.) during our first research trip in May. E.A.R.s are passive acoustic recording devices developed by Marc a decade ago and are used all over the world. With today's technology, it is possible to record continuously and store data, or sample periodically for even longer periods of time. The researcher then retrieves the stored data in the unit, and can look at how often certain species of cetaceans go by, and what signals they produced. Although

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1. Divers securely fasten the E.A.R. to a concrete block; Photo: Liah McPherson
2. A very pregnant Brush hanging in the water column; Photo: Cassie Volker
3. Dr. Herzing prepares to deploy the E.A.R.; Photo: Bethany Augliere
4. Thanks to E.A.R. data we sighted Brush and her 2-year old calf during Trip 8; Photo: Cassie Volker
5. Astro (Amanda's calf) in front and Butter (Brush's 2016 calf) behind; Photo: Cassie Volker
6. Captain Brad passes the E.A.R. to the diver; Photo: Bethany Augliere
7. Data is collected from the E.A.R. after a month resting on the ocean floor; Photo: Brittini Hill

LETTER FROM THE PRESIDENT



It is my privilege to serve as President of The Wild Dolphin Project's Board of Directors and to enjoy a front row seat as Dr. Herzing and her team continue to explore Atlantic Spotted Dolphins "in their world, on their terms."

Under the current leadership, the Wild Dolphin Project has produced invaluable information for the scientific community and given us unprecedented insight into the lives and behaviors of these magnificent animals for over three decades. 2018 has been no exception, as we continued to incorporate advanced technology that was unavailable just several years ago into our research efforts. We have come a long way from countless hours of video tape and photo IDs, to wearable computers allowing us to engage in two-way interaction with dolphins, localization technology that helps us determine which individual in a particular pod is vocalizing at any given time, and drones allowing us to monitor behavior from a distance.

A new application of technology in 2018 was the deployment of passive acoustic monitoring devices (E.A.R.s) in several strategic locations to continuously listen to activity as dolphins moved through these areas. Analyzing the data we collected allowed us to locate several individuals that had been lost since an unexplained 2013 mass exodus of Atlantic Spotted Dolphins from Little Bahama Bank.

Most recently, Dr. Herzing's expertise was called upon in late 2018, when a male Atlantic Spotted Dolphin named Lamda was found stranded on a beach in the Bahamas. The weakened, but otherwise healthy animal was taken to a facility where he received the medical treatment he needed to regain strength, allowing a group of scientists to ultimately release him back into the wild. This great outcome was only made possible by the scientists who dedicate their lives to research, understanding the previously unknown and sharing their knowledge with the scientific community.

We look forward to continued advancements in our research through technology and the commitment of our team.

Axel Stepan

Board of Directors, President

(continued from page 1)

there are now other companies that manufacture similar devices, we chose to work with OSI since they had a long-standing expertise in this field and also had the data analysis expertise to quickly turn around our findings.

Here's a wrap-up of our summer EAR project

May – Our first 2018 trip left for the Bahamas May 8 and by May 9th we were out in the field deploying our E.A.R.s. Our first site is relatively remote and is sometimes inaccessible due to large seas, but we pushed through the large waves and got there the first day to deploy the

first device. As our team, Drew Mayer and Tyler Hazelwood secured our first EARs on the bottom, four spotted dolphins showed up to check out what we were doing. This included Amanda, one of the four dolphins that had actually left LBB for GBB, and returned in 2016 with three previous resident male spotted dolphins. So, needless to say we were thrilled to see them and happy to know that our choice of deployment site would be a productive one.

June – During a trip in June, we retrieved both units to download one month's worth of data. Although covered slightly with sand and sporting some algae growth both units were found, retrieved, and then

redeployed after swapping out the hard drives. Each E.A.R. had about 8000 files to review, so data was backed-up and hard drives were sent to our colleagues in Hawaii for analysis.

August – After reviewing two months of E.A.R. data we began seeing a clear pattern for one of our locations. Using this knowledge, we set out in August to find some of the now-elusive dolphins of LBB. We first encountered a small group of dolphins and it included two dolphins, a very pregnant Brush with her two-year-old calf Butter, that we had not seen for two field seasons. For the next few days we were able to monitor Brush and Butter, along with her escorts Poindexter and Navel,

two male adults that actually found their way back to LBB from their brief displacement to Great Bahama Bank, making this a spectacular success and example of how data can improve our monitoring abilities and tracking details.

