

# WDCS ANNUAL REVIEW 2009

# WELCOME

Each person might think their role is small – so small in fact, no one would notice if it was not there anymore. But all of us pooling together our resources and talents continues to be the best way we can protect the things we care about, like these amazing animals and their ocean habitat.



**Sue Rocca, Whale Adoption Project Biologist**



**Regina Asmutis-Silva**  
Senior WDCS Biologist



**Sue Fisher**  
WDCS Policy Director



**Kate O'Connell**  
WDCS Researcher



**Courtney Vail**  
WDCS Policy Officer



**Svatka Whitton**  
WDCS Administrator







# Inside your review

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# THE YEAR IN REVIEW

Another year of campaigning has brought mixed results for whales and dolphins. Over ten years ago, WDSCS highlighted the serious threats facing the Chinese river dolphin, the baiji. Sadly, 2007 brought news that human encroachment and habitat destruction reduced this unique species to levels from which it cannot possibly recover.

Despite efforts by conservationists to save the baiji, little was done by decision-makers to protect it. We cannot let this happen again. Now is the time to act.

During 2007 and 2008, WDSCS has been working to get our message heard around the globe; empowering researchers and advocates and advising and lobbying decision makers on behalf of cetaceans (whales, dolphins and porpoises) everywhere.

Our work has been rewarded with some remarkable achievements and hope for the future. WDSCS's commitment to build conservation networks and solutions to save another river dolphin, the boto, or Amazon river dolphin, is already starting to bear fruit.

We have developed our strong relationship with the United Nations Environment Programme's Convention on Migratory Species, where we have already helped deliver region-wide conservation work in the Pacific Islands Region, the Mediterranean and Black Seas and more. We have laid the groundwork for the creation of marine protected areas around the world, to protect habitat critical to the survival of many species. This Review gives a snapshot of how work like this around the world is making real progress towards the protection of some of the most threatened species and populations.

The coming year will bring many challenges, but, with your support, WDSCS will rise to the task. For it is only through partnership that we shall really achieve a future for the whales and dolphins we all care about so deeply. Let's make sure that there is never another tragedy such as the baiji. Join us and together we shall work for the protection of every whale, dolphin and porpoise species, population and individual.



Chris Butler-Stroud  
WDSCS Chief Executive



CLOCKWISE FROM TOP: DUPANI/SUTARIA, NICKY POTTS, YAYASAN KONSERVASI RASI, MARK GAZZARD, GILL BRAULIK, WDSCS CHARLIE PHILLIPS







Nicky Potts completed a sky dive for whales and dolphins



With dolphins threatened by bridge building in Indonesia, surveys aim to reduce impacts



A research project into endangered Indus river dolphins in Pakistan



Mark Gazzard completed the London to Paris cycle ride in aid of WDCA



**WDCS helped to ensure that the commercial whaling ban remained in place for another year, even in the face of increasing pressure from pro-whaling countries**



# STOP PROTECT CONNECT

The first stage of our mission is to stop threats to whales and dolphins. These threats are many: whaling, dolphin hunts, fisheries bycatch, captivity, chemical and noise pollution, ship strikes and climate change are all part of the perilous world of today's whales and dolphins. By bringing individuals and groups together to create strong local, national and international campaigns, however, we can deal with these threats, and search for ways to end them.

## TOGETHER WE HAVE ALREADY...

### Whaling

- Helped save the lives of ten humpback whales with our successful campaign for the International Whaling Commission (IWC) to reject a proposal from Denmark to expand Greenland's whale hunt.
- Revealed that Japan's plans for coastal quotas would involve commercial whaling.
- Persuaded EU states to call for a suspension of import duty on jojoba esters, a tax which would incentivise the use of whale oil as a cheaper alternative.
- Exposed the inconsistencies between international standards for commercial meat production and the cruel manner in which whales are hunted and slaughtered.

### Captivity

- Helped persuade authorities in New Zealand not to allow more dolphins in captivity.

- Exposed the dangers of Dolphin Assisted Therapy in the UK and Germany.
- Helped persuade authorities in the Dominican Republic not to import 12 bottlenose dolphins captured in lethal drive hunts in Japan.
- Exposed the harmful expansion of swimming-with-dolphins programmes in countries bordering the Black and Mediterranean Seas.
- Helped stop plans for a new captive facility holding river dolphins in Norway.
- Helped persuade authorities in Panama not to allow the establishment of a new captive facility for dolphins.

