

# NOTES FROM THE FIELD

## WILD DOLPHIN PROJECT

### VITAL RESEARCH CONTINUES!

**T**his summer marks our 26th field season in the Bahamas studying the Atlantic spotted dolphins. Over the decades we have tracked individual dolphins and watched them grow up and start their families.



Collecting fecal samples and analyzing the genetic material has provided greater insight into the lives of the Atlantic spotted dolphin.

WDP continues to use benign research methods and have, through fecal collection, verified many of our mother/calf relationships and determined likely paternity for our male dolphins! Although we lost many of our known dolphins through the hurricane years of 2004 and 2005, the dolphin community is still thriving out in the Bahamas. Essentially it took the dolphin community over three years to stabilize socially and reproductively. It is a harsh reminder of the fragile balance between nature and human-made impacts and one we need always to keep in mind for all species on our precious planet.

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Here is Laguna. She had her first calf in 2008, which made Little-Gash a grandmother, and made them a three-generation family!



Romeo, one of the alliance pair Romeo and BigGash, our first known grandfather!

The Wild Dolphin Project remains a lean, mean research machine. The last two years of challenging economic times has affected all non-profits, including WDP.

Thanks to all our very loyal supporters, members, and foundations, we remain above water. However, we still need your support, so please consider renewing your membership for 2010 or joining us for a field trip this summer. We remain committed to following the lives of this incredible community of wild dolphins and telling their story through science and public education.

Dr. Denise L. Herzing  
Founder and Research Director  
2008 Guggenheim Fellow



Adding another three-generation family, Tyler had Tristan this past summer. We now know who Tyler's dad is - Romeo - our first known grandfather!



## Congratulations...

### Congratulations Dr. Cindy Elliser!

After 4 years of hard work, our research assistant, Cindy Elliser, has graduated with her doctorate! Her study focused on the social structure of both the bottlenose and spotted dolphins, their interspecies interactions and how the loss of individuals following hurricanes Jeanne and Frances in 2004 affected their associations. Her dissertation was divided into 4 chapters.

Chapter 1: Social restructuring of a resident pod of Atlantic bottlenose dolphins, *Tursiops truncatus*, after two major hurricanes. This previously stable community split into two units after the loss of 30 individuals and the immigration of 27 individuals into the population following the hurricanes. Within each unit the associations were more tight-knit than any previous work and associations between units were few and of low level. Immigrants were present in both units and male immigrants seemed to assimilate more easily into the population than females. Sex preferences remained a strong driving force in association patterns and also for how immigrants were accepted into the population.



Chapter 2: Long-term social structure of a resident pod of Atlantic spotted dolphins, *Stenella frontalis*, 1991-2002. The long-term association patterns confirmed the delineation of the Northern, Central and Southern clusters. Sex and age were the primary forces driving association patterns, similar to other well-studied bottlenose dolphin populations. Male associations were stronger between individuals of the same age class. Males formed long-term alliances that crystallized as adults (mottled and fused). Juvenile males often had strong associations with future alliance partners. Two levels of alliance formation were evident, similar to that in Shark Bay, Australia. There were primary alliances between pairs/trios of individuals and secondary alliances comprised of two or more alliances. Movement by males across clusters was evident. Female associations were constrained within their clusters and associations were primarily driven by reproductive status and social familiarity.

Females did not have stronger associations with individuals of the same age class as males did. This is because females often associate with older offspring (both theirs and their female associates').





Chapter 3: Stability of Atlantic spotted dolphins, *Stenella frontalis*, social structure after two major hurricanes. Despite losing 36% of the population, the community structure of the Northern, Central and Southern clusters remained. Associations were more tight-knit within each cluster than they were previously. Sex and age were still the primary driving forces in association patterns. Female associations differed little from long-term analysis, being constrained within their clusters and affected by reproductive status and social familiarity. Male associations were still based on age and alliance formation. However, some differences were documented. Only one secondary alliance was present, leaving a more simplified pattern of primary alliances. In addition, there were juvenile alliances, which had not been documented previously.

Chapter 4: Long-term interspecies association patterns of Atlantic bottlenose dolphins, *Tursiops truncatus*, and Atlantic spotted dolphins, *Stenella frontalis*, and the effect of demographic changes following two major hurricanes. There were few long-term associations between species. There was a striking difference in association patterns between species during interspecies encounters. The majority (68%) of the spotted dolphin population participated and was regularly re-sighted in interspecies encounters. Only ~10% of the bottlenose dolphin population participated and individuals were not regularly re-sighted. Alliances were important for spotted dolphins but not for bottlenose dolphins. Spotted dolphin group size was always larger than bottlenose dolphins, particularly during aggressive encounters. This indicates the importance of group size and alliances (particularly secondary alliances) for spotted dolphins. After the hurricanes, behavior changed (there was no overt aggression of bottlenose to spotted dolphins) and spotted dolphin group size was no longer larger. Although altered, they still engaged in interspecies encounters, indicating that this is a vital part of how they live together on the bank.