In 2019, we hope to use our E.A.R.s again to monitor our lost dolphins to discover their patterns. As climate change becomes more and more of an issue for wild animals, our abilities to use new tools and technology must improve. Our responsibilities to the dolphins and their habitat demand that we continue to tell the story of their lives in these changing times.

Dr. Denise Herzing
Research Director, WDP

END OF SEASON RECAP



PHOTO: BETHANY AUGLIERE



Left to right: Cassie Volker, captures video and audio recordings of two individuals. Group of interns from Trip #2, 2018

Our 34th consecutive field season is now in the books! Thank you to everyone who came out with us this summer and helped to make it one to remember. We had a lot of new faces and some who have been with us for years. It's always interesting to see who you will meet over the course of the field season.

This year we had some returning interns who helped us with data collection and data entry- Liah McPherson and Morgan Will. We also had two trips filled with first-time interns. This year I tried to amp up the intern experience. I had them read three of our research papers prior to coming aboard. Then I split them up into three groups, and each group was in charge of leading a discussion about one of the papers. It went really well and we discussed some of the research in detail which then lead to larger biological topics. The goal was to get them familiar with reading a scientific paper and learning to discuss it among peers. We also had them focus on working through their photos they took so that they could learn how to ID some of our individuals in the water. One intern commented that it was a lot harder than she thought it would be, and how she gained a

new respect for ID work. Overall, I think the new aspects that were utilized this summer worked out really well and I look forward to using them next summer.

Ruth Petzold, a long-time supporter of our project and former president, came out for a trip with her cousin Miles O'Brien. They got a chance to experience some dolphin mating and discipline behavior along with some crater feeding bottlenose. Miles is working on a short PBS clip about the Wild Dolphin Project, so keep your eyes peeled for this piece. We were also joined by long-term WDP colleague Matthias Hoffmann-Kuhnt from the National University of Singapore. He is working with Dr. Denise Herzing on some joint acoustic projects and we are looking forward to the development of this technology. We also had Hussain Aga Khan join us for two trips this summer. Hussain is the founder and photographer for Focused on Nature. He has been supporting the project since 2013 and provides us with awesome photos of these dolphins that aid in our photo ID'ing process.

At our study sites we saw about 70% of our Bimini dolphin population and about 34% of our Little Bahama Bank (LBB) population. There were 3 new

calves this summer, two of them up on LBB. Amanda had a male calf we named Astro, and Zipp, who we haven't seen since 2016, had a female calf we named Zest. Regatta, a Bimini female, had a new male calf we named Rudder. Aside from these 3 new calves, we saw 12 pregnant females! Hopefully this means we will have a lot of new calves for the 2019 season!

We are always trying out new technology for our research to aid in the study of these wild animals. This year we implemented drone work to capture some data on group traveling behavior. We also experimented with E.A.R.s (Ecological Acoustic Recorders) on the sea floor on LBB to record dolphin sounds. Remember about half of our LBB population moved down to Bimini, therefore it is a lot harder to find these dolphins. So we thought the E.A.R.s could help out.

Since we are having some difficulty finding our LBB dolphins, we decided to spend one trip solely up on LBB. We used this trip as a crew trip, and dedicated 6 days to finding these animals. Our persistence paid off and we found Brush and her calf Butter who we have not seen since 2016! Brush and Butter were accompanied by Navel

and Poindexter (two males who seemed to be courting Brush) and Amanda with her calf Astro. On LBB there were originally three clusters of dolphins, the northern, central, and southern clusters. Brush is a female from our northern cluster and was one of four from that cluster to stay on LBB after the big move. We worried about her because it was just her and three juveniles- Brat (her calf at the time), Tristan, and Palette. Seeing her mixed in with some of the central cluster was such a relief! In regards to the other three from that northern cluster, we saw Tristan this summer and we believe she is pregnant! However, we have not seen Palette or Brat since 2016. We hope Palette and Brat are somewhere mingling with the southern cluster, and we hope to see them soon.

As always, the summer field season flew by! We are already hard at work in the office with the data we collected. However, I am already ready to be back out on the water and May 2019 can't come soon enough!

