

BEST PRACTICE GUIDELINES FOR DOLPHIN SWIM TOUR OPERATIONS

INDUSTRY MANUAL - A DOLPHIN DISCOVERY CENTRE EXAMPLE

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SUSTAINABLE
TOURISM



CRC

CONTENTS

PREFACE	v
PART ONE	1
Tour Plan	1
Staff Pre-tour Set-up Plan.....	2
Snorkel Refresher.....	3
PART TWO	4
Educational Brief.....	4
Welcome and Introduction	4
DDC Minimal Impact Procedures	5
1. Sanctuary zone	5
2. Behaviour	5
3. Swim attempts.....	5
4. Boat approach	6
5. Free swimming group.....	6
Personal Comfort and safety whilst in the water.....	6
Safety Signals	7
Emergency Exit	7
System for Swim Attempts.....	8
Guidelines for Swim Attempts based upon Outcomes	9
Potentially Aggressive Behaviours	10
PART THREE	11
Boat Approach Types	11
Entry and Exit Protocol	13
Staff Guidelines	14
Roles prior to sighting.....	14
Roles once dolphins are sighted	14
Roles if dolphin/s behaviour is suitable to make a swim attempt	15

PART FOUR	16
In-water Guidelines for Staff	16
Roles where Interaction is ‘terminated’	16
Roles for Post Swim/after interaction is terminated.....	17
Roles for Emergency Exit – Interaction must be terminated immediately	17
In-water Guidelines for Participants.....	18
Passenger Safety – tell swimmers:	18
Serious Injury Requiring Urgent Medical Aid	19
PART FIVE	20
Staff Post-tour Pack-up Plan	20
Equipment Protocol (cleaning)	20
FINAL COMMENTS	21
APPENDIX I: SITE MAP OF DDC AND KOOMBANA BAY	22
APPENDIX II: SAFETY STOP SIGNAL	23
APPENDIX III: SAFETY HELP SIGNAL	24
APPENDIX IV: JAPANESE INTERPRETATION – EMERGENCY EXIT	25
APPENDIX V: SAFETY FIST STOP SIGNAL	26

PREFACE

This Best Practice Industry Manual was produced for the purpose of providing specific guidelines for tour operators during the operation of dolphin swim tours. This Manual was also produced in conjunction with a Technical Report entitled 'Best Practice and Interpretation in Tourist/Wildlife Encounters: A Dolphin Swim Tour Example' which consists of literature and survey-based studies relating to ecotourism, best practice, education and interpretation, marine mammal tourism and dolphin swim tours.

The Technical Report that accompanies this Best Practice Manual focuses on a particular site where dolphin swim tours occur, that place being the Dolphin Discovery Centre (DDC) in Bunbury, Western Australia. The examples used in this manual are specific to the site. Some of the initial Code of Practice procedures have undergone changes since the inception of the project (2000), both as a result of management expertise and research processes. These swim tour guidelines are encouraged to be applied to other sites where dolphin swim tours operate and critiqued for usefulness in managing wildlife tourism impacts.

This Best Practice Manual for swim tours involving dolphin/human interaction has been compiled using the following principles of best practice. These five principles are outlined in the Technical Report, and in this instance they are used with specific reference to dolphin swim tour operations:

1) Define

- Clearly define interpretation and education objectives – *covered in the Educational Brief;*
- Services required – *catering, medical, snorkelling equipment, assistance in and out of the water;*
- Mission statements and broader corporate objectives; and
- Incorporate all relevant community, customer, environmental, heritage or scientific values into goals.

2) Develop

- Integrated and documented procedures for identifying programs, messages, target audiences and approaches to be used – *guidelines for set up, running and pack up of swim tour procedures are outlined in this manual;* and
- Setting 'Key Performance Indicators' – *recording behaviour of staff, tourists and dolphins during swim tour; recognising limits and following strict procedures when these limits are reached.*

3) Deliver

- Recognise the value of in-house staff in delivering interpretation and education; using Performance Plans after assigning roles and responsibilities for all stages of education and interpretation – *throughout this manual, roles and responsibilities have been assigned to various staff members i.e. Tour Instructor, Assistant and Skipper. Delivery requirements of these staff members should be noted.*

4) Evaluate

- Evaluate performance of education and interpretation services applying 'Key Performance Indicators' using a suitable method and systematic procedure – *the Assistant will carry out recording of events during all aspects of the swim tour. This person will also note behaviour of staff members, tourists and dolphins. (A discussion of the effectiveness of education and interpretation as a management tool for sustainable tourism is discussed in the Technical Report accompanying this manual).*

5) Support

- Having documented procedures to support communication, evaluation, data analysis and performance reporting, while identifying, training, monitoring and maintaining core skills for the interpretation and education service levels: *Relevant authorities, operators and researchers will continue to assess the guidelines and codes of practice implemented in this operation. Please find the contact details of the authors of this manual in the 'final comments' section.*

This Manual has involved extensive input from the tourism community through managers, operators, researchers and tourists. A version of the manual has been operational at the DDC since the initial licensing of swim-with-the-dolphins tours in 1999 (refer to Appendix I for site map of DDC and Koombana Bay).

The aim of the Manual is to provide operators with a base line example of Best Practice procedures. It is anticipated that the manual will be examined, applied and evaluated in each case where it is used to aid the operation of dolphin swim tours.

