Three decades of research have been conducted on California coastal common bottlenose dolphins (Tursiops truncatus), and multiple collections of photo-identification images, including related sighting metadata, are available for analysis. Study area locations include: San Quintín and Ensenada, Baja California, Mexico; and San Diego, Orange County, Santa Monica Bay, Santa Barbara and Monterey Bay in California, USA.

This poster reports on the development of a centralized, shared, digital repository for historical and future data that can be openly accessed by researchers.

This online database and photo-catalog, called the “California Dolphin Online Catalog” (CDOC), was launched in January 2012 and is hosted by the Duke University OBIS-SEAMAP program and funded by a grant from Pacific Life Foundation.

The objective of CDOC is to provide an online, open-access, digital database resource and research tool freely available for use by scientists who study coastal bottlenose dolphin populations throughout their geographic range along the west coast of North America. While CDOC is primarily intended to be a scientific resource, it can also serve an important role in facilitating citizen-scientist engagement and public awareness. To date, principal investigators have contributed data identifying 697 individual dolphins collected in areas extending from Ensenada, Baja California, Mexico to Monterey Bay, California, USA during 1981-2001. CDOC provides online features for contributors to: load dolphin sighting data and photographs; view dolphin dorsal fin images and review sighting history data; compare dorsal fin images to identify matches; across study areas and sighting dates; communicate potential matches to one another and share a process for matching decisions; map sighting data for dolphins; and, view CDOC data with OBIS-SEAMAP visualization tools.

Further development will be focused on adding more recently collected data, refining the online application, and seeking collaboration and input from other interested data holders.

OVERVIEW

CDOC provides a centralized, digital photo-catalog and online photo database application with data management & workflow features; thus, contributors can use a standardized digital photo-catalog and sharing tool to CDOC with full limitations on how they maintain their individual study area catalogs. It is an online database

Digital photo-catalog software is used to store original survey images, so that fin features can be reviewed and scored by the user. A draft matching review is conducted by each contributor for each Dolphin is selected from each survey, and the best image (or two) for each survey is used to create a catalog for a particular study area and time period. Now, any researcher can share such catalogs with others.

CDOC provides a standardized database structure and an online database: photos can be viewed in fine detail. The best fin image for each dolphin is selected from each survey, and the best image (or two) for each survey is used to create a catalog for a particular study area and time period. Now, any researcher can share such catalogs with others.

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