### Fisheries bycatch

- Helped protect critically endangered North Atlantic right whales off Massachusetts by promoting the use of sinking groundline in lobster fisheries.

- Provided training on the identification of whales and dolphins in Micronesia.
- Drawn attention to common dolphin entanglement in fishing nets in New Zealand, resulting in the reassessment of the conservation status of this species.

### Environmental impacts

- Gained legislation in the US that will slow ships down in habitats important to right whales.
- Gained legislation directing the US coastguard to consider impacts on right whales before designating shipping lanes.
- Successfully campaigned to stop ship-to-ship oil transfers in the Firth of Forth, Scotland.
- Published guidance on reducing noise impacts through protected areas.
- Conducted surveys to understand whale and dolphin habitat use, to investigate potential impacts from military sonar off Hawaii.



Dr Ingrid Visser from the WDCS-funded Orca Research and Education Centre in New Zealand rescues a stranded orca



Research in Sri Lanka helps understand cetacean distribution and causes of stranding



WDCS patron Miranda Krestovnikoff joins a WDCS beach clean in Scotland

Long-term research in the  
Mediterranean helps inform  
conservation measures for rapidly  
declining dolphin populations

**WDCS has funded  
43 conservation  
and research  
projects across  
27 countries**

**WDCS**  
Whale and Dolphin Conservation Society



# STOP PROTECT CONNECT

While we work to stop the threats to whales and dolphins, we must ensure their protection for the long term. Individual animals have needs just as do groups and populations, and by working with local communities and governments we aim to protect all whales and dolphins at risk, as well as the places and conditions they need to survive.

## TOGETHER WE HAVE ALREADY...

### Securing Regions

- Grown our partnership with the UN Convention on Migratory Species (CMS), gaining a new agreement within West Africa.
- Begun the first research projects and training programmes in the Pacific Islands Region.
- Gained endorsement of a conservation plan for marine mammals in the Caribbean.

### Creating Sanctuary

- Encouraged the New Zealand Government to set up protection for Hector's and Maui's dolphins.
- Set up the South American River Dolphin Protected Area Network (SARDPAN) initiative to protect habitat for river dolphins.
- Helped gain the designation of the first marine protected area for cetaceans in Italian waters.
- Obtained agreement from countries on the

Black and Mediterranean Seas for work on the designation of 17 marine protected areas.

- Developed a conservation plan for the Adelaide Dolphin Sanctuary.

### Research and Conservation Projects


- Revealed information about the lives of humpbacks off the coast of Ecuador, leading to the creation of a marine protected area.
- With support from the BBC Wildlife Trust, conducted the first ever seasonal research in the outer Moray Firth, Scotland, to inform protection measures.
- Set up projects to end the killing of Amazon river dolphins from nets, including the first fish-filleting co-operative in Leticia, Colombia.
- Documented breeding behaviour of humpback whales off the Turks and Caicos.

- Continued research into the population of 80+ Irrawaddy dolphins in Chilika Lagoon, India.
- Found new orca travel routes and a transient orca hotspot in Far East Russia.
- Supported and set up first locally-led cetacean conservation projects in Papua New Guinea.

### WDCS also launched these new campaigns:

- Protect Our Dolphins, for bottlenose dolphin protection in the Moray Firth, Scotland. In 2008 we delivered over 18,000 protests to the UK Government against oil and gas exploration in the Special Area of Conservation.
- Global Campaign for Marine Protected Areas (MPAs) with the goal of establishing 12 large, highly protected MPAs and networks by 2012.
- River dolphin campaign, for the protection of Amazon river dolphins.

KARIN STOCKIN, OLIVER YATES, GMM/IPS




Research into dolphin deaths in New Zealand helps protect these animals from fisheries bycatch



Land and kayak-based research into Risso's dolphins in Chile limits the impact on these vulnerable animals



A porpoise is disentangled from netting by the Harbour Porpoise Research Project team, Canada

A group of children and an adult are in a boat on a body of water. The boat is decorated with a large, braided green structure that looks like a tree or a canopy. There are colorful paper cutouts of animals and plants hanging from the structure. The children are looking out at the water. One child is holding a green object. There are also some stuffed animals on the boat, including a white dolphin and a grey dolphin. The background is a calm body of water.

