
The Other Colonists: An Informed Look at The Dolphins of Pern (part 2)

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Having examined the complex behavior and intricate relationships of dolphin societies on Terra, we can now explore how these have been translated and adapted to suit Pern. There is a crucial difference between The Dolphins of Pern and those of our Earth; specifically, that the dolphins of Anne's universe have been 'treated with mentasynth to enhance their empathic abilities and to assist them in learning human speech(1). This enabled the initiation of a working partnership between human and dolphin, creating the Dolphincraft. The Logres timeline contains a burgeoning Dolphincraft just waiting to be included in stories, but to do so we must be aware of the history, traditions and practices of both dolphins and craft, which this essay will explore.

The original dolphin complement of the Pern colonial expedition was small, with only twenty-five dolphins transported to Pern in deep-freeze on the colony ship Bahrain(2). Dragonsdawn and The Dolphins' Bell (TDB) establish why these intelligent marine mammals chose to accompany the colonists: for the 'chance to inhabit the clean waters of an unpolluted world'(3), and because they 'enjoyed seashepherding as well as the opportunity to see new worlds'(2). Given these reasons and considering that twenty-five is a small group from which to establish a viable population, it is surprising that more were not included. This oddity becomes even more apparent when you consider that those twenty-five dolphins represented TWO species, 'blues and bottlenoses'(4).

In later books Anne McCaffrey chooses to concentrate on only one species, the bottlenose dolphin, even though in Dragonsdawn she repeatedly refers to a second. Rather than accept this as a typical McCaffrey error, it is more interesting to explore the possibilities behind the presence of another, as yet unheard-of species. Consequently I have located one that comes as close as possible to Anne's 'blue dolphin': the striped or 'blue-white' dolphin, an oceanic species that has less contact with humans than the more friendly coastal bottlenose dolphin. Because of the remoteness and sheer size of its habitat' the striped dolphin has hardly been studied and my previous essay included such information as I could find, the paucity of which leaves great scope for development. What is clear from Dragonsdawn is that the 'blues' and 'bottlenoses' both worked with the early dolphineers(4), more of which later.

Once on Pern dolphins and humans entered into a Dolphin Contract which stated that 'Dolphins would protect humans on or in the water to the best of their abilities, in whatever weather and unsafe conditions, even to the giving up of dolphin life to save the frail humans; they would

apprise humans of bad weather conditions, show them where the schools of preferred fish were running and warn them of sea hazards'(7). In return for these services humans would 'remove any bloodfish that might attach themselves to dolphin bodies,..float any stranded dolphin...heal the sick and treat the wounded, talk to them and be partners if the dolphin was willing.' While some might feel that the humans got the better part of the deal it is important to remember that dolphin priorities are undoubtedly different to ours, a fact which could confuse non-dolphins. The dolphins regarded their tasks more as play than work, a view emphasized during the Landing evacuation with Teresa firmly telling Jim Tillek 'My fun not your fun. This is my fun...Hear me?'(6) Another factor is the implication in The Dolphins of Pern (TDOP) that the dolphins felt that they owed humankind with 'The Tillek's' statement: 'We are grateful to men for many things. For history, for knowing what we are, and for giving us the tongue to speak. For speech is what raises the mammal above the animals and fish of land and sea.'(7)

In those early years, before the fall of Thread, marine rangers or 'dolphineers' partnered and worked with the dolphins in honoring the contract, the humans gripping the dorsal fin to be towed along. A bell, with a long chain, hung at the end of a floating wooden platform(8) at Monaco Bay where the dolphineers could talk to their partners and enabled each to summon the other should they have news to impart. Certain sequences existed including 'Report' and 'Come in' that allowed the humans to summon the dolphins, 'come in' being the less urgent of the two, giving them a chance to ignore it if they were busy(9). The dolphineer would reward respondents with a fish. You might question why dolphins should want old, dead fish when there's a sea full of live, fresh ones and Alemi later wonders about the custom, given that 'dolphins were quite capable of eating as much as they needed'(10) He decides that 'it was a hospitable gesture. Humans offered klah to every visitor...when everyone had the same commodities in their own homes, but it was the principle of the offer.'(10) As well as bell signals, hand signals and basic spoken commands were used to communicate quickly and efficiently with the dolphins.