Cassie Volker
Research Assistant, WDP

Liah McPherson, Field Assistant



Catching the drone on a calm evening

This summer was my second season as a field assistant for the Wild Dolphin Project. In addition to our day-to-day field research, I've started to collect behavioral data using my DJI Mavic Pro drone. The bird's eye view offers a perspective we've never had before, and the ability to study the dynamics of large groups accurately. Moreover, the Mavic Pro's 4K video provides enough detail that I can identify individual dolphins as I'm flying and during video review. This is a huge benefit for answering questions that might pertain to an individual's age, sex or lineage. I'm hoping to collect more data next season so that I can begin to analyze the behavior of the dolphins in my drone footage. For now, I'm writing up a methodology paper on my research for my senior honors

thesis at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill.

With every trip aboard the RV Stenella, I learn more about field research, marine mammal science, and the lives of the dolphins we study. On more than one occasion, we found dolphins that the Project hadn't seen in years—and individuals I'd never seen before. After becoming so familiar with the dolphins we find on a regular basis, I'm always shocked to see a dolphin I recognize only from the photo-ID books. Where do they spend all their time? What have they been up to? If I've learned anything this season, it's that I have a lot more to learn!

Liah McPherson
College Senior at the University of North Carolina
Major: Biology & Cognitive Science

Graysen Boehning, Field Intern

This summer, I joined the WDP team on Trip #2 of their 2018 season, and from the moment I stepped on board, it was clear this would be a life-changing experience. We left port a few hours late due to some rough weather, but the time was far from wasted. While Captain Ruda and our first mate, Tyler, kept a watchful eye on the weather, the wide-eyed interns got an overview of the project and what our time aboard would look like from Cassie, Alyson, and Liah (all the while, Theresa was already hard at work preparing an unbelievable amount of food in the galley). After a pretty rough crossing over to the Bahamas, the boat was full of laughter, a few sick interns, and an unusually high number of fake Russian accents. I could tell already that this was a group I would relish getting to know. While everyone on board was excited to be on softer seas in the Bahamas, we were even more excited about what we hoped the morning would hold.

We saw our first spotted dolphins early Wednesday morning, and they were beautiful! After letting the group enjoy a bow ride for a few minutes, we geared up and jumped in the water. Immediately, our team was greeted by three adult male dolphins; Sunami, Picasso, and Mohawk. Mohawk seemed to take a special interest in me, and began twirling me in circles as he spun just inches from my mask. To stare into the eyes of a wild dolphin for the first time, and to see him look back at you with equal curiosity and amusement is something truly stunning. I left the water convinced nothing else would top that experience, and yet at times it seemed as though the dolphins made it their mission to do exactly that. Day after day our team had incredible encounters with the pod, leaving me completely amazed. Whether I was standing on the bow trying to keep count of the 30+ dolphins leaping in every direction, or observing Hepta, a young male we saw numerous times, dart around with a child-like inquisitiveness, I was continually awestruck by the beauty and grace of the dolphins in their natural environment.

As the dolphins amazed me daily with their energy and intelligence, the WDP team continued to impress me in the quality of work they do. Hours spent on dolphin photo identification, video vocalization logs, and environmental conditions reports add up to an unrivaled database of behavioral information. Our understanding of these incredible creatures is expanding exponentially, and it is in large part due to the painstakingly detailed work of the Wild Dolphin Project. Joining the WDP this summer was the experience of a lifetime, and I cannot wait to see the outstanding discoveries that come from their efforts as they seek to better understand and protect spotted dolphins "In Their World...On Their Terms".

Graysen Boehning
College Sophomore at Palm Beach Atlantic University
Major: Zoology



R/V Stenella anchored on White Sand Ridge



Graysen Boehning observing a group of spotted swimmers

Morgan Will, Field Assistant

The summer before last, I was able to intern with the Wild Dolphin Project on their first trip of the season. On this trip, we only encountered the spotted dolphins once, but that was enough for me to fall in love with them. I learned so much, and had such an amazing time, that I could not resist coming back for more.

This past summer, I was fortunate enough to go on five of the nine trips of the season. Each trip was different, some with spotted dolphin encounters three times a day, some with only two encounters the whole trip. Despite this, each trip brought new experiences and

knowledge to the table. When there were fewer encounters, there was more time to learn dolphin IDs and query the researchers about behavior and acoustics.