**WDCS has reached  
over 10,000 children in  
more than 15 countries  
this year through the  
development of our  
Dolphin Diploma**

Children from Puerto Narino, Colombia  
take part in a celebration of the water  
world organised by WDCS-funded  
interpretation centre Natütama



# STOP PROTECT CONNECT

To stop the threats to whales and dolphins, and protect the animals in the long-term, we need to spread the word as widely as possible. Through events, exhibitions, visitor centres, the media and more, we are raising awareness of the issues and helping our international network of supporters to grow. Across the world, our allies are coming together to create a global community of passionate protectors of whales and dolphins.

## TOGETHER WE HAVE ALREADY...

### Education

- Taken our message to over 3,000 students directly in the UK, Germany, Latin America and Australia through school workshops and to thousands more through events and partnerships.
- Developed new content for the Dolphin Diploma to engage children around the world in local issues.
- Gained recognition for our Dolphin Diploma by the German UNESCO commission, which awarded it the title of Official Project of the Decade of Education for Sustainable Development.
- Educated more than 1000 school children on the East coast of the US about the endangered North Atlantic right whale.

- Won recognition from the US Government for our PIER2PIER educational initiative in Florida.
- Extended our Caribbean education programme to the islands of Grenada, St Vincent and Trinidad and Tobago.
- Involved over 800 children in Puerto Nariño, Colombia, in an annual celebration of the Amazon water world called Natütama Week.
- Continued to educate and inspire thousands of visitors to the WDCS Wildlife Centres in Scotland.
- Involved schools in South Australia in basic photo ID research, through our award-winning Dolphin Watch project.
- Created a new whale and dolphin display at the Victor Harbour Whale Centre, South Australia.

### Whale Watching

- Delivered the first-ever workshop on whale watching and marine ecotourism in the traditional Indonesian whaling village of Lamalera at their invitation.
- Charted the steep growth of whale watching in Latin America, with a new 60-page report covering 20 countries. The report was widely praised and quoted in the press.
- Expanded the responsible dolphin-watching programme, Dolphin SMART, to Alabama and Hawaii and conducted the first operator training workshop in Orange Beach, Alabama.
- Continued to lead the way in responsible whale and dolphin watching through Out of the Blue.
- Trained 500+ people involved in whale watching in Latin America in how to run responsible trips.

WDCS/CHARLIE PHILLIPS, WDCS/LINDSAY BRUCE, WDCS/MIKE BOSSLEY



WDCS's Protect our Dolphins campaign launches with an interview on Channel 4 News



WDCS's education project in Alicante, Spain in partnership with Team Russia and the Volvo Ocean Race



Students in South Australia help monitor local whale and dolphin populations

### *The government view*

Sir Geoffrey Palmer is responsible for representing the Government policy and views of New Zealanders in relation to the hunting and killing of whales.



Sir Geoffrey Palmer: Former Prime Minister, Head of the New Zealand Law Commission and New Zealand

Commissioner for the International Whaling Commission (IWC)

'WDCS has been a superb non-government organisation for me to work with during my six years as Whaling Commissioner. Primarily because this organisation is relatively unique in this arena as it has only one focus – the protection of all cetaceans – and is therefore able to provide very specific expertise.

'The organisation's work is strongly science based and it has been important for me to be able to rely on the quality and the accuracy of the information presented to me. When you work as a government official and you want to make a strong point about particular issues you have to be very certain that the information you have is well-founded and precise.

'There have been many occasions when WDCS has brought not only its broad expertise to bear, but also mobilised the pressure of its supporters, across many regions, and made their presence felt at the IWC. This has enabled us to gain support from other like-minded governments on important proposals. These types of collaboration are often essential to garner the support required to ensure that proposals that threaten to erode







**'I speak from experience when I say that the world's cetaceans are better off as a result of the work of this multifaceted organisation'**  
**Sir Geoffrey Palmer**

SCOTT PORTELLI

progress towards improved protection for whales are defeated.

'WDCS brings a strong, well informed voice into this debate with reliable, high quality information which I think has been essential for moving the debate forward. As well as the organisation's strongly scientific approach, they also explore detailed legal and technical arguments that relate to the enforcement of, and infringements against, regulations on whaling and trade. What is perhaps most remarkable about this organisation is that it seems to have tendrils in many parts of the world where whaling issues arise. It has an amazing network of connections, even in remote corners of the Earth, that allows them to draw on regional perspectives and intelligence, which is essential in the battle for cetacean protection.

'WDCS claims to be the voice for protection of all cetaceans and from my own experience of working with this organisation over the years, I think that is a very fitting description. I can speak from experience when I say that the world's cetaceans are better off as a result of the work of this multifaceted organisation. I'm sure cetaceans will continue to benefit as WDCS progresses further campaigns for greater protection of these remarkable creatures in their many habitats and in all parts of the world's oceans.'

