



Tuesday, June 9, 2009

Media Statement

Swan River dolphins removed

The Swan River Trust has retrieved two dead bottlenose dolphins from the Swan River.

Trust officers responded to a report from the Water Police on Friday June 5, of a dead dolphin near the railway bridge in Fremantle.

Officers were initially unable to remove the male calf because its mother was displaying protective behaviours. Removing the calf would have caused her distress.

With help from Fremantle Ports staff, Water Police, Department of Environment and Conservation and researchers from Murdoch and Curtin universities, Trust officers monitored the calf during the weekend and were able to retrieve it on Sunday and transport it to Murdoch University for examination.

On Monday morning, a Town of Mosman Park ranger reported a dead male dolphin at The Coombe Reserve and helped Trust staff to transport the body to Murdoch.

Swan River Trust Riverpark manager Chris Mather said there are many factors affecting dolphin health and the small resident community was vulnerable to disease and human impact.

“Dolphins in the river tend to be more vulnerable compared to those in the ocean because of their exposure to a wider range of viral pathogens found in estuaries and increased human impact on the river system,” Mr Mather said.

The Swan River Trust, Murdoch and Curtin universities have collaborated to create a new social science research and education project recording the activities of bottlenose dolphins in the Swan Canning Riverpark.

Recognizing their potential as indicators of river health, the new river-based project will centre on dolphin ecology and their interactions with human activities.

It will build on research completed from 2001-03 which provided a baseline understanding of the Swan River’s resident dolphin population.

The outcome of the study will be a comprehensive understanding of dolphin status in the Riverpark and the effects of human activities on these mammals.

For more information visit www.riverguardians.com

The Trust would like to thank all those involved with retrieving these dolphins and to the public for being the “eyes” of the river and encourages the reporting of dolphin deaths in the Swan and Canning Rivers by phoning 9278 0900 or after hours 0419 192 845.

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