CHAPTER 8

A CLOSE ENCOUNTER OF THE CETACEAN KIND

For some people, touching a wild dolphin in the open sea is a vision they carry around in their minds. It is the ultimate cherished experience that most of them will never have (Dobbs, 1990: 15).

8.1 Introduction

The coast is a beginning place, an edge. In the high icy northland, where whales sing to the accompaniment of glaciers roaring into the sea, or in the tropics, damp and misty in the green humid light of a rainy morning, the coast is where we meet – whales and people, sea and land.

This quote drawn from Joana Varawa’s book, The Delicate Art of Whale Watching (1991: 13), indicates clearly the modern fascination with being close to cetacea. In Chapter 7, I also elaborated upon this modern mythologisation of the dolphin. In that chapter, I noted that the socially constructed dolphin was assumed to be a universally meaningful creature, frequently given human attributes, and often placed as living a utopian life outside the ‘pathologies’ of modernity. As mentioned in Chapter 7, there is an inherent contradiction here. The dolphin is at once produced (and as we will see in this chapter also consumed) as an animal close to or like humans but they are simultaneously posited as an animal somehow above or outside of us.

This chapter turns to the ways in which these fabrications are absorbed by and interact with the experiences of people participating in dolphin sightseeing and swimming tours. It does so using the example of dolphin sightseeing and swimming operations in Port Phillip Bay, Victoria. I base this analysis of dolphin consumption through tourism on responses taken from the visitor survey run over the 1996-97 summer on the dolphin tour vessels examined in Chapter 7. As with the case of the experiences of tourists at the Penguin Parade (Chapter 6), I also kept a participant observation diary during my trips on the boats. This
information, interspersed throughout the chapter, contributes insights about visitors' experiences on the tours which is not present in data gathered in the surveys. As explained in the methodology chapter (Chapter 3), the surveys were given to all tourists on boats on which I carried out my research. These boats were the sightseeing yacht the Looking Good, and two of the sightseeing and swimming vessels, the Polperro and the Moonraker. As the trips run concurrently, it was usual for survey work to be done on one boat at a time. On a few occasions, operators distributed the surveys on their vessels when I was involved in another tour at that same time. This meant that the survey did not cover the total visitor population for the period in which surveying was undertaken. As such, comments regarding the survey population are made in reference to this limited section of the visitor population surveyed and not the visitor population overall. On any one day I would only survey about one third of the total commercial dolphin tour population in the Bay. In total I surveyed 992 tourists (see Appendix 8.1).

The survey data is used in this chapter to describe the experiences of tourists on the dolphin boats. In stark contrast with the Penguin Parade, there is no land-based educational infrastructure to prepare tourists for the animals they are to be shown. In this case, as I outlined in Chapter 7, people are dependent upon the variable commentaries provided by tour operators to help develop an understanding of the animals and their habitat. The experience of viewing dolphins from the boat with an on-going commentary, as found on the Looking Good, varies markedly from a more intermittent commentary provided on the Polperro and an almost non-existent one on the Moonraker, where people are primarily waiting to see the animals from within the water. To varying extents the experience of seeing the dolphins and the associated commentary work to teach people about the Bay and its animals, particularly the dolphins, while at the same time providing them with a fun adventure on the sea.

This chapter begins with a brief demographic illustration of the survey population outlining the key variables of age, gender and place of residence. The chapter then goes on to examine a pivotal theme of the thesis, namely why people chose to visit the dolphins? An explanation of visitor motivations in this regard relies on responses to the open-ended
question in the survey regarding peoples' reasons for visiting the animals as well as informal chats with tourists on the boats. This information is supplemented by my own observations of tourists' behaviour and comments as well as that of the crew of each vessel. As stated elsewhere in the thesis, the question of visitor motivation is critical if we are to understand why particular animals have earned a special place in the popular imaginary. Furthermore, such knowledge may be used to bring other animals and parts of nature out of the borderlands and enlarge peoples' idea of what constitutes society.

Following the discussion of tourists' reasons for visiting wild dolphins, the chapter considers the various ways visitor groups experienced the animals. Here we find that in many instances the dolphins are seen by tourists in ways similar to the constructions described in Chapter 7, that is as humanised and as 'good' and utopian beings. These categories are based upon tourists' consumption of the dolphin encounter as reported in survey responses and from participant observation recordings. The ways in which the animals are packaged through what is said, and not said, in the tour commentaries elaborates these images in varying ways, and in association with an overarching conservation ethic in most instances.

The final section of this chapter considers the educational experiences of tourists at the site. The rationale for asking education-related questions in the survey, as explained in Chapter 6, was to determine if visiting dolphins in situ was an effective way to learn about them, from the visitors' perspective. As was the case with Chapter 6, my desire to ask these questions was in part an attempt to determine how tourists say they learn (or do not learn) about animals by visiting them in a range of settings. Although literature exists on visitor responses to certain environments and their interpretation facilities, this pragmatic emphasis on user/visitor responses is often left entirely out of the picture of more theoretical accounts of the socially constructed animal. In light of the above, the chapter explores some of the survey results which incorporate tourists' learning preferences at the site. In addition, I include my observations of visitor responses in terms of participation in the albeit limited educational opportunities provided.
8.2 A Description of the Survey and Participant Observation Population

The following section of the chapter examines the demographic make up of the survey respondents on the dolphin boats during the 1996-97 summer. This profile of the sample population is not intended to speak for all people who went on the tours that summer. Although, with the exception of one family, all people who were asked to fill in the survey did so, only a subset of the total dolphin tourist population were interviewed, depending on the boat I was on at the time, as explained earlier in the Chapter. It should be noted that, for the same reasons as explained in Chapter 6, only the variables of gender, age and place of residence are discussed. Unlike the case of the Penguin Parade, previous visitor surveys have not been carried out on the dolphin boats and as such I have not been able to undertake comparisons with other data sets.

Table 8.1 describes the age and gender characteristics of the people I surveyed aboard the three dolphin tour boats. As can be seen 39.6% (n=393) of respondents were male and 60.4% (n=599) were female. Overall, in relation to the distribution of people across age groups, most people (38.9%) were aged 31-60 years. This was followed by the 21-30 year old group with 23.7% of respondents and then the 13-20 year old group with 20.5% of respondents (see Table 8.10, Appendix 8.2).

Table 8.1*: Comparison Of Age Breakdown For Male And Female Survey Respondents On Dolphin Tours, Summer 1996-97.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Age (years)</th>
<th>Male</th>
<th>Gender</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>n</td>
<td>%</td>
<td>n</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>0-12</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>31.5</td>
<td>76</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13-20</td>
<td>75</td>
<td>36.9</td>
<td>128</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21-30</td>
<td>94</td>
<td>40.0</td>
<td>141</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>31-60</td>
<td>163</td>
<td>42.2</td>
<td>223</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>61+</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>45.6</td>
<td>31</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>393</td>
<td>39.6</td>
<td>599</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Note: the data in the table refers to number of respondents who answered this question.
Table 8.2 illustrates the breakdown in the composition of the tour taken by survey respondents as to whether it is a swimming or a sightseeing tour. In the field I observed that with regard to the sightseeing tours on the Looking Good, many respondents were there as family groups. This is different from the case of the swimming tours on the Polperro and the Moonraker where clientele were largely over the age of 13 years and very young children less common. Generally, as shown in Table 8.1, the majority of people on these tours were aged between 13 and 60 years (n=824). This is not surprising given the nature of the experience. As it involves being on a sometimes rolling deck, it is not always suitable for elderly people. Similarly, the swimming tours pose certain issues of safety for very young people who may not have the confidence or expertise to swim in the Bay, well away from shore. Generally, tour operators do not allow children under the age of five years to swim with the animals although they can participate as sightseers.

Table 8.2 shows that of children aged 0-12 years, 73.9% participated in the sightseeing tours, a bias that reflects the issues of safety just alluded to. Similarly, 78.9% (n=45) of people aged 61+ years preferred to participate in a sightseeing tour rather than a swimming trip. In contrast, the swimming tours were most popular amongst people aged 13-20 years (54.7%) and 21-30 years (60.4%). On these swimming trips, the groups tended to be largely made up of friends and young couples rather than multi-generational family groups.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Age (years)</th>
<th>Swimming</th>
<th>Sightseeing</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>n</td>
<td>Row %</td>
<td>n</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>0-12</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>26.1</td>
<td>82</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13-20</td>
<td>111</td>
<td>54.7</td>
<td>92</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21-30</td>
<td>142</td>
<td>60.4</td>
<td>93</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>31-60</td>
<td>117</td>
<td>30.3</td>
<td>269</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>61+</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>21.1</td>
<td>45</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>411</td>
<td>41.4</td>
<td>581</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Note: the data in the table refers to number of respondents who answered this question.
The visitor survey also sought to determine how many people were choosing to see the dolphins privately and how many were part of an organised visit. Table 8.3 shows that a small majority of people (58.7%) were on the dolphin trips as private visitors. During the 1996-97 summer, the dolphin tours, unlike the Penguin Parade, did not have provision for booking a place on the trips via travel agents. As such, the 41.3% of respondents who said that they were part of an organised visit (Table 8.3) were there as part of particular groups who had specifically chosen to organise an outing to see dolphins and the Bay generally. These groups were wide ranging. They included the Victorian Coastal Conservation Board, numerous students undertaking school and university courses, as well as members of scientific and conservation organisations such as the Double Helix Club and Friends of the Melbourne Zoo. As such, and in contrast with the tour groups at the Penguin Parade who were visiting the Penguin Parade as part of a larger regional touring experience, these organised visit participants came on the tours with the sole intention of visiting the Bay and its animals on a boat.

On several occasions I held informal discussions with members of these groups and their organisers in a bid to determine the motivation behind their participation in the trips. The responses were various. People organising the trips for school children did so because they hoped that bringing the classes out to the coastal environment would help reinforce lessons from the classroom. Teachers with University students similarly intended the experience to be an educative one as part of a tertiary course. In the case of the Coastal Conservation Board members, the purpose of the trip was for networking and, as one member of the Board jokingly put it, “to see what all my hard work has done!” People participating in the Double-Helix and the Friends of the Zoo excursions told me that their organisations offered several day trips each year, often to places associated with animals and the environment. An elderly woman from the Friends of the Zoo group explained to me how much she had enjoyed other trips, such as to Werribee,\(^1\) because they were always opportunities to learn

\(^1\) Werribee is a open-range wildlife park on the outskirts of Melbourne.
about different animals. A woman from the same organisation said she enjoyed taking her family on the outings as they were “usually fun and interesting and the kids enjoy it”.

Table 8.3*: Type of Dolphin Tour Taken by Respondents.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Age (years)</th>
<th>Organised</th>
<th></th>
<th>Private</th>
<th></th>
<th>Total</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>n</td>
<td>Row %</td>
<td>n</td>
<td>Row %</td>
<td>n</td>
<td>Row %</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>0-12</td>
<td>51</td>
<td>45.9</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>54.1</td>
<td>111</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13-20</td>
<td>110</td>
<td>54.2</td>
<td>93</td>
<td>45.8</td>
<td>203</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21-30</td>
<td>67</td>
<td>28.5</td>
<td>168</td>
<td>71.5</td>
<td>235</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>31-60</td>
<td>160</td>
<td>41.5</td>
<td>226</td>
<td>58.6</td>
<td>386</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>61+</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>38.6</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>61.4</td>
<td>57</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>410</td>
<td>41.3</td>
<td>582</td>
<td>58.7</td>
<td>992</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Note: the data in the table refers to number of respondents who answered this question.

Table 8.4 portrays the place of residence information for the dolphin boat survey population. Clearly, the vast majority of respondents (89.4%) were residents of Victoria, with most of these visiting from Melbourne (72.9%). Only 2.2% of visitors were from States or Territories other than Victoria. Nearly four times that amount (8.4%) were from overseas. The low patronage by Australians outside of Victoria may be a reflection on the growing interest in and accessibility of dolphin and whale tourism in other Australian states. In depth interviews revealed that the international visitors were usually in Victoria for some other reason (visiting family and friends) and their dolphin tour was a supplementary feature of their visit. So, unlike the Penguin Parade which is often a key attraction for international visitors to Victoria, the dolphin tour is not the attraction that may have brought them to Victoria. As stated earlier, tourists can visit dolphins in various Australian states.

These figures perhaps also reflect the nature of advertising carried out by the dolphin tour operators to date. This advertising is low level and based on brochures mainly circulating through Victorian-based tourist outlets. This in part reflects the Operators’ sensitivity to the limits of their operations. Most are aware that unlimited numbers of
people visiting the animals each year would almost certainly be to the detriment of the dolphins and therefore their businesses. In addition, conversations with operators suggested that over the particularly busy months of December to March many tours are sold out in advance. Erratic climatic conditions also limit the number of tours which can be run. Thus it would appear that the Operators are already almost at maximum capacity. Hence the need to attract interstate and overseas patronage is not currently warranted or desirable in the long term.

Table 8.4*: Place Of Residence Of Interview Sample On Dolphin Tours, Summer 1996-97.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Place of Residence</th>
<th>Individuals (n)</th>
<th>(%)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Victoria:</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Local Area</td>
<td>102</td>
<td>10.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Melbourne</td>
<td>723</td>
<td>72.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other Victoria</td>
<td>61</td>
<td>6.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Sub total</strong></td>
<td><strong>886</strong></td>
<td><strong>89.4</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interstate:</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>South Australia</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>0.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>New South Wales</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>0.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Western Australia</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Queensland</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>0.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A.C.T.</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>0.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Northern Territory</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>0.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tasmania</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Sub Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>22</strong></td>
<td><strong>2.2</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Overseas</td>
<td>84</td>
<td>8.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>TOTAL</strong></td>
<td><strong>992</strong></td>
<td><strong>100.0</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Note: the data in the table refers to number of respondents who answered this question.

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2 In addition, legislation passed since I completed my fieldwork has placed a limit of two trips per day per vessel.
8.3 Why Do People Visit the Port Phillip Bay Dolphins?

As discussed previously, a key aim of the thesis is to ascertain tourists' reasons for visiting marine animals. In the case of the dolphin tours, the survey asked the respondents why they wanted to go and see the animals. The following section of the thesis is concerned with uncovering these motivations using survey responses, data from informal conversations and participant observation notes.

A summary of visitors' reasons for wanting to visit the wild dolphins of Port Phillip Bay is presented in Table 8.5. As shown, 1,138 responses were given to this question from 992 surveys. As can be seen, I have collated the responses into seven categories, those being themes most commonly mentioned by respondents. As with the Penguin Parade results of Chapter 6, these categories were arrived at after reading all survey responses and tallying the results under various thematic headings which were recurrent in the data.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category Number</th>
<th>Stated Reasons For Visit</th>
<th>Number of Responses</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Specific love of dolphins, desire to see them unconfined, within close proximity, and to learn more about them.</td>
<td>513</td>
<td>45.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Visiting the Bay generally, as a recommended tourist site, part of an organised tour or course.</td>
<td>185</td>
<td>16.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>No response / don't know.</td>
<td>125</td>
<td>11.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Like all animals, and being close to nature.</td>
<td>112</td>
<td>9.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Specific interest in the marine environment.</td>
<td>86</td>
<td>7.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Part of a family and/or friends outing.</td>
<td>59</td>
<td>5.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>To share with children</td>
<td>58</td>
<td>5.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td><strong>1138</strong></td>
<td><strong>100.0</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Note: the data in the table refers to number of responses to this question.

