

Volunteers urgently required to assist with a study of bottlenose dolphins (*Tursiops truncatus*) in Northland, New Zealand

Program:

The Coastal-Marine Research Group (C-MRG - <http://cmrg.massey.ac.nz/>). Was established under the auspices of the Institute of Natural and Mathematical Sciences (INMS) (<http://ins.massey.ac.nz/>) at Massey University, Albany, New Zealand in 2000. Since then, both its staff and postgraduate students have undertaken marine mammal research within and beyond New Zealand waters, concentrating specifically on conservation and management orientated questions.

Volunteers are required to assist on a PhD study (supervised by Dr Karen Stockin and Dr Mat Pawley, Massey University and Prof Mark Orams, AUT University) to assess the behavioural ecology and conservation of bottlenose dolphins (*Tursiops truncatus*) in the Bay of Islands, Northland, New Zealand. Bottlenose dolphins are classified as Nationally endangered within New Zealand waters (Baker et al 2010), with a local population recently described (Tezanos-Pinto et al 2014). This study builds upon earlier research undertaken by Tezanos-Pinto (2009) and Constantine (2002) and will among other things, reassess the status and effects of tourism interactions (a decade on from Constantine 2002).

Volunteer activities:

The field season runs year round and volunteers are required for the **December 2014 – March 2015**. A minimum commitment of three months is preferred, with priority given to those who can commit for longer periods.

The volunteer team will be required to fulfill several key roles:

Assist on a 5.5m dedicated research vessel operating from the Bay of Islands. Surveys will involve daily return trips (not overnight) and be conducted in favorable conditions only. As such, no minimum or maximum number of research days onboard the research vessel can be guaranteed

Assist with vessel of opportunity data collection in the Bay of Islands

Assist with data processing and preliminary analysis on bad weather days

Undertake additional responsibilities/roles as the season progresses

Effort will be placed into allowing all volunteers the opportunity to gain experience on each element.

Volunteer requirements:

Be adaptable and patient. Field work is highly weather dependent and could include long, consecutive days both on and off the water.

Be enthusiastic and team orientated (both in a living and working environment)

A willingness to learn

Possess a positive attitude

Be polite to, and engage positively with, the local community

Be physically fit and able to work in outdoor conditions

Speak English

Possess basic computer skills (excel, word, etc)

Preferred (but not necessary) skills/traits:

Be enrolled in, or have completed, a degree in a related field (Biology, Zoology, Marine Biology, Animal Behaviour, etc)

Have small boat experience
Acoustic/video analysis experience
Have previous (marine) field experience

Enthusiasm and demonstrable commitment to the project will supersede formal qualifications. Volunteers will be expected to work and live as part of a team with shared cooking and cleaning duties.

Unfortunately, monetary compensation cannot be provided, and volunteers will be required to pay for their own food and accommodation. However accommodation will be provided in the field research house at a reasonable rate. Volunteers must pay and organize for their own transport to the field site (3 hours North of Auckland). Information, prices and assistance can be provided to successful applicants.

Application process:

Applicants should send a short email cover letter, using "volunteer opportunity" as the subject line, to c.peters@massey.ac.nz. The email should include an outline of why you would like to work on this project, your availability and relevant experience. **Applicants able to commit between December 2014 – March 2015 will be given priority.** Please also attach a brief CV including at least one reference.

Early application is recommended to avoid disappointment. Successful applicants will be notified ASAP. This is a great opportunity to work in a dynamic environment and gain further experience.

For more detailed information on the project please do not hesitate to contact me.

Many thanks

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