



## EDITOR'S NOTE

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Welcome to the newly redesigned Interspecies Newsletter! With the permission of Interspecies founder Jim Nollman and the help of my good friend web designer Brett Alton (<http://www.brettalton.com/>), I have begun a new phase of the newsletter.

The new vision for the newsletter is a monthly magazine-style publication with regular contributors. People of both science and art will help expand the newsletter with regular 500-1000 word blog-style articles. Perhaps a more accurate name for the publication would be Interspecies E-Magazine, but I do not wish to re-invent the wheel entirely. The revamp is only in its early phases, so if you are a man of science or art with a background in interspecies communication and wish to contribute to the magazine, please feel free to contact me at [Michael.e.dasilva@gmail.com](mailto:Michael.e.dasilva@gmail.com).

Interspecies Newsletter will remain free to all subscribers. Knowledge should not be limited the wealthy. We are, however, open to the possibility of dealing with a sponsor if there is interest. Said sponsor would have to be of a similar philosophical bent as Interspecies Communication and can contact me at the e-mail address above.

The newsletter will only be available online. Print copies will not be distributed. It is both too expensive and too environmentally unfriendly to release print editions of the e-magazine. My chief role as editor of the Interspecies Newsletter will be the collection and editing of articles. Every month I will preface the magazine with a short article not unlike this one. It will serve as an introduction to the issue's contents as opposed to an independent journalistic endeavor.

I am admittedly new to the world of interspecies communication and have not yet formed a full opinion on the extent to which it is possible. I look forward to my correspondence with various individuals in the field who will help me better understand my topic of study.

I am fascinated by the work that Jim Nollman and my other contributors do and admire the underlying philosophical premise. I consider myself an environmentalist, but think that there is far more to the environment than simple biological fact. The cult of science is sometimes a little too much for me to handle despite the fact that I recognize the necessity of science. I feel that science is part of a greater framework instead of being a greater truth in and of itself.

I look forward to this new era of Interspecies Newsletter. I feel it will be a fruitful project for all involved. I would like to thank Jim Nollman for the opportunity to work on this project and Brett Alton for the invaluable technical support he has given me. In all reality, this project is a joint effort between Brett Alton and I.

*M. Da Silva*

Michael Da Silva, Editor, *Interspecies Newsletter*

# Art, Nature and Cell Phones

By Jim Nollman

We at Interspecies have long disagreed with the prevailing view of modernism, that art has no meaning beyond itself, and that artists have no responsibility to their culture. It is an absurd proposition. To the contrary, until the ascendancy of Modernism in the first decade of the 20th century, artists served society as arbiters of cultural perception.

We at Interspecies have long argued that the so-called environmental crisis is best understood as a crisis in human perception, specifically, our own human place within nature. Interspecies was founded to mobilize artists to depict and transform this crisis of perception. Ironically, such a corporate charter is risky business for an art nonprofit that seeks much of its funding from foundations. In 30 years of existence as an organization that promotes nature art, Interspecies has never received funding from any foundation that defines itself as serving the arts or community. We always fall through the cracks of their categories. What we do is not just sculpture or painting or music. It is all of that plus biology, acoustics, community organizing, education and protest.

Interspecies recently failed to attract funding from a well established community foundation in our home town, for an art project benefitting the local music community. As we wrote the proposal, the project seemed to be a perfect fit. In our town, (it's probably the same in your town as well), it is the musicians who are constantly being asked to volunteer their time to provide live music at local events. I had solicited the Foundation to sponsor a volunteer CD production featuring 30 local musicians, with all CD profits given to a local charity. This was an attempt to give something back to the musicians, and also showcase them as a working community. The Community Foundation rejected the project, with the comment that CD production is not a nonprofit activity, and I ought to take out a personal bank loan if I wished to produce any CD.

For much more about Interspecies' rationale to support artists, check out this page describing why [Interspecies exists](#).