Each of the young dolphins had a partner 'to help with the exploration, to explore the seas and the deep abysses and the Great Currents, the Two Subsidences. Greater and Smaller, and the Four Upwellings'(5). also performing such tasks as checking fishtraps(11). Dolphins also used their sonar to aid medics in diagnosing some conditions and

furthermore, emergency rescues were an important part of dolphin duties and all adult dolphins 'spent a period training with humans partners, learning to come to the aid of stranded swimmers, sailors and crafts.'(12) In the latter event the dolphins were fitted with a harness that could be attached to the boat to tow it. During the Landing evacuation and 'Dunkirk' crossing, teams were used to tow and support the more fragile craft (13) and acted as 'pilots', towing the sailcraft 'out of the congested harbor area to the point where they could safely hoist canvas.'(14) That would probably have been one of their normal tasks anyway, along with hauling the ore barge from Drake's Lake(13). The Landing evacuation also reintroduces the dolphin 'Teresa', previously established as being a 'blue'(4), and now 'speaker for dolphins'(8). While this could provide further evidence for a second species working closely with humans, THIS Teresa is described as having a bottlenose!

In order to spend so much time in the water with their partners, the dolphineers needed special equipment. During those early years this included a short-sleeved, short-legged wetsuit(11), face mask, fins and a 'breather' attached to oxygen tanks carried on the back(13), which we would probably recognize as SCUBA equipment. This enabled the humans to inhabit the dolphins world safely, but did not totally protect them from injury. Jim Tillek notes in TDB that Theo's legs show 'raking scars from many brushes with tough dolphin hide'(15) and later, when Theo checks the storm wrecked ships for survivors she is injured when her short wetsuit does not adequately protect her(16). The ancient dolphineers equipment undoubtedly resembled that of our own diving gear, both in appearance and materials, which are discussed below. However, they had access to higher levels of technology than do the modern dolphineers in the Logres timeline and certain aspects of the equipment may have to be adapted to suit present capabilities.

The ancients' mask would have consisted of a lens covering the eyes and cheeks, made of tempered glass to resist scratching and shattering; a body of a soft rubber compound forming a waterproof seal against the face, also enclosing the nose to allow pressure equalization when submerged, and a strap of rubber to hold the mask in place, which could be adjusted in length using buckles(17). Often the mask body would be made from silicone rubber as this has greater resistance to corrosion and perishing.

The fins would have consisted of a 'shoe' and a 'blade'. The shoe, either a socket for the foot or a slot with an adjustable strap round the heel, would have been made of a soft rubber compound to prevent chaffing. The blade, which provides the enhanced propulsion, would have consisted of harder rubber or plastic molded to a graduated stiffness in order to transmit the power of the finning action of the legs and feet, with stiffening ridges for support(17). Though not mentioned in the text, it is likely that soft boots or booties were worn for added comfort and protection.

A wetsuit is an essential part of a dolphineer's equipment as water conducts heat twenty-five times more effectively than air and a person immersed in the sea would

rapidly become dangerously chilled. It would have been made from synthetic rubber, usually neoprene that had been foamed. The gas bubbles which are trapped in the rubber are separated from each other so that the suit does not absorb water as a sponge might, and provide effective insulation(18). Water is not prevented from entering between the suit and the body, but the close fit (have you ever tried to get into or out of a wetsuit? A helpful friend and considerable patience is required!) restricts this to a minimum and the water is heated by the body, adding to the insulating effect(18). Because neoprene tears easily, the wetsuits would probably have been coated with a flexible fabric such as nylon and the joints and seams waterproofed with a contact adhesive(18). In colder northern waters a full wetsuit or semi-drysuit (similar to a wetsuit but only allowing a little water in, preventing flow back and forth) would have been needed, plus gloves. An important fact to remember is that dolphineers were not scuba divers. They had no need to go to great depths and remain there and should they need momentarily to dive, their dolphin partner would probably have towed them down. Because of this they were unlikely to have needed weight belts. Additionally, when equipped with breathers, an experienced dolphineer with a trained partner need not fear drowning and hence probably did not wear any form of lifejacket or stabilizer jacket.