PART ONE

Tour Plan

Provided below is an outline of a tour itinerary for a dolphin swim tour. The length of the tour will depend on travel times from point of departure to areas of dolphin activity and other events that may vary in the tour itinerary according to each specific site.

Table 1: Take a swim on the wild side!

TIME	ACTIVITY
8:15 - 8:30am	<i>OPTIONAL</i> Inexperienced snorkellers brief (will be arranged at time of booking)
8:30 - 8:50am	Educational brief
8:50 - 9.00am	Board vessel and 'Skippers brief'
9.00 - 10:45am	Swim with the dolphins
10:45 - 11.00am	Debriefing, equipment retrieval and optional entry into Interpretive Centre

Staff Pre-tour Set-up Plan

Approximate time of activity: 8:00am

Approximate duration of activity: 15 mins (before arrival of visitors)

This procedure should be carried out before and during the time when swim tour participants assemble for their briefing. Basically, it involves collection by staff of all equipment that will be needed during the swim tour. This set-up plan may be interpreted in conjunction with the tour itinerary previously presented.

Bring the following equipment to the tour assembly area:

1. Four bins with various fin sizes and masks,
 2. Rack with wetsuits and buoyancy vests, and
 3. Extra bin to put vests and other equipment in.
- Take fins out and sort into sizes to make easier for everyone (if time).
 - Make sure you have brief notes and indemnity file plus several pens.
 - People can try wetsuits on in change rooms or in assembly area.
 - Put all chosen fins in a bucket to take to boat.
 - Put all masks, snorkels and buoyancy vests in the other bucket.
 - Inform people that they will need only their camera, warm jacket/top, sunnies, hat, sun cream, water. (Will not need shoes or change of clothes).
 - Ensure people's suits fit and everyone is happy.
 - Have one or two assistants take buckets down to the beach and put wetsuit rack back in shed.
 - Once everyone is ready gather around, introduce yourself, other staff members and conduct brief.
 - Have people sign indemnity form and then put file back inside.
 - Board vessel - passengers first sitting at the back of vessel - buckets of equipment go up the front at bow.
 - As the boat departs divide people up into plank and side groups. Then go through entry and exit procedure.
 - When finished this procedure start handing out all equipment, have people gear up whilst steaming out (Everything on except mask, snorkel and fins - but in hand ready to go).
 - Look for dolphins.

Snorkel Refresher

Approximate time of activity: 8:15am

Approximate duration of activity: 15 mins

The results of a survey conducted at the DDC in 2000 (included in Technical Report) showed that almost half of participants in the dolphin swim tour rated their snorkelling ability as below average before they went on the tour. Therefore it is important to make sure all participants are confident with their own snorkelling technique. Outlined below is an optional refresher course on snorkelling techniques, and is to be conducted in the zone prior to boarding vessel.

(Note: The Snorkel Refresher course is no longer utilized at the DDC due to procedure changes and reasons specified by the Dolphin Interaction Supervisor. See Appendix II of Technical Report for more details)

1. Mask:
 - Comfortable fit - no squeeze or tightness;
 - Straps untwisted, hair out of mask and eyes;
 - Nose piece covering nose.
2. Mask and Snorkel:
 - Face down in water and breathing in and out;
 - Check for water in mask - breathe out through the nose, tilt head and create space.
3. Snorkel swim:
 - Check finning technique - hands by side and moving from hip, kicking underwater;
 - Check for water leakage in mask.
4. Equalisation of ears - explain importance and how it is done.
5. Low impact duck diving:
 - Take breath;
 - Bottom up and go under;
 - LOOK up at surface when coming back up.
6. Hyperventilation - NO MORE than 3 deep breaths.
7. Intake of salt water.
8. Hypothermia.
9. Personal safety and comfort in the water.
10. Confirmation of hand signals.

PART TWO

Educational Brief

Approximate time of activity: 8:00am and 11:00am

Approximate duration of activity: 20 mins

The Technical Report produced in conjunction with this manual deals with the issue of education and interpretation as a management tool for dolphin/human interaction. This discussion outlines the importance of education and interpretation as a way of minimising harmful impacts on dolphins and their environment. If tourists are educated about the potential effect they could have on dolphins it is hoped that they may be conscious of their actions and actively promote conservation efforts. It is also important to educate tourists about the realities that they will encounter: they must realise that dolphins are wild animals and their behaviour can be unpredictable. This also means that sightings and a successful swim tour cannot be guaranteed.

This part of the tour procedure is conducted prior to boarding the vessel. It consists on an introduction to the tour itself, expected behaviour of tourists during the tour, a discussion of realities and expectations of the swim tour and what to do in an emergency.

The following section has been reviewed by the DDC manager, Andrew Horan and DDC Dolphin Interaction Supervisor, Phil Coulthard. It reflects the current Educational Brief and guidelines applied at the DDC.

Welcome and Introduction

It is important to make our participants aware of the aims of the swim tour:

Aims:

- To find dolphin/s.
- Assess their location and behaviour.
- If the situation is appropriate, people will be placed in the water.
- Record information for research purposes.

