

water and released. Slowly at first and then with increasing vigour the dolphin swam away, hopefully to rejoin its pod. A successful dolphin rescue - and a very special and moving experience for all involved.

Courtesy of WA Seabird Rescue (Inc.)
Inquiries: 0418 952 683 (24 hrs)

Dolphin rides, with “gang of five”

One Saturday morning, the “gang of five” were on a Mandurah Over 55’s Canoe Club paddle near Boodalin Island and met a pod of about eleven dolphins. The dolphins decided that “the five” should be taken for a “dolphin ride” not only one paddler at a time, but often two at a time. The rides were fast and furious, above the cries of joy and laughter, there was a cry of “I’ve lost control of my boat!”. This went on for about half an hour. While some lucky individual paddlers have enjoyed similar “ride” experiences, we aren’t aware of a whole group being chosen to interact like this!

Courtesy of Mandurah Over 55’s Canoe Club
Inquiries: greydolphin55@gmail.com

Mandurah’s leaping dolphins

On a ‘perfect day’ to cruise the Mandurah Estuary the **Super Cat** was cruising through Mandjar Bay when our sister ship, the **Dancing Dolphin**, radioed through that a pod of six dolphins had been playing with their boat, and they were heading straight towards us! The fins of six large adult dolphins sliced through the water and straight to the port-side of our boat. They floated around for over ten minutes; some on the surface, some just below, even upside down.

Within seconds of the boat getting underway again the fun begun... The dolphins surfing only two meters from the boat apparently trying to splash every single person on board... and they had a good aim! They surfed and leapt around with us for another ten minutes before they decided it was time to go. The passengers and crew watched on until their dorsal fins faded onto the horizon.

Courtesy of Mandurah Cruises
Inquires: Mandurah Cruises website. mandurahcruises.com.au

It was a bitter arctic July, I had shirt, jumper, shorts, long pants, beanie and waders on. From my boat I saw a good catch of whiting, ran the net out and started to haul them in, then the net became snagged, a 100 metres away.

So down to my “jocks” and swim to the snag, a tree 1.5 metres under the water. Diving to free the net I looked up and there was a mother dolphin shaking her head as if to say “ it’s freezing, what the heck are you doing here” her baby just kept staring seemingly amazed


Finally net off, with dolphins following I swam back to the boat, climbed in pulled only my shorts on and thought I’m not cold, I’ll keep fishing. My dolphin mates just kept looking at me as though I had lost the plot. They were right, severe exposure (Hypothermia) was setting in, so I roared home had a shower then wrapped up in lots of dry clothing and went to bed.

Courtesy of Professional Fisherman, Bruce Tatham
Inquiries: phone 9537 6319

Dolphin oriented environmental groups

 **Dudley Dolphin** is a mascot for Mandurah’s dolphins and other wetland and marine animals. He encourages community to care for our environment and get out and enjoy nature. He provides children and families with fun and interactive ways to learn about caring for dolphins, other wetland and marine animals and the wetland environment.

Courtesy Stacey Jane
Inquiries: hellodudley@gmail.com.

 **Estuary Guardians** is a whole community organisation, concerned about the health and sustainability of the Peel-Harvey Estuary. We would like to ‘umbrella’ organisations without affecting their individual identities, helping them to meet,share ideas and where there are avenues, to pitch in and help each other achieve objectives more effectively. Estuary Guardians will also be a ground level point of connect for all the schools in the Peel district. John Tonkin College has projects affiliated with Murdoch University, Keep Australia Beautiful, Mandurah Cruises and the Tangaroa Blue Marine Debris Initiative.

The current focus of Estuary Guardians is to produce a Fin Guide for the identification of the Peel-Harvey Estuary dolphins and to encourage schools to become Estuary Guardian Schools.