Through this experience, I gained a lot of knowledge about spotted dolphin behavior, as well as field research experience. By the end of the summer, I was able to identify specific dolphins in the water, as well as recognize some of their whistles and clicks. I was also able to help the project with some database entry, working to digitize the massive amounts of data collected during the summer research trips. Overall,



Morgan Will working on her underwater photography skills

these trips are some of the most memorable experiences I have ever had and I look forward to coming out next summer to work with the Wild Dolphin Project.

Morgan Will
College Junior at Nova Southeastern University
Major: Marine Biology & Environmental Science

CAPTAIN'S CORNER - SEPTEMBER 2018



Captain Brad Ruda



Staring down the feeder band of Tropical Storm Gordon



First Mate Tyler Hazelwood

Hey Wild Dolphin Project friends and family! It's Captain Brad here. The 2018 field season has come to an end. What a season it was!

As is to be expected in the Bahamas, we dealt with some weather this year like tropical storms Alberto and Gordon. Each of them skirted the research area while we were there but we stayed safe in the leeward side of the island. A big thanks to the crew who rode those storms out with us and never complained during turbulent seas.

This season the Stenella crew was flawless as usual. Theresa

is still the best and hardest working cook in the industry. We hired a new mate, Tyler Hazelwood, and we couldn't have found a better guy to fit our team. He worked hard, was always safe, and kept us laughing and smiling all season. He showed a passion for the mission of the project which makes my job so much easier. The research assistants were great this year. Led by Research Assistant, Cassie Volker, and the young bucks Liah, Morgan and Brittini they all worked hard and did a great job. A big thanks to Melissa for the home support from the office we couldn't do it without you! And last but not

important a big thanks to Dr. Denise Herzing who provides great leadership and makes the work fun and easy.

Earlier this year we finished our hydraulic overhaul and we got some window frames repaired along with fresh paint among many other things! And this offseason we're looking forward to continuing to upgrade our beautiful boat and research platform while also completing our fire suppression system and many other upgrades!

Thankfully, Stenella ran great this year and led us to dolphins time and time again. We had dolphin encounters from the

start of the season to the very last day, from our old research areas to new territory, from large 30+ groups to small. We found some of our guys that we hadn't seen in a while and some that we see almost every trip. It truly was a great season. I couldn't have asked for a better crew or for the boat to run better. I am already dreaming of next season and the things the future will bring us.

Captain Brad Ruda
Captain R/V Stenella,
Wild Dolphin Project

PREPARING FOR 2019



Research Team from Trip #1, 2018 (Brittini Hill, Bethany Augliere, Cassie Volker, Morgan Will)

WDP members and the general public are welcome to join our summer research trips. Passengers and guests are invited to assist our research team studying and observing dolphin behavior both underwater and from the deck, relish the spectacular sunsets, and enjoy presentations and lectures given in the evening. A full-time cook is aboard ensuring everyone is well fed and hydrated as some dolphin encounters can be lengthy and can happen multiple times throughout the day.

Students currently enrolled in high school or college with an interest in marine biology can participate in our internship program. Responsibilities are to conduct daily dolphin watches on the bridge, assist the research team with logging data, and assist with underwater photography and processing for photo identification.

9-days at sea assisting our research team studying the natural behavior of dolphins in the wild, learning the how's and why's of our non-invasive approach, getting unplugged from the demands of the world, and enjoying starlit skies and fiery sunsets while getting well fed.... What other reason do you need to join us in 2019 for our summer research trips?!

Signing up is easy!

FOR MEMBERS

In December, we finalize the summer schedule and notify members via email that trips are open for sign up. Simply provide the information below and we'll send you the application paperwork and payment options. Once your spot is fully reserved (by submitting your application and making payment in full), we will send you marina instructions, departure details, packing guidelines, and other travel information.

FOR NON-MEMBERS

To be placed on a notification list where you will receive an email in January when the remaining trip spots are open to the general public, simply provide the information below and we'll send you the application paperwork and payment options. Once your spot is fully reserved (by submitting your application and making payment in full), we will send you marina instructions, departure details, packing guidelines, and other travel information.