Description of site: example - Koombana Bay (refer to Appendix I for site map)

- Estimation of dolphin population.
- Details of the bay – area that swimming will most likely take place.
- Expected visibility and temperature (in and out of the water).
- Maximum depth of bay and stress shallow depth near cut (where most likely to be swimming).
- Briefly describe non-permitted swim areas of bay – BPA waters (Channel, Inner and Outer Harbour) and Jet Ski areas.

Realities

Stress to participants that this is a wild dolphin swim; tour operators cannot guarantee dolphin sightings and have no control over:

- Where they will be.
- How many there will be.
- What they will be doing (i.e. feeding, travelling).
- How close they will come.
- How long they will stay for.
- How interested they will be in interacting with humans.

DDC Minimal Impact Procedures

To help minimise the potential impact that tourist activity may have upon the dolphins, the DDC has developed a set of 'Minimal Impact Procedures':

1. Sanctuary Zone

- No swim attempts made with groups including foetal fold calves.
- A small area has been set-aside with a small area between the two groins known as the 'cut' area. Many mothers with calves use this area, taking advantage of the eddies and currents.
- A speed limit of 6 knots has been identified for a defined area extending 400 m from the Northern Groin of the Cut entrance and ending 400 m North along the beach (see Appendix I for site map).

2. Behaviour

- No swim attempts made with groups including foetal fold calves.
- When certain behaviours are identified as aggressive people will not be placed in the water – this includes continual tail slapping, head jerking or jawing, body slamming or any other related behaviour.
- If a dolphin is sighted with a fish then it is definitely having a meal – so people will not be placed in the water close enough to create a disturbance to the dolphin's natural behaviour patterns.
- Interaction will not commence if males are aggressively herding females, chasing, splashing, pushing or displaying any other behaviour deemed potentially threatening by the Interaction Supervisor.

3. Swim Attempts

- The maximum number of swim attempts made upon a group of dolphins per swim tour session should be restricted to three, in order not to continually harass a group of dolphins.
- At all times, consecutive swim attempts on a single group when neutral or avoidance behaviours are observed will be avoided unless an obvious change in behaviour has been observed.

4. Boat Approach

- The vessel will not steam up and drive right into the centre of the group of dolphins and drop people into the water – it will be a slow, calm process (see boat approach procedures in Part 3).

5. Free Swimming Group

- Free-swimming groups have strict guidelines to ensure dolphins approach people when they want to, not by people chasing them. (It should be noted that the Snorkel Lines discussed in the Technical Report, section 5.3, are no longer considered to be minimal impact procedures. Whilst research showed a high level of visitor satisfaction with the lines, interactive observations noted a high impact on dolphins.)

Procedure

- Once swimmers have entered the water they remain as a group and are supervised by the volunteer guide, and the Marine Biologist (Interaction Supervisor).
- There is no actual swimming involved, the procedure of remaining in one position determines every dolphin to human approach -
 - Peduncle and tail flukes of dolphin are raised and slapped down to water. These may be dorsal or belly up tail slaps.
 - To encourage/stimulate dolphin curiosity, talking, singing and duck diving is allowed. Surface slapping with fins/hands is not allowed.
 - At no stage are swimmers allowed to chase/touch dolphins, or move away from the swim group.
 - Dolphin curiosity is often delayed, possibly in order to gain trust with the swimming group. Hence, swimmers will often stay in water for an extended period after the departure of dolphins from the immediate area.

Personal Comfort and Safety in the Water

1. All participants must wear a full-length wet suit. This provides 100% buoyancy. Buoyancy vests, which provide reassurance and protection from the cold are also available and can be worn without being inflated.
2. Tell swimmers: If you are going to duck dive, please ensure you:
 - Have equalised your ears so you are not damaging or bursting your ear drums (ask if they know how and if not, demonstrate)
 - Look up on your way up so you do not hit anyone (including a dolphin).
 - Do not exceed your limit – no extremely long breath hold dives.
 - Do not do more than 3 consecutive duck dives or take more than three large breaths before you go under, as you will run the risk of hyperventilating.
 - Duck diving is only encouraged towards experienced snorkellers.
 - Get out of the water if you are uncomfortably cold or experience uncontrolled shivering. Also get out if you are tired or sea sick.
 - Let your guide know if you are continually experiencing water in your mask, swallowing water or cramping in your legs. We can assess your snorkelling technique.
 - Wear sunscreen and a hat where possible and drink lots of water.
 - ENJOY YOURSELF – ask if you want staff assistance or have any questions.

Safety Signals

Wave hand – HELP (demonstrate) (refer to Appendix III for illustration).

Tell swimmers: Wave your hand and staff will respond if:

- You are not feeling comfortable;
- You are having trouble with your equipment;
- You want to get out; or
- There is any problem at all.

The **OK** signs – (demonstrate)

- When asked by staff either verbally, or by signals, return with **OK** signal if ok!!

Emergency Exit

In situations where dolphin/human interaction occurs there is always an element of danger present. Dolphins are wild animals and their behaviour cannot be predicted. If dolphins are seen displaying potentially aggressive behaviours (see 'System for Swim Attempts') then swimmers will be immediately prompted to exit the water. If any kind of accident occurs, i.e. medical, sickness, drowning, this will be treated as an emergency procedure.

Tell swimmers:

- If you see staff clench fist and hold into the air (see Appendix V) and then followed by two loud whistles – this means make a fast exit. The guide will give further instructions.

