

Project Update: October 2007

In order to assess the potential effect of dolphin-watching in Bahia Drake (8°41' N and 83°40' W.), Costa Rica, a 2 year study was initiated in December 2004-April 2005. The observations were performed from a 7m boat with a four-stroke outboard engine. Data on the number of boats within 300m of the group of dolphins and dolphins' behaviour was collected, in addition to dolphin group size and age class composition. Behavioural observations were recorded using a scan-sampling method, where the groups' activities were registered every 2 minutes. Acoustic recordings were performed simultaneously. Spotted dolphins' sightings averaged 5 ± 2.5 sightings/day and 90 sightings/season. Throughout the season, the apparent main behaviour showed by spotted dolphins is feeding. Besides spotted dolphins, other 3 cetaceans' species were observed in presence of more than one boat: bottlenose dolphins (*Tursiops truncatus*), false killer whales (*Pseudorca crassidens*), and humpback whales (*Megaptera novaeangliae*). Two community meetings have been done in Drake Bay, and we expect to have more during 2005 and 2006.