Inquiries: Estuary Guardians Mandurah, estuaryguardians@gmail.com, Kim Davies 0417 215 644

Dolphin rescues – kayakers help

Paddlers often assist the Department of Parks and Wildlife (DPaW) and Mandurah Dolphin Rescue Volunteers to relocate stranded dolphins in several ways by escorting dolphins to locations adjacent to transport access points; scouting and verifying reports of stranded dolphins; or physically assisting in moving dolphins to deeper waters. E.g. the relocation of two dolphins christened “Squeaky” and “Trouble” were trapped in the shallow waters of Black Lake for several days because of low tides that left them exposed in the resultant shallow water. DPaW transported them by road to Furnissdale where they were released into the Serpentine River. Similarly a Mother and Calf were trapped up stream from Lake Goegrup and paddlers assisted ground crews move “Square Cut” and her calf “Lindy” to safety. “Lindy” being the name given to the calf in tribute to one of the paddlers.



This pamphlet was compiled by the Canoe Trail Friends of Mandurah and Pinjarra Inc. a non-profit organisation run by volunteers who advocate awareness of and care for the natural environment of the Peel Estuary. We thank Mirvac for funding the printing of this pamphlet.

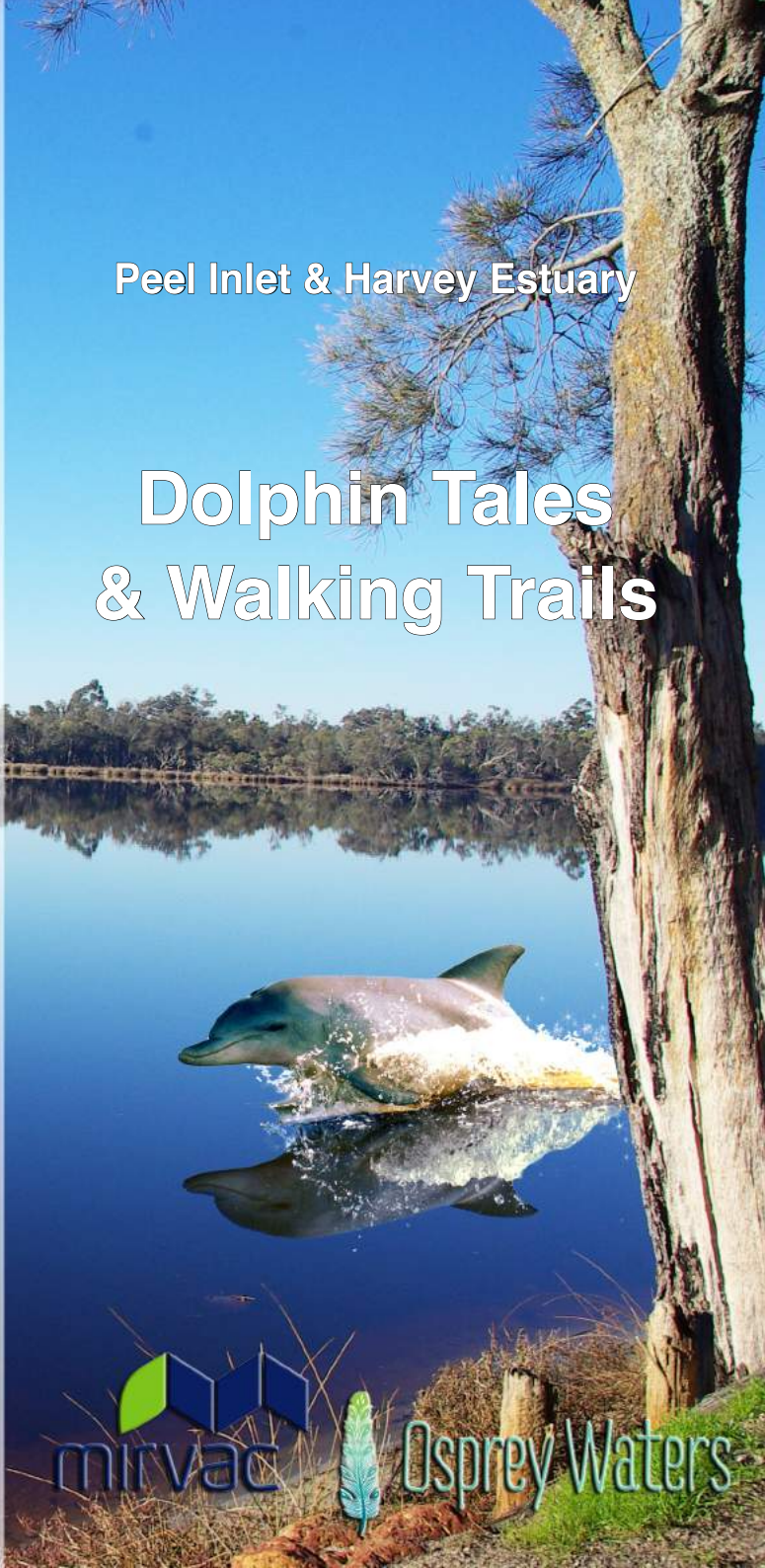
Other free publications are seven Canoe Guides and three Guide Companions that promote the use of recreational canoe trails on local waterways and a land based Bird watching Trail Guide for Water & Shorebirds.

