

Few dolphin-watching boats join program



Photo courtesy of Megan Harber

The Florida Keys National Marine Sanctuary will host a free bottlenose dolphin lecture at 6:30 p.m. Monday at the Eco-Discovery Center in Key West, on the Truman Waterfront. The National Marine Fisheries Service will share the impacts of tourism on the dolphins off Key West.

Many clamored for rules, but only 3 have license

BY TIMOTHY O'HARA
Citizen Staff

Dolphin boat captain Lisa Reedy slowly trolls through Key West Harbor Tuesday on her way to an area known locally as the Dolphin Playground.

Reedy, a captain on the Sunny Days Dolphin Cat, educates her small group

of tourists about how the Atlantic bottlenose dolphins hunt, mate and socialize. During her monologue on marine mammal protection laws and dolphin ecology, she mentions how it is illegal for people to swim with or feed wild dolphins. It disrupts their hunting and mating patterns and can alter their behavior permanently. One tourist appears taken aback by her

comments, saying she was told by one unscrupulous — or at least uneducated — concierge that they would be able to swim with wild dolphins. Reedy, who provides her patrons with books and literature on dolphin biology and behavior, tells the tourist it is illegal and explains why the

See **DOLPHINS**, page 3A



Photo courtesy of U.S. Coast Guard

The Boat Trap device still is being developed by the Coast Guard and the Department of Defense, but both groups recently successfully demonstrated the device near Marathon.

Nets to replace bullets in ocean go-fast chases

BY ADAM LINHARDT
Citizen Staff

The Coast Guard's latest weapon against drug-runners and human smugglers looks more like a fishing net than the typical high-tech, nonlethal gizmos unleashed by the Department of Defense over the past few years.

As the military perfects microwave guns, noise machines and beanbag bullets, the "Boat Trap" net designed by the Joint Non-Lethal Weapons Directorate appears surprisingly low-tech. Law enforcement officers

simply drop a net in front of a boat, the propeller of which becomes entangled in it, forcing it to stop.

"Entanglement of a vessel's propeller has been demonstrated as a promising, nonlethal means to quickly and safely impede or stop a small, high-speed boat," said Darrel Webb, project engineer for the Joint Non-Lethal Weapons Directorate. "Maritime security units, from port security to offshore interdiction, could benefit from this capability."

Such nets could get wide-

See **NETS**, page 11A

Man's body found floating

A man's body was found floating in the water about two miles south of Key West around 1 p.m. Saturday, according to the Coast Guard.

"A Good Samaritan reported it to us," said spokesman Lt. j.g. Matt Meinhold. "We did a search between here and Boca Chica to see if he might have fallen off a boat or something, but didn't find anything else."

The Monroe County Sheriff's Office recovered the body, Meinhold said, and it was turned over to the county coroner. There was no identification on the body, he said, but it looked like it hadn't been in the water for too long.

There was no other information available as off press deadlines Saturday night.

Learn about coral restoration

Ken Nedimyer, president of the Coral Restoration Foundation, will talk about his work Wednesday night at the Visitor Center in John Pennekamp Coral Reef State Park, Mile Marker 102.5, oceanside.

Gates will open at 7 p.m.; the lecture will be at 7:30. Nedimyer's talk marks the second of the 18th series of the "Delicate Balance of Nature" lectures sponsored by Dagny Johnson Key Largo Hammock Botanical State Park.

The Coral Restoration Foundation Inc. manages a nursery off Key Largo where staghorn corals are grown for research and restoration projects. It's free to enter the park for the lectures. Seating is limited, and more comfortable with a cushion. For more information, call Elena Muratori at 305-451-1202.



Photo courtesy of Alyson Crean/City of Key West

United Universalist minister the Rev. Randy Becker, left, accepts a proclamation from City Commissioner Clayton Lopez declaring Jan. 20 President Barack Obama Day. The public is invited to watch that day's inauguration ceremonies on wide-screen TV at 11:30 a.m. in the Key West High School auditorium. 'This represents a new era of hope,' Becker said.

