

DOLPHINS DAY - synopsis

Masters of the world beneath the sea, dolphins live in total harmony with their aquatic environment. There are few places in the world where human interaction with these wild mammals occurs on a regular basis. Bunbury, Western Australia, a thriving industrial port and recreational centre, is one of them.

Over many years, research scientist, Steve Honnor, has observed the three pods of wild bottlenose dolphins that live in and around Bunbury's Koombana Bay. Building up a trust that allows for the closest of interaction, Steve notes that although dolphins spend most of their day playing and socialising, this seemingly carefree and laid back existence is in fact highly structured. Adhering to a daily routine of work, rest and play, these intelligent mammals continue to evolve a cohesive existence, sharing their aquatic home with fellow creatures and humans.

The film chronicles the daily antics of some of the one hundred dolphins that live in the area. Local pod member, Sharky, the ragged old war-horse and victim of many a shark attack, now boasts half a tongue; Thin Fin and her calf is always inquisitive, inviting human interaction; seven year old B.B., nervous in the interaction area, remembers the fate of her mother at the hands of a human; and elusive and super-fast Finky, continually defies easy identification.

We see rare footage of pods sleeping, feeding, being sexually active, and engaging in spectacular play antics. Steve, and volunteers from the Dolphin Discovery Centre, undertake their daily observations, documenting behavioural patterns and social organisation, and monitoring the impact of human activities on surrounding waters.

Dolphins can experience humans, and vice-versa, at close quarters in the Centre's interaction area. The dolphins, like humans, come and go as they please and seem to express as much curiosity in us as we do in them. As one of the few wild animal species trusting enough to choose to interact with people, dolphins leave a lasting experience for humans.

"Dolphins Day" enters the world of the dolphins and the world of one man as he discovers more about the behaviour of these magnificent mammals.