WDCS/FRAN MALLON



**Inside the 2008 meeting of the International Whaling Commission**

### *Giving their time to WDCCS*

Alex Hill and Rosalie e'Silva are from a team of five interns, who volunteered for WDCCS in the US. The generosity of thousands of individuals who donate their time is vital to every aspect of WDCCS, from education and administration to law and business matters.



**Alex Hill**

'It says a lot about WDCCS to have committed volunteers and interns who believe enough in the organisation to volunteer their time and

efforts. The work of WDCCS in the US is significant to the conservation of whales and dolphins worldwide. Along with the research biologists and administrators who protect and educate, it is efforts such as this that make a difference and set the organisation apart.'



**Rosalie e'Silva**

'As an intern, I spent most of my days on board whale-watching and research boats, taking photographs of humpback whales and making note

of their exact location using a GPS. The best bit was seeing so many humpback whales in their natural habitat and being able to recognise individuals. This was closely followed by having the opportunity of working with Regina and Sue, who not only taught me a great deal about humpbacks and North Atlantic right whales, but also gave me a warm welcome to WDCCS.'



**Children from the Sundarbans region of Bangladesh, where a proposed Marine Protected area aims to protect the rich diversity of whales and dolphins**





E&R FAHRNI MANSUR/ BANGLADESH CETACEAN DIVERSITY PROJECT

## Homes for whales and dolphins

Our goal is to help design and create 12 large 'safe havens' or marine protected areas (MPAs) for whales and dolphins by 2012.



Erich Hoyt:  
Campaign Leader,  
WDCS's Global  
Campaign for  
Marine Protected  
Areas

'This campaign is important because countries have already signed up to designate networks of MPAs by 2012, but the MPAs created are few in number, far too small and ineffective. We need to speak up for whales and dolphins to ensure that their habitat is protected.

'Our five-year Global Campaign was launched in 2008 and in just the first week of the campaign, thanks to the support of Team Russia and the Volvo Ocean Race, we gained about 10,000 signatures on our petition calling for MPAs: a fantastic start.

'In setting up the campaign, I have been constantly amazed at WDCS's world network of researchers and conservationists. They allow us to work in every country and ocean. For example, in the Mediterranean, WDCS has contributed to the work of the Tethys Research Institute as well as helping Alnitak scientist Ana Cañadas, from Spain.

'Their work has in turn led to the first of our 12 MPA proposals – in the Alborán Sea – which will protect some of the best habitat for five species of dolphins, as well as fin, sperm and Cuvier's beaked whales in the Mediterranean.'

# Protectors of the future

Sara Marcela Murayari from Colombia and Christian Burg from Germany are just two of over 10,000 children around the world who have learned about dolphins and their conservation through our Dolphin Diploma.



Sara: 10 years old,  
Puerto Nariño,  
Amazonas,  
Colombia

'Dolphins are important for our town, tourists and other people can see them

and observe them when they come here. People shouldn't throw plastic bags and rubbish in the water – for my Dolphin Diploma, we cleaned all the rubbish out of a stream near my house so that the dolphins wouldn't eat plastic and the water would be cleaner. We dressed up for a parade through the streets of Puerto Nariño, and carried posters telling people not to harm dolphins.'



Christian:  
13 years old,  
Ahlen, Germany

'I found out about the Dolphin Diploma when I read an article about it in our local newspaper. After

that I downloaded information from the WDCS website and started creating my exhibition. For my diploma activity, I contacted my former kindergarden and held a workshop. I showed the posters that I had created, and engaged the kids in some learning activities and games that I had invented.'



**WDCS-funded researchers work with local fisheries in Chilika Lake, to ensure the protection of dolphins**





VBREC

## *Fighting to survive*

Chilika lagoon, on the east coast of India, is home to an endangered population of Irrawaddy dolphins which, with only 100 individuals remaining, faces a fight for survival.



Coralie D'Lima, research scholar at Nature Conservation Foundation, India, leads a WDCS-funded research and conservation project on these animals

'Our project includes scientific, social and conservation components, and is based on the interaction of the Irrawaddy dolphin and local stakeholders at the lagoon. Our goal is to learn more about how both humans and dolphins impact each other, and to transmit this knowledge to local stakeholders, so that they understand how best to conserve the Irrawaddy dolphins.