Motivating artists to create works that protect nature, whether explicitly or through symbolic gestures, has been an exceedingly easy thing to do. The largest art movement of our time is called Earth Art. There are literally thousands of artists around the world now working under its rubric. If

the movement seems less grand than what I describe here, that is an illusion perpetuated by the mainstream art world. Galleries and famous art critics are the big losers wherever earth art succeeds. This art offers few products for sale. So no gallery will promote it? And since for-profit galleries do not support Earth Art, the celebrity system that assures you that Picasso is good (and therefore expensive) as opposed to Joe Shmoe who is, well, less good, can be understood as a marketing scheme to sell art for big profits. For a hundred years, a few artists became very wealthy, and the rest of us took a day job. With the emergence of Earth Art, the only celebrity worth celebrating is the earth itself. Also, art that stretches the categories of paintings, music, etc, out of shape, eventually eludes the critics who don't have much good to say about new forms that include scientific methods, and an eco-polemic that displays a developed sense of responsibility to the culture at large. These critics are still searching for work that displays their idea of art: a very specific kind of "newness" of content that is expressed using the old established forms.

Much of what I say here describes the difficult profession of choosing a career as an artist in the U.S.A. Unlike every country in Europe, the U.S. has almost no artistic middle class. This is the result of no ongoing government sponsorship of artists. If you don't believe it, ask an artist who has worked on projects in Finland, or Holland, or Germany.

The above is offered as the curious prelude to a rather strange, if humble program that Interspecies has recently started. We are working with Yamaha to develop two new lines of cell phone ring tones. A ring tone is a ten second audio hint into somebody's musical aesthetic. One line will feature the calls of endangered species. The other will feature interspecies real-time call and responses with dolphins and whales. What's not like about it? It's all virtual material, meaning no trees were cut down to create it. And what would you rather your 16 year old daughter hear when waiting for her friends to call: gangsta rap, or a courting humpback whale? Or better yet, what you prefer some Japanese teenager listen to as she is sitting down to a mandatory school lunch that includes whale meat? We do plan to tailor the ring tones for the Japanese market, with descriptions that hopefully educate Japanese teenagers about the meaning of extinction, linked to the endangered status of the specific animal they choose.

We think of the program as an expression of earth Art. We also think of it as the expression of post modern totemism. We've talked sending some free samples of skunk ring tones to a few foundation presidents who, after 30 years of reading our proposals about playing music with whales, still

don't consider what we do to be worthy of their support.

*Jim Nollman is the founder of Interspecies.com and this newsletter. His last book was Beluga Café, available at any bookstore.*

## A Protocol for Engaging Dolphins, Orca and Sperm Whales in the Wild

By Hardy Jones

My first encounter with dolphins in the wild occurred in 1978 in the Bahamas with spotted dolphins. To say it was an exhilarating experience is an understatement, but these initial encounters were chaotic. They were wild fun, but chaotic and lacking in any intimacy or creature-to-creature contact.

Our initial efforts to bridge to the dolphins involved using computers that created analogs of their own sounds, dropped their frequency so we could hear them and then replaying those sounds to the dolphins. The dolphins responded immediately by mimicking those sounds. When they tried to embellish our sonic output we could not respond.

Over the years we used underwater scooters, which the dolphins loved. They would race to us from out of the blue and assume a position on our "bow" and along side us. We experienced a genuine feeling of traveling within a dolphin pod.

The most intimate contact with the spotted dolphins, however, came from letting things slow down, focusing on one dolphin and then moving tangentially toward it. For the most intimate encounters, we could never move straight at the dolphin. If we followed proper procedure, certain dolphins would reply by opening their eyes wide and making direct eye contact. If I held the contact, the dolphin would swim side-by-side with me for long periods along the surface. If I dove, the dolphin would duplicate my action and we would swim through the clear Bahamian waters together.

