Hawaiian Spinner Dolphins
Outreach, Enforcement, &
Community Engagement

MMC Annual Meeting

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Protected Resource Division
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Outreach Overview

Commercial Viewing
- Tour operators.
- Visitors using tours.
- Spiritual Retreats.
- Tourism industry (Visitors bureaus, travel agencies, etc.).

Recreational Viewing
- Local residents.
- Visitors not using tours.
- Organized groups (swim spiritual groups, etc).
- Social media.

www.oceanjoycruises.com
www.gohawaii.com
Outreach – Tour Operators

• Ocean Users Workshop with the Sanctuary:
  • Conducted on Kaua`i, O`ahu, Maui, and Big Island.
• One on one meetings prior to approach rule proposal:
  • Five on Big Island, 11 on O`ahu.
• Tour evaluations and ride-alongs:
  • One tour group after harassment case.
  • Dolphin SMART operators.
Dolphin SMART – Overview

- Voluntary program to promote responsible stewardship of dolphins and other marine wildlife.
  - Minimize adverse interactions.
  - Wildlife friendly marketing and manage customer expectations.
  - Educate operators and their customers.
Dolphin SMART – History

• Established in 2007 in the Florida Keys National Marine Sanctuary.
• Expanded to other parts of SW Florida and Alabama in 2008; Hawai`i in 2011.
• Founding partners:
  • NOAA Fisheries
  • Florida Keys National Marine Sanctuary
  • Whale and Dolphin Conservation (WDC)
  • The Dolphin Ecology Project
Recognized Operators
• Voluntarily follow a set of criteria to demonstrate support of dolphin conservation.
• 19 Recognized Operators nationally, five in Hawai`i.

Proud Supporters
• Raise public awareness of program and promote responsible viewing and advertising.
• Companies or organizations promote tours or support responsible viewing.
• 66 Proud Supporters nationally, 13 in Hawai`i:
Ideas for updating the Dolphin SMART program:

- Build new and foster existing partnerships.
  - Hawai`i Tourism Authority (HTA) – communication with and influence over tourism industry.
  - Hawai`i Ecotourism Association (HEA) – ecotourism certification program.
- Focus on education and training.
  - Free online training modules.
  - Annual workshops on each island.
- More inclusive of other stakeholders in tourism industry.
  - Travel agencies, hotel concierges, airlines, etc.
Recent Outreach Events

- Global Tourism Summit:
  - Focus on “responsible wildlife marketing”.
  - Annually sponsored by HTA.
- World Oceans Day in Waianae, Oahu.
  - Close proximity to dolphin swimming beaches.
- International Save the Vaquita Day at the Waikiki Aquarium.
- Multiple presentations and events at schools and universities.
  - Presentations at UH Manoa and Tokai University.
  - Events with schools near Waianae Coast (Oahu).
  - Video chat Q&A with Honaunau Elementary (Big Island).
Outreach Partnerships

Hawai`i Tourism Authority:
• Shifting focus to “sustainable” tourism.
• Provides platform to share message (e.g., GTS).
• Communication with visitors and industry.

Hawai`i Ecotourism Association:
• Recently added “no swim with dolphins” criteria to certification checklist.

PONO at UH Manoa
• Uses foreign language skills to promote conservation of protected wildlife.
• Translates outreach materials and signs.
• Analyzes Japanese advertisements and provides suggestions for marketing guidelines.
Big Island

- Kama`aina United to Protect the `Aina (KUPA) & Friends of Ho`okena Beach Park (FOHBP):
  - Outreach to ocean users and tour operators.
  - Developed their own signage with info and viewing guidance.
  - Engage state and county management and enforcement agencies.
- Keōua Canoe Club
  - Conduct outreach to snorkelers at Hōnaunau.
- Coral Reef Alliance
  - West Hawai`i Voluntary Standards for Marine Tourism (est. 2009).
  - Working group consisted of tour operators, Hawai`i DLNR, NOAA Fisheries, and the Sanctuary.
  - Not aware of current compliance metrics of these standards.
Community Engagement

O`ahu
- "Knowledge Café" at the IUCN WCC in 2016
  - Theme – *Sustainable Marine Ecotourism*
  - Workshop convened several stakeholder groups (gov’t agencies, tour operators, researchers, tourism bureaus, cultural practitioners, etc.).
- UH PONO
  - Engages undergrad and grad students from several disciplines.
- Protectors of Paradise
  - Local conservation group conducting outreach in Makua.

Maui & Lana`i
- HI State Parks
  - Signage in La Perouse Bay with info and viewing guidance.
- Pulama Lana`i
  - Outreach to Four Seasons guests.
Supporting Enforcement

• Managing reports of potential take incidents (PTIs).
  • Process that responds to reports of PTIs using systematic decision trees to determine if the incident should be:
    • Forwarded to NOAA OLE (Enforcement Referral), or
    • Managed by PRD through outreach (Management Action).
  • Receive approx. 70 reports annually, most from social media.
• NOAA OLE and PRD collaboratively assess incidents, conduct trainings, patrols/ride alongs, and joint outreach efforts.
• Joint Enforcement Agreement (JEA) provides funding to DOCARE:
  • PRD supports DOCARE Academy and training for current officers.
  • Create supporting materials (e.g., spinner dolphin harassment form).
Commercial Viewing:
• Two tour operators issued three total penalties:
  • Operator on Big Island – incident in 2014.
  • Operator on O`ahu – two incidents in 2016.

Recreational Viewing:
• Three recreational swimmers issued monetary summary settlements from incidents in 2017.

NOAA OLE has also issued multiple verbal and written warnings, as well as conducted outreach on several occasions.
Actions & Resources Needed

• **Face-to-face outreach at resting bays:**
  - Anecdotally effective for visitors or infrequent dolphin swimmers.
  - Potentially implement using grants to NGO volunteer networks.
  - Can include outreach for other species, human safety, local culture, etc.

• **Further engagement with tourism industry:**
  - Reinvigorate Dolphin SMART program.
  - Continue to foster partnerships (HTA, HEA).
  - Create trainings for tour industry (online modules, annual workshops).
  - Develop responsible marketing guidelines.

• **Increased enforcement presence, especially on outer islands:**
  - No NOAA OLE personnel permanently stationed on outer islands, rely heavily on DOCARE JEA for enforcement.
  - Resting bays are in remote locations, difficult to access.
  - LE has limited resources and several other responsibilities.
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