

The National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration's National Marine Fisheries Service (NOAA Fisheries) would like to invite you to an introductory meeting on the Dolphin SMART program on Wednesday, December 3, 2008, from 6 PM to 8 PM, at the Waianae District Park Community Center (85-601 Farrington Hwy, Waianae, HI 96792). Dolphin SMART is a recognition and education program that NOAA Fisheries is considering implementing on Oahu. This program is intended to be a voluntary approach that promotes responsible stewardship of wild dolphins by encouraging sound wild dolphin viewing practices for tour operators and others that encounter wild dolphins, while providing participants with incentives.

Background

The Dolphin SMART program was created in response to increasing disturbance and harassment of wild bottlenose dolphins in Florida waters. The program was launched in 2007 in the Florida Keys National Marine Sanctuary, in partnership with NOAA Fisheries Southeast Regional Office, the Whale and Dolphin Conservation Society, and the Dolphin Ecology Project. Building on the success of the program in the Florida Keys, it was launched in Alabama waters in 2008.

The program offers recognition, education/training, and other incentives for commercial tour operators who voluntarily follow established criteria, while educating their clientele about the need to minimize dolphin harassment. Dolphin SMART is an education and public awareness program, not a law enforcement program.

If you would like to read more about the program, please visit the Dolphin SMART web site at <http://www.sanctuaries.noaa.gov/dolphinSMART/>. This web site also includes a link for operators in the Florida Keys National Marine Sanctuary that have agreed to be Dolphin SMART.

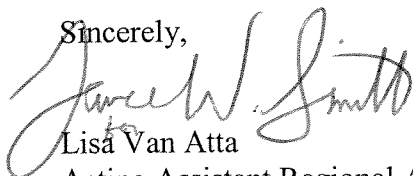
December 3, 2008 Meeting

The December 3, 2008 introductory meeting will include presentations introducing the Dolphin SMART program and NOAA Fisheries' potential implementation of the program on Oahu. During the meeting you will also get a chance to provide input on the program and its potential implementation on Oahu.

Please RSVP for the December 3rd meeting with Melissa Andersen at melissa.andersen@noaa.gov or 808.944.2107. If you have questions about the Dolphin SMART program, the December 3rd meeting, or both, please contact Melissa Andersen at the information provided above, or Jayne LeFors at jayne.lefors@noaa.gov or 808.944.2277.

Thank you and we hope to see you on December 3rd!

Sincerely,



Lisa Van Atta

Acting Assistant Regional Administration for Protected Resources, Pacific Islands Region
NOAA Fisheries Service