

## Make a Splash to Protect Dolphins

### EXTENSION LEARNING OUTCOMES

Students will be able to:

- survey student groups to discover their personal experiences with dolphins
- identify ways in which Australian government protect dolphins and whales within Australian waters.

### Further website resources

[www.wdcs.org](http://www.wdcs.org)

(Whale and Dolphin Conservation Society)

[www.amonline.net.au/mammals/resources/cetacean\\_faq.htm](http://www.amonline.net.au/mammals/resources/cetacean_faq.htm)

(Australian Museum Online cetacean fact sheet)

[www.environment.gov.au/coasts/publications/pubs/whale-protection.pdf](http://www.environment.gov.au/coasts/publications/pubs/whale-protection.pdf)

(Fact sheet about the Australian Government's protection of whales and dolphins—PDF format)

[www.environment.gov.au/coasts/publications/cetaceans-action-plan/](http://www.environment.gov.au/coasts/publications/cetaceans-action-plan/)

(*The action plan for Australian Cetaceans*, report published by the Commonwealth Department of the Environment and Water Resources)

[www.environment.gov.au/coasts/publications/pubs/whale-watching-guidelines-2005.pdf](http://www.environment.gov.au/coasts/publications/pubs/whale-watching-guidelines-2005.pdf)

(*Whale and dolphin watching guidelines*, publication of the Commonwealth Department of the Environment and Water Resources)

### EXTENSION ACTIVITIES

#### *Pod meeting*

Hold a 'pod' meeting with students. Allow each student to share their dolphin experiences with the other members of the pod. Discuss the differences between an encounter with a 'captive' dolphin and one with a wild dolphin. Locate the students' dolphin encounters on a map of Australia to identify particular dolphin 'hotspots'.

#### *Fin identification game*

This game is great for understanding how researchers identify dolphins in the wild—and how difficult this task can be!

- Cut out several fin shapes. Make each fin unique with its own markings, nicks and cuts.
- Tape each fin to the back of a student; these students are the 'dolphins'.
- Choose groups of three students and supply each group with a chart of the fin shapes: these students are the 'researchers'.
- Have the dolphins 'swim' around the classroom while the researchers stand in one spot (the research boat).
- Instruct the researchers that they must try to identify each dolphin by observing its fin pattern. Two researchers observe the dolphins through 'binoculars' (a poster tube) while the other researcher writes down a description of the dolphins they see.
- Tell the researchers to write the name of the student wearing the fin under the appropriate fin shape on the chart.
- Do this several times, testing the researchers with new dolphins that are currently unidentified, as well as leaving some out on each turn.

### ***Dolphin encounters***

Dolphin watching is a popular marine activity due to the gregarious behaviour of many of the species. Strict guidelines dictate how marine vessels, swimmers and aircraft may interact with whales and dolphins. This is to minimise the impact upon the animals. Research the dolphin and whale watching guidelines. The web links in the magazine (particularly [www.environment.gov.au/coasts/publications/pubs/whale-watching-guidelines-2005.pdf](http://www.environment.gov.au/coasts/publications/pubs/whale-watching-guidelines-2005.pdf)) will help you with this task. You should then be able to answer these questions:

- What is the maximum number of vessels or swimmers that can approach a pod of dolphins?
- What are the 'no approach zones' for marine vessels and aircraft?
- Specify the speed limits for vessels in the vicinity of dolphins and whales.

### **The Great Australian Dolphin Survey.**

- Encourage students to discover the varying degrees of understanding of dolphins by surveying students from other classes. Use the questions listed on the data collection sheet which can be printed out from the Dolphin Research Institute website [www.dolphinresearch.org.au](http://www.dolphinresearch.org.au) or find at the end of this document.
- Graph the results from each class. Discuss your findings in class. Email you results to the Dolphin Research Institute to be part of the Great Dolphin Survey. Results are due by June 5<sup>th</sup>, 2007 (World Environment Day). Australia-wide survey results will be available early in Term Three, 2007.
- Your results will play a major part in a report to be shown to local and state governments about the perceptions of Australians towards marine ecosystems.

### **Adopt-A-Dolphin.**

Why not get your school involved with the Dolphin Research Institute's Adopt-A-Dolphin program? Your school will receive a kit that includes marine stickers, a ten-page activity book, a certificate, pictures and information on our individuals dolphins and details about the current work of our researchers. Additionally, a quarterly newsletter will be sent to your school outlining our latest findings, trips, education programs and fun pages. All this for only \$100 per year! All proceeds go straight into our research and education programs. For further details see the Dolphin Research Institute's website [www.dolphinresearch.org.au](http://www.dolphinresearch.org.au)

## The Great Australian Dolphin Survey

School name:

School address:

Contact teacher:

Phone number:

**Survey completed by:**

Class name:	Total no of students in the class	Q 1: How many students have seen a dolphin in captivity?	Q 2: How many students have seen a dolphin in the wild?	Q 3: Are dolphins .....			Q 4: If a person was swimming at the beach and came across a dolphin are they permitted to ...			Q 5: What do you consider to be the <b>single</b> greatest threat to dolphins?			
				fish?	sharks?	mammals?	touch the dolphin?	feed the dolphin?	swim with the dolphin?	fishing nets?	sharks?	humans boating?	pollution from land?

Email the data collected back to The Dolphin Research Institute by June 5th 2007 (World Environment Day) to be part of the Great Dolphin Survey. [www.dolphinresearch.org.au](http://www.dolphinresearch.org.au)