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Hawaiian Spinner Dolphins Outreach, Enforcement, & Community Engagement

MMC Annual Meeting

Ann Garrett
Protected Resource Division
May 21, 2019
Kailua-Kona, HI

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.



Outreach – Tour Operators

- Ocean Users Workshop with the Sanctuary:
 - Conducted on Kauaʻi, Oʻahu, Maui, and Big Island.
- One on one meetings prior to approach rule proposal:
 - Five on Big Island, 11 on Oʻahu.
- 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



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Dolphin SMART – Recognition

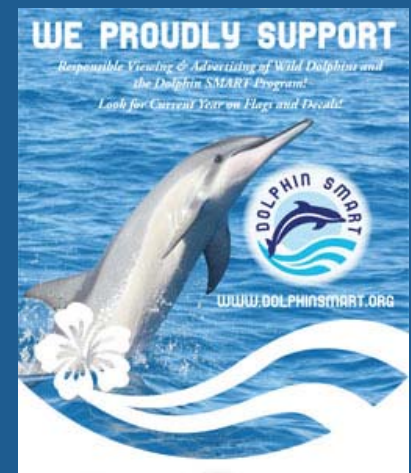
Recognized Operators

- Voluntarily follow a set of criteria to demonstrate support of dolphin conservation.
- 19 Recognized Operators nationally, five in Hawai'i.



Proud Supporters

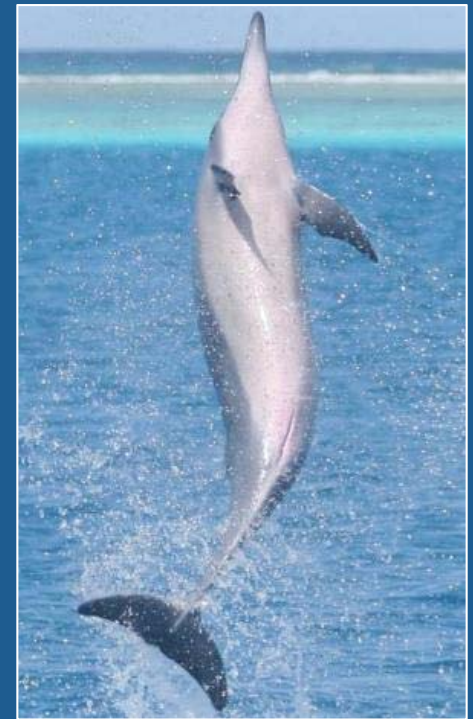
- Raise public awareness of program and promote responsible viewing and advertising.
- Companies or organizations promote tours or support responsible viewing.
- 66 Proud Supporters nationally, 13 in Hawai'i:



Dolphin SMART – Future

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.



Community Engagement

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).



Recent Enforcement Actions

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.

Tour Operator Fined for Harassing Hawaiian Spinner Dolphins

BY JOSEPH BENNINGTON CASTRO | July 2017

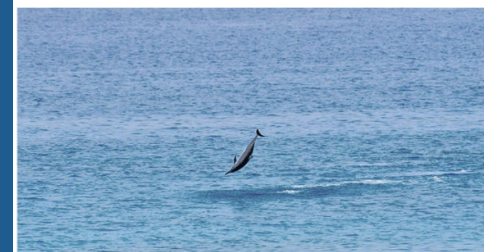


Spinner dolphins are so named for their habit of jumping out of the water and spinning as they enter and leave their daytime resting areas nearshore. They don't often engage in this behavior while resting in bays -- unless they're disturbed by people.

TOP NEWS

3 swimmers fined for pursuing spinner dolphins at Makua

By NICA 000 | August 28, 2018 | Updated August 28, 2018 4:05pm



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A Hawaiian spinner dolphin performs aerial acrobatics off of Makua Beach on Oahu.



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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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