Finally there was the breather or aqualung itself. This would have consisted of a steel or aluminum cylinder containing compressed air, attached to the human by means of straps and a supporting plastic backpack. The air passed through both a reducing valve attached by an A-clamp to a cross-flow pillar valve, and, via a hose, a second valve (demand valve) held in the divers mouth(19). This system was termed simply 'the regulator' and reduced the high pressure air of the cylinder to exactly that of the surrounding water. Whereas the cylinder, valves, hoses and straps could be produced by modern Pernese technology if they had had access to plans detailing their construction, it is unlikely that the complex machinery needed to originally compress the air for the cylinders would be feasible. Consequently, the best alternative for a modern dolphineer would be a snorkel. This is a simple rigid rubber tube (though it could be made of alternate waterproof materials) with a soft rubber mouthpiece that is gripped by the teeth and forms a seal under the lips. It makes finning on the surface easier in that you can travel face down and allows you to observe your partner's exploits underwater without having to hold your breath. A typical snorkel is about 40-45cm in length and has a bore of about 25mm(17).

Modern Pernese appear to have lost the capabilities to make synthetic materials such as synthetic rubbers and non-organic plastics. This requires certain modifications in the above dolphineer equipment. It's possible that certain organic plastics (polymers) could be manufactured with the present level of technology. Cellulose and cellulose nitrate are two such possibilities. Cellulose is a natural substance occurring in wood pulp and cotton fibers. In the early 19th

century on Earth, nitric acid and camphor (an essential oil probably available on Pern) were first added, producing a substance that passes through a moldable stage when hot, and then sets(20). This is one possibility for such items as snorkel tubes, though it has the disadvantage of being highly flammable.

The other plastic material within the scope of Pernese technology is natural rubber. This is produced in a raw form by the rubber tree *Hevea brasiliensis* that grows in subtropical and tropical climates. It is likely that the original colonists brought specimens of this useful tree and it may be cultivated in places such as Nerat, Ista and, of course, the Southern Continent. Natural rubber is generally of little use until it has been vulcanized. The process of vulcanization was developed as long ago as 1840 and involves heating the rubber in the presence of sulphur. This causes crosslinks to form between the rubber molecules, stiffening the material(20). Therefore rubber can be molded into a shape and then heated to set it. The more sulphur added prior to molding, the stiffer will be the finished product after heating. This variable flexibility could allow the Pernese to use rubber to make parts of the mask, fins and suit.

A modern mask therefore, could consist of a glass lens (well within Pernese capabilities), rubber body and either rubber or leather straps with a metal buckle for adjustment. It might be too complex to produce a rubber nosepiece and the lens might consequently have to cover the nose as well, providing further restrictions on the depth the dolphineers could safely dive to since they would not be able to equalize the pressure in their ears and would risk a burst eardrum.

To ensure that modern fins are not too complex, they could largely be made from boiled leather, enabling the fin to be shaped easily. This would then be coated in rubber to waterproof it, graduating the thickness of the coating on the blade to approach the 'graduated stiffness' of the ancient fins. For the fin to be easier to make and repair it would have a slot, rather than full shoe, for the foot with a leather strap around the heel and buckles to alter the fit. Such a fin would need repairing frequently as the rubber coating became damaged by contact with rocks etc and exposed the leather to rotting by the salt water. The rubber also would gradually perish and become brittle due to attack by oxygen, a process accelerated by UV radiation which will be stronger in the tropics. To prevent chaffing by the fins a modern dolphineer could either wear soft hide or leather boots or simply socks, particularly in the warm Southern waters where heat loss is less of a problem.