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Inquiries:

<http://canoetrailfriendsofmandurahandpinjarra.myclub.org.au>

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Introduction

Bottlenose dolphins (*Tursiops truncatus*) are common along much of Western Australia’s coastline and are frequently seen in our rivers and estuaries. Unlike some other dolphin species, the Bottlenose dolphin population tends to form smaller subgroups or pods that inhabit a specific home area. Although group members can change from time to time, within the group, members assist each other with activities such as herding fish and rearing calves.

The Bottlenose dolphin varies in size from two to four metres and may live for up to 30 years. Females generally reproduce from about six years of age, calving every two to three years. Calves suckle for up to 18 months.

For residents and visitors alike, the prevailing images of Mandurah are its beautiful estuary, its water birds and its iconic dolphins. Although we have come to take for granted the presence of these majestic animals in our waterways, the reality is that we know very little about their behaviour, their health or their prospects for long-term survival in the waters of the Peel Inlet-Harvey Estuary.

We do know that the members of the Mandurah dolphin population primarily come into the estuary to feed and to find sanctuary and protection for their newborn and young from sharks and other open-ocean threats. But our waterways are under increasing stress: population growth, housing development, urban drainage, contaminants, recreational use, tourism, and agricultural practices all affect our estuary and its dolphin population.

There is significant evidence that the environmental quality of the Peel Inlet-Harvey Estuary has declined over recent years. This decline

is certain to progress, with development taking place at an increasing rate and rainfall levels declining. Responsibility for developing and implementing appropriate strategies to address these threats rests with government at all levels and, urgent action is required.

As individuals we also have a contribution to make to the safety and health of the dolphins that frequent our waterways. To avoid injury to dolphins, boat owners should avoid travelling at excessive speed and slow down for dolphins in the narrow and shallow boat channels.

Power boats and jet skis closely following or in other ways harassing dolphins can cause stress, which can also threaten the health of the animals.

Under no circumstances should dolphins be fed. The waterways should be kept free of all litter, but particularly plastics. River and estuary friendly fishing practices should be followed: trawling should be avoided, bait bags and other plastics taken home and broken or tangled fishing lines and nets removed. If you see a sick, stranded or entangled dolphin:

- call the **Wildcare Helpline (08) 9474 9055** (24 hours, 7 days a week),
- keep noise to a minimum and keep dogs away,
- keep the animal’s skin moist with water, if possible, taking care not to get water inside the blowhole,
- do not touch the animal more than necessary,
- do not attempt to push the animal back into the water,
- do not apply sunscreen, even if the animal’s skin is burnt.

Technical advice courtesy of Marine Biologist Dr Nuray Veryeri

Snapshot of local dolphin history

August 2009: Thanks to the many people who reported a calf in the Dawesville Channel with a huge mass of fishing line and seaweed tangled on its body and tail, making it very difficult for the calf to swim. We are happy to report that the Department of Environment and Conservation attended and after a lengthy rescue was successful in removing the huge mass that was tangled around the calf, including the fishing line and many hooks. Well done to DEC for a huge effort and their success.

June 2010: A dolphin is seen pushing her stillborn or dead newborn calf near the Mandurah Ocean Marina. Dolphins mourn their dead and she is likely to stay with the body for several days. A smaller adult, she may be a first time mother and unfortunately there is a high mortality rate with first calves.

