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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

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We report here the findings of a 2.5 year investigation of interactions between dusky dolphins and tourism at Kaikoura, New Zealand. This research, contracted by the New Zealand Department of Conservation, provides information on the current status of dolphin tourism and the effects of tour activities on dusky dolphins that reside in the area. Based on our scientific interpretation of these findings, we provide advice to resource managers, tour operators, and other community stakeholders for ways to maintain, and perhaps enhance, the sustainability of dolphin tourism at Kaikoura. This investigation was very much a team effort, involving research teams operating from three separate platforms – a shore station, a research vessel, and swim-with-dolphin tour vessels. This report is organised so as to:

- *report findings from each research platform separately, then*
- *combine data from all three platforms in synergetic and comparative analyses, and lastly,*
- *provide an overview of the research conclusions and our recommendations for sustainable management of dolphin tourism for the next ten years and beyond.*

This information can be found in the following Chapters:

- 1. Describes the background and rationale for this research effort**
- 2. Presents findings from the shore station (theodolite tracks, movements and behaviour)**
- 3. Presents findings from the research vessel regarding changes in dolphin behaviour before, during, and after tour interactions**
- 4. Presents details of swim-with-dolphin tours and behavioural responses of dolphins to specific tour activities, based on data collected from tour vessels**
- 5. Presents findings from research vessel line transect surveys conducted south of Kaikoura, from the Haumuri Bluffs to the Waiau River**
- 6. Combines the above findings in an ecological synthesis**
- 7. Provides conclusions based on the above analyses and what is known about dusky dolphins in particular, and dolphin-tourism interactions in general, and offers our advice for sustainable management of dolphin tourism at Kaikoura**