

I Spy...Dolphins!

(Post visit)

Grade Level: Pre-K-1st

Purpose: To have students create their own set of binoculars that they can use as they go hunting for dolphins through their school.

Materials:

- Toilet paper rolls (2 per student) can also use paper towel rolls cut in half
- Hole punch, crayons, yarn, stapler
- Pictures of dolphins (can find these at <http://www.photolib.noaa.gov/animals/kwhales2.html> or http://neptune.atlantis-intl.com/dolphins/preview_root.html), spread around the room or the school or outside

Teacher Background Information:

In order to learn more about the dolphin population, it is important to identify individuals. To do this scientists can use the dorsal fins of dolphins to identify certain individuals. Dorsal fin identification uses marks and notches as well as the shape of the dorsal fin to distinguish one individual from another.

Identification of individual dolphins allows scientists to learn more about the dolphin populations. Through repeated sightings, coupled with behavioral data, scientists can tell how dolphins use their habitat. It can also help us understand how many dolphins may be resident to a particular area. Identification techniques allow scientists to estimate population sizes and changes.

Procedure:

- 1) For very young students, pre-make the binoculars by taking 2 TP rolls and stapling them (you can also use masking tape) together or by hole punching and then tying them together so that the rolls are side by side so they can act as the binocular lenses.
- 2) Give each student a set of TP rolls and have them decorate them with the crayons.
- 3) Have them tie their long piece of yarn to make a loop for their neck so they can wear their binoculars.
- 4) Once they have their binoculars ready, give them the safety rules (NO walking with binoculars up to their eyes).
- 5) Take students out to their “research field” and have them try to find all the dolphins that have put up for them to find. Have them count the number of dolphins they find and see if they can see any differences between the different dolphins.

Discussion Questions:

- 1) How do scientists tell the difference between different dolphins in the wild?
- 2) Did your dolphins have any of these differences?
- 3) Do scientists name dolphins? Why or why not?
- 4) Do wild animals usually have names?