Alyson Myers, recent PhD graduate, takes underwater video and audio recording of Sunami, a male in the Fused age class

Email fieldwork@wilddolphinproject.org or call 561.575.5660 with the following information:

- Full Name (as it is written on your passport)
- Email address
- Phone number
- Is participant younger than 18 years of age? (Yes or No)
- Preferred trip number (or trip dates)

Visit www.wilddolphinproject.org/participate/bahamas-trip or www.wilddolphinproject.org/participate/student-internship-opportunities for more information.

-WDP Fieldwork

2019 TRIPS

Trip 1	May
Trip 2	May
Trip 3	June
Trip 4	June
Trip 5	July
Trip 6	July
Trip 7	August
Trip 8	August
Trip 9	September

Trip Dates to be Announced

Ways to Support our Research

There are many ways to support our research here at The Wild Dolphin Project. Here are just a few. For more details and direct links visit the "donate" section of our website or email info@wilddolphinproject.org

Amazon Smile – Make a contribution to WDP without costing you anything. Simply log into Amazon Smile using your existing Amazon user name and password, select Wild Dolphin Project as your selected charity and continue shopping as usual. The AmazonSmile Foundation will donate 0.5% of the purchase price from your eligible purchases!

Buy & Sell on Ebay – Wild Dolphin Project is part of the eBay Giving Works program. You can support our mission when you buy and sell on eBay.

Paypal Giving – It's easy to donate using your Paypal account. And you can set up automatic recurring donations to make it easy to give effortlessly! Set it all up in PayPal!

Just Giving – Join over 22 million people who support charities and personal causes through JustGiving.com, the world's largest giving platform.

Network for Good makes giving to charity easy and convenient. Support your favorite charities in one place, have your records stored for tax time, set up automated monthly giving, dedicate donations in honor of loved ones, share your favorite charities with others, and more.

Benevity is the global leader in online workplace giving, matching, volunteering and grant management solutions. Their award-winning solutions to power their Goodness Programs and corporate philanthropy, helping them attract, retain and engage today's workers by connecting people personally to causes that matter to them.

Facebook Fundraisers – Friends and family can celebrate your birthday by donating to a charity that you care about. Set up a birthday fundraiser and help share the mission and the vision of WDP.

Workplace Matching Programs - Many corporations offer a gift-matching incentive where they match your donations to your favorite charity (ahem) up to a certain amount. Usually, it's simply a form to fill out within a year of the date you donated. Your HR department will have guidelines and instructions.

Stock Donations – Get the full value of donated stock and avoid the tax on capital gains. Your broker can easily transfer stock from your account directly to WDP. You can download the form from our website or please contact our office for specific instructions.

Amazon Wishlist – WDP is continually seeking better equipment, faster technology, and upgrades to boat equipment. If you would like to make an in-kind donation please contact our office at 561-575-5660 or help by shopping our wishlist on Amazon.



Merchandise – All proceeds from WDP t-shirts, books, gift sets and other merchandise help fund our research by providing more time in the field. We thank you for your purchases as you support our mission to study free-ranging Atlantic spotted dolphins . . . In Their World . . . On Their Terms.



PHOTO: BETHANY AUGLIERE

Research Assistant Cassie Volker takes identification photos wearing WDP's new hoodies.

Memberships – As a member of the Wild Dolphin Project you get a free coffee table book from Dr. Denise Herzing, a newsletter, and first priority when signing up for summer trips! Whether you are looking to possibly participate onboard R/V Stenella or just stay updated on the project, our research, and upcoming events, a WDP membership will benefit you.



Why I Support WDP

My first research trip with Dr. Herzing to study Atlantic spotted dolphins goes back to 1987. My first close up encounter was with a female dolphin named Blaze. That moment was all it took to change my life in so many ways!

Since then, The Project has been a part of my life and continues today. I hope you will join me in supporting Dr. Herzing's future work ensuring the dolphins living in the waters of the Little Bahama Bank will remain healthy and the dream of interspecies communication becomes a reality.

Peyton Lee, President Wood Worx, Inc. Where trees go to branch out. www.woodworxinc.com 205-568-1822

Atargatis

Atargatis is the mythological goddess of fertility and the underwater world.

When Bear Jones first began work on this 4-foot tall, chain saw carved sculpture, he wasn't familiar with Atlantic spotted dolphins but wanted to create a special gift for friend and co-worker, Peyton Lee - a long-time supporter of the Wild Dolphin Project.