Later I tried this approach with killer whales and sperm whales. I met a young female orca in Tysfjord and locked eyes. She swam with me for nearly an hour in the fading November light. Eventually she swam down and retrieved a jelly fish which she offered to me. I fell in love and on the plane flying

out of the Arctic I could not take my mind off my new "love".

In Dominica, in the West Indies, I was working with a French television crew filming sperm whales. Two sperms approached our boat, but appeared to be veering off. I slid into the water and made some whooping sounds, my best effort to imitate a humpback whale. One of the sperms, or "cachalots" as we were calling them in French, arched its back and dove. The other began to do the same, but when I made a "whoop" it arched its back and returned to the surface. I tried my tangential approach and turned my head to look the whale in the eye. The eye looked small against the vast wall of whale, but it was the size of a grape fruit.

We locked eyes and swam together for half an hour. If the whale tried to leave, I would turn and swim away vigorously. The whale returned again and again to resume our eye-to-eye interlock.

For more on our work with dolphins go to <http://www.bluevoice.org>

*Hardy Jones is executive director of BlueVoice.org. He has observed dolphins in the wild in the water for nearly thirty years and many more than 70 films for television about marine mammals and the oceans. His work focuses on dolphin communication and intelligence and on protecting dolphins from human abuse.*

# Swimming with Wild Cetaceans: Laws, Commerce and Commonsense

By Andy Ridinger

The governments of several countries have had regulations in place for many years now concerning the level of human-cetacean interaction and restrictions on proximity to wild cetaceans. In the U.S., these regulations are mostly under the Marine Mammal Protection Act, passed during the Reagan administration. These rules govern much more than the behavior of tourists trying to get close to wild whales and dolphins, but the portion of the law that concerns most people states that swimmers and boaters must maintain a 100 yard distance between themselves or their vessels and the cetaceans. These laws apply only in U.S. coastal areas. Outside a 12-mile limit, there are no international agreements, to this writer's knowledge.

The marine restrictions that affect the environment in Hawaii's National Humpback Whale Sanctuary allow for the dumping of ships and tour boat bilge and waste products 3 miles off the coastline of the islands that border the Sanctuary. This has allowed these vessels to dump within the Sanctuary for many years now. Many cruise lines and even the Pacific Whale Foundation (a non-profit 5013c educational foundation) dumped their whale-watching boat's wastes within the Sanctuary at times. Only in the past two years has the PWF begun the practice of having a septic truck come to the dock and pump out their chemical toilets, and that followed the initiation of this procedure by other tour operators on Maui.

It is a bit puzzling to try and figure out how the government has tried to protect these cetacean species. On the one hand, a single kayaker or swimmer may not approach any cetacean within 300 feet, facing very severe fines if caught. This boundary increases to 900 feet in areas designated as calving areas in marine preserves or sanctuaries. On the other hand, huge amounts of toxic wastes are dumped in the area the government has designated as a sanctuary.

Legislation was passed after 9/11 that effectively waived ANY adherence to any of the U.S. environmental laws for the Department of Defense. The Navy's Low Frequency Active Sonar (LFAS) program has been opposed by numerous environmental groups for years, and after a rather lengthy court battle, its deployment has been effectively restricted to a relatively small area in the Sea of Japan, with the able help of the National Resources

Defense Council (NRDC). There have been several documented instances of cetaceans being killed and disabled by the use of various kinds of sonar, but no restrictions have been placed on its use, as it is considered to be a matter of national security to have nearly unlimited use of these devices in coastal waters, for the purpose of detecting enemy submarines. The Navy has recently been requesting a new "take" permit (allowing for the harassment and possible injury of cetaceans) from the National Marine Fisheries Service to re-deploy the LFAS in areas outside the court-ordered boundaries. The military is allowed to create enormous noise pollution in the ocean, the cruise lines and tour boats are allowed to dump large quantities of wastes and bilge, but the public is not allowed within a hundred yards of a dolphin.