---

3 As with Chapter 6, people often provided more than one response to the open-ended questions. Thus, if a person said they wanted to visit the dolphins because they wanted to go out on the Bay and to be close to a dolphin, their answers would be recorded in both categories 1 and 2 in Table 8.5.
At the start of the dolphin trips the boats usually set out in search of the dolphins first. If a pod is sighted, there is much excitement as people rush to the appropriate side of the boat, straining to glimpse this revered animal. Table 8.5 shows that by far the most popular reason for people choosing to visit the dolphins was that they loved them, wanted to see them up close, unconfined and to learn more about the way they live. Some examples of the responses are reported below. Clearly, it seems that the intent vis a vis the object under the tourist gaze, the dolphin, is more evident than was the case of the Penguin Parade. In Table 8.5 we see that 45.1% of responses stated that seeing a dolphin was the main motivation for the visit. In comparison, Table 6.4 in Chapter 6 showed that at the Penguin Parade a comparatively small number of responses (14.2%) reported seeing the penguins as the main incentive for visiting the site. This finding further lends support to the idea of the dolphin as a unique creature, able to attract people in the off chance they might sight one. Hence, on the dolphin tours there seems to be more of a focus on the animal from the tourists than is the case at the Penguin Parade.

A dominant theme within category 1 responses was a longing to see dolphins ‘in the wild’ as opposed to the confines of an aquarium or Marine Park. For example, a young man aged 13-20 years (#874) wanted to see dolphins “in nature and not as a toy for humans in a park”. A woman aged in the 31-60 years age group (#679) wrote that “the opportunity to see such beautiful creatures in the wild was unmissable, especially when we live in such an urbanised environment, and the only opportunity to connect with nature is via TVs, movies, books or zoos”. Many people also noted that they wanted to be close to the animals. For example, a woman in the 31-60 years age group (#942) wanted to “see them up close, to touch and interact with them”.

A conversation I had with an Australian couple in their mid-20s was illuminating in its explanation for some people’s desire to see dolphins in their own habitat. These people said that they were interested in learning about the animals and that was why they went on the trip. Although they had seen dolphins in Sea World and liked that experience, they felt that seeing them in the wild would be better. In their words:

1 This response is a good example of the need for tourists to undergo interpretation before the trips. The environmental rationale for restrictions on tourists being able to touch and closely interact with the dolphins needs to be explained to them.
Actually seeing them, going out and watching them is what changes you. You get respect for them by watching them in the sea and seeing just where they live.

One woman aged 25 years told me that “it’s better to go out and see them – you respect them more if you go out and see them and all the marine life”. Thus it appears that in observing the dolphins many tourists are concerned not only with being proximate to the animals, but also being in the dolphins’ world with them. This is a theme I return to later in the chapter.

The desire to learn about the animals was also a common one. A man aged 21-30 years (#807) noted that he always wanted to see the dolphins to have the chance to “interact and learn more about them through [his] own observation of their behaviour”. In the same age bracket, another man (#607) thought that by going out and seeing the dolphins, he would learn about them so he “could be more sensitive towards them and their environment [and] get to respect them”. One woman in the 13-20 aged group (#41) felt that by seeing the dolphins out of captivity, she could “see how they actually behave”. Similarly, a male aged 13-20 years (#372) wrote that seeing wild dolphins was “a rare opportunity to get closer and understand their world”. A number of people answered that they felt they could also learn something from the dolphins by visiting them, a point which I also return to later in the chapter. In summary, however, these respondents viewed their encounter with dolphins as a form of personal development. In contrast, other tourists framed their interest in dolphins in a more self-consciously environmental way. For example, a man aged 21-30 years (#965) said he wanted to see the dolphins “to understand and therefore help educate other people and the government about the fragility of the dolphins’ environment and our lack of proper control over these issues”. Similarly, a man in the 31-60 age bracket (#516) said that he thought the dolphins were beautiful and graceful animals and “if we look and learn we can help”.

Category 2 in Table 8.5 represents responses from people who were visiting the dolphins as part of a general touristic experience on the Bay or as part of an organised tour or course. Some 16.3% of responses fell into this category. Comments in this vein included that from
one young woman aged 13-20 years (#247) who said that visiting the Bay was part of their
holiday plans but that they had also heard that “Sorrento was famous for its dolphins”.

The third most popular category in Table 8.5 was people who provided no response or said
they did not know why they wanted to see the dolphins (11.0%). This response is difficult
to explain. A simple reading is that the visitor did not wish to spend time answering this
section of the survey. Category 4 consisted of people who said they visited the dolphins
because they liked all animals and being close to nature (9.8%). For example, a woman in
the 31-60 year old group (#497) said “I love seeing all animals in their natural habitat,
without disturbing them”. Another woman of the same age group (#498) wrote “I would
always prefer to see any creature in its natural habitat given the opportunity”(emphasis in
original). These people were perhaps less spellbound by the dolphins in particular than
other visitors. That is, such a response may indicate that these people were more interested
in visiting nature generally than in experiencing the mythologised creature of film,
television and popular text. Other responses here indicated an interest in the mammals, but
also in the wider context of the Bay. A girl aged 0-12 years (#17) wrote she wanted to visit
dolphins because “I like the marine life and the way the animals live”. In conversation one
day, a blind woman told me that she thought dolphins were interesting, that the trip helped
her understand their environment but that she “particularly enjoyed listening to the birds”
on the trip. Finally, a male visitor in the 13-20 age group (#569) noted that the trip was “an
opportunity to see wildlife in its natural habitat [and that he] enjoyed seeing the seals,
gannets and other birds just as much [as the dolphins]”.

7.5% of responses indicated a specific interest in the marine environment and that was their
primary motivation for going on the tour (Table 8.5, category 5). Several people said that
they loved the Bay and wanted to learn about it by visiting it. For example, a man aged 21-
30 years (#162) wanted to “become aware of the wonders of our Bay”. Another in the 31-
60 years group (#392) said “I am an ocean lover and I love marine life”. Other people
seemed to be predominantly interested in the well being of the local coastal environment.
One man aged 13-20 years (#246) was on the tour “to see how adversely affected the Bay is
by pollution”. Along similar lines, a female aged 13-20 years (#479) was “interested in the Bay...with respect to quality”.

Finally, as shown by categories 6 and 7 in Table 8.5, some people went on the dolphin trip as part of a family and/or friends outing and others to share the experience with their children. In all, 5.2% of responses were associated with a general group outing. As one woman aged 21-30 years (#278) wrote “I enjoy seeing these beautiful, serene creatures and I wanted to bring friends to share the experience”. Another woman of similar age (#312) said the trip was “part of a family activity [and they] wanted to see dolphins wild and free”. As was the case with survey responses at the Penguin Parade, some people (5.1%) wanted to see the dolphins for the sake of their children. One person indicated “they are beautiful, intelligent, playful creatures and I couldn’t think of something that would be as memorable to my daughter on her birthday” (female respondent, 21-30 years, #142). Several people mentioned the perceived educational benefits for children. For example, a man in the 31-60 years age group (#582) said the motivation for the trip was “to teach the kids the value of maintaining the environment”. Along the same lines a woman in the 31-60 years age bracket (#865) said the trip was “to promote an awareness in my children of the wide variety of creatures that inhabit our planet”.

In sum, it appears that there is a noteworthy difference between the dolphin tours and the Penguin Parade in terms of percentages of people visiting as part of a general family/friends (including children) outing. On the dolphin tours, only 10.3% of responses were given supporting this reason. In contrast, at the Penguin Parade some 28.2% of all responses regarding stated reasons for visiting the site were family, including children, motivated (see Table 6.4, categories 1 and 5 in Chapter 6). For reasons touched upon earlier in the Chapter, the dolphin tours are not always suitable for the very young and the elderly. In addition, the Penguin Parade with its entertaining Visitor Centre and associated amenities lends itself more easily to a family outing. Participation in a three and a half hour dolphin tour on the other hand is a more rigorous event and not one that offers an opportunity to leave the site should children become bored or tired. Also, the cost of the dolphin trip may be prohibitive to some families. For instance, a family of four could visit
the Penguin Parade for A$29.00. To see the dolphins, it would cost the same family A$35.00 each to sightsee only and A$60.00 each to swim with the animals, a maximum total of A$240.00.

8.4 Tourists' Experiences of the Dolphin Tours

The dolphin tours of Port Phillip Bay do not have the mass tourism characteristics and hence the associated modes of consumption of the Penguin Parade (see Chapter 6). The very nature of the dolphin tours means that the visitors by and large have self-consciously and knowingly bought an 'immersion experience', more immediately placing themselves in the world of the dolphin. Survey and participant observation work on the dolphin tour vessels suggest that visitors to the dolphins consumed the experience with the animals in two key ways. These thematic threads were based on a combination of visitor behaviour (observed and as reported in the survey and informal conversations) as well as accounts of their expectations and aspirations with regard to their visit to the dolphins. Based on this data it was possible to designate two generalised 'ways of seeing' described by visitors during their immersion experience with the dolphins. As was the case with visitors to the Penguin Parade, a tourist may experience one or more of the types of immersion visits during the course of the tour. At the same time, my aim is not to present one of the types as dominant but rather to show that there are a range of ways in which different people may experience the same animal. The characteristics of the visitation themes act as a guide by which the interactions of tourists within the world of the dolphin can be readily comprehended.

Firstly, for some visitors the dolphin experience was a life-transforming event, something, they said, they had wanted to experience all their lives. Such visitors equated seeing the dolphins with major personal events, such as the birth of their children. Here, immersion with the dolphins was an opportunity to communicate with a readily humanised species. In addition, that the dolphins may single individual tourists out from a crowd of swimmers by looking at them or applying their sonar is a much-revered experience. The spectacle and
excitement of the dolphin experience was central to some tourists, entranced as they were with the physical antics of the animals and their apparent curiosity about the tour boats. Secondly, many tourists were primarily motivated to see the dolphins by their deep respect for the creatures. Here, the dolphin was envisaged as other, as a utopian being, inherently peaceful, altruistic and in harmony with their environment and one another. In Port Phillip Bay, not only is the dolphin consumed as human-like and somehow incongruously as utopian, it also gives tourists an exciting adventure sometimes akin to other life changing occurrences.

Table 8.6\textsuperscript{5} summarises the main themes in relation to tourists’ ideas of what they enjoyed most about the dolphin tour. The insight from this data combined with participant observation notes and conversations with tourists is used to illustrate the ways in which dolphins are consumed. The chapter will then go on to examine other aspects of the tour enjoyed by tourists, as shown in Table 8.6. Following this, the chapter briefly addresses the negative impressions that tourists had of the tours (Table 8.7).

The chapter now turns to looking at the various ways in which the dolphins in particular are consumed by people in the survey using data collected on various boat trips (Table 8.6, category 1). The introduction to this chapter proposed that the experience of seeing dolphins in the wild is not the same for all tourists. There, I explained that in the case of the survey participants during my fieldwork, the dolphins were variously consumed as humanised beings providing an opportunity for communication and as a utopian other. This part of the chapter will use the comments of the tourists to show that while we might imagine the dolphin tours to be predominantly immersion, there are still variable levels of interaction and contact with the dolphins and variable levels of intimacy or closeness felt. Furthermore, in considering people’s impressions of the trip, I am able to show that the dolphins are seen by tourists in ways that reflect the more widely held constructions of dolphins as outlined in Chapter 7.

\textsuperscript{5} As with Table 8.5, these categories were determined in light of the responses given. The total number of responses (n=1207) is greater than the total number of dolphin survey respondents (n=992) due to the fact people frequently provided more than one response to this question.
A few points of clarification are required regarding category 1 in Table 8.6. For people aboard the Looking Good, their only option is to see dolphins in a sightseeing capacity. However, many other people chose to take a tour on the Moonraker or the Polperro specifically because they wanted to take their experience 'in the wild' one step further, by dropping into the depths of the Bay in an attempt to be, if just for a moment, part of a pod of dolphins. As such, category 1 in Table 8.6 shows that 13.3% of responses were given in relation to swimming with the dolphins and 25.6% were given in relation to sightseeing from the boat. That there were more responses favouring seeing the dolphins from the boat as opposed to from within the water may seem surprising. However, of my survey population, 41.4% were participants on the swimming tours and 58.6% on sightseeing tours (see Table 8.2). In addition, the capacity of the Looking Good to carry up to fifty sightseeing passengers compared, for example, with the Polperro which usually carries no more than sixteen passengers, helps to explain this difference. At the same time, some swimming-tour respondents noted that they actually had a better view of the dolphins from the boat than they did from within the water. As such, it is possible that even people on the swimming tours provided responses for both swimming with the dolphins and seeing them from the boat. This is to be expected. It can be difficult to see the dolphins underwater, especially if visibility is low. They move quickly and swimmers need to be looking in the right direction at exactly the right moment to see them. From the boat however, the dolphins are more easily observed, their dorsal fins breaking the surface regularly as they breathe, a sound often heard from on deck. Spectacular aerial feats by the animals are also more readily seen from onboard the vessels.

Notably, these two methods of encountering dolphins have some significant differences. On the one hand, seeing the dolphins from the boat can be an exhilarating experience but there remains the barrier of distance between the visitor and the animal. In swimming with the dolphins, quite a different view is afforded the tourist. Here, the animals may swim within reach of the tourists, look them in the eye, roll over and display their white bellies, or use their sonar on them. This encounter is necessarily a more personal and intimate one, the
ultimate in immersion tourism. As such, although the two experiences are combined in category 1, I will at times refer to them separately.

Finally, the question relating to tour enjoyment was open-ended. As mentioned, tourists could nominate a number of positive aspects of the trip. Each of these was then appropriately categorised. As can be seen, a relatively small number of tourists (6.8%) chose not to differentiate between the enjoyable aspects of the trip, saying they liked it all (category 5, Table 8.6). Overall, Table 8.6 indicates that the boat tours gave tourists the opportunity to experience the tourism event, including the dolphins, in a range of ways, as I will now discuss.

Table 8.6*: Aspects Of The Visit To The Port Phillip Bay Dolphins Most Enjoyed By Respondents.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category Number</th>
<th>Most Enjoyable Aspect</th>
<th>Number of Responses</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Seeing the dolphins from the boat (n=309, 25.6%) Swimming with the dolphins (n=161, 13.3%)</td>
<td>470</td>
<td>38.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Seeing marine animals in their natural environment and swimming with seals</td>
<td>312</td>
<td>25.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Being out on the ocean, seeing the scenery</td>
<td>122</td>
<td>10.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Liked all the trip</td>
<td>82</td>
<td>6.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5a</td>
<td>Being on a boat</td>
<td>80</td>
<td>6.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5b</td>
<td>Educational aspects and commentary</td>
<td>80</td>
<td>6.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>No response/don’t know</td>
<td>61</td>
<td>5.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td><strong>1207</strong></td>
<td><strong>100.0</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Note: the data in the table refers to number of responses to this question.