January 2011: Adding to the dolphin population, during the summer of 2010-2011, three new baby dolphin calves were active in the waterways of Mandurah, one of them so much so, it has been nicknamed **Sonic**. Thanks to the cruiseboats for this info.

A young dolphin approximately 1.5m was rescued off a sandbar in Geogrup Lake today by the helicopter pilot and his crew member who do the mosquito spraying. They saw the dolphin well and truly stranded in the hot sun, so they landed their helicopter nearby and were able to carry it to deeper water and saw it swim off. Well done Guys!

April 2011: Another newborn has been sighted — possibly up to 6 (or more) in Main Estuary/Peel Inlet waters

June 2011: Another newborn sighted. 7 for the year.

December 2011: A female dolphin and her newborn calf were found dead on subsequent



Before...

(DEC)



After...



days 100 meters south of Novara boat ramp.

January 2012: First newborn for the year was sighted in the shallows at Cox Bay. A total of 7 newborn were sighted that year.

In 2013, 10 newborn were sighted, 8 in 2014, 9 in 2015 and 7 to date in 2016
Courtesy of Sally Kirby (Volunteer Dolphin Rescuer)
Inquiries: southwest.com.au/~kirbyhs/dolhistory

One of **Mandurah Ocean Club’s** most memorable paddling experiences happened on an Easter Monday afternoon a few years ago. A group of paddlers on one-man outrigger canoes were surfing the waves off Seashells Resort just before sunset when a pod of very playful dolphins turned up and decided to join in the fun.

For the next half an hour there were canoes and dolphins surfing and sharing wave after wave, at one point there were 5 canoes and about 6 dolphins all on the one wave! It’s an amazing experience to have dolphins trying to get as close to the nose of your canoe as they can and rolling onto their backs right underneath you when you are surfing on a wave. An even more amazing experience is to be surfing on a wave in one of the club’s 40 foot six person outrigger canoes with the dolphins leaping over head height and surfing right next to you!

Courtesy of Mandurah Ocean Club
Inquiries: www.mandurahoceanclub.com.au

The dolphins often swim with the **Mandurah Dragon Boat Club** during their training sessions in the Mandurah estuary and canals, especially in the winter, when the waterways are a little quieter. The dolphins very seldom miss a training session.



They seem to enjoy the splashing of the paddles and jump up in front of the boat.

On one occasion a dolphin family picked us up at the Old Mandurah Bridge and followed us all the way to Estuary Bridge and back. The mother and her baby always stayed close together but were not afraid to swim alongside the dragon boat. Some of the other adult dolphins dived under the boat and jumped out on the other side, much to the joy of all paddlers. It is always a great pleasure to paddle with the local dolphins especially when they keep following us into Mary Street Lagoon to wave goodbye.

Courtesy of Mandurah Dragon Boat Club
Inquiries: www.mandurahdragonboatclub.com.au

The **YAHOO Over 55's Bushwalking Walking Club** negotiating deeper channels at low tide were on their annual outing to waded from Island Point to Herron Point and return. On the way back when in waist deep water on the northern side of Brunswick Island a plane was heard above and someone called out it's the "shark spotter plane", no sooner was that said then a dolphin surfaced right in front of us causing panic and screams. With part of the group 100 metres ahead they heard the screams and it wasn't until they heard laughter that they realised it was a dolphin. The interaction from the dolphin was an incredible experience as it swam around and between us, at times brushing past our legs, and inviting us to play. After about 15 minutes of playing with the dolphin it disappeared as quickly as it appeared.



Courtesy of YAHOO Over 55's Bushwalking Club
Inquiries: email: psuijden@bigpond.net.au

One Autumn the **Mandurah-Murray Vietnam Veterans Canoeing Group** was paddling from Island Point down to the bottom of the Harvey Estuary.

On the way back just near Brunswick Island we noticed what appeared to be two dolphins, but something about the body outline and their behaviour looked strange, as though there was an extra dorsal fin on one.

They also appeared to submerge, but not fully, then surface again, almost up and down on the spot.

As they drifted closer towards us we are sure that they had a very young calf between them and we concluded that they were assisting or teaching it to submerge and surface to breathe this was mainly supposition on our part regarding their behaviour but it sure was something different. We kept our distance and they just slowly continued on their way.



