Meet our new captain

Meet our new boat captain, William Gifford! William has a lifetime of experience on the water and has worked on a variety of passenger vessels in South Carolina, Hawaii, and Alaska. His experience is vast, and sometimes involved operating vessels with 150 passengers. Most recently, he was a captain and guide in Glacier Bay National Park in Alaska, traversing up to 150 miles on a vessel each day! His specialty is managing operations for ecotours as well as naturalist presentations. For our lab, he will serve as a boat captain during our bottlenose dolphin surveys and retrievals/deployments of our passive acoustic recorders. He will also manage the day-to-day maintenance of boats, gear, and field bay. We are excited to have him on our Team!

Long-term bottlenose dolphin acoustic data

Fig. 1. Bottlenose dolphin vocalizations collected at the mouth of the May River during 2013 to 2022.

Fig. 2. Bottlenose dolphin vocalizations collected in Chechessee Creek (CC4) and Colleton River (CR1) during 2019 to 2021.
Behavior spotlight: baby position

“Baby position” is shown in the photo on the left with Cloud and her calf. Calves travel in “baby position” where the mother will surface first and then the calf will surface slightly after and behind, maintaining close proximity to the mother. This allows the calf to catch the mother’s slipstream, so it doesn’t have to work as hard to keep up. Calves learn to echolocate over time and are more clumsy and vulnerable during this stage, providing another reason to stay close to their mother. When babies are born, they must get comfortable swimming, breathing, and learning the location of their blowhole. Baby dolphins will do something known as “chin slap breathing”, where they lift their heads farther out of the water than necessary to inhale air.

Bottlenose dolphin visual data

**Table 1. Abundance of bottlenose dolphins sighted on our most recent surveys.**

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Month</th>
<th>May River</th>
<th>CCCO</th>
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<th>May River</th>
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<td>2</td>
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</table>

Fig. 2 This figure shows the abundance of dolphins sighted on each survey in both the May River (green) and Chechessee Creek, Chechessee River, Colleton River and Okatie River (CCCO) (orange) during January, 2016 to February, 2023. Surveys in CCCO began in June, 2019.

Fig. 3 This figure shows the number of bottlenose dolphins, including the number of calves and neonates sighted in (A) the May River and (B) Chechessee Creek, Chechessee River, Colleton River and Okatie River (CCCO) from January 1st, 2016 to February 28th, 2023. Surveys in CCCO began in June, 2019. The Port Royal Sound Foundation funding period is highlighted in yellow.

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