Chapter 7 showed that the dolphin has been re-mythologised in two key ways through a range of popular discourses. Firstly, the dolphins have been humanised. Through science we have found we have clear evolutionary links with these animals and we subsequently have felt that we can relate to them in terms of their intelligence, their perpetual ‘smile’, and the existence of their family groups. These features of the dolphin have led invariably
to anthropomorphism hence, as the following section will show, we have come to believe that the dolphin is ‘friendly’ and ‘happy’. Respectful of the animals’ intelligence and ability to communicate, I will show that tourists felt a degree of communion with the animals. Secondly, we have come to understand the dolphin as belonging to a utopian community, as being altruistic in nature and as being capable of a ‘pure’ existence, entirely other to that of our own. What is clear from people’s comments is that they see the dolphin as an animal with human-like qualities and values. At the same time, they might also position dolphins as being above modernity, as a kind and somehow magical being.

Visitors’ ideas represented in category 1 of Table 8.6 indicate their feelings of being enchanted by the chance to see dolphins in their ‘natural environment’. The research presented in the thesis has indicated that tourists’ attraction to the dolphins was in part a result of a perceived or real knowledge that dolphins have characteristics usually associated with humans. These features include such things as the physical make up of the animal, particularly their human-like eyes and their ‘smile’. In addition, that the animal appears to have a sense of fun and the ability to play, as mentioned in Chapter 7, further contributes to the connection tourists may feel with them.

Chapter 7 outlined the long held belief in a bond between humans and dolphins. In particular, Horace Dobbs (1990) has investigated the possibilities of this in his books and films about D.A.T.. This perceived link was evident in some survey responses which suggested several tourists felt there was a chance to communicate with them. One person, a woman aged 31-60 years, (#402) said “as I have seen them before, I wanted to communicate again with them...they can feel how much you love to spend time with them, and they reciprocate that”. Similarly, another woman aged 31-60 years (#827) answered that “the relationship between humans and dolphins is interesting and the concept of getting closer to them, spiritually and physically, is appealing”. A particularly well informed female respondent in the 31-60 years age group #878 explained that “when close, some dolphins can induce brain neurotransmitters which lighten mood and depression”. One respondent aged 13-20 years (#391) offered that she wanted “to talk to them and understand their intuition” while another aged 21-30 years (#632) said he visited the
animals “to lift my spirits”. Another female respondent aged 61+ years (#876) wrote “I believe they are special and I wanted to be in their company”. Some responses recorded in category 1, of Table 8.6 suggest that people appeared to be very moved by the experience of seeing the dolphins, and in some instances felt the event to be akin to other significant happenings in their lives. For instance, one woman aged 21-30 years said seeing the dolphins was “as excellent as our wedding night”. Similarly, a man aged 31-60 years said that seeing the dolphins made him “feel like I did when my kids were born”. Another woman, aged 31-60 years said the best part of the trip was “actually seeing the dolphins as we knew we might not see them...I cried I was so happy”. Clearly, seeing the dolphins was an intensely emotional experience for some people.

For some people, the dolphin interaction was like meeting members of an extended family or friends group. The C.S.I.R.O accredited Dolphin Research Institute (D.R.I.), mentioned previously in the thesis, is a non-profit research organisation funded by donations and corporate sponsorship, including McDonald’s. The D.R.I. runs a fundraising campaign called “Adopt a Dolphin”. Here people can pay an annual fee to support the work of the D.R.I. and in return receive a photograph and information about their ‘own’ adopted dolphin. Some respondents were participants in this campaign. For example, one boy aged 0-12 years (#848) wrote that he came on the trip because “I wanted to see my adopted dolphin” and one woman aged 21-30 years (#852) said “I have adopted two dolphins, Quincy and Spike”. In relation to seeing the dolphins, another woman aged 31-60 years said “I enjoy my friends in the Bay”. On one trip a girl aged about 8 years asked me how long it would be until we saw her dolphin. I asked her what she meant and she said “I want to see my adopted dolphin, Hookie Fin”.

The naming of wild animals in this way perhaps brings them closer to us, distinguishes them as individuals and indeed as members of our families. The Adopt a Dolphin project is one example of communion between humans and the dolphins. Here, people allow the animals to enter into their kinship structure through adoption. For some of my respondents, this was a ‘family-like’ visit as they had come on the tour to see the dolphins they had adopted.

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Some respondents enjoyed sharing the experience with their children. Two men aged 31-60 years variously said the best part of the experience was “my children actually seeing dolphins in the wild” and “the reaction of my children when they saw the dolphins”. Children on the tours had their own quite individual impressions of how they felt having seen the dolphins, relating the experience to other big events in their lives shared with family and friends. Many were excited by the experience, variously describing it as:

- “as good as when we went to the Melbourne Grand Prix” (male, 0-12 years)
- “as much fun as cricket” (female, 0-12 years)
- “like when all the Christmas presents are under the tree” (female, 0-12 years)
- “like the time I got my new doona” (female, 0-12 years)
- “extent just seeing the dollfens and uther anermos” (sic) (male, 0-12 years)

Many people commented on their idea of the intelligence of the dolphins, a feature again which links them with humans. Echoing the discourse examined in Chapter 7, one client aged 21-30 years (#298) chose to go on the dolphin trip because he wanted “to have a close encounter with a species that has often been compared as second in intelligence to mankind” (sic). One woman aged 21-30 years (#960) and a self-confessed Flipper fan, said that the motivation for attending the trip came about because “dolphins are really smart and I’ve always had dreams to ride with a dolphin by holding onto its fin”. Another person aged 21-30 years (#929) said she was interested in the animals “because of their intelligence and obvious reasoning ability”. One man aged 21-30 years (#869) said “they are very intelligent and I wanted to see what they thought of me”, an interesting comment perhaps implying a desire to be seen by as well as see another animal. For this tourist, not only could dolphins form opinions, it mattered to him that the animals saw him in a positive light. Finally, a woman aged 31-60 years (#877) said “I have heard they are able to have a close relationship with humans”, a notion supported by an older man of 61+ years (#920) who stated, “they fascinate me in their ability to relate to humans”. These responses also provide further credence to the investment tourists have in the notion of the dolphin as a creature capable of communication with humans.
The explanation of the re-mythologising of the dolphin in Chapter 7 expanded on the aesthetic qualities of dolphins recognised by humans. As mentioned earlier, some people were especially attracted to the human-like forms and features of the animal as a means of experiencing a degree of communion with them. For example, one tourist aged 13-20 years (#704) wanted to see dolphins because she “believed it would be very special as they are supposed to be quite human in the eyes”. A woman aged 31-60 years (#675) similarly felt the dolphins were beautiful and intelligent. She went on to say that her primary attraction to them was that she saw them as “so gentle and human-like, looking after their young, helping each other, travelling in pods”. A younger woman, aged 21-30 years (#626) thought that it would be “extremely exciting to visualise their human nature” while a boy aged 0-12 years (#389) was attracted by the dolphins’ “funny smile”. One woman aged 31-60 years (#530) said, “I find them beautiful, highly intelligent creatures”. Finally, a woman aged 21-30 years (#968) wanted to see the dolphins “to be in their territory, to feel special and hear them talking, to have eye contact with them”. Again these responses show tourists’ interests in the dolphins as communicative beings.

Table 8.6 shows that 13.3% of responses specifically nominated seeing the dolphins underwater as a highlight of the tour. The general consensus was that this experience was quite remarkable. Overwhelmingly tourists commented upon their excitement at being able to be very close to a dolphin. A typical response came from a woman aged 13-20 years who said that she enjoyed “actually getting to swim close to the dolphins and seeing them up close”. One woman aged 31-60 years said, “aside from TV shows I’ve only seen dolphins in aquariums and theme parks”. Other people felt moved by the experience of their perceived communion with the animal and the opportunity to become momentarily and completely immersed in the world of the other. One man aged 31-60 years said the best part of the tour was “seeing the dolphins swimming next to me, looking into their eyes and wondering what they are thinking”. After swimming with the dolphins a woman aged 31-60 years wrote that she felt “happy, peaceful and spiritual”. A schoolgirl aged 15 years said that she felt swimming with the dolphins to be “humbling”. In this way it seems that in some cases the interaction with the dolphins had the effect of transforming the relational
hierarchy between humans and the animals. Here, we do not see an attitude of domination but rather a tourist feeling subservient and humbled by the dolphin/nature experience.

Hence in many ways the dolphin has been consumed by my tourist population as a humanised creature with which they can experience both a sense of communion and also a form of interspecies communication. However, as explained earlier in the chapter, numerous tourists I surveyed and observed experienced the dolphins as creatures having characteristics which placed them in a utopian social world which stood as an antithesis to modern society. In many tourists' minds, the animals were altruistic, gentle, caring beings symbolising a better, other, possibly non-modern, way of life. Some adjectives appeared repeatedly in the survey responses describing the animals as non-aggressive, calm, peaceful, fun-loving, sensitive, free, natural, spiritual, gentle, special, and mysterious.

Clearly, the idea of somehow being a part of the world of the dolphin, or perhaps being able to escape humanity, was appealing for many respondents. For example one client aged 13-20 years (#827) said she wanted to swim with the dolphins because "they are beautiful animals and I just wanted to be in their world". A female respondent aged 21-30 years (#143) said, "what I heard about their way of life has some qualities I'd like to achieve for myself". One woman aged 21-30 years (#604) contributed that dolphins are "beautiful, fascinating creatures and to be close to one in the water makes me feel like I do have some connection to the planet". In addition, that the dolphin is considered to be spiritual in nature was also evident in many tourists' comments in the surveys. A woman aged 31-60 years (#518) felt the dolphins had "a spiritual quality", while another woman in the same age group (#82) felt they were "magical, magnificent creatures exuding a sense of freedom of spirit and gentleness far beyond our own".

For a number of tourists, the encounter with the dolphins stimulated ideas of a global character. For instance, some responses associated the dolphin with wider conservation issues, a feature cultivated by the environmental movement in Australia and elsewhere. As discussed in Chapter 7, the dolphin has been used by environmental groups and by Green marketers as a tool for selling various products and ideas. For example, a man aged 31-60
years (#211) said “in the long term we all need to take a global view of our environment because the oceans and their inhabitants will become more important every year”. Similarly, a female aged 31-60 years (#10) said “I hope many, many more will realise the importance of caring for this earth because if this happens, I may be privileged to see, if only via film, many more healthy, happy dolphins all over the world”.

For some tourists the dolphins they encountered in the Bay represented a form of utopia, living embodiments of peace and freedom. For instance, one man aged 31-60 years (#972), was “fascinated with their freedom” while another man of similar age (#687) wanted to see the animals “to feel free” himself. A woman aged 31-60 years (#530) said, “I associate them with being at one with nature, as peaceful, spiritual animals.” Another person (21-30 years, #504) contributed to the idea of the dolphin as a utopian being when she wrote that we could emulate the dolphins “living freely together in harmony...through an understanding and appreciation of them”. A man aged 31-60 years (#808) wrote “on T.V. they are portrayed as very smart, peaceful, friendly, graceful animals – I wanted to see that”.

In sum, almost 40% of survey responses nominated seeing and/or swimming with the dolphins as the most enjoyable part of the tour. For some tourists, though, the dolphins were not the highlight of the tour as I will now discuss. Category 2 in Table 8.6 shows that tourists’ second most often mentioned enjoyable aspect of the visit to the dolphins was seeing a range of marine animals in their environment (25.9% of responses) and in particular, being given the chance to swim with resident seals in the Bay (Figure 8.1). The seals are visited by the Looking Good on all of her tours as a sightseeing activity only. The Moonraker and the Polperro also regularly visit and swim with these animals. Hence, none of the tours exclusively focus on the dolphins. This is not solely out of a desire to show people a wide range of marine environments. The utilisation of the seals as an attraction helps to guard against tourist disappointment if the dolphins can not be found during the trip. Hence, each tour tends to supplement the dolphin encounter with other marine animal features. Interestingly, I did not usually observe particularly excited behaviour from tourists when visiting the seals. In the water, these mammals frequently
Figure 8.1: Tourists Swimming with Australian Fur Seals, Port Phillip Bay, Victoria, 1997

(Source: Christina Jarvis, 1997)
hover within reach of swimmers. They appear to be curious, playful and gregarious animals, with extraordinary grace in the water. Yet in my time on the boats the response to the seals from tourists was less emotional that when we located dolphins. The seals, it seemed, were an enjoyable sideline but held none of the dolphins’ intrigue mapped out in Chapter 7. Another main animal feature of the tours are the Australasian Gannets who nest at Popes Eye. Commentaries on the Polperro and the Looking Good include basic scientific ecological and conservation information about both the seals and the gannets further adding weight to their aim of environmental education through tourism.

Although the tours are sold largely on the basis of a dolphin experience, there are various reasons why interactions with the other animals received such a high number of responses. For instance, although the other animals are usually visited after the dolphins, tour boats can always drive within only a few metres of the seals and gannets and remain in the vicinity of these animals for some minutes. This allows very close observation of the largely stationary animals. However, as I have said, although tourists can swim within a distance of a metre or so of the seals, the dolphins remain the stars of the show.

The high number of responses favouring the visit to the seals may be in part due to the fact that the dolphins are not stationary, can be difficult to find, and often allow tourists only a fleeting glance as they swim past. As one man aged 31-60 years stated “it would have been good to see more dolphins but I understand that they are wild animals and are not predictable like the birds and seals”. Clearly this visitor’s hunger to see a dolphin was not placated by the other animals. His comment raises the question as to whether he sees the seals and the birds as being somehow less ‘wild’ than the dolphins. Again, the dolphin is envisaged as a magic creature, the leading light in the drama of the tour with the other animals performing interesting supporting roles. From another tourist’s perspective the seals were the highlight of the trip because “they’re easier to photograph and they don’t zoom past” (male, 31-60 years). Another woman aged 31-60 years enjoyed “the majestic seals…and the beautiful gannets” and another woman aged 21-30 thought the best part of the trip was “seeing the fur seals up close [because] it is unusual to be able to get that close to such a large, wild animal”. One young girl summed up the excitement expressed by
many younger tourists when she told me that she “liked swimming with the seals because it’s like going to something really big, like *Beauty and the Beast*”. This quote is interesting in that the child is equating her encounter with the seals with another big event in her life. That she sees a parallel between the seals and a cartoon feature film perhaps indicates that to this girl swimming with a wild animal is somewhat of a make-believe experience.