Carved from a single red cedar log, Bear took his time to get the best representation of a real dolphin by reading Dr. Herzing's book and looking through countless photographs of spotted dolphins. Earlier this year, Atargatis came to life. The sculpture will be on display at 3 art shows this fall in Birmingham, AL.



EVENTS



RECENT EVENTS

Signature Event: Wild Ocean Science 2018

Our first annual event, Wild Ocean Science, took place in March and was a success! Well over 200 people were in attendance filling the lobby area of the Osher Lifelong Learning Center at FAU in Jupiter. A beautiful slideshow by photographer, Hussain Aga Khan, donated by his foundation, Focused on Nature, played in the auditorium while guests enjoyed refreshments, browsed the raffle and silent auction tables, had their book signed by Dr. Herzing, perused our merchandise, and mingled with friends. As the event got underway, special guest host Miles O'Brien introduced the premiering film, "Dolphins: Breaking the Code" by Changing Seas, a SouthFlorida PBS production. Thanks to sponsors

38 students from The Ideal School in Royal Palm Beach, The Gale Academy in West Palm, and FAU were in attendance, asking some great questions during the Q&A. Thanks to our generous sponsors for making this event possible! (see page 10)

Local Talks: River Center 2018

In February, Research assistant, Cassie Volker, gave a compelling and educational presentation to over 70 people about the objectives and strategies of The Wild Dolphin Project at the River Center in Jupiter, Florida. The River Center is dedicated to preserving the Loxahatchee River and its natural habitats, by designing innovative wastewater solutions, furthering river research efforts

and fostering environmental stewardship.

Kiwanis Club 2018

In October, Research Assistant, Cassie Volker presented to the Kiwanis Club of Delray Beach. Her topic was overview and introduction to The Wild Dolphin Project. This club meets every week and has served the needs of our community for over 41 years. The Kiwanis club of Delray Beach-Sunrise has numerous opportunities to get involved and provides several benefits to its members.

Fundraisers: Great Give 2018

We participated in the Great Give, a 24-hour online giving opportunity celebrating the spirit of giving. Contributions received during the Great Give helped fund the use of technology such as Drones

and Passive Acoustic Monitoring equipment. Drones are helpful in surveillance and monitoring the behavior of the animals when they are away from the vicinity of the boat and the listening devices are used for recording dolphin sounds remotely, which were deployed this summer. These devices allowed us to analyze when dolphins travel through certain areas. The outcome from this work can be followed in our blogs.

1. Dr. Herzing signs books at Wild Ocean Science 2. Special Guest Host and Journalist, Miles O'Brien (left), Research Director and Founder, Dr. Denise Herzing (center), Photographer and WDP Board Member, Ruth Petzold (right). 3. Q&A from the audience during Wild Ocean Science 4. Local Presentation at the River Center by Research Assistant, Cassie Volker

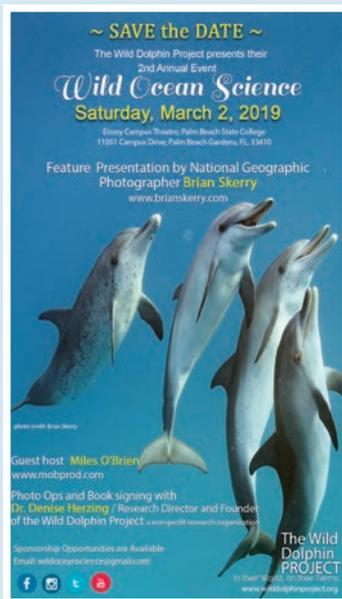
SAVE THE DATE

Wild Ocean Science 2019

Save the Date! Join us **SATURDAY, MARCH 2ND** for our 2nd annual signature event, Wild Ocean Science. This year's unique event will feature National Geographic photographer, **Brian Skerry** and will be hosted again by journalist, Miles O'Brien. Sponsorship opportunities are available. Contact Melissa at 561.575.5660 or email wildoceanscience@gmail.com.

Visit www.wilddolphinproject.org/media/wild-ocean-science/ for updates and more details.

