

Dolphin Conservation in Croatia

By *Ulrike Kirsch*

Stand up and Paddle for the Dolphins – Charity Event

The four athletes, Andy Dressler, Arnd Dünzinger and the twins Mario and Manuel Stecher, chose an unusual way of drawing attention to the plight of the last Adriatic dolphins living in the coastal waters of Croatia year-round. They tackled the challenge of surrounding the Italian lake of Garda by stand-up paddling (SUP), a first ever in the lake's history. "The project had the character of a real expedition," explains Mario Stecher. "We carried our entire equipment and food on our boards, which are provided with special mountings at bow and stern. We had no additional support from a bumboat or the like."

In Malcesine, where the expedition started, visitors were able to inform themselves about GRD's project to save the last Adriatic dolphins. Having worked as a skipper in the Croatian part of the Adriatic Sea for years in the past, Mario Stecher feels a particular commitment towards this project.

The paddlers succeeded in paddling the 155 km in just 28.5 hours in two days with the pure force of their arms! We congratulate them on this achievement and thank them for their commitment to protect the Adriatic dolphins! And of course we thank everyone who supported this charity event with their donation. By press time we had gathered the stunning sum of more than 2,000 Euros for the Adriatic dolphins!



SUP athlete Mario Stecher is committed to protecting the last Adriatic dolphins.

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Our new Dolphin Conservation Center on the island of Molat starting in its first season – this year's opening times:

June 25 through August 13 and from August 19 through August 23

The daily operating hours are from 10 am to 2 pm, and in the evening from 7 pm to 9 pm. If you cannot make it during the daily operating hours you can arrange for an individual visit with our German and English speaking project manager Martina Đuras: +385/95/9022613. Please check our website regularly for updates and amendments: www.delphinschutz.org/save-the-last-adriatic-dolphins

How to find us

The Dolphin Conservation Center is located on the island of Molat in northern Dalmatia. To reach the island you can take car or speed ferries leaving from the port of Zadar, or you use your own boat. The Dolphin Conservation Center is situated in the middle of the village of Molat, within 10-minute walking distance from the harbor. There are no street names and house numbers on Molat. The Center is signposted from the harbor. The GPS coordinates are as follows: 44°12'49" N, 14°52'44" E. Check our website for more information and photos: www.delphinschutz.org/save-the-last-adriatic-dolphins



Our Dolphin Conservation Center on the island of Molat was inaugurated in July 2013. © U. Kirsch



A bottlenose dolphin observed by Nicole Allmayer. © office@nika-photos.at

Attention vacationers in Croatia: Please participate and report your dolphin sighting!

As every year, GRD calls upon tourists in Croatia to participate in GRD's project to save the last Adriatic dolphins and report any dolphin or whale they observe in the Croatian part of the Adriatic Sea.

In 2013, we received a total of 234 sighting reports. This year's first dolphin observation reported to us was made in mid March – it was a group of 10 bottlenose dolphins swimming in the sea about 1 km off Molat – what a coincidence! In early May we were informed about a rare whale sighting: a fin whale enchanted visitors with its stay near Trieste harbor in Italy, before disappearing out of sight.

Please also let us know if you find a dead, stranded, or injured marine mammal. If such an incident is reported quickly we can initiate rescue measures or pick up the dead animal to examine the cause of death.

The sightings are published on our website: www.adriadelfine.de

The sighting form for download as well as a Code of Conduct on encounters with wild whales and dolphins can be found here: www.delphinschutz.org/save-the-last-adriatic-dolphins