Although the dolphin is the star attraction, many tourists were simply impressed by the more general boating experience. Some 10.1% of the responses nominated being out in the ocean environment and enjoying the Bay scenery, particularly Port Phillip Heads, as an enjoyable aspect of the tour (category 3 in Table 8.6). People variously described this part of the trip as “relaxing”, “picturesque”, and “peaceful and quiet”. Category 5a in Table 8.7 shows that 6.6% of responses nominated being out on a boat as a highlight of the dolphin tour. Visitors frequently commented about the fun associated with being on a boat and the opportunity it provided to see the Bay. A woman passenger on the *Looking Good* aged 31-60 years said the best part of the trip was the opportunity to go sailing which was like “when you see shooting stars in the night sky in the country”.

A woman aged 13-20 years gave a particularly poignant response. Blind since birth, she told me she had always been interested in nature and animals. She thought that by coming out on a trip she might be able to feel a little more of what life is like in the marine environment. Her response to being in the presence of dolphins indicated that for this woman, an immersion experience was a form of seeing. That is, the encounter served to provide her with a form of ‘knowing’ she had not felt before. In her words “I can now understand more about what dolphins are, how they live, what it is like where they live...I can visualise them now”.

As with responses in category 1 in Table 8.5, some tourists highlighted the benefits they felt from the opportunity to learn more about the Bay and animals through the Operators’ commentary and the chance to ask crew questions. 6.6% of responses nominated this viewpoint (category 5b, Table 8.6). Several people also said that they learnt about the site

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6 *Beauty and the Beast* is a Walt Disney performance for children.
simply by being there. For example, a male aged 61+ years said he enjoyed “learning more about dolphins and seals by seeing them in the wild”. The question of education at the site and tourists’ impressions of this is considered further later in the chapter.

Finally, Table 8.6 shows that 5.1% (category 6) of responses nominated that they did not know what the most enjoyable aspect of the trip was or did not provide an answer to this question. As with the surveys conducted at the Penguin Parade, these responses may be indicative of people feeling bored by the survey or possibly very cold after their tour on the Bay and disinclined to provide responses to questions. Alternatively, they may have found that they enjoyed all aspects of the trip or that they did not enjoy any of the trip. This latter issue will now be discussed in relation to tourists’ dissatisfaction with different aspects of the dolphin experience.

8.4.1 Visitor Dissatisfaction on the Dolphin Tours

On the whole, the surveys showed that most people enjoyed at least one aspect of the dolphin tours. However, for a minority of respondents, the way in which they experienced the dolphins was not wholly positive. Table 8.7 shows the various aspects of the tours not enjoyed by people.

As can be seen in category 1 of Table 8.7, almost one third (32.7%) of responses nominated that all aspects of the dolphin tour were liked. Category 2 shows that a further 21.8% of responses were a non-response or a ‘don’t know’. As with category 6 of Table 8.6, this may indicate a reluctance to spend time on the survey response. Alternatively, some of these responses may represent people who liked all of the tour and could not specify a negative aspect. Some 13.4% of responses (category 3) from tourists indicated concern about the wind and cold weather on the tour, and 11.1% (category 4) of responses indicated that the smell of the seals at Chinaman’s Hat was offensive. These latter two categories are
Table 8.7*: Aspects Of The Visit To The Port Phillip Bay Dolphins Least Enjoyed By Respondents.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category Number</th>
<th>Least Enjoyable Aspect</th>
<th>Number of Responses</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.</td>
<td>Nothing, liked all of the trip</td>
<td>324</td>
<td>32.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.</td>
<td>No response/don’t know</td>
<td>216</td>
<td>21.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.</td>
<td>The cold and the wind</td>
<td>133</td>
<td>13.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.</td>
<td>Smell of the seals</td>
<td>111</td>
<td>11.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.</td>
<td>Inadequate food and equipment</td>
<td>91</td>
<td>9.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6.</td>
<td>Waiting to see the dolphins</td>
<td>64</td>
<td>6.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7.</td>
<td>Other vessels in the area</td>
<td>53</td>
<td>5.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td></td>
<td>992</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Note: the data in the table refers to number of responses to this question.

interesting and perhaps indicate that some people had hoped to experience an immersion visit with comfort levels higher than such tours can offer during their day out on the Bay. This suggests that some tourists enjoy the chance to see animals ‘in the wild’ but do not embrace the personal discomfort which is almost inevitable in that context, and is indeed a part of experiencing this ‘wild’. It is rarely possible to know the unconfined magic of Flipper and his marine friends without also knowing their space, which is often cold, always wet and invariably carries the odours of the animals.

Category 5 in Table 8.8 shows that a small number of responses (9.2%) were given in relation to visitors' dissatisfaction with food provided on the tours or the adequacy of equipment. Fewer responses still were given in relation to tourists’ unhappiness with the amount of time it took for the tour operator to locate the dolphins (category 6, 6.5%). That these responses were recorded at all indicates that for some viewers there is an expectation that the appearance of the dolphins can be made on demand, as in a more controlled environment such as a theme park. One tour boat operator told me that he had experienced several occasions where tourists had asked him when the dolphins would arrive. Finally, as shown in category 7, 5.3% of people voiced concern about other vessels in the immediate area. These comments primarily related to peoples’ concern about the impact of these vessels on the dolphins.
In sum, the preceding responses summarised by Tables 8.6 and 8.7 illustrate that although the general experience of dolphin watching and swimming is characterised by immersion and closeness, the touristic experience of visiting the dolphins is highly varied. In disparate ways peoples’ comments show they have been influenced by the re-mythologising of the dolphin as explained in Chapter 7. With general reference to Tables 8.5 and 8.6, comments from many tourists suggest that the emotional experience of immersion with dolphins can have an educative impact and perhaps broader conservation spin-offs for those respondents already open to such an idea. Of relevance is a consideration of the ways in which interpreters might harness tourists’ affection for nature to achieve environmental education outcomes. It is to the educational experiences of tourist on the dolphin tour vessels that the chapter now turns.

8.5 Educational Experiences on the Dolphin Tours.

As alluded to in the introduction to this chapter, my project is in part interested in the possibility of people learning about animals by visiting them. In the case of the dolphin tours, I sought to discover if the people themselves felt that their knowledge of dolphins was enhanced by taking the time to go out and visit them. My premise in asking tourists questions relating to their ideas of pedagogical experiences was twofold. Firstly, the dolphin tours are promoted as ‘ecotourism’ and if they are to be sold in this way, tour operators have a duty to incorporate an educational aspect. Secondly, if the tourists felt they learnt something by seeing the animals in ‘real life’ and in their own habitat, perhaps this may go some way to determining if sightseeing and swimming with dolphins and the inevitable impact on them is justifiable in a conservation sense. As such, my survey initially asked people if they felt they learnt about dolphins by participating in the tour (Table 8.8) and, if so, what methods did they find beneficial in this regard (Table 8.9).

As stated earlier in the chapter, some respondents chose to go on the dolphin tours in part to increase their knowledge of the animals and their habitat. Table 8.8 illustrates tourists’ responses to the survey question asking if they felt they learnt anything by visiting the Port
Phillip Bay dolphins. Of the 988 answers to this question, a substantial majority (87.1%) were in the affirmative. Across all age groups, over 80.0% of responses indicated that visitors felt visiting the dolphins had an educational advantage. As with the case of the Penguin Parade, the people on the tours provided me with a self-assessment of learning and as such these findings will not necessarily match those based on educational assessment criterion of a different nature.

Table 8.9 shows the various ways in which the tourists' felt they learnt about the animals. There were 2238 responses to this question from 992 surveys, again because people had the opportunity to answer yes to more than one learning option. As shown, 35.4% (n=793) of responses indicated that the tour operator's commentary provided on the vessels was a useful learning method. This corresponds with some of the comments relating to category 5b Table 8.6 regarding people who stated that the commentary was their favourite part of the tour. The commentary was nominated as the most preferred learning method across all age groups, an unsurprising finding considering the commentary is the only self evident pedagogical aspect of the tours. As discussed in Chapter 7, there is a wide variation between the content and quality of interpretation provided on the three tour vessels. In examining the survey responses, people aboard the Polperro and particularly the Looking Good made note of the fact that they enjoyed the commentaries and that they were a useful way to learn about the dolphins and their environment. Recommendations about potential
additions to the interpretation component of the trips are included in the final chapter of the thesis.

The second most popular method that respondents nominated as a way of learning about the dolphins was by observing them directly. As can be seen in Table 8.9, 28.3% of responses favoured this method. Clearly this is an important learning tool. For these tourists, seeing the animals in their own space was beneficial in an educational sense, and presumably more so than simply seeing them on a screen or in a book. Many of the more extensive comments made by tourists directly supported this notion. For instance, a man aged 13-20 years (#796) recorded that “I thought it would be lovely to see dolphins closely and learn more about them”. Similarly, another man, aged 21-30 years, (#807) said that seeing the dolphins first hand was “a chance to interact and learn more about them through my own observation”. One man aged 21-30 years (#31) referred to the dolphins as “the brains of the sea” and considered them to be “great teachers of how calm and tranquil nature can be”. One woman aged 21-30 years (#227) wrote “I didn’t realise [dolphins] were so close to Melbourne”. Similarly, a man aged 31-60 years (#353) said that he went on the tour because he lived “locally and wish[ed] to know what was happening in the area”. Finally, a woman in the 21-30 years age bracket (#640) felt that seeing the dolphins was “a great way to enjoy and learn more about our environment”.

Some 21.9% of responses indicated that tourists learnt about the animals by asking questions of the crew, an option especially popular on the Polperro and the Looking Good. This is an important finding in that it indicates the usefulness of having personal contact with people on the tours. Clearly, for many of the respondents, it is not enough to simply be driven around to see the dolphins. Tourists learn effectively if they are allowed contact with the ‘experts’ on board. At the same time, this result points to the need for crew to be well informed and approachable.

Not surprisingly, only 7.9% of responses nominated reading about the dolphins onboard as a preferred learning method. As mentioned previously, written interpretation material on the tours largely exists at the level of promotional brochures. On some vessels, the then
Tour Operator's Voluntary Code of Practice was displayed in the cabin, a useful document for tourists to peruse. With the movement of the vessels at sea and the attractions to be seen from the deck, it is not realistic to expect people to want to read about the dolphins in the cabin. This suggests there may be a useful place for a land-based interpretation site to supplement the water-based experience.

A similarly small number of responses (5.1%) were recorded in relation to people learning about the animals through watching videos on board. As mentioned, both the Looking Good and the Polperro are equipped to run videos. During my field work, the Polperro displayed videos twice, once at the request of a client and the other time because we could not find the dolphins and the video was run to appease some disappointed tourists. As explained in Chapter 7, the Looking Good has a camera mounted on its hull which can relay live footage of the animals into the cabin. This is a fantastic way for people to closely observe the animals’ movements underwater without disturbing them. A remote control allows patrons to change the direction of the camera, hence following the movements of the animals. My observation of these events was that people were delighted with the chance to see the animals in this way. Children, in particular, enjoyed directing the camera lens to capture the animals, perhaps indicating that this interactive and technical approach was one with which they had become accustomed through the now widespread use of computers. Several photograph albums documenting the Bay and its animals are provided by the Looking Good and the Polperro in the cabins. They may in part account for the 1.4% of responses (Table 8.9) choosing ‘other’ as a way to learn about the animals.

On the few days during my fieldwork when dolphins were not sighted, the tourists’ disappointment was tangible. This was despite visits to see other popular marine attractions such as the seals and gannets as well as historical sites in the Bay. My observation of tourists at these times reinforced the idea that to them, the dolphin was

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7 On these occasions some tour operators offered tourists a complimentary return tour.
Table 8.9*: Respondents Preferred Learning Methods on Dolphin Tours

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Age (years)</th>
<th>Reading n</th>
<th>Row %</th>
<th>Observation n</th>
<th>Row %</th>
<th>Asking Crew n</th>
<th>Row %</th>
<th>Commentary n</th>
<th>Row %</th>
<th>Slides/Video n</th>
<th>Row %</th>
<th>Other n</th>
<th>Row %</th>
<th>Total n</th>
<th>Row %</th>
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<tr>
<td>0-12</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>8.2</td>
<td>67</td>
<td>27.3</td>
<td>42</td>
<td>17.1</td>
<td>83</td>
<td>33.9</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>10.2</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>3.3</td>
<td>245</td>
<td>100.0</td>
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<tr>
<td>13-20</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>9.0</td>
<td>149</td>
<td>29.8</td>
<td>106</td>
<td>21.2</td>
<td>165</td>
<td>33.0</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>6.6</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0.4</td>
<td>500</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21-30</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>6.9</td>
<td>158</td>
<td>30.1</td>
<td>131</td>
<td>25.0</td>
<td>179</td>
<td>34.1</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>2.8</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>1.1</td>
<td>525</td>
<td>100.0</td>
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<td>31-60</td>
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<td>229</td>
<td>26.9</td>
<td>188</td>
<td>22.1</td>
<td>323</td>
<td>38.0</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>3.9</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>1.4</td>
<td>850</td>
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<td>9.3</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>26.3</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>20.3</td>
<td>43</td>
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<td>0.0</td>
<td>118</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
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<td>7.9</td>
<td>634</td>
<td>28.3</td>
<td>491</td>
<td>21.9</td>
<td>793</td>
<td>35.4</td>
<td>115</td>
<td>5.1</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>1.4</td>
<td>2238</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Note: the data in the table refers to number of responses to this question.
indeed the star attraction. Without the appearance of these animals, some visitors seemed to feel resentful or cheated of their object of fascination.

8.6 Conclusion

Chapter 8 has brought us to the end of the spectrum of marine animal tourism experience outlined in the thesis. Within a context of the social constructions of dolphins through popular discourse, the chapter has suggested that tourists experience the dolphins of Port Phillip Bay in two significant ways. Variously immersed in the world of the dolphins, some tourists have generally seen the animals as having characteristics usually associated with humans, such as a high level of intelligence and communication skills and a clear family structure. Some visitors even adopt a dolphin into their own families. Other visitors saw the dolphins as being somehow better than humans, as having utopian qualities. In their minds the animals exhibited an aura of peace, calmness, and spiritualism to be envied and emulated by humans.

Of particular relevance to the thesis, data presented in this chapter has told us many things about the motivations of people visiting the Port Phillip Bay dolphins. Interestingly, a clear majority of people wanted to see the animals through a desire to observe them at close range ‘in the wild’, with the opportunity to learn more about them. Over half the survey responses (n=513, Table 8.5) stated that they already held a specific interest in dolphins. In looking at tourists’ motivations for visiting the site, the chapter has shown that popular texts and films such as those examined in Chapter 7 have played a role in the modern day re-mythologisation of the dolphin in the minds of tourists.