Brian Skerry is a photojournalist specializing in marine wildlife and underwater environments. Since 1998 he has been a contract photographer for National Geographic Magazine covering a wide range of subjects and stories. In 2014 he was one of five photographers named as a National Geographic Photography Fellow. In 2015 he was named a Nikon Ambassador and in June 2017 he was awarded the title of Rolex National Geographic Explorer of the Year.



UPCOMING EVENTS

• **TUESDAY, NOVEMBER 27TH** WDP will participate in the biggest online giving event worldwide: #GivingTuesday. During this day of giving, WDP will be celebrating the significance of long-term research and how it directly impacts the dolphins in the wild, such as Lamda.

• **WEDNESDAY, FEBRUARY 13, 2019** Research Assistant, Cassie Volker will be presenting to Grass River Garden Club in Delray whose focus is on the environment.

• **SATURDAY, MARCH 2, 2019** our 2nd annual Wild Ocean Science event will take place at the Eissey Campus Theatre in Palm Beach Gardens, Florida. Mark this date in your calendar now and visit www.wilddolphinproject.org/media/wild-ocean-science/ for sponsorship opportunities, tickets, and event details.

• **WEDNESDAY, MARCH 27, 2019** PBS's Changing Seas will offer a live screening of "Dolphins: Breaking the Code" with Q&A from the

expert panel of WDP researchers after the film.

• **SATURDAY, APRIL 6, 2019** WDP will be participating in Coastal Fest, an annual coastal themed free event to be held at The Plaza Down Under on the Riverwalk in Jupiter, Florida

• **WEDNESDAY, APRIL 24, 2019** WDP will be participating in the annual 24-hour online event: Great Give 2019. Critical data was obtained by using this equipment during the 2018 field season and we hope to deploy it again in 2019. These listening devices are used for recording dolphin sounds remotely and allow us to analyze when dolphins travel through certain areas.

If your club, school, or community is interested in having WDP attend or speak at your event, please call 561.575.5660 or email us at media@wilddolphinproject.org

LOST LAMDA: A STRANDED DOLPHIN IN THE BAHAMAS

THE HISTORY

We first observed Lamda in 2013 as a juvenile in the speckled age class. Since 2013, he has been seen every field season for a total of 20 times. In 2015, he became mottled (young adult age class) and we now estimate him to be approximately 10 years old. He is active in his group and has recently been observed engaging in courtship and mating behavior with other female spotted.

THE STRANDING

In early September we were notified by our colleague Dr. Diane Claridge, that a male spotted dolphin had stranded, and was being rehabilitated in the Bahamas. Thanks to her fast-acting group, Bahamas Marine Mammal Research Organization (BMMRO), this dolphin received critical

care and was flown rapidly to an Animal Rescue Center in Nassau, Bahamas.

After WDP received photographs of the individual, WDP's Research Assistant, Cassie Volker, set to work on trying to identify him. After carefully reviewing photos from the stranding and his rehabilitation, there he was, Lamda, a male from our Bimini group. With his spots clearly matched on both sides, and a full sighting history available for at least 5 years, we quickly confirmed that we knew who he was and where he lived. Last seen by us in early August, for some reason, Lamda had stranded about 70 miles east of his normal area, in the Berry Islands.

One of the powerful strengths of this stranding response has been the cooperation of the groups involved. BMMRO has

a great stranding network in the Bahamas, and the team at Atlantis in Nassau provided the expertise for medical treatment, air lift, and full rehabilitation. We provided an early identification of the individual, and sighting history, lending support to the Bahamian Government for the return of Lamda to his group. Dr. Randy Wells, from Mote Marine Laboratory & Aquarium, offered a satellite tag and tracking for Lamda, so he could be monitored after release. While Kelly Melilio from the Dolphin Communication Project and her husband Al Sweeting, from Bimini, also offered additional boat support locally for any follow-up tracking of Lamda.