One might ask how enforcement of these rules is to be accomplished, given the small numbers of government personnel assigned to the task, and the hundreds of thousands of square miles of ocean involved. The answer is that there is very little actual enforcement of these rules, due to the small number of agents assigned to the task. There have been a few very isolated instances where people were fined for being too close to cetaceans, but by and large, the rules sit as a guideline and rarely get enforced.

It is a wise and prudent strategy to set forth regulations to try to ensure that whales and dolphins are not harassed by swimmers and boaters. How to enforce regulations that have any chance of ensuring this is an entirely different matter. The orcas of the Puget Sound and Johnstone Straight areas of the Pacific Northwest have long been a tourist attraction, and have been interacting with dozens of tour boats for many years now. Rarely are the distances maintained, as it is impossible to control where the orcas swim, and many choose to come very near the boats. The same is true of the humpback whales in Hawaii. Last year, a PWF boat with a large contingent of elementary school children struck and injured a humpback whale calf with its hull and propeller, even though their captains are committed to observing the legal distances. There were several confirmed boat strikes in Hawaii.

The proposed "Super Ferry" will be transiting much of the Humpback Sanctuary, a huge barge-like vessel that will be moving thousands of tons

at considerable speed through the breeding and calving areas throughout the year. Although there have been study groups and proposed steps to supposedly minimize the risks to whale and dolphins from this huge vessel, no environmental impact study has been required. Big money talks and cetacean protections walk, in this instance, and in many others where large ferries are in operation. It is apparent that the current regulations do not effectively manage the risk to the cetaceans, and it seems questionable to assert that they serve any real deterrent to harassment by organized groups promoting whale-watching activities, the military, or the public at large.

The National Marine Fisheries Service is currently reviewing and in the process of revising its rules on swimming in the proximity of cetaceans. The period of public comment is now closed, and new revisions are in development, much to the chagrin

of many people who take groups out to swim in the proximity of whales and dolphins. Again, the question of why this is being done is brought to the forefront. The enforcement of protective measures for cetaceans seems to be restricted to the groups least likely to do any real damage, i.e., the small groups of tourists and cetacean observers who seek out interaction with these sentient, intelligent species.

*Andy Ridinger is a Licensed Psychological Associate and Specialist in School Psychology who lives in Texas and Upcountry Maui (Haiku). He has studied cetaceans and marine biology since his teens and has been diving Hawaiian, Gulf Coast and Caribbean waters since 1980, seeking as much contact as possible with his flipped friends. He can be contacted at [ridinger@msn.com](mailto:ridinger@msn.com).*

## Back to Basics: The Urgent Value of Natural Systems

By Michael J. Cohen

To improve communication with other species and each other, we must recognize that:

- 1) [Natural systems](#) are what we most hold in common with all forms of life,
- 2) Natural systems sustain and balance life on earth, including human life,
- 3) For anything to be part of a natural system it has to be in communication with that system.

At our birth, communications throughout natural systems connect us with the global life community. However, by the age of five, our nature-conquering socialization bonds us to ignore or suppress this communication and [replace it](#) with the meaning of words. To benefit from communication with other species we must overcome the socialization that disconnects us from it.

A major disconnection that we suffer emanates from contemporary educators psychologists and [health leaders](#). They teach us an outrageous lie about our relationship with life. From birth on, we obtain deep rewards (parental and social approval, food, shelter, water, air, light, love, warmth, etc.) that

inextricably attach our thoughts to our leaders' lie. Habitually, whenever we think or feel their lie comes to mind first. Like wearing warped eyeglasses, it makes us perceive that we live on the surface of Planet Earth. But we don't. We live in the Earth, 300 miles beneath its atmosphere, imbedded in and nurtured by Earth's biosphere and communications.