Tell participants:

- *'Watch and listen to staff on board as we will help you see where the dolphins are.'*

System for Swim Attempts

This is a system for determining the number of allowed swim attempts on a single dolphin or dolphin group. This information may be included in the Educational Brief in order to prepare participants for the possible outcome of a failed swim attempt and the reason behind it, or left for the staff knowledge only.

The system is based upon the response type of the dolphin/s (category below). Attempts involve putting people in the water and dolphins responding in one of the following ways:

- **Successful attempt**
 - A noticed or obvious change in one or more dolphin's behaviour and direction to actively interact with swimmers for > or = 5 minutes.
- **Sustained Swim**
 - As above, however interaction lasts between 50-60 minutes.
- **Neutral**
 - No response. No obvious change in behaviour or direction. Dolphins may swim close by in passing or underneath but do not noticeably alter present activities to interact.
- **Avoidance**
 - Obvious visible change in behaviour and direction to avoid swimmers. Deep diving and surfacing far away or change in direction to move away from swimmers.
- **Unsuccessful**
 - No further sightings after entry, both from surface and underwater. No noticeable changes in direction or behaviour. Dolphins may have dived deep prior to entry, hence due to visibility, weather, lost sighting, and unsure of avoidance responses, swim attempt is unsuccessful.

Guidelines for Swim Attempts based upon Outcomes

It is important to set guidelines for the behaviour of both tourists and operators regardless of the outcome of the swim attempt. This ensures that methods of best practice are constantly implemented should tour operators follow these guidelines, and harmful effects on dolphins are eliminated, or at least minimised:

- A sustained swim outcome is to be no longer than 60 minutes (in accordance with license conditions)
- A group (if it can be identified) should be subjected to only ONE 60 minute sustained swim, no more attempts should be made on that group unless:
 - People break off the interaction (may occur due to coldness, boat in bad positions resulting from long term drift, too shallow, swell, change in sea state)

AND/OR

- It has been 60 minutes from end of sustained swim and no other groups have responded (given that there is enough tour time left)
- When an attempt results in an 'avoidance' outcome, no consecutive attempts are to be made on that group, and unless a clear and noticeable change in their behaviour is observed, similarly no swim attempts are to be made with that group during that session. A maximum of three attempts can be made on groups that result in the following outcomes:
 - Successful;
 - Sustained swim < 60 minutes;
 - Neutral; or
 - Unsuccessful.

Potentially Aggressive Behaviours

Swimmers will not be placed in the water, or be instructed to exit the water if dolphins are sighted *continually* displaying the following behaviours:

- Tail slap
 - peduncle and tail flukes of dolphin are raised and slapped down to water. These may be dorsal or belly up tail slaps.
- Jaw clap
 - opening and closing mouth widely in a threatening display.
- Tiff
 - head to head confrontation by 2 or more dolphins, often with head bobbing up and down. This can also be accompanied by loud vocalisations.
- Push
 - one or more dolphins are within close range and use their entire body to push the other part way out of the water. Dolphins may also be pushed from beneath, lifted on their back/side or entirely out of the water.
- Shikick
 - this is full-on action and brawl between two or more dolphins. Many aggressive behaviours and lots of splashing are seen.
- Herding
 - rapid changes in direction by more than two dolphins, in combination with belly up sightings, chases, splashing, body protruding from the water, mounting or erections.

If these behaviours are observed during a swim all swim participants are to swim away from dolphins, then exit water with no further attempt to be made unless behaviour changes favourable.

Feeding – The same policy applies to dolphins when:-

- Catching fish
 - Dolphin seen catching fish
- With fish
 - Dolphin seen with fish but actual chase not seen
- Snacking
 - Fish seen and dolphin chasing fish belly up

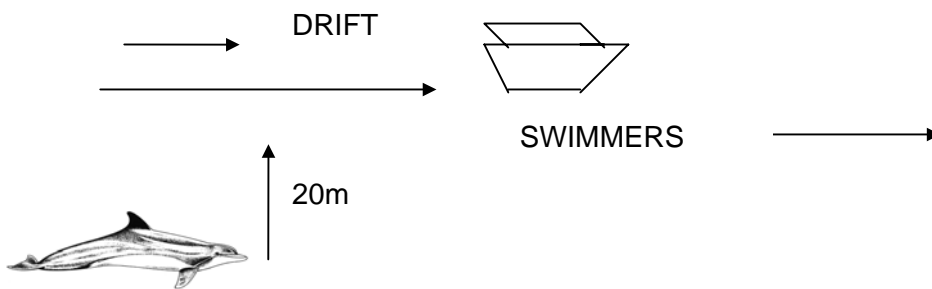
PART THREE

Boat Approach Types

The approach of a tour vessel can be thought of as an invasion on a dolphin's space, or habitat. Therefore the boat's approach into the dolphin's environment must be slow and non-threatening so as not to frighten dolphins away. After all, it is the dolphins that these tourists are coming to see!