'Our efforts will reap long-term benefits, rather than those which can be immediately perceived. The findings of this work will lend a superior understanding to certain vital aspects of the Irrawaddy dolphin ecology which could be used to conserve the animal. In addition, as a part of our conservation efforts, we are targeting local children in our outreach sessions, so that the importance of Irrawaddy dolphin conservation is instilled in them at a tender age.

'WDCS has been one of the project's main funders, and more importantly has supported its initiation, for which we are very grateful. Apart from the entire WDCS team, I am also grateful to each and every one of the WDCS supporters, without whom this conservation project would not have been possible.'

The research team head out into the Moray Firth, Scotland



ABERDEEN UNIVERSITY LIGHTHOUSE FIELD STATION

### Protecting dolphins

For 16 years, WDSCS has funded Paul Thompson's long-term studies into the behaviour and ecology of the Moray Firth dolphins.



Professor Paul Thompson, from the University of Aberdeen

'These dolphins are special, not only because they form part of WDSCS's adoption programme which helps fund work to protect other whale and dolphin populations all around the world, but also because they are one of the last remaining groups of their kind around the UK.

'It's a long and expensive process trying to study changes in the numbers, movements and behaviour of the dolphins. Because of the commitment of its dolphin adopters, WDSCS is one of our major funders.

'WDSCS has also helped make our research findings available to a much wider public and has raised awareness of the importance of dolphins and the Moray Firth, both to people living in the area, and to supporters throughout the UK and abroad. Local communities are much more likely to accept conservation measures when they can be seen to bring local benefits. WDSCS has used its Wildlife Centre in Spey Bay to build links with local schools and create jobs; all of which helps build links with other key organisations involved.'



# REVIEW OF FINANCIAL RESULTS

During October 2007 to September 2008, WDCS North America delivered over \$235,000 expenditure towards its campaigning, conservation and education objectives for the protection and conservation of whales, dolphins and their habitats. The information in this chart is taken from our audited accounts for the fiscal year ending 30 September 2008.

We are extremely grateful to all of our dedicated supporters and their continuing commitment to help WDCS meet the threats to whales and dolphins in North America and around the world.

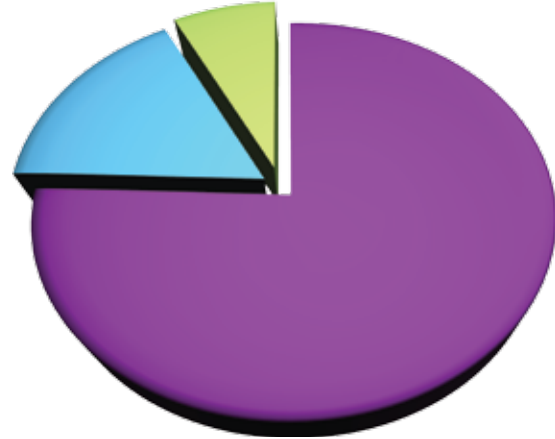
A copy of our full accounts can be obtained from WDCS, 7 Nelson Street, Plymouth, MA 020360-4044 or you can email us on [contact@whales.org](mailto:contact@whales.org)



Jane Bryan  
Chief Financial Officer  
Signed on behalf of the Board of Trustees

## How each \$ was spent in 2007-08

- Program services 73%
- Fundraising 16%
- Administration and general 11%



# THANK YOU!

Thank you to the many organizations and individuals that have supported WDCS

Get in touch  
[contact@whales.org](mailto:contact@whales.org)  
[www.whaleadoption.org](http://www.whaleadoption.org)  
888.MYWHALE  
(888.699.4253)

**Thank you to all the individuals and organizations that have supported WDCS North America, including:**

The Towerbrook Foundation  
Change Happens Foundation  
Harbor Branch Oceanographic Institute (HBOI)  
Peggy Oki  
The Cape Cod Mermaid  
Capt. John Boats  
Dolphin Fleet of Provincetown  
Hyannis Whale Watcher Cruises  
ROI Solutions  
Markmakers Foundation  
MB Studios  
Bamboo Trading Company  
Cape Cod Bay Council

**WDCS North America works across a number of national and international bodies to help protect whales and dolphins:**

Atlantic Large Whale Disentanglement Network  
Atlantic Large Whale Take Reduction Team  
Atlantic Trawl Gear Take Reduction Team  
Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES)  
Harbor Porpoise Take Reduction Team  
International Whaling Commission  
North Atlantic Right Whale Consortium  
Specially Protected Areas and Wildlife Protocol (SPAW)  
Stellwagen Bank National Marine Sanctuary Advisory Council