The necessary wetsuit is more of a difficulty. Synthetic rubbers such as neoprene are well beyond the present technological levels and therefore a viable alternative is needed. One possibility is to switch to a membrane drysuit. This consists of rubber-coated cloth with rubber seals for the wrists, neck and ankles(21). The seams are vulcanized, making the whole suit highly waterproof, though easy to puncture so repairs are frequently needed and, luckily, simple. Warmth is maintained by wearing warm clothes under the suit, in the dolphineers case possibly a tightly

woven woollen bodysuit. One problem with this type of suit is that it is baggy and our dolphineers will probably be rechristened 'monsters from the deep'!

The last piece of present day equipment is likely to be a life vest. Modern dolphineers will not have the breathers that allowed their ancestors to cavort safely on and under the water and will need the added security, particularly when training. On Pern such vests are sewn from a native fibrous plant(22).

In addition to work accomplished with human partners, the dolphins performed many other duties independently, often co-operating with the fishermen. These included checking a ship for barnacles and holings, checking the current speed, reporting on depths, likely weather conditions and the whereabouts of rocks and reefs, and informing the fishermen of the position of fish shoals(23). In TDOP Alemi finds that the dolphins give shoal information as sonar readings which he must learn to convert(24), but fishermen in the early years of the colony were probably experienced in this.

Dolphins would also provide escorts for the ships, leading them to the fish and warning them of unseen hazards. They tried to provide these services in Alemi's time and logs of Master Idarolan's captains indicated that the dolphins attempted to warn the ships of hidden reefs and sand banks by veering to port or starboard(25). The early colonists would have known to heed such information and alter course. In order to show gratitude for their assistance, a strict code of courtesy was adhered to with the early captains politely asking how the pod fared and providing the escorting dolphins with a token fish as a thank you for their aid(26).

Finally, more unusual delphinic duties included reporting on the imminence of underwater earthquakes and tracking the resulting tsunami(4). In Dragonsdawn dolphins were also used to search for the wreck of the Moth(27). Teresa, one of the 'blue' dolphins took on this task, searching the Ring Sea, possibly because her species is an oceanic one.

Perhaps the second species was included in the Pern expedition to help harvest more oceanic fish and aid pelagic exploration?(28)

The Dolphin Contract details several services that humans agreed to render to dolphinkind in return for their aid. Perhaps the most important of these was to heal the sick and treat the wounded. Dolphins appear to be generally healthy animals but they do sometimes sustain injuries, often gashes gained from rocks during the heavy seas of a storm. Other serious injuries could come from attacks by animals such as seawhers. The larger species travel in large pods and are known to eat dolphins. While a dolphin pod could probably handle one or two of these intelligent predators, a whole group would constitute a serious threat. Dolphins are exceedingly fast and agile swimmers which may be their salvation and their sonar, which at high intensities can stun fish, may be used to possibly disorientate the seawhers. However their best defense is to stay alert and keep their distance. This may not always be possible as seawhers are

known to attack storm-damaged craft, putting them in direct conflict with escorting dolphins intent on saving the occupants. What would occur in such a situation has yet to be seen.

The injuries that dolphins sustain can be stitched as would those in a human, but healers should be prepared to cope with the thick blubber layer and the copious numbers of blood vessels running through it. Only when dealing with the most serious and life-threatening injuries should a dolphin be removed from the water as they can rapidly overheat, needing constant dampening with seawater. Luckily the salt water appears to considerably accelerate the healing process.

Dolphins can also become infested with parasites which can build up to detrimental numbers and have, here on earth, been linked to some strandings. One Pernese external parasite, the bloodfish, attaches to any open wound to suck the blood, infecting any warmblooded creature. When attached to a dolphin it produces a very long sucker to penetrate through the blubber(29). The removal of these creatures is a fundamental human duty and can be accomplished by puncturing the thin skull at a particular point with a knife, which causes the sucker to release(30).