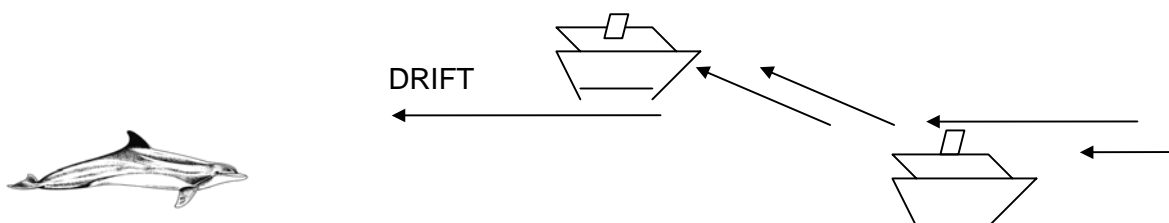
Outlined below are some guidelines that the skipper should follow when manoeuvring the boat around dolphins.

- Skipper is to assess currents and if boat is in suitable position/area to put swimmers in the water.
 - A boat is not able to approach a dolphin close than 20 meters under power.
1. *Ideal* approach is a 'behind parallel approach' from behind and slightly to the side of dolphins. Placing the boat ahead of dolphins:

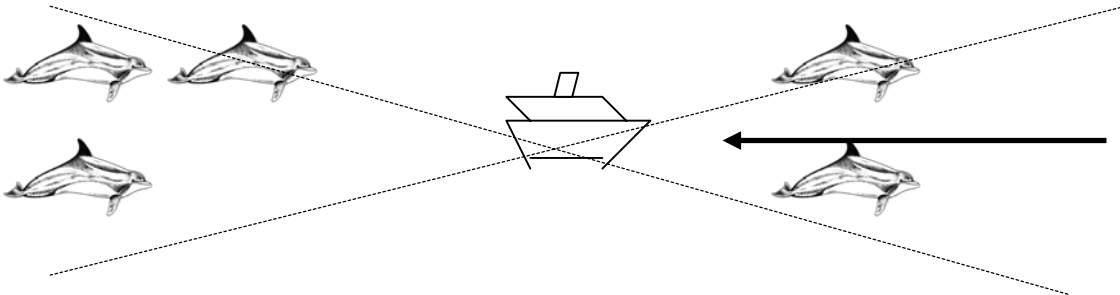


2. If boat is going head on towards dolphin group (as opposed to approaching from behind):

- Position the boat so it is slightly to the *side* of the dolphins. Then *slow* to no wake speed and drift, place people in the water, making sure it is slightly to the side of the dolphin group.



BOAT MUST NEVER INTERCEPT A GROUP CUTTING STRAIGHT THROUGH THE CENTRE, HENCE SPLITTING DOLPHINS UP



** If the boat is *already stationary* and the dolphins approach and mill around the boat, it is known as 'around boat' strategy. People can be placed in the water, as it is dolphins that have made the approach to the boat.

Entry and Exit Protocol

This procedure must be clearly explained to participants before they enter the water. All entries are to be as calm and quiet as possible. No jumping or diving entries as they could scare dolphins away or land on one!

➤ Side entry - tell swimmers:

'Please do not walk around the vessel with fins on before entering the water – it is dangerous'

- Instructor will demonstrate water entry procedure.
- Put mask and fins on when prompted by instructor.
- Once in water, swim away from vessel and join in-water guide.
- Masks, fins & snorkel are to be properly fitted and secure while seated. Instructor to demonstrate.
- When ready to enter all swimmers 'shuffle' to the back on the boat, firmly holding onto rail for a side entry.
- To avoid excessive splash, all swimmers sit and slide into water one at a time, then swim clear of the back of the boat.
- Once all have entered, the boat moves away and swimmers remain as a group in anticipation.

➤ Exit:

- In the case of side entry – people are to use the back board/step ladder at the back of the vessel.
- Fins are to be taken off before getting out of the water and immediately handed to staff on board.
- If going back into the water, hold onto fins and mask. If not, make sure they are given to staff.

➤ Emergency Exit:

- Staff will use a 'stop' or 'fist stop' hand signal (see Appendices II and V).
- This is followed by two loud blows of whistle.
- Follow directions as before but make as fast and efficient as possible – *Do not panic*.
- Move away from the back of the boat once on board so others can get out quickly.

Staff Guidelines

It is important that all staff on board the tour vessel recognise their own roles and responsibilities and are specifically aware of when interaction should be terminated. They should also be vigilant and practical, and proficient in the case of emergency. Below are some guidelines for the Skipper, Instructor and Assistant/s to follow during the swim tour.

Roles prior to sighting

Skipper:

- Drive boat!
- Look out for dolphins.
- Ensure vessel safety procedures are followed.

In-Water Instructor:

- First priority is to assist passengers with equipment or questions.
- Ensure all passengers have been briefed on activity.
- Must ensure each passenger is geared up as much as possible.
- Sight dolphins.
- Be well informed on the dolphin populations behaviours & movements.

Assistant / Observer:

- First priority to search for dolphins.
- Second is to assist Instructor or Skipper if required.

Roles once dolphins are sighted

Skipper:

- First priority is to assess the area and determine if it is:
 - A boating prohibited area.
 - High risk due to other boats.
 - A suitable area to put people in the water – currents, swell.
 - Safe for vessel drift or dragging of line.

