

Media Release:

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Stranded Dolphin Washed Ashore

A dead juvenile Indo-pacific humpback dolphin was found washed ashore near the Darwin Sailing Club late last week after being reported by a member of the public.

The stranding was attended by the Department of Natural Resources, Environment, The Arts and Sport biodiversity scientist Carol Palmer, who heads up the Coastal Dolphin Research Project, NRETAS marine wildlife officer Ray Chatto and staff from the Museum and Art Gallery of the Northern Territory (MAGNT).

“While it is a very sad discovery, it has provided valuable information to the research as in two years of monthly surveys we have never recorded an Indo-pacific humpback dolphin in waters around Fannie Bay,” Ms Palmer said.

“We regularly record bottlenose dolphins, sometimes the Australian snubfin dolphin and the Dugong but never the humpback dolphin in the actual Fannie Bay. “

The Coastal Dolphin Research project aims to identify key habitat areas to provide an understanding of populations and potential threats to ensure the long term conservation of the coastal dolphin species in the Northern Territory.

“The dolphin had been dead for probably two days, which could mean that it floated in with the tides and unfortunately it was too decomposed to carry-out a post mortem so we are not sure what the dolphin died from,” Ms Palmer said.

“We took a range of tissue samples which will help in understanding the genetics for the species in the Northern Territory.”

NRETAS marine wildlife officer Ray Chatto who mans the Marine WildWatch Hotline has requested that anyone with information contact the hotline.

The Marine WildWatch Hotline, is a Territory Government hotline where the community can report any incidents involving threatened, endangered or protected (TEP) marine species in Northern Territory waters.

“Any information could be useful, if someone saw the dolphin floating in the Harbour, we’d like to know,” Mr Chatto said.

The community is encouraged to call the Marine WildWatch Hotline to report incidents such as pollution or rubbish that could affect marine wildlife, boating accidents involving wildlife, unlawful killing of TEP species and unintentional by-catching of marine wildlife.

For more information on the Marine WildWatch Hotline go to www.nt.gov.au/marinewildwatch or to report an incident call 1800 453 941.

Ends

Media Note – for more information contact Carol Palmer on 8995 5011

Image – the Indo-pacific humpback dolphin washed ashore near the Darwin Sailing Club (editors please note - use image at own discretion).

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