



The Dolphin Project

34 Years of Research 1989 – 2023

As an ALL-VOLUNTEER, science-based, non-profit research, conservation and educational organization, The Dolphin Project is unique. It is the only organization of its kind in the United States to be granted a US government authorization to conduct long-term, scientific studies of *Tursiops erebennus* – East Coast Estuarine Bottlenose Dolphin – in the waters of coastal Georgia and lower South Carolina. Photo-Identification surveys take place on inshore waters from January through November, from Hilton Head South Carolina to St. Mary's, Georgia. The Dolphin Project volunteers seek to contribute to the knowledge base of Bottlenose dolphins through the sharing of collected field data. Regular collaboration takes place both formally and informally with research scientists, universities, government agencies and other scientific organizations. All of the viable data and photos are uploaded into two databases at Duke University: MABDC (Mid Atlantic Bottlenose Dolphin Catalog) and OBIS SEAMAP (Ocean Biodiversity Information System Spatial Ecological Analysis of Megavertebrate Populations). Scientists access these databases to conduct health and abundance studies and migratory patterns of marine mammals. The Dolphin Project has co-authored a research paper with Savannah State University which has been formally published. No other organization has conducted on-site research on the wild Bottlenose dolphin on a consistent basis off the coasts of Georgia and lower South Carolina for the past thirty-four years.

In addition to research surveys, The Dolphin Project endeavors to promote a better understanding of marine mammals by expanding the public's knowledge and concern for our marine environment through its Education Outreach Program. Age-appropriate presentations are offered to schools and organizations. Informational displays are hosted by TDP volunteers at community festivals and special events throughout the Low Country. The Dolphin Project is the only group that offers recurrent education about the Bottlenose dolphin and coastal ecology. Education is the key to conserving our wildlife and natural resources.

*"In the end we will conserve only what we love. We love only what we understand.
We understand only what we are taught." B. Douim*

Today the work of The Dolphin Project is more critical than ever. With encroaching development, contagious diseases, sonar blasting, climate changes and increasing human populations on the coast, the environment for the wild Bottlenose dolphin, as well as all marine life, is threatened. The Dolphin Project will remain vigilant in its protection of our coastal treasures. As the Dolphin Project celebrates its thirty-fourth year of research in 2023, it continues to expand its mission by word and deed through its dedicated volunteers providing research for the protection of wild Bottlenose dolphins and its Education Outreach Programs.

*"Never doubt that a small group of thoughtful, committed citizens can change the world;
indeed it is the only thing that ever has." Margaret Mead*

<https://thedolphinproject.org>
P.O. Box 60753, Savannah, Georgia 31420
155 Bent Tree Way, Richmond Hill, Georgia 31324