Instructor:

- First priority to assess behaviour of dolphin/s.
- Assess suitability of group, closely assessing behaviour of participants (are they scared, excited – will this frighten the dolphins?).
- Finally, assess suitability of the situation – is it appropriate for dolphin/human interaction to occur?

Assistant / Observer:

- Assess behaviour of dolphin/s.
- Record necessary information.
- Put dive flag up.

Roles if dolphin/s behaviour is suitable to make a swim attempt

Skipper:

- Manoeuvre boat to approach from behind and side.
- Continue to monitor position of dolphins.
- Identify possible risk areas.

Instructor:

- Give group okay to enter (small hand signal).
- Motivate and supervise passenger entry.
- Identify troubled, excited and/or noisy people so as to keep a watch on them.
- Must enter water as soon as possible – always first unless a second Assistant available.

Assistant / Observer:

- Observe and record necessary information.
- Maintain position of dolphin/s.
- Drop side entry ladder.
- Assist with swimmers, entry procedures.

PART FOUR

In-water Guidelines for Staff

Skipper:

- Watch position of boat.
- Wait for okay signal from Instructor.
- Drift no closer than 30m from swimmers.
- Watch and listen for signals from Instructor and Assistant.

Instructor:

- Signalling 'okay' to Assistant and Skipper.
- Tell skipper to proceed with drift – (may need GO signal).
- Observe and supervise all swimmers.
- Identify dolphins if possible and convey information to swimmers on whom, what and why.

Assistant / Observer:

- Look out for dolphins and assess behaviour.
- Relay information if necessary to skipper and instructor.
- Identify dolphins by dorsal markings if possible.
- *Stay alert* for danger and signals from instructor.

Roles where Interaction is 'terminated'

Skipper:

- Safety manoeuvre boat close to swimmers for pick-up.
- Attempt to maintain location of dolphins.
- Watch for OK signal from in-water guide and Instructor.
- No wake speed to leave.
- Search for other dolphins or take back to DDC.

Instructor:

- Note time when interaction was terminated.
- Signal termination.
- Supervise exit – determine who is last out.
- Conduct passenger count.

Assistant / Observer:

- Record necessary information.
- Stay at stern of vessel to assist exit and take fins/masks etc.
- Conduct passenger count.
- Take flag down.
- Pull up steps (ladder).

Roles for Post Swim/after interaction is terminated

Instructor:

- Assist passengers.
- Answer questions/explain reason for termination.
- Count passengers again.

Assistant:

- Assist passengers with their equipment.
- Fill out brief tour report.
- Answer questions.
- Clear away deck area of any equipment.

Roles for Emergency Exit – Interaction must be terminated immediately

- In water Instructor to inform skipper and assistant using the fist STOP hand signal (see Appendix V). Interaction must be terminated when first signal used.
- Assistant Instructor on board must blow whistle *twice* loudly.
- Assistant Instructor must use hand to beckon and call people in.
- In water Instructor to assist and encourage people to stay as a group and wait for vessel to position itself for an exit. Staff remaining in the water and keeping tourists calm.
- When instructed, swimmers will be instructed to board the vessel via the exit ladder.
- Individuals closest to the boat will be first on and procedure will follow in that order.
- Assistant Instructor to take fins and masks from each person on board
- Once aboard individuals must move away from the back of the boat, allowing room for quick re-entry of others onto the boat.
- Signal to skipper OK and drive!

In-water Guidelines for Participants

Participants in the dolphin swim tour should be aware of things that they should and should not do when in the water with dolphins. Let them know these things before they enter the water:

- No one is to make any attempts to touch or feed the dolphins.
- No lunging towards dolphins.
- Swimmers are encouraged to spread out evenly but to remain as a group.
- Swimmers are encouraged to wait for dolphins with their heads out of the water. This ensures instructions and directions on where to look can be heard. In addition, swimmers are able to watch where those on deck are pointing. This is also very important for shark sighting, when foetal fold calves are present and when necessary for a quick return to the boat.
- Arm movements must be kept to a minimum, due to habituated dolphins expecting food and potential for some people to be bitten.
- No flash photography is permitted at surface or underwater.
- Swimmers are encouraged to move away from the stern as soon as they enter the water, as there is the possibility of being injured by stern movement in larger swells.
- Ears are to be cleared before duck diving.
- Practice 'low impact' duck diving and look up upon surfacing.

DO NOT:

- Kick and splash or lunge at animals.
- Swim on top of others whilst trying to see dolphins.
- Swim towards dolphins or chase dolphins.
- Reach out to dolphins or touch if close (explain that they have very sensitive skin and may get frightened away).
- Use a flash above or underwater.

Passenger Safety – tell swimmers:

- If you are feeling unwell inform Instructor or Assistant before departure.
- Inform of sea sickness **as soon as possible**.
- Inform of any pre-existing medical conditions, which may affect you whilst in water. These will be explained and described during pre-tour briefing.
- If you feel uncomfortable or worried whilst in the water use the distress 'HELP' signal to inform staff (See Appendix III). Staff are trained to assist you.

*(For Japanese interpretation of emergency exit, see Appendix IV)

Serious Injury Requiring Urgent Medical Aid

- Staff on land must be radioed from tour vessel – must notify these staff:
 - If ambulance is required; describe nature of problem;
 - If other essentials required – blankets etc.;
 - Of current location of boat;
 - Of expected time of arrival and location of landing; and
 - When back on land, injured person must stay on boat and have help come to them, unless conditions warrant a safe evacuation onto dry land.

