

WHALE TAILS AND DOLPHIN DREAMS



I have dedicated this birth year to my cetacean connection, in preparation for work I will be doing in the future. This was my main reason for visiting Hawaii. As well as regularly visiting our local Moray Firth pod and the Irish dolphin Mara as usual this year, I hope to meet the Cardigan Bay dolphins in July and will be spending a month in Baja, Mexico to see the blue whales – the largest creatures ever to have graced our planet. The area around Baja also has several species of dolphins and the amazing gray whales who come in to calve in the shallow lagoons. They seem to have forgiven mankind for our recent hunting in the very same area, and now bring their young right up to the boats to “meet” the people. On viewing an emailed photo of someone leaning out of a small boat and kissing the nose of a gray whale, my fate was sealed, I had to go!

There is an ongoing debate about the ethics of swimming with dolphins and whales. Following some incredible experiences in 2007, I know that it is crucial for humanity’s ascension and evolution (and perhaps even survival) that we connect with sea mammals. However it has to be exclusively on their terms. As long as they are able to make the choices regarding where, when, with whom and for how long to connect, and as long as we can afford them the respect of being guests in their domain, (e.g. don’t be so rude as to reach out and try to

touch them,) then it is great. Their basic needs have to be considered if we are to continue receiving the energetic and spiritual benefits from the human-cetacean connection. For example, if an area gets too crowded with people and boats then the dolphins will have to move out and spend their resting time in rougher or more dangerous waters, so they will have to expend more energy simply to survive and may be exposed to more predators. As it was, I noticed a lot of dolphins around the Hawaiian Islands displaying the scars of shark attacks and other wounds.

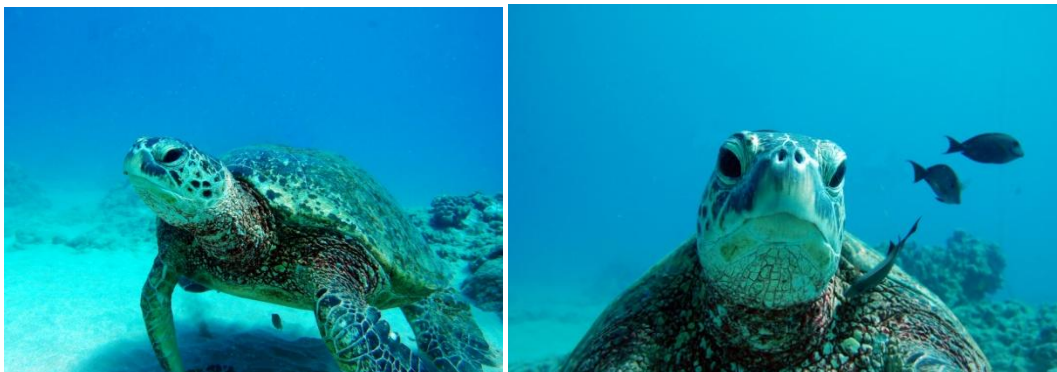


Before leaving for Hawaii I had a conversation with a friend who is a wildlife biologist and has been researching cetaceans for 20 years. She was a little concerned when I told her the dates of my Hawaii trip. “It’s a little early for the whales,” she said, “They don’t usually come till mid December.” It was too late for me to change dates, but I had a feeling that what I had planned would work out, especially as a meditation had confirmed that I would connect with them. I had my first boat trip on West coast Oahu in mid November . About 40 minutes from shore there was great excitement – we spotted two humpbacks, probably juvenile males, which were first the crew had seen this season. They stayed close for about an hour before eventually moving off.



We next came across a pod of around 60 spotted and rough tooth dolphins – they had been fishing together, but stopped to escort us, leaping, splashing and bow riding, especially the mums with calves – it was like they were showing us their babies, up real close! The Delphic excitement, exhilaration and joy in the water was reflected equally in the humans above!