Equally relevant to my overall project was an examination of tourists’ pedagogical experiences at the site. As explained earlier in the thesis, I wanted to contribute to literature examining learning experiences at tourist sites with non-captive marine animals from the perspective of the tourist. Data displayed in this chapter has suggested that most people surveyed felt that they did learn about the dolphins by going out and visiting them in their
own habitat. In this case, most people said they learnt about the dolphins by listening to the commentary provided by the Tour Operators. Personal observation of the animals was also a popular method, suggesting a combination of direct sighting of animals and a well-informed commentary can be usefully combined to increase people’s knowledge. What remains unknown, and requires more research, is the degree to which this conservation learning experience is applied by the consumer to other animals and to other aspects of their own lives in the short and the longer term. Finally, if current trends continue, increasing numbers of public and private tourists will seek out the Sorrento dolphins in coming summers.\footnote{At the time of my fieldwork there were five tour boats in operation. Since then, eight tour operator permits have been allocated operating from Sorrento and Queenscliff. Pressure on the dolphins from private craft remains high in summer and holiday periods.} The impact of this activity on the animals needs immediate and careful research, primarily for the sake of the animals, but also for the long-term viability of the stakeholders.
CHAPTER 9

SUMMARY, RECOMMENDATIONS AND CONCLUSIONS

"Environmental education is borderland activism that blurs the boundaries...between nature and culture (Michel, 1998: 179)."

9.1 Introduction

The various ways in which the culture/nature binary is challenged or reinforced through visiting marine animals in Australia has been a key investigative focus of this thesis. It has examined the production of marine animals by players involved in the framing of the animals for tourism. At the same time, the thesis explored the multitude of ways in which these framed experiences of marine animals are consumed by tourists. The thesis asserted that the "hyperseparation", as Plumwood (1993: 155) calls it, between humans and animals can account for many contemporary environmental ills, leading geographers such as Wolch and Emel (1995) to call for a remapping of our moral landscape. As such, the potential of one kind of environmental or nature tourism, marine animal tourism, to contribute to the reshaping of this moral landscape has been explored.

This thesis has been a tour from the funfair of early aquaria and the modern day marine theme park, to the conservation-focussed spectacle of the Penguin Parade, before finally becoming immersed in the realm of the popularised dolphin, enshrouded as it is with myth. Through this journey we have seen marine animals framed in three critical ways. Firstly, they have been produced as hyperseparated entertainment for humans in early aquaria and at Sea World. Secondly, marine animals have been framed as creatures different from us but with characteristics with which we might identify, such as at the Penguin Parade. Finally, the thesis has shown marine animals framed as simultaneously human-like but also as better than humans, as in the case of the Wild Dolphin Tours.
Importantly, this thesis has contributed an examination of interactions with non-captive animals as opposed to the more frequent studies involving animals in captivity. At the same time, I have chosen to look at the case of animal tourism in the contemporary moment in a bid to build upon other studies concerning themselves with touring animals in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. By examining the ways in which marine animals in Australia are variously packaged for tourist consumption in the present day, I have tried to illuminate tourists’ reasons for and experiences of visiting animals across a spectrum of ecomarine experience. In contrast to the early marine naturalists who visited and collected marine specimens largely for scientific knowledge and/or recreational curiosity, modern tourists are attracted to these sites as part of a wider interest in experiencing the environment. At the same time, visitors are variously attracted to these sites to observe an animal spectacle or to learn about marine life, often in the company of family and friends. As the journey of this thesis closes and we return to shore, the final chapter will summarise the key arguments of each chapter before presenting recommendations and conclusions.

9.2 Thesis Summary

Chapter 1 introduced the discussion surrounding the culture/nature binary taking place within contemporary cultural geography and within the relatively new field of animal geography. It suggested that the working of this binary (how it is challenged or strengthened) may be better understood through an examination of the ways in which marine animals are produced and consumed for tourism. Figure 1.2 showed that marine animals can be toured across a spectrum of mediated experiences, each displaying a distinct type of animal/human interaction. It introduced the various production and consumption features of each of these experiences. Specifically, at the point of extreme mediation, captive animals were trained as objects of entertainment. Visitors were controlled in certain ways and interaction with the animals usually existed at a visual level and often through spectacles involving trained or performing animals. The examples used in the thesis to illustrate this were the early aquaria, Sea World and, to a lesser extent, the new Blue Zoos. At the point of moderate mediation, animals were living in their ‘natural’ habitat, or a close reconstruction of this, and they were not trained to entertain on command. Here, tourists were allowed greater proximity to the
animals and other forms of interaction may be allowed such as feeding or patting. At the same time, interpretation opportunities such as presented through a Visitor Centre were used. The first case study of the thesis, the Penguin Parade on Phillip Island functioned as an example of this moderate mediation. In the final example, that being one of minimum mediation, animals were visited in their own habitat and surrounding infrastructure was low. Such sites highlighted the lack of human interference with the animals’ behaviour. Proximity between visitor and animal was high with some initiative for this interaction coming from the animal. The second case study of the thesis, the Wild Dolphin Tours of Port Phillip Bay, was introduced as an example of this marine tourism experience.

In Chapter 2 I examined and combined some diverse fields of literature in order to provide a theoretical context for the thesis. Initially the chapter considered the ways in which nature has been socially constructed. I saw this as an important starting point because the ways in which nature is framed can shape its subsequent use, including the ways we engage with animals. The social construction position brought into view the Cartesian binary of culture/nature, a binary that is central to the thesis. The work of Plumwood (1993) expands this sense of nature as other, conceptualising it both philosophically and historically. These more general ideas were then brought closer to the empirical theme of the thesis by examining those studies that have applied these constructs to the animal in historical touristic contexts such as the zoo.

The second part of the chapter examined the ways in which critical studies in human/animal relations are applicable to the case of touring marine animals in the contemporary moment. This exploration was couched in the work of geographers including Yi-Fu Tuan (1984), Kay Anderson (1995; 1997; 1998), Jennifer Wolch and Jody Emlen (1995; 1998). Here, from an animal geography perspective, I looked at the ways in which humans have dominated and domesticated animals over time and for capital gain. In addition, the problem of the incorporation of animal agency into geographical thought was discussed. It was argued that in developing a less anthropocentric social theory, more time needs to be given to the study of animals and their use and subordination within a capitalist context. In this way it was made clear that my thesis was designed in part to contribute to this developing field through a specific
examination of marine animals (as a wider part of what is termed 'nature') in a touristic context.

The third section of Chapter 2 began with a general overview of tourism theory and the work of tourism geographers. I then considered the ideas of John Urry (1990) and his explanations of the gaze of the tourist. In particular, attention was given to an unravelling of the reasons why nature tourism has developed at the coast, especially as a means to improve health, as a place of cross-class leisure and more recently as a place of ecotourism. I examined various critiques of the phenomenon of ecotourism. Included in this was a consideration of the role of environmental education within the ecotourism experience and a specific examination of cases of interpretation used at nature tourism sites.

The methodological approach adopted in the thesis was explained in Chapter 3. With the aim of determining the reasons why tourists visit marine animals, the thesis employed both a quantitative and a qualitative approach. This consisted of three forms. Firstly, I read the touristic landscapes as a means of understanding the ways in which nature was being produced and constructed. To this end a socio-semiotic reading of the landscape was undertaken in an examination of the various sources which combine to create the tourism landscapes discussed in the thesis, including publicity, education and management discourses. Secondly, a visitor survey was administered in order to discover visitors’ experiences of consuming nature at my case studies from their own perspectives. Here qualitative and quantitative questions were posed in order to gain a wide understanding of the tourist experience as well as to satisfy the requirements of tour operators. Generally however, the overall thesis did not sit easily within a positivist framework and as such to a large extent the quantitative results were not used, their function primarily serving the needs of the Institutions which assisted my data collection. Thirdly, participant observation was used extensively at my case sites and at contextual locations for the thesis, such as Sea World. A widely used method in tourism research (Ryan, 1995), this means of data collection contributed strongly to the stories of visiting marine animals.

Chapter 4 worked to provide a contextual backdrop for the two case studies of the thesis. To this end, the chapter investigated the ways in which marine animals have
been displayed over time, particularly the development of marine aquaria and the various forms they take in the contemporary moment. Specifically, the chapter examined the hyper-nature experience of Sea World with its associated emphasis on fun and its manipulation and control of the marine animal inhabitants. This example was contrasted with marine zoos such as UnderWater World which were shown to afford education a high priority. These forms of marine animal display were couched within a context of the collection and exhibition of other nature as presented in museums and zoological gardens.

Chapters 5 and 6 provided a comprehensive analysis of the ways in which marine animals are produced and consumed at the first case study in the thesis, the Phillip Island Penguin Parade. In Chapter 5 I explained the history of the site as a tourist destination. This was done through a reading of key texts including legislation, historical accounts of the site as well as touristic discourses both on site and off site. At the same time the built touristic environment of the Penguin Parade was examined for the insight it provided into the ways in which both visitors and animals are managed for mass tourism. This analysis was carried out within a framework which understood the penguins as being variously framed as a novelty attraction, as a threatened animal and as a way for tourists to reconnect with nature. Each of these framings to some extent functioned to question and reinforce the culture/nature binary.

In Chapter 6, I examined the ways in which some members of the tourist population over the 1996-97 summer consumed the spectacle of the penguins presented to them at the site. Survey results and a participant observation diary were used in this regard. Here, after presenting some general characteristics of my survey respondents, I found that many people were drawn to the site as it provided an opportunity to spend time in nature with family and friends. At the same time, the Penguin Parade seemed to be an activity undertaken by people as part of a regional holiday. Other people chose to visit the site because they enjoyed being with wild animals and they saw it as a chance to closely interact with nature more generally. As such it was interesting to find that tourists sought out the penguin experience as a form of group entertainment frequently referring to the novelty characteristics described in Chapter 5. At the same time, many tourists also chose to visit the site because they wanted to be close to the animals in their own environment, indeed to ‘get back to nature’. Chapter 6 also examined the
ways that tourists said they learnt about the penguins which in this case was predominantly through observing the animals, and to a lesser extent through the various interpretation opportunities in the Visitor Centre, particularly the dioramas and text displays. It is unsurprising that survey results reported in Chapter 6 showed very few visitors considered the Visitor Centre to be the most enjoyable part of their tour. The penguins are clearly the main attraction. However, visitor responses indicated that the Visitor Centre rated highly as an educational forum.

Chapters 7 and 8 explored the second case study of the thesis, the wild dolphin tours of Port Phillip Bay. Mirroring the format of the previous two chapters, Chapters 7 and 8 looked at the ways in which dolphins are produced for and consumed by tourists. In Chapter 7 I examined five popular texts which were used as representative of the ways in which dolphins have been framed over time and space. Specifically, I explained that the dolphin has been at once constructed as close to and as separate from humanity. The humanising of the dolphin was apparent in references to the animals’ family structure, their intelligence levels and their aesthetic attributes. At the same time, it was clear that the dolphin has been framed as apart from humans, as leading a ‘pure’ and somehow utopian existence. The fictional character of Flipper was held to be one reason why dolphins have come to be known as having characteristics in common with humans, while the texts frequently made mention of a connection between dolphins and the ancients. At the same time, New Ageism, Green marketing, and the environmental movement were seen to have contributed to and benefited from this modern re-mythologising of dolphins.

Chapter 8 presented some tourists’ views of the dolphins of Port Phillip Bay during the 1996-97 summer. Here data collected through the visitor survey and participant observation combined to show the ways in which the visitors involved in my research consumed the dolphins. In contrast with the case of the Penguin Parade, relatively few responses indicated that seeing the dolphins was driven by an opportunity to spend time with family or friends. Here, a predominant number of people were drawn to participate in the dolphin tours largely because they felt a specific attraction to this animal and wanted to see them close up and in a non-captive setting. In addition, that the dolphins were seen to exhibit behaviours and qualities usually associated with humans was a major drawcard for respondents. For visitors on the dolphin swimming tours there was a
marked desire to be a part of the dolphins’ world. For many respondents the world of
the dolphin was seen as somehow spiritual and ‘pure’ and in contrast with their own
lives. The tour operator commentaries were seen to be useful ways to learn about the
animals, an unsurprising finding considering the very limited educational alternatives
offered. As with the Penguin Parade, a popular response to ways tourists felt they learnt
about the animals was to observe them first hand and within close proximity.

9.3 Ecotourism and the Culture/Nature Binary: challenge or condonement?

The case studies of marine animal production and consumption presented within a
tourism context in the thesis variously function to suggest that these forms of touring
both question the contemporary validity of the culture/nature binary and reinforce it.
Each contributes an array of interwoven responses to this question. That is, although at
times the animals may be objectified and made the focus of spectacle, they are also
framed as having features with which humans can equate in their own lives. Thus on the
one hand animals are seen as separate from us because, in the case of the penguins they
are put under floodlights and apparently parade for us, and the dolphins are
mythologised so as to be ‘above’ humans. But, on the other hand, both animals are
anthropomorphised so as to appear to have physical and familial characteristics akin to
humans and in this way come to be seen as being like us.

Although the two case studies are not presented in a strictly comparative framework, the
broader findings from the work can be analysed in terms of the spectrum of ecomarine
touristic experience introduced in Chapter 1 (see Figure 1.2). At the same time, the
discussion of early aquaria and modern day displays of marine animals examined in
Chapter 4 contribute to a greater understanding of the ways in which marine tourism
encounters work to reinforce or challenge the culture/nature divide.

The aquaria of the 1800s sought to exhibit marine animals as scientific curiosities to a
public increasingly intrigued by ‘the wonders of the deep’. Similarly, modern day
nature theme parks like Sea World primarily display animals as part of ‘another world’
by placing them in moviescape surroundings and without the support of an informative
educational program. It is at this point of maximum mediation that we might assume
that the culture/nature binary is most sharply evidenced supporting as it does the culture of late capitalist consumption on which such spaces are based. Here, the binary is abundantly reinforced through keeping animals in captivity, teaching them tricks to entertain tourists and hence exhibiting an apparent low level of respect for the animals outside of their immediate physical requirements. In comparison, the new ‘Blue Zoos’, although sharing certain structural features with Sea World and other early aquaria, seek to take visitors into an oceanic ‘subspace’ to encounter animals. These animals, although taken from their usual habitat, are presented in artificial worlds determined to recreate their usual habitats. These animals are also encased by an obvious environmental education agenda housing a strong conservation focus.

The first case study in the thesis, the Phillip Island Penguin Parade, functions to simultaneously challenge and condone the binary. In this zone of medium mediation, animals are seen as quite apart from humans in the way in which this institution sets the birds up as a theatrical performance under lights, as something quite different from us. As with all animals, penguins are of course different from humans but the infrastructure of the site also works to objectify the birds in specific ways. Clearly, the Penguin Parade is a site of spectacle which in many ways works to the birds’ advantage with the attention they receive and the subsequent protective measures which have developed around them. At the same time, the Penguin Parade can be seen to actively question the validity of the human/animal divide. As explained in Chapters 5 and 6, the aesthetic features and behavioural characteristics of the birds leads them to be easily anthropomorphised. Interpretative displays in the Visitor Centre show that to an extent the Penguin Parade managers have tried to find commonalties between the birds’ lives and humans so as to find a point of recognition. This effort to encourage tourists to see the animals as more ‘like them’ is not simply for entertainment purposes. Encouraging such recognition may well enhance the likelihood of these tourists seeing conservation efforts for these animals and their habitats to be worthy. If such recognition leads to conservation, then perhaps the anthropomorphising of the animals may not be a negative process.