I would like to thank Dr. Herzing and WDP for making this work possible and guiding me through the process. I thank all participants and graduate students that have helped on the boat and in the lab over the many years encompassed in this study. It has been a long journey, but a rewarding one.

Best Fishes,  
Dr. Cindy Elliser  
Research Assistant  
Wild Dolphin Project





## ***FLORIDA WORK: THE FIRST YEAR***

**A**s many of you know, we began our new Florida Expansion Project in September of 2009. We had a great first trip during an offshore survey in September where we saw both spotted and bottlenose dolphins (see Fall 2009 Newsletter). Using the small boat in the Intracoastal Waterway (ICW), we have gotten out almost every month and documented bottlenose dolphins on ~50% of our surveys. The weather has been the most trying part of this process. There was non-stop wind and rain this fall/winter, making it difficult to schedule surveys in advance. Although we have had limited field time this year, mainly due to weather, our success in finding dolphins shows that the Florida work has a promising future.



Your support of WDP will help us continue this important work, along with our main study in the Bahamas. Whether through monetary or in-kind donations, every bit helps! Be sure to check out the WDP wish list at the end of the newsletter for items you may be able to donate.

## ***WDP NEWS: New Staff Member***

**T**he Wild Dolphin Project has a new staff member: Toni Wheeler has joined the WDP team as Administrative Assistant. Toni arrived in Jupiter from New York over 20 years ago, and has enjoyed the Florida lifestyle ever since. During this time, Toni has worked for area non-profits, and for several years was an editor for a local independent publishing house. When she is not in the WDP research office, Toni can most often be found volunteering as “Band Mom” for the music programs at her children’s schools in Jupiter.



## ***A Greener Tomorrow Starts Today Purity Products: A WDP Corporate Sponsor***

**F**or two years, Purity Products has been a corporate sponsor of The Wild Dolphin Project, helping preserve our environment. Purity Products is recognized for its evidence-based nutritional supplements. From products that are known to help increase brain functioning to those helping our pets' health, Purity Products has a variety of formulas to serve the entire body. Their flagship formulas include the Perfect Multi Formulas, HA Formulas, Evoxin CG, Organic Super Reds, Pharmaceutical Grade Fish Oils and more.

Purity Products has made several steps in the preservation of the environment. It is important to them to lessen their "carbon footprint" and improve the energy efficiency of its operation. They have many partners that share the same values. Purity Products work with suppliers to create better, environmentally-friendly products that are not only good for consumers but for the environment as well. They are committed to a "greener" future!

The Wild Dolphin Project gives a BIG THANKS to Purity Products [www.purityproducts.com](http://www.purityproducts.com) for their continued financial support and their commitment to the environment!

Please visit WDP's website at [www.wilddolphinproject.org](http://www.wilddolphinproject.org) or contact the office at 561.575.5660 for more information on how your company can become a corporate sponsor too!



## ***ARTIGRAS 2010***

**A** Another successful year at ArtiGras! WDP would like to thank SE Printing and Don Mader for once again donating their ArtiGras sponsor booth to WDP this year. ArtiGras, held each February at Abacoa Town Center in Jupiter, is a juried art festival with hundreds of invited artists displaying their beautiful painting, photography, sculpture and more. With thousands of people enjoying the festival over a three-day weekend, it is a great way for WDP to get local exposure and educate people about what we do and why it is important. Thank you to all the staff, graduate students and volunteers who helped man the booth and made ArtiGras such a great success for WDP!



## DEVELOPMENT UPDATE & BULLETIN BOARD

### 2010 FIELD TRIPS

We hope that you will decide to join us on board R/V *Stenella* this summer for our 26th field season, and participate in an amazing research experience. Full information, including FAQ and schedule information, is posted on our Website ([www.wilddolphin-project.org](http://www.wilddolphin-project.org)) along with a printable trip application. Here's an excerpt from "A Typical Day on *Stenella*" – you can read the full story on our Website!

**9am - noon:** We usually pull up the anchor around 9am to start searching the area for dolphins. You will be put to work on your first dolphin watch of the day. After your 1-hour shift, you have down time to listen to music, talk, or just enjoy the view. We have plenty of scientific articles and other materials to read, and we encourage you to learn more about the research, as well as the individual dolphins you may see.

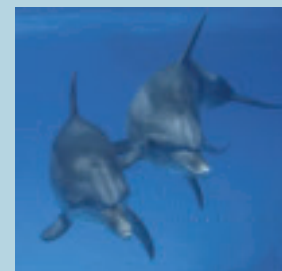
**1pm - 8pm:** The boat is still underway; however, we may take some time to drift or anchor, depending on the day. During the afternoon hours you will work your second dolphin watch. This is a popular time to take a nap, but remember: the dolphins can come by at anytime!

