

Course Outline

Geography803 Ecology and Conservation of Whales

D.A. Duffus
Office Hours: Tues/Weds 5:00-6:00
Office: DTB 113B
Contact:7217344

Course Description

This is a stand alone third year science course in lecture format to introduce students to the biological and sociopolitical nature of cetaceans (the whales, dolphins and porpoises). As it is only a single course with no specific seminars on the topic we will move along quickly giving a wide variety of information, topically, from evolutionary history and the palaeontological record to the potential influence of ocean regime change. The last half century have seen tumultuous changes in our relationship to, and knowledge of the cetaceans.

The course is a microcosm of the art of creating a foundation for furthering your education in the study of cetaceans. Studying a group of living organisms inhabitants of earth requires you follow the adage of the famous philosopher Dylan when he stated "learn your song well before you start singing." Many people profess to love cetaceans, many people are engaged in management and conservation, but remarkably few of them recall the fundamental nature of the organisms they are dealing with. This course will demonstrate the types of knowledge needed to combat the level of ignoble discourse, and open the shutters to a fascinating group of animals.

The course will allow students the opportunity to leverage their hard won knowledge from courses such as, evolution, behaviour, ecology, biogeography, spatial analysis, remote sensing, oceanography, among others, all focussed on the whales, dolphins, and porpoises.

Text

There is no single text that cover the breadth of material sufficiently. There are several good basic texts in the library, they will be presented and discussed in class. The principal course information is your notes, taken during lectures.