Courtesy of Mandurah-Murray Vietnam Veterans Canoeing Group
Inquiries: email enquiries@mmmv.asn.au

Late in the afternoon one Anzac Day, Wade and I paddled out to the sandbar in front of the Marina Breakwater. It was easy on the outgoing tide, out of the heads the water glassed off as it had done the day before and the metre plus swell rolled through making for some good rides on our kayaks.

Sure enough like the day before after we started playing on the waves we were joined by 30+ dolphins that wanted to play just like us. The rides we had were just incredible as the dolphins surfed along side us and regularly jumped across the bow of our boats at our head height.



As we paddled back out against the swell a huge number of Dolphins could be seen against the setting sun jumping out of the waves close enough for their splash to shower us. An awesome experience!

Courtesy of Wayne Felton
Inquiries: email: info@kayaks4u.com.au

It was mid-morning when the call came in to the **WA Seabird Rescue (Inc.)** 24-hour phone number: an adult dolphin was stranded in shallow water at Novara and Mandurah Dolphin Rescue Group was calling for volunteers. Although primarily involved with the rescue and rehabilitation of sick or injured seabirds, members of WASR quickly arrived to assist.

Although distressed and calling to members of its pod, the dolphin appeared to realise that its rescuers were helping and barely struggled as they positioned a specially designed canvas sling around its body. The rescuers slowly walked the dolphin out to chest-deep water. When it sensed it was in deeper water, the dolphin gently undulated its body until it was free of the sling. But, to the consternation of rescuers, the dolphin swam back to the shallow water, stranding itself again.



As the rescuers returned the dolphin to the sling, the animal continued its plaintive calls. This time with the help of a rescue craft, the dolphin was gently loaded aboard and taken to deeper



Recommended Dolphin Viewing Locations

Welcome to the wonderful world of the Peel Inlet & Harvey Estuary Dolphins.

The aim of this pamphlet is provide you with some information and locations where you may see our wild dolphins.

1. Mandurah Ocean Channel
 - (a) Fishing/ Viewing Platform at channel entrance access from Breakwater Pde. Mandurah
 - (b) Western Foreshore (foreshore walks) access from Leighton Pl. (kiosk) or Fairbridge Rd. Halls Head
2. Mandjar Bay (foreshore walks with café, restaurants and takeaways)
 - (a) Eastern Foreshore access from carparks Mandurah Tce. Mandurah
 - (b) Stingray Point access from carpark Vivaldi Dr. Mandurah
3. Waterside Foreshore Reserve adjacent Estuary Bridge — (foreshore walk) access from Waterside Dr. Dudley Park
4. Osprey Waters, South-western side of estuary Bridge, Egret Point Erskine, access from Leisure Way, Halls Head or Bridgewater Blvd, Erskine.
5. Mandurah Quays (foreshore walk with café/restaurant) access from the carpark at end of Harbour Rt. Erskine
6. Dawesville Channel (viewing from platforms and pathways)
 - (a) Eastern side access from Rees Pl Wannanup (public carpark near café)
 - (b) Western side access from Southport Blvd. Dawesville (carpark near Port Bouvard Surf Lifesaving Club)
7. Murray River (foreshore walks with café/takeaway and restaurant)
 - (a) Reserve near deli access from carpark at end of Pelicans Rd. South Yunderup
 - (b) Reserve near restaurant access from carpark at end of Tatham Rd. South Yunderup
8. Serpentine River (reserve & foreshore walking) Furnissdale (boat ramp) access from Furnissdale Rd. Furnissdale.
9. Batavia Quay (boat ramp access via Batavia Qy. South Yunderup Canoeing Group.



Photos Courtesy Mandurah Paddling Club, R Wroth, Mandurah Ocean Paddling Club, Sally Kirby (Volunteer Dolphin Rescuer), Bouvard Cruises & Mandurah Ferry Cruises, Canoe Trail Friends of Mandurah & Pinjarra and, Mandurah-Murray Vietnam Veterans Canoeing Group.

Thanks also to Nuray Veredi, Marine Biologist for technical input.

A romp with a pod of eight dolphins... an average day out on the Estuary!