Diamond Gala 'pre-event' held

The American Cancer Society will host a 2009 Diamond Gala Pre-Event Cocktail Reception from 5:30 to 7 p.m. Thursday at The Woman's Club, 319 Duval St.

The actual Diamond Gala will be on March 21 at the Casa Marina Resort. Thursday's event will be an informal gathering to talk about the many local services the American Cancer Society provides, including transportation to and from treatment, wigs, turbans, other head-coverings and prosthetics, as well as educational programs. The nonprofit nationally works to prevent cancer, save lives and help patients and their loved ones. Reserve a spot for Thursday's event by calling 305-292-2333, ext. 4904.

Dolphins

Continued from page 1A

laws are in place. The tourist is not happy with the end result, but she seems to understand the logic behind it.

Such misinterpretations of the Marine Mammal Protection Act is one of the reasons why the Florida Keys National Marine Sanctuary implemented a program for responsible wild-dolphin viewing. Sunny Days, Dolphin Safari and the Java Cat are the only three Key West-based eco-dolphin-watching tours to receive a Dolphin SMART certification, which is completely voluntarily, from the sanctuary. All of the operators, not only those in Dolphin SMART, share information about where dolphins are, and split their time with them to minimize the effects of their presence.

"We like to call it a healthy competition," Reedy said.

The sanctuary recognizes and rewards operators who follow the rules laid out in the Marine Mammal Protection Act that allow for healthy and sustainable wild-dolphin viewing practices. The acronym "SMART" is a reminder of the basic principles: Stay, move, always, refrain and teach.

The complete version: Stay at least 50 yards from dolphins, move away slowly if the dolphins seem disturbed, always put your vessel engine in neutral when dolphins are near, refrain from feeding, touching or swimming with wild dolphins, and teach others to be Dolphin SMART, said program coordinator Megan Harber.

"A fascination and curiosity of dolphins may cause people to want an up-close experience with marine mammals, but many don't realize the negative

impact it could cause," sanctuary spokeswoman Karrie Carnes said.

In return, the operators are listed on the sanctuary's Dolphin SMART Web site, DolphinSmart.org, and other educational and promotional program materials that are distributed through Florida Keys chambers of commerce, concierges and booking agents, hotels and other tourist locales. Being a member of the program also affords participating operators with opportunities for extra media exposure.

The program, which educates operators on marine mammal laws, dolphin research and dolphin behavior, since has been replicated in other states. Dolphin SMART has been launched in Alabama, and the groups are working on establishing it in Hawaii.

The sanctuary, National Marine Fisheries Service,

Dolphin Ecology Project and Whale and Dolphin Conservation Society developed the Dolphin SMART program after tour operators approached the Sanctuary Advisory Council with concerns that an increasing number of charter boats potentially were harassing dolphins.

Nearly five years ago, many dolphin-watching, eco-tourism boat captains were clamoring for sanctuary officials to develop a program with guidelines for dolphin viewing. At the time, Key West saw a surge in dolphin-watching operators, with it peaking at nearly 40.

Sanctuary managers held meetings and started the SMART program, which was officially launched in 2007.

But of the remaining 13 Key West operators, only three have received Dolphin SMART certification to date. Another six have received training but

not the certificate. Some disagree with the advertising policies and other requirements, Carnes said. Operators can't display underwater dolphin photos or photos of people swimming with dolphins.

To help build interest and participation in the program, the sanctuary will host a free lecture at 6:30 p.m. Monday at the Florida Keys Eco-Discovery Center in Key West. Marine biologists from the National Marine Fisheries Service will share research on the effects of tourism on the marine mammals in Key West, and the effects of water quality on dolphins in Biscayne Bay.

Hundreds of dolphins call the waters of Key West home, affording visitors the memorable experience of seeing them in their natural habitat. Since 2004, researchers have been documenting the behaviors of Key West dolphins and

the pressures they face from tourism.