Later we found a beautiful spot to snorkel with an astounding variety and amount of reef fish. To our delight we then saw 2 Honu –green turtles, really close up. They are so special – sacred to the Hawaiians, and very obviously keepers of ancient wisdom. Listed as threatened under the federal Endangered Species Act, only around 100-350 nest each year throughout all of the Hawaiian Islands.



When we said goodbye to the honu and began returning to the boat there was a subtle shift in energy. It felt like every molecule of water became alive and very present as a pod of around 20 spinners approached and checked us out. Dolphins are the only creatures I've seen combine both curiosity and knowing in one look, which is often also embedded in love and joy. The spinners got their name from their acrobatics – they leap vertically out of the water while spinning on their axis. Impressive! They are great fun to watch from above the water too –a large pod can turn the ocean into 'dolphin soup'. They are smaller than our Atlantic bottlenose –so I am looking forward to the next time I swim with beautiful Mara, (the Irish dolphin,) she is going to seem HUGE after all her pacific cousins!



It is interesting to note that I had not planned to be out on the water that particular day, but the night before I just happened to get talking to a hotel worker who had an interesting aura. It turned out he was a dolphin lover too and he just happened to be friendly with a captain who was taking his boat out the following day...

From conversations I had with rangers it seems I was very fortunate in my whale sightings, seeing them very early in the season and in unexpected places. I also find the whale song to be really powerful. Twice I was blessed with their incredible song in 2 different areas, listening through a hydrophone. On both occasions the different captains were also delighted as it was the first song of the season they had heard. Although I have swum with humpbacks I have yet to hear their song while I am IN the water – this must be the ultimate sound bath!

On Big Island I spent 2 nights in a wonderful house with incredible ocean views in the sacred Valley area. On awakening the first morning I couldn't wait to go

out on the lanai to see the view in daylight. I screamed in delight when I saw the perfect iconic whale tail dive right below me. That sight is etched forever in my memory! With a tail like that I knew she would be down a while, so I ran into the house to get binoculars. I was “stuck” on the lanai for the next 4 hours watching the mum and what I think was last years calf spend time moving around one fairly small area. Duncan kindly brought me sustenance from time to time, but I refused to leave the lanai for anything as mundane as showering or putting clothes on until they eventually moved off! This time would be very precious for both the mum and calf, as they would soon be parting for her to mate again, although like humans they maintain their family bonds for life.



After that, I had many ‘cetacean nation’ encounters. I stayed for a time near Kealahou Bay, known by dolphin lovers worldwide as there is a pod of spinner dolphins who regularly come into the bay to rest and swim with people. It was one of the most incredible places I have ever been, a Mecca to dolphin lovers! I had some very significant and meaningful encounters there and also on Lanai, a less well known venue on a smaller Island that also has regular dolphin visitations.



Although I saw them everywhere I went, Maui is considered the best Island to see whales. I was in heaven! My experiences culminated in the most incredible display of whales breaching, time after time, after time, right next to our small boat! This was a truly synchronicitous event, again it was unplanned, but the call for me to seek the whales was so strong it was irresistible. So on my last day I got up early and took a ferry back to Maui. I only had 3½ hours there if I was to make all my connections for my 34 hour journey home that evening. It seems all my “wish list” boxes were ticked by the universe – 5 minutes walk from where the ferry docked I found a boat going out within the perfect time frame – just 15 minutes to spare either side. It was a small boat, (therefore close to the water,) with 3 all female staff – captain, crew and a guest invited on her

day off working on another boat - who I really connected with as we were both tuning into the whales in a similar way. It turns out that she is a healer also and we have made plans to work together next year. I took some wonderful photos of the whales breaching right next to our boat. Although by law boats can't approach closer than 100 feet, the whales have their own plans and 2 young males were coming up right next to me – at that point I had to put the camera down and just be with them, to look into their eyes and absorb the incredible energy they gifted. It was the most incredible experience and the perfect send off for my last day on Hawaii.