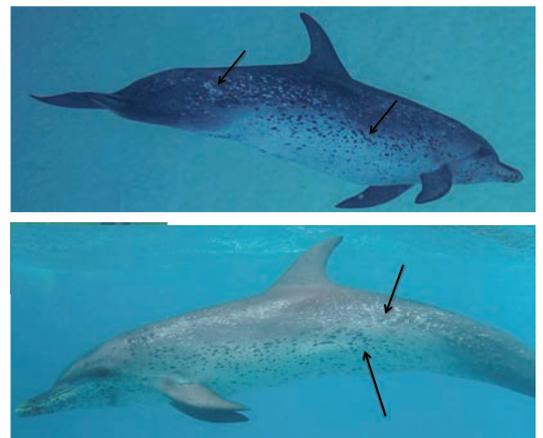
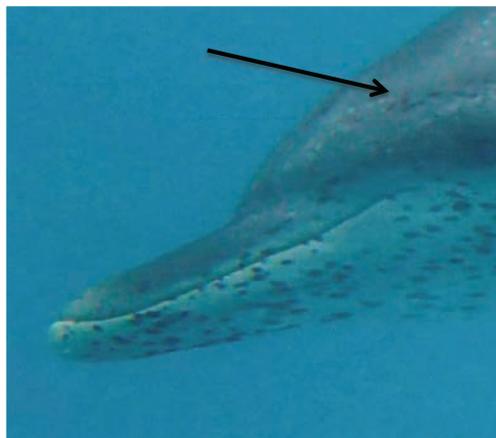
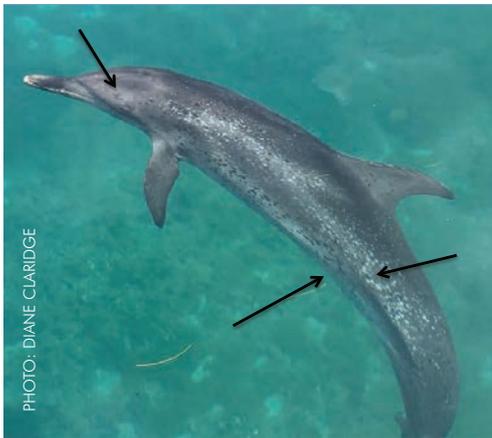
On October 25th R/V Stenella left Florida for the Bahamas with six crew members: Captain Brad Ruda, Research Assistant Cassie Volker, Board Member

Drew Mayer, Team member Melissa Williams, Field Assistant Liah McPherson, and Research Director Dr. Denise Herzing. We spent two days off Bimini trying to find Lamda's group and we located them on October 26 and 27th.

RELEASE AND TRACKING

On the morning of Monday, October 29th a seaplane brought Lamda over to Bimini from Nassau. Lamda was satellite tagged on the small release boat as they made their way out of the harbor and back out to sea.

We had tracked his family for the two days previous to the release, therefore Lamda was placed into the water nearby where his group was last seen. Our RA Cassie Volker documented his first moments back in the water, and our field assistant Liah McPherson kept a visual on him using a drone. We were able to follow Lamda for about 20 minutes heading south. By late that afternoon, Randy Wells, and his tracking team at Mote Marine Lab had *(continued on page 11)*



By comparing photos taken while Lamda was stranded on the beach, and while being rehabilitated, WDP was able to identify unique spot patterns and recognize this dolphin as Lamda



Lamda observed by WDP in 2018



Lamda observed with a large group in 2018

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(continued from page 9)
sent us satellite data showing Lamda continuing south on the edge of the sandbank.

Over the next two days we stayed in the area to try to track Lamda visually, but by this time he was well beyond our reach and on his own. We will be monitoring him in the months to come, to make

sure he is still mobile and to discover where this mysterious male spotted dolphin goes in the winter. Perhaps in the end, Lamda will have taught us more than we have ever known about the true home range of the Atlantic spotted dolphins in the Bahamas.

Much thanks to all of Lamda's team: Bahamas Marine Mammal

Research Organization, Dolphin Communication Project, Mote Marine Laboratory & Aquarium, and Dolphin Cay Animal Rehabilitation Center at Atlantis, Paradise Island.

Also a **BIG THANK YOU** for our membership sponsors for helping us fuel R/V Stenella to get her across to the Bahamas to help Lamda.



The stranding



Lamda is swimming free in the clear Bahamian water with a satellite tag attached securely to his dorsal fin

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Website:

www.WildDolphinProject.org

General Email:

info@wilddolphinproject.org

Trip Information Email:
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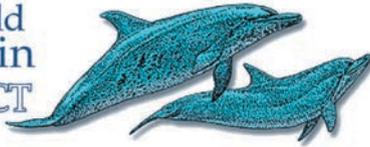
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