One of those researchers, Laura Engleby, will discuss her findings of a multiyear study on Key West's resident dolphins. She has assembled a photo archive of resident dolphins' dorsal fins, which has allowed her and other researchers to document their life cycles and movements throughout the Keys and Florida Bay. Her archive is used by Dolphin SMART operators to help educate their patrons on Keys' dolphin ecology.

Another National Marine Fisheries Service researcher, Jenny Litz, will discuss dolphin population structure and habitat use of the dolphins in Biscayne Bay.

The Eco-Discovery Center is at 35 East Quay Road in the Dr. Nancy Foster Environmental Complex at Truman Waterfront in Key West. Parking is free.

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IN THE PUBLIC INTEREST

• Dolphin lecture

The public is invited to a free lecture on wild Atlantic bottlenose dolphins at 6:30 p.m. Monday at the Florida Keys Eco-Discovery Center on the Truman Waterfront in Key West. Parking is free. The lecture is hosted by the Florida Keys National Marine Sanctuary's Dolphin SMART program.

• Flag football sign-up

Girls and women are invited to sign up now to play flag football, beginning in February. It's a free program sponsored

by the KWWFL with no cost to participate. Call 305-896-7666.

• Citizen Review Board meets

The city of Key West's Citizen Review Board will meet at 6 p.m. Monday at Old City Hall, 510 Greene St. To see case files, call Director Stephen Muffler at 305-809-3887 or visit <http://www.keywestcity.com>. A board member position is vacant.

TODAY'S PICKS

• Moody art show

Key West artist Dick Moody will be fea-

tured in an Art Center Sunday Show, opening with a reception from 4 to 7 p.m. today at the Key West Art Center, 301 Front St.

The exhibit will feature 25 acrylic on mahogany paintings from camping trips to the Dry Tortugas aboard the Yankee Freedom ferry. Two tickets to the Tortugas will be awarded to a purchaser of Moody artwork. Refreshments will be served. For more information, call 305-294-1241.

AROUND THE KEYS

UPCOMING PICKS

• Audubon Society holds meeting

The Florida Keys Audubon Society will hold its monthly meeting at 6 p.m. Monday at Indigenous Park on White Street. Jerry Lorenz, director of the Audubon Science Center in Tavernier, will talk about new information on Roseate spoonbills learned from recent satellite tracking projects. Attendees are encouraged to bring a

dish for the potluck supper. There will also be a bird walk before the meeting, at 5:30 p.m.

All are welcome. Call 305-517-5701 or 305-587-6059.

• Sandford painting classes

Beginning this week, Key West artist Sandford Birdsey will teach "En Plein Aire" painting classes at 1 p.m. Tuesdays and 9 a.m. Saturdays. All classes will meet at her studio, at 328 Simonton St. Students are requested to bring supplies. The cost is \$30 per session. For more information, call 305-396-7493.

• Tai chi instruction

Instructor Will Soto will teach the ancient Chinese martial art of tai chi from 9 to 10 a.m. Tuesdays and Thursdays at the Key West Tropical Forest & Botanical Gardens, 5210 College Road, Stock Island. Beginners and all ages are welcome. Loose clothing is suggested. Call 305-923-9196.

Editor's note: To have your event listed in Around the Keys, e-mail the who, what, where and when to newsroom@keysnews.com.

Citizens' Voice

"Citizens' Voice" is a forum for you to tell us what's on your mind. Call the "Voice" at (305) 294-5800 or e-mail to voice@keysnews.com. Several of the comments will be published daily.

"Florida Keys SPCA has provided extensive, extraordinarily responsive support to ensure our soon-to-be-adopted German shepherd has the best chance at a second life. To the staff and those in the community that support them, including Raul, we are indebted for the hundreds of pets' lives, including our boy's that we've saved."

TODAY IN KEYS HISTORY



This photo of Grassy Key Poultry was taken on March 16, 1967.