The care, and if possible re-floating, of stranded dolphins is another key part of the Dolphin Contract. A healer should be on hand to aid the dolphin if necessary. Major causes of stranding include bacterial or parasitic infections, sometimes causing brain damage, and injuries from boats, nets etc(31). Weakness due to illness or starvation, and confusion due to changes in geomagnetic contours are thought to be other reasons, the latter being more likely to affect the oceanic striped dolphin which rarely comes close into shore and might not recognize the danger until it was too late. Occasionally mass strandings can occur where whole pods can become beached. Again this more often affects oceanic species following food prey or following their leader and becoming lost and confused, perhaps from shallow sandbanks and unfamiliar topographical features confusing their sonar(31). In other cases it appears that a pod will become beached because they refuse to leave one of their number who is sick. Often, in stranding cases on Earth, once towed out into open water, the cetacean strands again. This is unlikely to occur on Pern where humans can talk to the dolphins, reassuring them and helping dispel any confusion.

So, you've found a stranded dolphin. What should you do? Firstly, stranded dolphins can survive out of water for some time, so don't panic! It's important to immediately keep the dolphin wet as they overheat rapidly, but avoid the blowhole which is one of the most sensitive areas. They can be cooled down by placing cloths or seaweed over them and wetting this with seawater. The dolphin should be supported upright if possible to ease the strain on the internal organs (dolphins were not made to support their weight on land!), and dig small troughs for the front flippers but, until help is available and a healer present, a dolphin should NEVER be dragged into the water...you could injure them and if they're

ill and unable to swim they could drown. You should also remember to reassure any members of their pod which may be nearby in the water.

If the dolphin is well enough to return safely to the sea you should keep it as comfortable as possible until the tide comes in, to ensure you're as close as possible to the water. The best way to move a dolphin is to slide a sling underneath it and gently lift it down to the water (needing several very strong people!) whereupon they can be supported in the water until they have recovered. Alternately, if this is impossible and dragging is the only way, move the dolphin head first, never tail first. If the dolphin is sick or injured it should be transported to a place equipped with a sling attached to a platform so it can be supported in the water and hopefully treated. Unfortunately, many dolphins that strand are old or extremely ill and do not survive. Little is known yet about dolphin traditions concerning death, but the body should be treated with respect at all times.

The partnership between human and dolphin gradually dissolved over the fifty years after the First Pass. That it survived the Second Crossing can be seen from Kibbe's wistful reminiscence that 'There had been a Dolphins' Bell at Fort, too, and there had been many good years of partnership for dolphins and partners. Until the Sickness.'(32) His words suggest that a plague of some sort had decimated the human population, perhaps wiping out the dolphineers and leaving too few people alive to spare any to train as partners. Whatever the reason, the dolphins were left to their own devices for the next 2500 years, relegated to 'shipfish' and forgotten except for the remembered 'sin of netting a shipfish and the size of the nets being critical'(33). During this time they could have easily broken the Contract and lost human speech, forgetting their proud past...but they didn't, and this is where 'The Tillek' and dolphin traditions come in.

Dolphins revered the human captain Jim Tillek, remembering the years of his life as a golden age for both dolphins and dolphineers(5). Accordingly the bottlenose dolphins bestowed the title of 'The Tillek' on their Pod Leader, a female 'chosen of all the pods for her wisdom'(3). The Tillek was a 'living repository of all delphinic history, tradition and knowledge'(34) who instructed the young in their history and duties, from tales of their evolution to songs about Thread and the Dunkirk crossing. She kept the dolphins faithful to the contract telling the rebellious ones who 'complained that humans no longer kept their end of the ancient agreement' that 'that did not absolve dolphinkind from practicing theirs.'(32) Kibbe notes that she severely disciplined any calf who impudently called the humans 'long-foot or finless'(5). Promising that one day dolphineers would return, The Tillek remembered all the details of the Dolphincraft and passed the knowledge on, along with the human language, to those youngsters chosen to go to her and complete their training. These in turn would return to their pods as dolphin instructors to the calves(9). Apart from answering to The Tillek, pods on Pern are autonomous,