In 1929 scientists recognized that the biosphere functions as the central life zone of Planet Earth. It consists of a self-organizing, cooperative integration of atmosphere, sunshine, ocean, soil, rain, plants animals and minerals that beautifully sustain life without producing garbage. This integration is the heart of Organism Earth, that some call Gaia.

An essence of the biosphere is its healing flow of natural systems and their communication. Whenever the flow stops, life, as we know it deteriorates.

Natural systems stream through all of life, including the life of our mind. In our psyche they do their thing. They recycle and transform contamination in our thinking and feeling. This improves our perceptions and well being.

An example of any natural system in action is the purifying and self-correcting flow of the water cycle. We seldom learn that we are born in communication with water through our [natural senses of thirst](#) and excretion. These senses give us vital information. They intelligently, non-verbally communicate that we do or don't have the correct amount of water necessary for the health of ourselves and global life.

The lie that disconnects our psyche from the biosphere leads us to spend, on average, 98 percent of our time, thinking and feeling while blithely disconnected from conscious sensory contact with natural systems within and about us. This "normal" disconnection stops the regenerative flow of natural systems in our psyche. Deprived of it, many systems and [senses](#) lie frustrated or hurt in our subconscious. There they secretly initiate dysfunctions and erode our reverence for life. Fortunately, [Organic Psychology](#) provides an interspecies remedy for this phenomenon.

## Links

Interspecies Newsletter has always encouraged readers to send in links to sites of interest to subscribers. The URLs of these sites are then posted in the newsletter in hopes of expanding their readership.

This month's first website is a study on animal pregnancy by National Geographic. The study is entitled "[In The Womb of Animals.](#)"

The rest of the articles this month share a common theme. First is December 5th, 2006 article detailing new legislation designed to save whales from being struck by ships entitled "[Shipping lanes may give way to whales.](#)" Next is an article entitled "[Whale attacks trainer during show at SeaWorld in San Diego.](#)" It explains how the trainer's familiarity with the whale may have saved the trainer's life. BBC News reported on the removal of a sperm whale whose remains were found on a Scottish beach. Following traditions in the region, the lower jaw of the animal was removed by locals. Pieces of it were handed out as gifts.

All 3 of the above articles speak to the commercialization of whales, which is the topic of both "[Modeling the past and future of whales and whaling](#)" by

Organic Psychology is a sensory, hands-on, [nature-connecting](#) application of Ecopsychology. As its [130 activities](#) strengthen interspecies communication it helps us bring the beneficial flow of natural systems into our psyche so we may think and feel like nature and the biosphere work. This enables us to [remedy our deeper personal, social and environmental disorders](#) through the grace and restorative powers of natural systems. It gives added value to interspecies communication.

*During his 57 years living and teaching in natural areas year round, Ecopsychologist Michael J. Cohen, Ed.D, has founded Project NatureConnect, written eight books and created online degree programs that teach nature-connected education, counseling and healing. He can be contacted via his website [www.ecopsych.com](http://www.ecopsych.com), by phone at 360-378-6313, or by e-mail at [nature@interisland.net](mailto:nature@interisland.net)*

By Michael Da Silva

C. Scott Baker and Phillip J. Clapham, originally published in the July 2004 edition of TRENDS in Ecology and Evolution, as well as Interspecies Newsletter Founder Nollman's 1998 publication entitled "[On Their Own Behalf.](#)" Both of these in-depth pieces each explore the relationship between humans and whales and the implications thereof.

Sadly, the factors at play in the commercialization of whales and their environment has already claimed the lives of an entire species of dolphins. On December 18th, 2006 The Independent reported on the extinction of the white-fin dolphin in an article entitled "[After surviving 20 million years, China's goddess of the river is driven to extinction.](#)" A recent expedition to find the white-fin dolphin in China yielded no results leading experts to declare the end of the 20 million year-old species.

We are always looking for new and interesting links, so please continue to send them to both Jim Nollman and myself. We will give you credit for your findings in future issues of the newsletter. We sincerely thank you for your help.