In the second case study of the thesis, the Wild Dolphin Tours, the binary may be seen to be challenged through the various ways in which the dolphins are humanised in popular culture and in tourism practice. In popular culture the dolphin is set up as
having characteristics very similar to humans in terms of their family structure, their ‘smile’, the *Flipper* story, the ancient myths, and their levels of intelligence. In this way the binary is challenged because visitors see in dolphins shadows of themselves. Interestingly however, the dolphin is simultaneously framed as apart from humans. In contrast with the Penguin Parade though, the animal is projected as better than the human, as a creature who has been able to reach a state of utopia. Here, dolphins are framed as ‘pure’, altruistic and spiritual, somehow above the place of humans. Hence in this way the binary can be seen to be reinforced, albeit in a way more favourable to the animal.

Hence, to varying extents, tourist experiences at marine animal attractions may work to redefine broader ideas of nature and the place of humans within it. That this experience might then produce lasting and pragmatic changes in human behaviour in and attitude towards the environment is beyond the scope of this thesis. However, this project sought to lay the foundations for further work in this area by conceptualising people’s experiences of touring marine animals across a spectrum of options. In doing so, the door remains open for further work into the long-term impact on tourists of an environmental education experience. Accepting that this is would be hard to quantify, in part because of the difficulties in controlling for other determining factors, research may involve indepth work with visitors to marine animal sites in ensuing years to determine if the animal encounter produced long-term conservation effects. For instance, such a study could consider the visitors’ subsequent attitudes to nature and animals, their recreational pursuits, and their conservation initiatives at home, in the workplace and in the wider community.

9.4 Recommendations and Conclusion

The results of the literature survey and empirical data collected in this thesis have uncovered several possible recommendations for both of the case studies examined. In the case of the Penguin Parade these are four-fold. Firstly, observation of this site had implications for the relationship between ecotourism and education (as discussed in Chapter 2). Here, there was a clear link between people visiting the animals and learning about them when carried out in conjunction with on-site interpretation
opportunities. In particular, visitors considered that they learnt about the penguins by observing them first hand as well as looking at dioramas and displays. That this was the case for my tourist population at the Penguin Parade suggests that the visitation of animals in situ should be encouraged especially where it is supported by educational infrastructure.

It is not surprising that tourists preferred the ‘real thing’ (the penguin) to the built alternative (the Visitor Interpretation Centre) at the Penguin Parade. However, various interpretation options in the Visitor Centre were found to be useful tools for environmental education. Such sites of learning may be usefully applied in other ecotour ventures including even low mediation experiences like dolphin swimming. Research into effective media for education across age, gender and ethnicity needs to be ongoing. The finding that people overwhelmingly preferred to see the penguins in the cold and dark as opposed to in the perspex nesting boxes within the Visitor Centre (see Chapter 5) suggests a very interesting set of balances between visitors sense of closeness and distance, intimacy and intrusion, their world and our world. My research at the Penguin Parade suggests that although the visitor experience is of course not homogenous, tourists enjoy a high level of proximity to non-captive animals but at the same time may be concerned to not impinge too much on the lives of the animals. These are issues which management needs to be aware of and to monitor.

Secondly, in relation to the structured educational opportunities at the Penguin Parade, findings reported in Chapter 6 suggest that the people who filled in my survey learnt about the animals and their environments a variety of ways, but relatively successfully through looking at dioramas. As such, it seems dioramas are a useful tool to have in this ecomarine site when combined with direct observation of the animals. It also appears that to a lesser degree, the provision of text, the use of audiovisuals and the availability of staff to answer questions are important. These methods could perhaps be made more useful under different conditions. For instance, in the usual rush of the Penguin Parade, the Visitor Centre can become very crowded. The atmosphere is not conducive to standing still and quietly reading. Seats could be placed at strategic points to allow the visitor time and space to stop and absorb the information. Similarly, although the slide show is a very watchable and informative presentation, it was under-utilised by my survey population and by members of the wider visitor group. Signage regarding the
screening times could be made more clear and people advised of the show as they purchase tickets. At peak periods, it may be more useful to have the Rangers present a live talk in this theatre instead of running the commentary on the stands. Such talks could cater for various ages and nationalities and give people the chance to ask Rangers specific questions.

Thirdly, it is not surprising that so many people felt they learnt the most about the birds by simply observing them. As discussed in Chapter 2, generally people of all ages learn best when they are involved in a specific activity. Perhaps the observation aspect of the Penguin Parade experience could also be further developed. A greater number of interactive opportunities may allow for this. As stated previously, the Penguin Parade has recently installed touch-screen computers where people can listen to the Rangers speak on a variety of topics. More research will uncover if the renovations to the Visitor Centre following my fieldwork and the introduction of advanced multi-media interpretation opportunities will increase visitor education. In addition, I expect many visitors would benefit from the chance to touch various aspects of the birds' environment. I expect that a supervised touchpool representing the shore platform creatures of the area would be an initiative utilised by a wide range of visitors, especially children, as is the case at UnderWater World and the Melbourne Aquarium described in Chapter 4. As alluded to in Chapter 6, the Ranger commentary broadcast at the viewing stands can be inaudible due to the winds coming off the water. The stands contain a highly captive audience before the birds arrive. Possibly more speakers could built within the seating area of the stands so as more people could hear the information and perhaps concurrently feel the audio was a more personal experience.

Finally, as I discussed in Chapter 6, many respondents were deeply concerned with the frequency of flash photography used near the penguins and the perception that some Rangers were loath to control this activity. There is an opportunity here for the self-policing potential of educated tourists to be more widely utilised. Signage about the problem could be more extensive in the Visitor Centre especially near the doors leading out to the penguin habitat. For example, a graphic interpretation or diorama of the ways in which the flash impacts on the birds may have a positive impact on tourist behaviour. If the responsibility for protecting the birds could be placed more on the visitor population, perhaps even encouraging visitors to politely monitor other tourists in the
stands and on the boardwalks, this problem could be reduced. In addition inexpensive photographs of the Penguin Parade could be included in the price of entrance tickets. As an internationally renowned ecotourism site such proactive measures may indeed add to the attraction of the place.

The work undertaken in the thesis has also uncovered some interesting findings in relation to the Wild Dolphin Tours of Port Phillip Bay. As with the case of the Penguin Parade, tourists also enjoyed close contact with non-captive animals suggesting that this form of nature encounter should be encouraged. Importantly, in this case study, the animal has already been widely framed through popular culture as special. If a similar lens of ‘sacredness’ could be applied to other marine animals, especially those who do not enjoy the aesthetic advantage of the dolphin, perhaps they too could experience the reverence which is afforded this animal. For example, the legal measures in place to protect the dolphins do not apply to other marine attractions of the Bay such as the seals. Here, there are no restrictions on the number of tourists allowed near the animals, or formal measures to control vessel use around them. The thesis also found that interpretive opportunities at this site varied from being extensive on-board commentaries to a short outline of the trip. This means that while some visitors have the chance to learn about the Bay and its animals during the tour, others do not.

In relation to these findings, some recommendations for the dolphin tourism industry in Port Phillip Bay can be made. In this case, it has become apparent that the industry and protection for the animals could be improved through a more rigorous education program. Hence, while it is clear that many visitors learn about marine animals through being in close proximity to them, some degree of mediation is also necessary. While closeness to marine animals may go some of the way to challenging the culture/nature binary, for the long term well being of the animals this intimate contact needs to be managed. As I discussed in Chapters 7 and 8, at present, the content and quality of environmental education produced by the industry is highly varied across the individual businesses. Clearly, this is a function of the existence of multiple independent interests utilising one tourism commodity. Since the mid-1990s the industry has become

---

1 During my time in the field, tour operators were working under a voluntary Code of Practice, although as Saunders (1996) has documented, this was difficult to enforce and most (if not all) Operators
increasingly regulated due to the rise in vessels interacting with the dolphins. Fisheries Officers have had a greater presence on the water in recent years. The crew from the Polperro have lobbied politicians and spoken publicly about their concerns for the dolphins. The State Government in introducing a permit system for operators in 1998 has taken an important step in this regard. But it does not go far enough if the protection of the animals and nature in general through the education of tourists is to be achieved. The handing out of government-endorsed information brochures to tourists on the vessels (see Appendices 7.4 and 7.5) may present as a short-term measure.

In Chapter 7, I made reference to the dolphin tourism industry on Morton Island in Queensland. Here, tourists wanting to visit a population of wild dolphins were first required to participate in a self-guided tour of a dolphin Interpretation Centre. Before then moving into the water to feed the animals, visitors to this site were given a face-to-face commentary on the beach about the animals and how to behave around them. Research at the Morton Island site found that visitor behaviour towards the animals improved after the introduction of this education program. A similar system is essential in Sorrento. This thesis proposes that the Victorian State Government establish a shore-based Visitor Interpretation Centre in Sorrento to educate visitors about the Bay in general and specifically about the dolphin and seal populations. Incorporating the expertise of the tour operators and included in the dolphin tour price, a tour of the Visitor Centre could stand as a prerequisite to participation on a dolphin tour as well as being open to visitors who are not taking part in the tours. By their very nature, sightseeing tours allow Operators more opportunity to provide interpretation to visitors although there is no legal obligation for them to do so. At the same time the content of interpretive information is at the discretion of the user of the animal ‘resource’. In light of these points the thesis suggests the following options:

1. That a Visitor Interpretation Centre be established in Sorrento for the general public and as a pre-requisite for participation in sightseeing and swimming tours

contravened the Code at certain times. Subsequently, the Code of Practice has become mandatory and a permit system for operators introduced through the Victorian State parliament.

- In light of heavy private vessel traffic around the dolphins every summer and the impact of this on the animals, education of all sectors of the community is warranted. Anecdotal evidence collected during my fieldwork and reported in Chapter 7 suggests private boat users have caused significant disturbance to the animals in the past. Considering that in all likelihood private users have significantly less knowledge of regulations in place to control human interactions with the animals than the tour operators, and no economic imperative to protect a revenue source, education of these people would seem to be of at least equal importance to that of participants in organised tours.
with the animals. Importantly this initiative should include conservation measures
directed at all animals of the Bay, especially popular attractions such as the seals,
seahorses and gannets, but also the more maligned animals such as the sharks and
stingrays.

2. That all tours to see dolphins and other animals in Port Phillip Bay contain a
component of compulsory interpretation agreed upon and developed by the tour
operators, the Department of Natural Resources and Environment and other
interested parties such as the Dolphin Research Institute. This may take the form of
an Interpretation Officer’s Manual and be supplemented by associated training
courses for the tour guides. In this way, interpretation would be more standardised
across vessels and ensure an environmental education component which is
sometimes absent on the tours at present.

3. That the Department of Natural Resources and Environment in Victoria direct
greater resources towards the policing of marine animal tourism activities in Port
Phillip Bay. This would involve a more substantial presence of Fisheries Officers on
the water than is the case at present. In particular, the behaviour of private vessels,
especially jet skis, around the animals needs urgent and immediate attention. This
policing should be accompanied by a seasonal education campaign directed at
recreational boat users, especially in light of the fact that they are often drawn
towards animal attractions such as the dolphins by the presence of the tour boat
vessels in the southern parts of Port Phillip Bay.

My hope is that this thesis will go a small way towards contributing to the enormous
task of rethinking the animal (and by default the human) in society. Without doubt, we
need them more than they do us (Baky, 1980). From their long and varied histories
surely there is much to be learned. In discussing the young Karl Marx’s views of the
relationship between humans and the rest of nature, Dickens (1992: 67) writes that:

    to survive...people must have a direct and engaged relationship to
    nature. They are dead in a biological...spiritual, intellectual and
    aesthetic sense without such close association.

Perhaps the long queues into the Melbourne Aquarium signal a step towards peoples’
desire to investigate the transformative potentials of this relationship.
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Tubb, P. (no date) *Dolphin Discovery Tours*, Sorrento, Victoria.


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APPENDICIES

Appendix 3.1: Visitor Survey at the Penguin Parade.

PHILLIP ISLAND PENGUIN PARADE
Visitor Survey, 1996-97

Hi,

Thank you for taking the time to fill in this survey which is part of my Ph.D. thesis at the University of Melbourne. The results will be used to increase understanding of why people visit marine animals. At the same time the information will help to develop sustainable marine tourism in Australia. Please place a tick in the appropriate box and feel free to add further comments.

Christina Jarvis.

Location: Penguin Parade, Phillip Island
Date and Time: ________________________________

1. What is your age and gender?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Age (in years)</th>
<th>0-12</th>
<th>13-20</th>
<th>21-30</th>
<th>31-60</th>
<th>61 and over</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>m.</td>
<td>f.</td>
<td>m.</td>
<td>f.</td>
<td>m.</td>
<td>f.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

2. Where do you live?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Victoria</th>
<th>Other State</th>
<th>O/S</th>
<th>Which Country</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>P.Is</td>
<td>Melb.</td>
<td>Other</td>
<td>S.A.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

3. How did you find out about the Penguin Parade?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Family/Friends</th>
<th>Phillip Island Tourist Information Centre</th>
<th>Travel Agent/Publication</th>
<th>Tourism Victoria</th>
<th>Other (please specify)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

4. Are you part of an organised tour or are you a private visitor?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>An Organised Tour</th>
<th>A Private Visitor</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

5. Have you visited the penguins previously?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Yes</th>
<th>No</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

305
6. When was your first trip to the penguins?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Today</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

7. Before visiting the Penguin Parade, did you think that penguins were:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Birds</th>
<th>Mammals</th>
<th>Fish</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

8. Did you expect to see different types of penguins at the Parade?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Yes</th>
<th>No</th>
<th>Don't know</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

9. How many penguins did you think you would see?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>0-10</th>
<th>11-50</th>
<th>51-100</th>
<th>101-200</th>
<th>201+</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

10. What size did you think the penguins would be?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>15cm (6&quot;)</th>
<th>30cm (12&quot;)</th>
<th>60cm (2 ft)</th>
<th>more than 60cm</th>
<th>Don't know</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

11. Where did you think you would be viewing the penguins from?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>The beach</th>
<th>The dunes</th>
<th>Observation hides/boardwalks</th>
<th>Concrete stands</th>
<th>Don't know</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

12. Did you think you would be able to touch the live penguins?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Yes</th>
<th>No</th>
<th>Don't know</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

13. How close did you think you would be able to get to the penguins?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Within 1 metre</th>
<th>1-10m</th>
<th>11-50m</th>
<th>more than 50m</th>
<th>Don't know</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

14. Did you think you would be able to see how they live?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Yes</th>
<th>No</th>
<th>Don't Know</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

15. Did you think you would learn something about penguins from this visit?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Yes</th>
<th>No</th>
<th>Don't Know</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

306
16. At the Penguin Parade, what things helped you learn about penguins?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Watching slides/ a video</th>
<th>Yes</th>
<th>No</th>
<th>Please add any comments</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Looking at displays</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reading information boards</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Observation of the penguins</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Asking the Rangers</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Listening to taped commentary</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other (please specify)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

17. Of the above information sources, which three helped you learn the most about penguins?
1. __________________________
2. __________________________
3. __________________________

18. Please indicate if you agree, disagree or have no opinion on the following statements:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>I could easily see the penguins on the beach</th>
<th>Yes</th>
<th>Don't know</th>
<th>No</th>
<th>Please add any comments</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I could easily see the penguins in the dunes</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I got close enough to the penguins</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The penguins were not affected by me watching them</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I enjoyed looking at the displays</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I would have liked more information about the penguins and their environment</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I would like some information to take home</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The taped commentary was useful</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Flood lights on the beach are a good idea</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Parade was better than I expected</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The number of people should be restricted</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Having visited the Penguin Parade, I would like to learn more about marine animals</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The toilets were clean and well presented</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The food court was adequate</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Penguin Parade Staff were friendly, knowledgeable and helpful</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The gift shop provided a good range of souvenirs</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
19. Why did you decide to visit the Penguin Parade?


