Post-Doctoral Position
Marine Mammal Photo-identification & biopsy sampling
Dauphin Island Sea Lab

The Dauphin Island Sea Lab (DISL) seeks a full-time post-doctoral researcher for up to 4-years in the area of bottlenose dolphin ecology. The Postdoctoral Investigator will lead a newly funded research study on the status of bottlenose dolphin populations in Alabama waters. This research position will help meet the need to understand population status and recovery following the Deepwater Horizon oil spill and integrate new data with existing (but sparser) historical datasets to better understand cetacean health and population structure in the northern Gulf of Mexico.

The successful candidate will join a dedicated team of staff, students, researchers and volunteers as part of the Alabama Marine Mammal Research Program that includes the Alabama Marine Mammal Stranding Network and DISL's Manatee Sighting Network. Ongoing research projects use traditional ecological techniques with satellite/ GPS telemetry, photo-identification (ID), biomedical, and stable isotope and trace element analyses for population, movement/ migration, dietary, condition, and anthropogenic source tracing studies.

Position responsibilities include: 1) conducting core research studies on population structure and dolphin ecology through photo-identification; 2) working with collaborators to collect (via biopsy) and analyze data for derivative analyses (e.g.; stable isotope, genetic, contaminant analyses); 3) interacting with, training, and supervising graduate and undergraduate students or interns; 4) assisting with project oversight and reporting; 5) developing new lines of inquiry that build on the core research studies; 6) publishing papers from new and existing datasets, and 7) disseminating data through scientific meetings and outreach and education activities.

Applicants must have expertise in boat-based marine mammal photo-ID and observations using high-resolution digital photography (boat handling, animal approach and interactions, photography, photo-documentation and archiving, basic behavior assessment). Candidate should be familiar with standard focal observation methodologies and data sheets (survey effort, sighting, environmental data) for small cetaceans. Candidates should be able to grade and catalog photos using FinBase or an equivalent software such as finFindR and be familiar with the requirements for submitting photos to a database such as the Gulf of Mexico Dolphin Identification System (GoMDIS). Candidates must be familiar with analytical and quantitative methods used in photo-ID based ecological studies and be willing to learn new techniques.

Experience assessing dolphin body condition and potential human interactions in the field and from field-based photos is a plus. Experience with R statistical methods; estimating abundance, population structure or stock status from photo-ID data; student mentoring; and project management preferred. Familiarity with biopsy sampling and sample handing for other analyses is beneficial but not required. Applicant must have proof of or be able to take the DOI MOCC.

Applicants must hold an earned Ph.D., be fluent in written and spoken English, and be legally able to work in the USA at the time of application. To apply, submit a letter of application and research interest, CV, 1-2 copies of recently published works, and the names and contact information for at least three references by email to rcarmichael@disl.org. Review of applications will begin immediately and continue until the position is filled; start date is flexible. Salary commensurate with experience. AA/EEO/M/F/D.