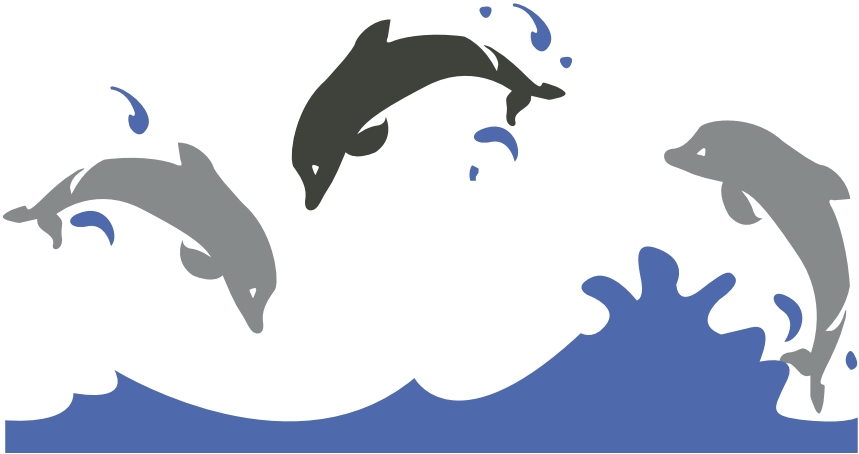




DOLPHINS



Dolphins are social animals

Dolphins are the smaller members of the whales; they are less than about four meters long. Dolphins are all highly social animals, traveling in groups of a few in nearshore environments to several thousands in deep waters offshore. Most dolphins appear to be perpetually smiling. This smile and their seeming friendliness (translated into a general lack of fear) toward humans has made them beguiling creatures

Dolphins food

Dolphins cooperate during hunting of schooling fish; they show temporary restraint in feeding while corralling prey into tight balls, often using the water surface as a wall against which to push the trapped fish. Only when the prey are secured does feeding take place. Dolphins also feed on non-schooling fishes, as well as on squid, jellyfish, shrimp, and other invertebrates. Most are quite general feeders, although a few deepwater species appear to specialise on squid.

It has been noticed that the presence of jelly fish is increasing rapidly in the shores of the Mediterranean sea specially in the shores of Egypt. This is due to the fact that the number of dolphins is decreasing also rapidly. It is well known that dolphins feed on jellyfish.

Problem facing dolphins

Dolphins are in danger due to human contact, despite the fact that humans in general have not considered dolphins as important prey. However, dolphins face some problem among which are:

- Accidental net line entanglement is killing animals world-wide. As mammals, dolphins need to travel to the surface every few minutes to breath, and when prevented from doing so, they suffocate.

- Purposeful killing for food occurs in protein-poor parts of world, for food as substitute for whale meat,

and because of perceived competition with human fisheries.

■ Accidental reproductive failure, reduced immunity responses, and mass die-off occur apparently due to human habitat degradation, including toxin input from industries and agricultural runoff. Dolphins are specially vulnerable to poisoned food, for they often feed high on the trophic level, on prey which have already bioaccumulated toxins. They also live long, and can themselves bioaccumulate heavy metals.



Dolphins killing

In all cases of decimation, results are long-lasting and difficult to reverse because dolphins are long-lived, slowly reproducing species, with only one young every two to four years.

Do you know ?

- That overfishing has contributed greatly to dolphin population declines.
- That a lone dolphin is unlikely to be a healthy animal.
- Dolphins can “see” with sound even in darkness similar to the echolocation abilities of some insectivorous bats.
- People think that dolphins are easy to fish because they come close to boats.
- Large numbers of dolphins are near the edge of extension.
- Thirty kinds of dolphins are in the critical numbers, yet they are not endangered for the time being.

TOPICS FOR DISCUSSION

- *Dolphins are in danger due to human contact.... determine seven procedures that can be taken to save them and maintain their biodiversity.*
- *Can the amount of fishing carried out by people be determined to save dolphins?*

Realised by : Prof. Dr. Mohamed SABER SELIM
Prof. Dr. Kamal El-Din Hassan EL-BATANOUNY
Academy for Scientific Research and Technology,
Cairo University, Cairo, Egypt.
Tel and Fax: (202-5) 71 58 85
E-mail: batanouny@frcu.eun.eg



Ain-Shams University



Academy for Sc. Research
& Technology

Coordinateur Régional : Prof. Dr. Abdelhamid BELEMLIH
Société Protectrice des Animaux et de la Nature «SPANA» 41, Résidence Zohra, Harhoura
12 000 Témara - Maroc - Tél : (212-7) 74 72 09 - Fax : (212-7) 74 74 93 - E-mail : spana@mtds.net.ma