20. Which aspects of the Penguin Parade experience did you find the MOST enjoyable?


21. Which aspects of the Penguin Parade experience did you find the LEAST enjoyable?


22. What word sums up how you feel having seen the penguins?


23. Have you ever felt like this before?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Yes</th>
<th>No</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

24. If yes, what else has made you feel like this?


25. Before today, which of the following nature-based activities have you experienced?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Yes</th>
<th>No</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Visited a National Park</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Visited a Zoo</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Visited an aquarium</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Camping/Bushwalking</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Diving/snorkelling</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

26. How often do you experience nature-based activities?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Very regularly (at least four times per year)</th>
<th>Regularly (at least twice per year)</th>
<th>Irregularly (less than once per year)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

In the interest of greater marine animal protection and higher visitor enjoyment, we would like to follow up this survey with an in-depth group interview. This would involve open discussion about your experiences today. We would very much appreciate your participation. If you are interested, please leave your name and contact details below. Thank you.

NAME_
ADDRESS_______________________________________
PHONE_ (H) _______________________________(W)
Appendix 3.2: Visitor Survey on the Wild Dolphin Tours.

DOLPHIN SWIMS AND OBSERVATION
Visitor Survey, Port Phillip Bay, 1996-97

Hi,

Thank you for taking the time to fill in this survey which is part of my Ph.D. thesis at the University of Melbourne. The results will be used to increase understanding of why people visit marine animals. At the same time the information will help to develop sustainable marine tourism in Australia.

*Please place a tick in the appropriate box and feel free to add any extra comments.*

Christina Jarvis.

Tour Name__________________________________________
Date and Time________________________________________

1. What is your age and gender?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Age (in years)</th>
<th>0-12</th>
<th>13-20</th>
<th>21-30</th>
<th>31-60</th>
<th>61 and over</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>m.</td>
<td>f.</td>
<td>m.</td>
<td>f.</td>
<td>m.</td>
<td>f.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

2. Where do you live?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Victoria</th>
<th>Other State</th>
<th>O/S Which country</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Local</td>
<td>Melb. Other</td>
<td>S.A. N.S.W W.A A.C.T Q’LD N.T. TAS.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

3. Are you part of an organised tour or are you a private visitor?

An Organised Tour | A Private Visitor

4. How did you find out about today’s Dolphin trip?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Family/Friends</th>
<th>Tourism Victoria</th>
<th>Phone book</th>
<th>Travel Agent/Book</th>
<th>Other (please specify)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

5. Have you visited dolphins previously?

Yes | No

6. When was your first trip to the Port Phillip Bay dolphins?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
7. Did you expect to see different types of dolphins today?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Yes</th>
<th>No</th>
<th>Don't know</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

8. How many dolphins did you think you would see?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>0-10</th>
<th>11-50</th>
<th>51-100</th>
<th>101-200</th>
<th>More than 200</th>
<th>Don't know</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

9. What size did you think most of the adult dolphins would be?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Up to 1m</th>
<th>1-2m</th>
<th>2-3m</th>
<th>more than 3m</th>
<th>Don't know</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

10. How close did you think you would be able to get to the dolphins?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Within 1 metre</th>
<th>1-5m</th>
<th>6-10m</th>
<th>11-50m</th>
<th>more than 50m</th>
<th>Don't know</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

11. Did you think you would be able to touch the dolphins?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Yes</th>
<th>No</th>
<th>Don't know</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

12. Did you think you would be able to feed the dolphins?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Yes</th>
<th>No</th>
<th>Don't know</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

13. Did you learn something about dolphins from this visit?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Yes</th>
<th>No</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

14. What things helped you learn about dolphins today?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>reading information</th>
<th>Yes</th>
<th>No</th>
<th>Please feel free to add additional comments</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>observation of the dolphins</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>asking Tourist Operators</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>listening to talks/commentary</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>watching slides/a video</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other (please specify)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

15. Of the above information sources, which three did you find the most useful?
1. ______
2. ______
3. ______
16. Please indicate if you agree, disagree or have no opinion on the following statements:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Yes</th>
<th>No Opinion</th>
<th>No</th>
<th>Please feel free to add any comments</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I could easily see the dolphins</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I got close enough to the dolphins</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The dolphins were adversely affected by me watching them</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I found the reading material useful</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I would like some information to take home</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Operator's commentary was useful</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Dolphin trip was better than I expected</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I will recommend the Dolphin trip to friends</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Dolphin trip was too commercialised</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The dolphins were being exploited</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The equipment used by the operators was adequate</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The refreshments served were adequate</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The number of tourists should be restricted</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Having seen the dolphins, I would like to learn more about the marine environment</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

17. Why did you want to see the dolphins?

18. Which aspect(s) of the trip did you find the MOST enjoyable?
19. Which aspects of the trip did you find the least enjoyable?

________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________

20. What word sums up how you feel having seen the dolphins?

________________________________________________________________________

21. Have you ever felt like this before?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Yes</th>
<th>No</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

22. If yes, what else has made you feel like this?

________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________

23. Before today, which of the following nature-based activities have you experienced?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Yes</th>
<th>No</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Visited a National Park</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Visited a Zoo</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Visited an aquarium</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Camping/Bushwalking</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Diving/snorkelling</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

24. How often have you experienced nature-based activities?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Very regularly (at least four times per year)</th>
<th>Regularly (at least twice per year)</th>
<th>Irregularly (less than once per year)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

In the interest of greater marine animal protection and higher visitor enjoyment, we would like to follow up this survey with an in-depth group interview. This would involve open discussion about your experiences today. We would very much appreciate your participation. If you are interested, please leave your name and contact details below. Thank you.

NAME ____________________________________________

ADDRESS ____________________________________________

PHONE (H) ________________________ (W) ________________________
Appendix 4.1: Major Public Aquaria of Australia

- Great Barrier Reef Aquarium, Townsville
- National Aquarium, Canberra
- Neptune's Marine Aquarium, Harvey Bay
- Oceanworld Manly, Sydney
- Pet Porpoise Pool, Coffs Harbour
- Royal Melbourne Zoological Gardens
- Sea World, Surfers Paradise, Queensland
- Melbourne Aquarium, Victoria
- Sydney Aquarium, Darling Harbour, New South Wales
- Taronga Zoo, Sydney
- Territory Wildlife Park, Northern Territory
- Undersea World, Cairns
- UnderWater World, Mooloolaba, Queensland
- Underwater World, Perth
Appendix 5.1: Financial Sponsorship of the Phillip Island Penguin Reserve

- Esso and BHP-Petroleum and BHP Community Trust
  - jointly funded a $300,000 research program over three years
  - A$10,000 donation for Interpretation in the Visitor Centre
  - produced a promotional penguin poster
- Hi-Cone Eco-Carriers
  - contributed towards printing holiday activities programs, taxidermy, produced ecologically friendly rubbish bags for promotional events, covered cost for conference attendance
- Blackmores Limited
  - provides all vitamins used at penguin and wildlife hospital
- Gaffney International
  - marketing company for “Pingu” the penguin, donated funds for hospital refrigerator
- Penguin Fund Japan
  - donated funds to research
- Bentine Gems
  - contributed funds from sale of their products to the Reserve
Appendix 5.2: A Private View: The Seal Rocks Sea Life Centre

As mentioned, the Nobbies site has recently undergone extensive infrastructure additions by a private consortium, changes which the then Victorian Premier hailed as the "beginning of a new era in tourism" (Forbes and Murdoch, 1998:1) for the State. In early 1998, Stage 1 of the private development at the Nobbies was finished. Although not central to my work, the Nobbies development deserves at least brief inclusion standing as it does as a possible indicator of 'things to come' on Phillip Island.

When current development proposals are completed some 4 million people are expected to visit the Island annually (Winkler, 1996: 4). The $52 million privately funded Sea Life Centre is a major component within this projection. The developing consortium, Seal Rocks Victoria, has negotiated a 25-year lease on the site for the first stage of their plan. Stage one consists of the recently opened $12 million seal Interpretation Centre which includes live footage of the animals projected back to the Centre, earning the project the title of "zoo of the future" (Department of Natural Resources and Environment, 1996:1). Stage 2 is yet to receive planning approval, but involves the construction of an undersea tunnel, observation tower and restaurant to be secured 15 metres from the colony.

The Seal Rock Sea Life Centre has not gone ahead without controversy. The first stage of the development was authorised without an Environmental Effects Statement. The Seal Rocks staff and management have since been criticised by the Environmental Protection Authority for releasing potentially contaminated water into the immediate area which could damage penguin and seal populations. The water, from a theme ride in the Centre, was found to contain small amounts of fungicide and anti-corrosive agents, at about a 10th of the quantity thought to be dangerous to the animals (Winkler, 1998).

Interestingly though, most local protest about the development was aimed at the proposed closure of the only road to the site and implementing a free shuttle bus system. The Nobbies has traditionally been a place for tourists and residents to access via their own cars. A compromise was eventually struck where as the road would remain open, parking spaces reduced and the free shuttle bus installed. The significant attention placed on the road closure issue detracted from more concerning environmental facets
such as the privatisation of parks, impacts on nesting areas at the site during the Centre’s construction and waste associated with large numbers of visitors.

Although it is beyond the limitations of this thesis, interesting work could be carried out in relation to the form and quality of environmental education at sites which are funded by private enterprise. In my opinion, there is a significant variation in the type of interpretation material provided at the Seal Rocks Centre and that of the publicly run Penguin Centre. This is an important issue in light of plans by the Seal Rocks Consortium to privatise the Penguin Parade (Forbes and Murdoch, 1998). Differing operating philosophies at Management level may prove problematic. While the Seal Rocks developers discusses plans for a mono-rail to link the Seal Centre and the Penguin Parade across the penguin rookeries, a senior staff member at the Parade defends the dusk to dawn road closure at the Nobbies site saying, “it’s not meant to be a Disneyland. It’s an environmental site” (Phillip Island Penguin Parade Management Department, 1997).
Appendix 5.3: Recent Renovations to the Visitor Centre Interpretation Material

The current interpretation material in the Visitor Centre is a mixture of work carried out in 1988 and between 1996 and 1997. Since my visitor surveys were run at the site in the summer of 1996-97, the design of the information centre has changed somewhat with a greater emphasis on the commercial attractions of the site, such as food and souvenirs. However, the ways in which educational material is presented also underwent some changes. The most significant of these was that much of the text was shifted from information boards to computers. Here, visitors can access information using a touchscreen where they can select questions to ask the Rangers. Video footage of Reserve staff is shown as they respond to questions. This information is available in English, Japanese and Mandarin. Of interest also is the clear philosophical changes that have taken place in recent years. These are most clearly illustrated by the new messages woven into the interpretation information, such as that the visitor is a guest in the home of the penguin and should respect this fact. The words Protect, Respect, Share and Discover stand above the new displays and are themes inherent in the interactive computer sections. However, very few of my respondents experienced this change and as such responses in my surveys and my reading of interpretation materials refer to the Visitor Centre prior to these changes.
Appendix 7.1: Movie and Television Productions in which Flipper Starred or Contributed, 1952 - 1998.

- Flipper frolics (1952)
- Flipper (1963)
- Flipper's New Adventures (1964) aka Flipper and the Pirates (1964)
- Flipper - The White Dolphin/Flipper's Monster (1964-68)
- Flipper - Flipper's New Friend (1964-68)
- Flipper - Dolphin Love (1964-68)
- Flipper - Dolphin Patrol/Flipper and the Spy (1964-68)
- Flipper - Shark Hunt (1964-68)
- Flipper - Flipper Joins the Navy (1964-68)
- Flipper - Deep Waters/Whale Ahoy (1964-68)
- Flipper - Flipper's Odyssey (1964-68)
- Flipper - Gift Dolphin/Aunt Martha (1964-68)
- Flipper - Flipper and the Puppy/Flipper and the Seal (1964-68)
- Flipper - Flipper and the Fugitive (1964-68)
- Flipper - A Job for Sandy/Air Power (1964-68)
- Flipper's Odyssey (1966)
- Flipper and the Elephant (1968)
- Flipper (1983)
- Flipper (1995)
- Flipper (1996)
- Flipper vs. Tetris (1998)

**TV Series**
- Flipper (1995)
- Flipper (1964)

STATUTORY RULES 1990

No. 102

Wildlife Act 1975

The Governor in Council makes the following Regulations:

Dated: 29 May 1990

Responsible Minister:
S. M. CRABB
Minister for Conservation and Environment

N. PLAYFORD
Acting Clerk of the Executive Council

Wildlife (Whale Watching) Regulations 1990

Title

1. These Regulations may be cited as the Wildlife (Whale Watching) Regulations 1990.

Commencement

2. These Regulations come into operation on 30 May 1990.

Objective

3. The objective of these Regulations is to prevent the disturbance of whales which arises from whale watching.

Authorising provision

4. These Regulations are made under section 85A of the Wildlife Act 1975.

Duties of persons in charge of vessels or using jetskis in waters in the vicinity of whales

5. (1) A person in charge of a vessel or using a jetski in waters in the vicinity of whales must not—

(a) cause or permit that vessel or jetski—

(i) to approach within 100 metres of any whale; or

(ii) to approach a whale head on; or

(iii) to be in the path of a whale; or

(iv) to separate a group of whales or to come between a mother and calf; or

(b) cause or permit an anchor to be dropped or lowered overboard of the vessel within 300 metres of any whale.

68426/90

319
Wildlife (Whale Watching) Regulations 1990
S.R. No. 102/1990

(2) A person in charge of a vessel or using a jetski in waters within 300 metres of a whale must—

(a) when moving the vessel or jetski, manoeuvre the vessel or jetski at a constant speed that does not produce a wake; and

(b) avoid sudden changes of direction; and

(c) manoeuvre the vessel or jetski to a distance of at least 200 metres from the whale if the whale shows any sign of being disturbed.

Duties of persons in charge of aircraft whilst in the vicinity of whales

6. A person in charge of an aircraft must not manoeuvre the aircraft lower than 300 metres above an area within 300 metres of any whale.