PART FIVE

Staff Post-tour Pack-up Plan

1. On the way back make sure all equipment is in buckets.
2. Inform people:
 - That there are free bottomless cups of tea or coffee when they return (they need to show their ticket).
 - There are a number of short films and displays in the Dolphin Room which will compliment their swim tour experience.
 - To leave all equipment in area of fitting. The guides will assist in taking equipment from you for washing.

Equipment Protocol (cleaning)

- Fill two buckets with wet suit and snorkel, sanitizing solution and one with fresh water – use tap near garden on grass.
- Rinse all equipment through the cleaning solution and then fresh water.
- Place fins in container and masks in another and put back in shed.
- Put buoyancy vests back into shed and hang them on the wetsuit rack to dry.
- Take rinsed wetsuits and hang on rack on the balcony – make sure at right edge of balcony so they get the sun.

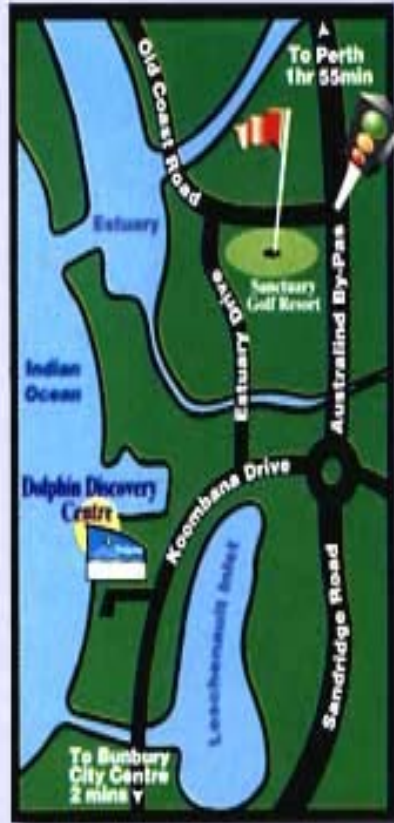
FINAL COMMENTS

This Best Practice Industry Manual has outlined the practical and educational procedures for running a dolphin swim-tour operation, using the Dolphin Discovery Centre, Bunbury, Western Australia as an example. The Technical Report entitled 'Best Practice and Interpretation in Tourist/Wildlife Encounters: A Dolphin Swim Tour Example', which was produced in conjunction with this Manual, has illustrated the importance of both education and interpretation as a component of dolphin swim tour operations.

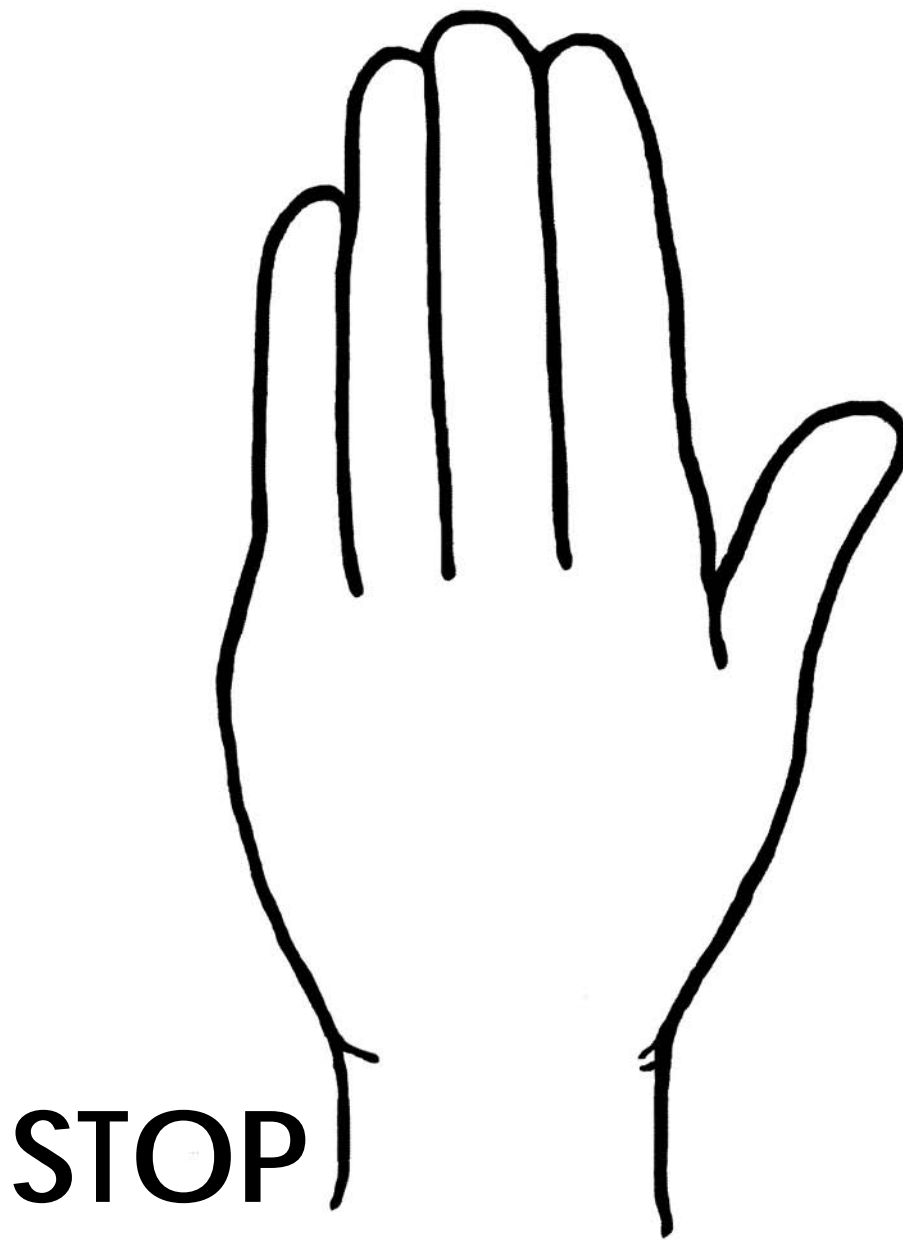
Through visitor surveys, operator input, observations and interviews, the views of the community have been obtained to assist in the formalisation of these Best Practice Guidelines. The authors would also like to acknowledge the continuing support and input from the current DDC Manager, Andrew Horan and the DIS, Phil Coulthard.