**9pm - 11pm:** Now it is time to watch dolphin video – this can be anywhere from 10 minutes to an hour or more, depending on the encounters of the day. Afterwards, enjoy the aft deck and stargazing. Away from all the city lights, you will be amazed at the beauty of the stars and the night sky. You are free to stay up as late as you want, but most people are in bed by 11pm, because the days are long, and the dolphins can tire you out! Sleep tight, and wake up refreshed for another great day on board R/V *Stenella*!

Remaining trip dates with available space are listed below; we depart Florida on Tuesdays and return on Thursdays. Weather permitting, we don't see land at all for 10 days! The cost per participant is \$2,495. We are offering a 10% (\$250) discount to past trip participants!

Please note that availability changes frequently. Updated information will be posted on our Website throughout the season, so check often. Completed application (from the Website) and deposit are required to confirm a space on a trip. Call our research office at 561-575-5660 for more information!

JULY 6-JULY 15  
JULY 20-JULY 29  
AUGUST 3-AUGUST 12  
AUGUST 17-AUGUST 26  
AUGUST 31-SEPTEMBER 9



### STOCKS

Sick of watching your stocks go down? We'll be happy to take them off your watch list! What better way to help WDP than to turn over some of your stocks to WDP. Your generous donation will support our ongoing research. Contact us or the **myFi group** with Solomon Smith Barney: 877-357-0888.

### GIVING THROUGH GOODSEARCH

Did you know that every time you search the Internet or make a purchase through one of hundreds of commonly visited Web sites, you can make a contribution to your favorite cause? Go to [www.goodsearch.com](http://www.goodsearch.com) and follow the instructions to select WDP under "Who do you GoodSearch for," or call us at 561-575-5660 for more information!

### WISH LIST

MACINTOSH COMPUTERS: G4 OR HIGHER

MACINTOSH SERVER

FLAT SCREEN COMPUTER MONITORS

PC COMPUTERS: 1GHZ PROCESSOR, 1GB RAM OR HIGHER

DOCK SPACE FOR *STENELLA*

OFFICE SPACE - NORTH PALM BEACH COUNTY

UNUSED AIRLINE MILES

MATLAB SOFTWARE, 2006A, 2006B OR 7.0

CANON EOS 7D SLR

CANON EOS TELEPHOTO ZOOM 70-300 MM LENS!

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WDP is part of the **eBay Giving Works** External Link program. This means you can support our mission when you buy and sell on eBay.

#### Here's how:

**Buying:** When you shop on eBay, look for items that benefit us. You can get a great deal and support WDP at the same time!

**Selling:** Did you know that charity listings often get more bids and higher prices than regular eBay listings? Boost your sales and support our critical work while you're at it! Plus eBay gives back to you too, with a fee credit on your basic selling fees! To support WDP when you sell on eBay, just designate our organization to receive 10-100% of your final sale price the next time you list something for sale.

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(Donations received before May 1, 2010)

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### 2009 No Show Ball

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**Please note:** All monetary giving is based on a calendar year and is accrued throughout the year. The No Show Ball funding is carried over to the following year.

### 2010 CORPORATE SPONSORSHIP

Purity Products

### Products and In-Kind Gifts:

**Blue Water Graphics and Southeastern Printing,** Don Mader, for sponsoring our booth at ArtiGras, and for production of the newsletters, holiday cards, auction invites, programs, and other printing needs for The Wild Dolphin Project

**Shaklee Corporation** for supplying WDP with their environment-friendly products for use onboard *R/V Stenella* and in the research office

Ruth Petzold for an Apple PowerBook G4

**ArtiGras volunteers** Chris Malinowski, Jessica Cusick, Meghan Weinpress, Bethany Augliere, Gina Cassulo, Tia Wrigley, and Tristan Siebeneck.

## FOUNDATION SUPPORT

Frances V.R. Seebe Charitable Trust  
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WDP would like to apologize for any misprints, mistakes or omissions. Please notify us with any changes and we will be sure to correct them in the next issue of *Notes from the Field*. Thank you.



## IN THIS ISSUE

VITAL RESEARCH  
CONTINUES!

CONGRATULATIONS,  
DR. CINDY ELLISER!

SPONSOR SPOTLIGHT

WDP NEWS

FLORIDA WORK:  
THE FIRST YEAR

DEVELOPMENT UPDATE

BULLETIN BOARD

THANK YOU



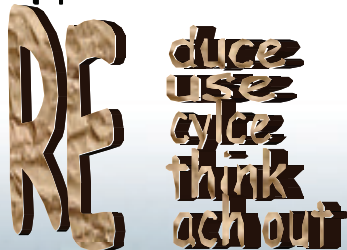
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*\*All memberships are based on a calendar year.*

*All monetary contributions are accumulated to your annual membership.*

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Names only will be published in newsletter, annual reports, etc.  
If you would like to be anonymous, please check here. ☐

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All donations are tax deductible as allowed by law. Please make  
checks payable to The Wild Dolphin Project and send to P.O. Box  
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