Duties of persons swimming or diving whilst in the vicinity of whales

7. A person must not swim or dive within 30 metres of any whale.

Duties of persons using surfboards and surfskis in the vicinity of whales

8. A person must not use a surfboard or surfski in waters within 30 metres of any whale.

Persons not to make noise in the vicinity of whales

9. A person who is within 300 metres of any whale must not make or cause to be made any noise which could disturb a whale.

Feeding whales prohibited

10. A person on board any vessel or aircraft or on land or in waters in the vicinity of a whale must not feed or attempt to feed any whale.

Penalty for breach of Regulations

11. A person who contravenes or fails to comply with any of the provisions of these Regulations is guilty of an offence and liable to a penalty of not more than 20 penalty units.

**Code of Practice for Dolphin Tour Operators in Port Phillip Bay**

This code is a co-operative initiative by the operators of Rip Charters, Looking Good, Moonraker and Polperro charter vessels and The Dolphin Research project in discussion with the Department of Conservation and Natural Resources.

October 1995.

The aim of this Code of Practice is to protect the dolphins of Port Phillip Bay and the people who are taken to see them.

1. Attempts at interacting with dolphins should stop if the animals show signs of being harassed. (See (1) below)
2. Vessels should approach dolphins from the side or rear rather from the "head on" this is a requirement of the *Wildlife (Whale Watching) Regulations* 1990.
3. Only one boat at a time should run a swim or interact with a pod, other boats should comply with the requirements of the *Wildlife (Whale Watching) Regulations* 1990.
4. The length of interaction should be no longer than 20 minutes.
5. Feeding of the Dolphins is against the law and operators should report offences to the Department of Conservation and Natural Resources.
6. Operators must endeavour to provide a professional level of interpretation for patrons and possess a good local working knowledge of the dolphins, their behaviours and their ecological requirements.
7. The crew of vessels welcome all questions, comments and criticisms. Members of the public should feel free to ask about anything that they have on their mind relating to the tour or the dolphins.
8. There should be a maximum of 10 swimmers in the water at a time and they must be under the supervision of a Qualified Safety Officer. (see (II))
9. A maximum of 141 swimmers per day should interact with the dolphins.
10. Operators must brief their patrons on safety and on the way that they should behave around the dolphins in the water.
11. Swimmers are not permitted to overtly approach dolphins or attempt to touch them.
12. Swimmers should not go more than 50 metres from the vessel.

I. "Harassment is when a boat or person approaches a dolphin or dolphins to the point that causes the dolphin(s) to display evasion behaviours and then the boat or persons persist in attempts to interact with the dolphin(s)." (Evasion behaviours may consist of deep dives, rapid swimming, tail slapping, large pods splitting into smaller groups which may move in different directions, changes in course and decoy animals from the pod).

II. A "Qualified Safety Officer" should have the minimum qualification of a Snorkel Diving Instructor.
Some basic information about dolphins in Port Phillip Bay.

The dolphins in Port Phillip Bay are the Bottle-nosed Dolphin.

Scientific name: *Tursiops truncatus*

Length: up to 3.65 m

Weight: up to 150 - 220 kg

Status: widespread and common

Food: fish, squid and octopus

Locomotion: swims at speeds of up to 35 kph, leaps to 6 m

Reproduction: gestation 11 - 12 months; one young which is about 1 m at birth and weighs about 12 kg

Life span: about 25 - 35 years

Habitat: open sea, bays, coastal waters and estuaries.

The Common Dolphin (*Delphinus delphis*) is also found in Port Phillip Bay, but is a less frequent visitor and is found in smaller numbers.

Department of Conservation and Natural Resources Offices:

**PORT PHILLIP AREA**

COWES - Corner Chappel Street & Osborne Avenue
Tel: (BH) 059 - 525 910; (AH) 018 - 379 034

DANDENONG - 205 Thomas Street
Tel: (BH) 03 - 9213 2800; (AH) 018 - 379 034

GEELONG - Corner Penwick & Little Malop Streets
Tel: (BH) 052 - 264 667; (AH) 018 - 379 034

MELBOURNE - 49 Spring Street
Tel: (BH) 03 - 9651 3038; (AH) 018 - 379 034

MORNINGTON - The Esplanade
Tel: (BH) 059 - 73 4779; (AH) 018 - 379 034

**GIPPSLAND AREA**

BAINSDALE - 7 Service Street
Tel: (BH) 051 - 520 400; (AH) 018 - 379 034

TRARALGON - 71 Hotham Street
Tel: (BH) 051 - 746 166; (AH) 018 - 379 034

YARRAM - 310 Commercial Road
Tel: (BH) 051 - 825 155; (AH) 018 - 379 034

**SOUTH WEST AREA**

COLAC - 83 Gellibrand Street
Tel: (BH) 052 - 335 533; (AH) 018 - 379 034

PORTLAND - 8-12 Julia Street
Tel: (BH) 055 - 233 232; (AH) 018 - 379 034

WARRNAMBOOL - 214 Koroi Street
Tel: (BH) 055 - 624 577; (AH) 018 - 379 034

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**DOLPHIN WATCHING IN PORT PHILLIP BAY**

A Guide to the Do's and Don'ts of Dolphin Watching

(Source: Department of Conservation and Natural Resources, 1995)

Prepared by Flora and Fauna Branch
Department of Conservation and Natural Resources, 1995
In Victoria, dolphins create a great deal of public interest and fascination. People may have a range of passive experiences with these animals, providing great enjoyment and increasing their appreciation of the natural environment.

We are very fortunate in having a resident population of dolphins in Port Phillip Bay. This provides an opportunity to enjoy these animals, first hand, in an area close to Melbourne.

However, it is important that these activities are undertaken in a way that does not compromise either the dolphins or the observers. In order to protect dolphins from harassment and disturbance, regulations have been introduced.

Whales and dolphins are known collectively as cetacea and dolphins are, in fact, small whale.

What is the legislation?

All dolphins are fully protected in Victoria under the Wildlife Act 1975. Penalties of up to $100,000 apply for persons killing, taking or interfering with a dolphin. The other legislation to be aware of is the Wildlife (Whale Watching) Regulations 1990, which apply equally to the larger whales, as well as dolphins. This legislation covers all coastal waters in Victoria.

Why have whale watching regulations?

The whale watching regulations seek to establish a set of standards which allow everyone to enjoy watching whales and dolphins without harassing these animals or placing the observer in danger. Penalties of up to $5000 apply for persons breaching these regulations.

What are the requirements of the Whale Watching Regulations?

The regulations apply to both whales and dolphins, but this brochure deals with dolphins only.

Briefly, the regulations require the following:

• If you are in a boat or jet ski, you must not:
  • approach a dolphin closer than 100m.
  • approach a dolphin head-on - always approach from the rear but not directly behind
  • drop an anchor within 300m of a dolphin.
  • move between a mother and her calf or separate a group of dolphins.
  • If you are in an aeroplane, helicopter or hot air balloon, you must not fly lower than 300m above any area that is within 300m of a dolphin.
  • If you are swimming or diving or using a surfboard or surf ski, you may not approach closer than 30m to a dolphin.
  • You must not feed dolphins or make any noise which may disturb a dolphin.

What may improve the dolphin-watching experience?

The following may help improve the experience:

• No more than three vessels should attempt to watch a dolphin at any one time.

• When stopping a boat to observe cetaceans, allow the engine to idle for a short time before turning it off - sudden stopping and starting may alarm the animals.

• When observing dolphins, avoid all sudden actions such as rapid changes of speed or direction.

• If a dolphin becomes disturbed, move away from the vicinity, quietly, to a distance of at least 300m.

How do I know a dolphin is disturbed?

If dolphins become disturbed, they may display the following evasive behaviours:

• Deep diving.
• Rapid swimming.
• Tail slapping.
• Large pods splitting into smaller groups.
• Small groups moving in different directions.
• Sudden changes of direction.

Should any animal start to display any of these signs, move quietly from the area.

What should I do if a dolphin approaches me?

If you are in a boat and a dolphin approaches you, place the motor in neutral and do not engage the propeller. Move away from the vicinity when it is safe, moving slowly and quietly.

If you are swimming or on a surfboard or surf ski, remain quiet and do not try to hold on to the animal.

Other important information.

• If you see anyone harassing or interfering with a dolphin, please contact the nearest office of the Department of Conservation and Natural Resources (see listing in this brochure).

• If you find a dolphin stranded, please contact the nearest office of the Department.

If you want more information on the biology of the dolphins in Port Phillip Bay and the research being conducted on them, please contact the Dolphin Research Project on 03-9532 1520 or at PO Box 13, Hampton, 3188.
About Dolphins

Bottlenose Dolphin (*Tursiops truncatus*)

Bottlenose Dolphins are common in tropical and temperate seas throughout the world. They inhabit the open sea to depths as great as 500 metres, but are also common along the coast and in bays and estuaries. The Bottlenose Dolphins in Victorian waters are a short-beaked form and lack spots on the undersides.

Adults are typically 2.5 to 3 metres long and weigh between 150 and 220 kg. Newborn calves are about 1 metre long and weigh around 12 kg.

Despite their size, they are very swift and agile, travelling up to 35 km/h and able to leap 5 metres out of the water.

Their main diet is fish, squid and octopus, but they will also take fish caught on lines or in nets.

Bottlenose Dolphins usually live for 25 to 35 years.

Common Dolphin (*Delphinus delphis*)

Common Dolphins are found in much the same areas as Bottlenose Dolphins, but are less common in bays and estuaries. They are seen only occasionally in Port Phillip Bay, usually in large herds. Strandings are not uncommon.

Common Dolphins are smaller than Bottlenoses, typically about 1.7 to 2.1 metres long and between 50 and 90 kg. Newborn calves are about 0.8 metres long and weigh around 10 kg.

Like their cousins, they are also very swift and agile. Their diet consists mostly of small fish and squid.

The average lifespan for Common Dolphins is around 22 years.

Offices of the Department of Natural Resources and Environment

Port Phillip Region

**Cows**

[BH] 03 5952 5910
[AH] 018 379 034

**Geelong**

[BH] 03 3226 4667
[AH] 018 379 034

**Mornington**

[BH] 03 5975 4779
[AH] 018 379 034

Gippsland Region

**Rainesdale**

[BH] 03 5152 0400
[AH] 1 800 813 828

**Traralgon**

[BH] 03 5172 2111
[AH] 1 800 813 828

**Orbost**

[BH] 03 5161 1222
[AH] 1 800 813 828

**Yarram**

[BH] 03 5182 5155
[AH] 1 800 813 828

South West Region

**Colac**

[BH] 03 5233 5553
[AH] 03 5233 5553

**Portland**

[BH] 03 5523 3232
[AH] 03 5523 1395

**Warrnambool**

[BH] 03 5562 4577
[AH] 03 5562 4577

For more information on Port Phillip Bay dolphin biology and research, please contact the Dolphin Research Project, PO Box 13, Hampton 3188 (tel. 03 9532 1250).

Flora and Fauna Program

December 1996

Dolphin Watching in Victoria

regulations and guidelines 1996-97

(Source: Department of Conservation and Natural Resources, 1996)
Dolphins in Victoria

Dolphins are found all along the Victorian coast. However, we are lucky enough to have a resident population of over 100 Bottlenose Dolphins (*Tursiops truncatus*) in Port Phillip Bay, allowing us to enjoy these fascinating animals first hand. Common Dolphins (*Delphinus delphis*) are also found in the Bay, but they are less frequent visitors, and fewer are seen.

Dolphins belong to the family Delphinidae, which includes rarer dolphins such as Risso’s Dolphin and Fraser’s Dolphin, and also the Killer Whale, False Killer Whale and Long-finned Pilot Whale. These are all, in fact, small cetaceans, closely related to true whales.

Dolphins and the law

There are two laws which protect dolphins from harassment and disturbance in all Victorian coastal waters.

Like all native animals, dolphins are protected under the Wildlife Act 1975. Under this law, interfering with, taking or killing a dolphin carries penalties of up to $100,000.

The Wildlife (Whale Watching) Regulations 1990 apply to dolphins as well as larger cetaceans. Breaching any of these regulations carries a penalty of up to $2000.

Regulations for dolphin watchers

The whale-watching regulations detailed on the following pages are designed to allow everyone to enjoy watching whales and dolphins without harassing the animals or putting the observer in danger.

General regulations

**Boats and jet skis**

You must not:
- approach a dolphin closer than 100 m
- approach a dolphin head-on, always approach from the rear off to one side, not directly behind
- drop an anchor within 300 m of a dolphin
- move between a mother and her calf or separate a group of dolphins

**Aeroplanes, helicopters and hot-air balloons**

You must not:
- fly lower than 300 m above or within 300 m of a dolphin

**Swimmers, divers, surfers, windsurfers and surf skiers**

You must not:
- approach a dolphin closer than 30 m
- feed or make any noise which may disturb a dolphin.

Additional guidelines for boats

The following apply particularly to dolphin-watching from boats.
- To avoid harassment, no more than three vessels should watch a dolphin at any one time.
- When stopping to observe dolphins, allow the engine to idle for a short time before turning it off; sudden stopping and starting may alarm the animals.
- When observing dolphins, avoid all sudden actions, such as rapid changes of speed or direction.
- If a dolphin becomes disturbed, move away quietly from the vicinity, to a distance of at least 300 m.

If a dolphin approaches

**Boats**

Place the motor in neutral and do not engage the propeller. Move away from the vicinity when it is safe, moving slowly and quietly.

**Swimmers, divers, surfers, windsurfers and surf skiers**

Remain quiet and do not try to touch or hang on to the animal.

Symptoms of dolphin disturbance

If you observe any of these behaviours, it is an indication the dolphins are disturbed:
- deep diving
- rapid swimming
- tail slapping
- large pods splitting into smaller groups
- small groups moving in different directions
- sudden changes of direction.

If a dolphin displays any of these signs move quietly from the area

Reporting harassment or stranding

- If you see anyone harassing or interfering with a dolphin, please contact the nearest office of the Department of Natural Resources and Environment (see listing this brochure)
- If you find a dolphin stranded, contact the nearest office of the Department.
Appendix 8.1

In Chapter 8 of the thesis, survey data relating to the various operational characteristics of individual dolphin boat operators has been grouped together in the tables. In Chapter 7 the dolphin tourism businesses were discussed individually because data was derived from information available to the general public, generally in the form of promotional brochures. The reason for this inconsistency is that in securing permission from the boat operators to run the surveys, I gave them an assurance that their businesses would not be individually identifiable in the way I presented the survey data in the thesis. This agreement was negotiated in the context of some operators’ concerns about other reports which had unfavourably identified individuals. Breakdowns of the data presented in the tables in Chapter 8 have been provided to the separate tour boat operators.
Appendix 8.2: Table 8.10. Number, Row and Column percentages for Visitors on Dolphin Tours by Age and Gender

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Age (years)</th>
<th>Gender</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>Female</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>n</td>
<td>Row %</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>0-12</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>31.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13-20</td>
<td>75</td>
<td>36.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21-30</td>
<td>94</td>
<td>40.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>31-60</td>
<td>163</td>
<td>42.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>61+</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>45.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>393</td>
<td>39.6</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
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Jarvis, Christina Harwood

Title:
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