

World record attempt in diving: Achim Schloeffel becomes project ambassador to protect the last dolphins in the North Sea

After summer break, the preparations for the world record attempt have been resumed

Munich, September 19, 2011 – In June 2012 Achim Schloeffel aims to deliver proof that the tools for technical diving are now mature enough to complete a dive under the English Channel from Dover to Calais without a surface break. By becoming a project ambassador for the last population of bottlenose dolphins in the North Sea, he aims to raise in addition awareness for the threat oceans are facing from pollution and noise.

After the summer break Achim Schloeffel is back and continues the preparations for the world record attempt in diving through the English Channel. He has used the break to sign a cooperation agreement with the international Whale and Dolphin Conservation Society WDCS. Under the umbrella of the world record attempt Achim Schloeffel becomes a project ambassador to protect a population of bottlenose dolphins in the North Sea and collects donations for renowned non-profit organisation WDCS.

The Moray Firth is the largest embayment in the northeast of Scotland and home to a small population of resident bottlenose dolphins, consisting of 130 animals. Dolphins in this area are subject to studies for 20 years already to protect them from any potential threats. Small and isolated populations are easily threatened by extinction if not protected. In 2005, WDCS accomplished that part of the Moray Firth was designated by the European Union (EU) a bottlenose dolphin Special Area of Conservation (SAC) and hence a protected area. A result not only for the benefit of the dolphins but other animals inhabiting the Firth such as sea birds, harbour porpoises, otters and seals.

Nonetheless the animals are under constant threat from boat traffic, water pollution and the presence of the oil industry. Back in 2008, the UK government discussed to allow the search for oil and gas resources in the Moray Firth again, which the WDCS could successfully prevent for several years. But now the UK Government is allowing two companies to begin seismic surveys for oil and gas in the Moray Firth in autumn 2011.

Some of the tests with strong acoustic signals are designated to happen right on the boundary of the Special Area of Conservation.

World record aspirant Achim Schloeffel hopes to gain a wide support: „The technical delay we had to announce in May also had some positive aspects. Without the delay, the cooperation with WDCS probably would have never happened. I am very pleased to direct some of the attention this spectacular dive project enjoys to the threats caused for dolphins by boat traffic and water pollution. I will face similar environmental conditions during my dive through the Channel – but with the huge difference that I can leave the waters after 15 hours. I would like to contribute to raising awareness in the general public for the problems coming along with pollution of the oceans and noise pollution. Because without healthy oceans, the oxygen supply to all of us is in danger!“

The donation goal set for the project is 5.000,- €. The money will be used for desperately needed for tangible goods and training measurements. For a simple and transparent donation, a project website has been set up at <http://www.betterplace.org/en/groups/achim-dives-for-dolphins>

For companies interested in further sponsoring opportunities, special sponsoring packages are available. Please contact Christoph Hoppe by phone +49-89-673 78 619 or e-mail christoph.hoppe@tourism-unlimited.com.

For further information about the project, please visit www.tourism-unlimited.com/xplore

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About WDCS

Established back in 1987, the Whale and Dolphin Conservation Society (WDCS), is the leading global charity dedicated to the conservation and welfare of all whales and dolphins (also known as cetaceans). In short, we are the world voice for the protection of these animals, creating pressure to bring about change.

About XploreYourLimits/Achim Schloeffel

Achim Schloeffel was only seven years old when he did his first dive during a vacation in Greece – and it led him to a depth of 32 meter (105 feet). Ever since this incisive event, he is committed to diving and chose an international career as dive instructor, commercial diver and explorer of the fascinating underwater world. In June 2012, Achim Schloeffel aims to establish a world record in diving: He wants to be the first person to cross the English Channel in one single dive.