Further comments and input from operators are invited under the principle of 'Support' in Best Practice Principles (refer to the Preface to this Manual).

APPENDIX I: SITE MAP OF DDC AND KOOMBANA BAY



APPENDIX II: SAFETY STOP SIGNAL



止まれ!!

そのまま待機

APPENDIX III: SAFETY HELP SIGNAL



HELP SIGNAL

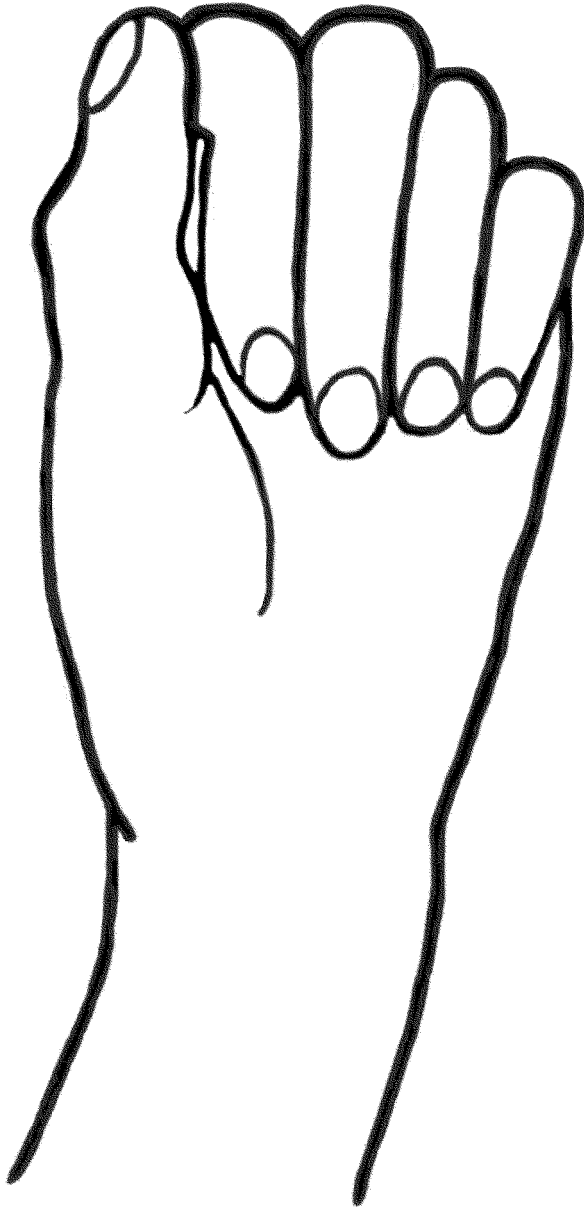
助けて下さい

APPENDIX IV: JAPANESE INTERPRETATION – EMERGENCY EXIT

緊急時の対処の手順

- ・ ホイッスルを2回鳴らします。
- ・ 最初にドルフィン ディスカバリー センターのスタッフから、STOPのハンドシグナルが出ます。
- ・ あなたはDDCスタッフのハンドシグナルの合図によって呼ばれます。
- ・ 船の近くのロープをつかんでいる人から順番に船に上がります。そのあと、ロープを回収します。
- ・ 船に上がったら、次の人が上がれるようにすみやかに他の場所へ移り、次の人が上がれるようにスペースをあけて下さい。

APPENDIX V: SAFETY FIST STOP SIGNAL



**TERMINATION OF
ENCOUNTER**

終了

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LISMORE

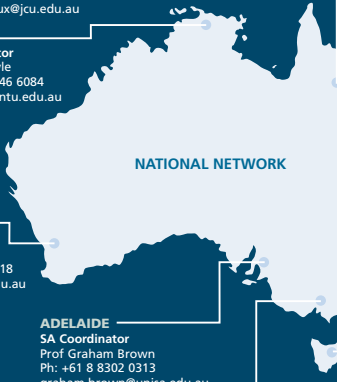
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