KEY WEST 5-DAY FORECAST

TODAY	TONIGHT	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY
79	67	78/64	72/61	71/62	72/63

TODAY'S STATE FORECAST



AccuWeather.com

KEY WEST ALMANAC

Through 5 p.m. Saturday.
Temperature
 High 77°
 Low 67°
 Mean Temperature 72.0°
Precipitation
 24 hrs. ending 5 p.m. Sat. 0.00"
 Month to date 0.38"
 Normal month to date 0.73"



KEY WEST MARATHON ISLAMORADA KEY LARGO

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KEY WEST

Hear free lecture on dolphins

The public is invited to a free lecture about wild Atlantic bottlenose dolphins at 6:30 p.m. Jan. 12 at the Florida Keys Eco-Discovery Center, 35 E. Quay Road in the Dr. Nancy Foster Environmental Complex, at the Truman Annex Waterfront. Parking is free.

For the event, hosted by the Florida Keys National Marine Sanctuary's Dolphin SMART program, marine biologists from the National Marine Fisheries Service will discuss the impact of tourism on the mammals in Key West, and the effects of water quality on them in Biscayne Bay.

Since 2004, researchers have been documenting Key West dolphins' behavior and the pressures they experience from tourism. Researcher Laura Engleby will present her findings in multiyear study of them.

KEY WEST

Learn how to create gardens

Landscape designer Patrick Tierney will present a free evening workshop, "A Garden in Balance: Blending Natives with Tropicals," from 5:30 to 7 p.m. Jan. 14 at West Martello Fort as part of the Key West Garden Club's 2009 Horticulture Education Series.

Tierney, whose tropical landscaping has been featured on Home and Garden Television, in books and magazines, is known for his private and public gardens, including the Key West Library Palm Garden. This in-depth workshop is open to the community and will feature step-by-step how tos and photos, followed by a social where Tierney will give one-on-one answers to individual questions. Arrive early to get a seat. For more information, call Kim Gordon at 305-745-2030.

ISLAMORADA

January 15, 2009

WEATHER FORECAST

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PHOTO GALLERY



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the dealer would respond to repair calls and other support services, he said.

The larger trucks, Ford F-150s, will be used throughout

switching to "greener" vehicles during the campaign, said some of the new vehicles are smaller and get better gas mileage than the cur-

re properties' worth in the 2009 economy. The public can buy them individually or in a batch, he said.

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Domino's

Continued from page 1A

has long resisted will spill open.

Ranson, unaware that the anti-chain store law would apply to him, first opened his Domino's a year ago, only to have it shut down by village code enforcement after a couple of days. In response, Ranson converted the small storefront to a faux Domino's, which he called Murphy's Law Pizza, which served Domino's items, but without the signage, pizza boxes, menu logos and other branding. Ranson closed the pizzeria in May at the insistence of Domino's, which informed him he was violating his franchise agreement.

Still, with the storefront

already leased, it was a relatively simple matter to reopen the Domino's once the Islamorada chain-store ban was repealed.

For other companies that previously have expressed an interest in the village, such as Publix and Walgreens, things likely would be far more complicated. Details like land purchases, lease agreements, permitting and site plan approvals must be worked out. Then there's the sagging economy that is stifling many companies' desire to expand.

Though he declined to be specific, Realtor George Wilson in recent weeks said he has been showing properties to agents for several chains stores and restaurants. So far he's had no luck, primarily, he said, because potential sellers are vastly overestimating their

properties' worth in the 2009 economy.

"There are people holding out for \$4 million or \$5 million cash," Wilson said. "They're dreaming."

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House lawmakers had wanted in case the state's finances to strip more than \$200 million from reserves, leaving the budget year on June 30.

CITIZEN OF THE DAY



TIM O'HARA/The Citizen

Capt. Lisa Reedy gives dolphin tours off Key West on the Sunny Days Dolphin Cat. She follows the Sanctuary's Dolphin SMART protocol, which promotes responsible dolphin-viewing. Reedy came to Key West about four years ago from the U.S. Virgin Islands, opting to live on another island, but closer to the United States. She's marrying Scott Riley in June.

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