'following their chosen leader -- usually an older female'.(25)

The Tilleks each live 'near the north-western subsidence'(3). It is here too that at the Turn of the year all the pods gather 'to watch the young males attempt the Whirlpool and exchange the news each pod gathered in its waters'(35). This crossing of the Whirlpool appears to be a rite of passage for young dolphins, referred to as The Test(34). For females at least it is a test they must pass before they will be allowed to reproduce, as suggested by one having 'swum cleanly through the whirlpool and been considered worthy of bearing dolphin calves'(36). Before each crossing a song naming the 'Dolphins who had slept the Great Sleep and accompanied humankind to Pern... and those born in the Years Before Thread'(37), is sung. Learning those names is considered an important lesson for young calves and from them come the names chosen for each new calf.(37) Of those names, the ones mentioned in the books are Kibbe, Olga, Bessie, Lottie, Aphrodite, Atlanta, Dart, Teresa, Maximilian, Amadeus, China, Captiva, Sandman, Oregon, Carolina, Aleta, Pha and Cass. Some of these could be names of the 'blue' dolphins and this is obviously not a full complement, leaving plenty of room for invention!

One of the most important duties of The Tillek was to keep the human language alive among dolphinkind. Though this is achieved, by Alemi's time dolphin pronunciation is different to modern Pernese and is corrected by the new dolphiners(9). The strange pronunciations are probably the result of lingual shifts among dolphinkind itself, given that over 2000 years have passed without proper contact with humans, rather than being examples of how the original settlers spoke! Another reason why dolphins didn't simply lose the Speech after humans forgot about them might be that it is the Speech that provides dolphinkind with the means to create and impart their history, and so would be in constant use. It is surprising that no-one realized sooner that dolphins could speak since there are many tales about them rescuing sailors etc.9 Perhaps the combination of lingual shifts, life-threatening conditions and sheer disbelief meant that most people convinced themselves that they hadn't heard a thing! As to why the boat captains hadn't heard their escorts talking, well, perhaps if they didn't think to listen, they wouldn't. Several times in TDB and TDOP it is mentioned that dolphins often spoke very fast, and only those accustomed to this would understand them. This may be another reason why dolphin abilities went undetected for so long, especially since the Pernese had forgotten all the old signals. As Alemi ruefully remarks it's a wonder that we missed every single clue the dolphins gave us that they wanted to be friends'.(38)

Eventually contact WAS re-established when Master Fishman Alemi and young Readis were rescued by 'shipfish' after their boat capsized in a squall9. Both heard the dolphins using words and Alemi pursued the matter, talking to AIVAS and discovering exactly what the shipfish really were. In those early days he, and his compatriots,

encountered considerable resistance to the idea of intelligent sea creatures. Alemi noted that it was going to shock the conservative fishermen... 'Fish' had no right to be intelligent, much less answer humans'.(39) Indeed, Master Idarolan did not inform all his craft of the discovery 'since he knew some of the hide-bound ones would deny the fact of shipfish intelligence'.(40) Even Lessa, who often riled against such head-in-the-sand behavior, was uncomfortable with the idea; 'That dragons knew their own names at birth was an indisputable mark of their self-awareness and intelligence. To hear that the dolphins also had names smacked of heresy to the Weyrwoman'.(41)

Alemi and the others persevered however, and gradually introduced the dolphins' capabilities to more open-minded individuals. Some fishermen, including those at Southern Hold, quickly realized the potential benefits of having dolphin allies and reaped the rewards; Alemi reporting that 'they know exactly where schools are feeding and lead us right to them. My men are delighted since it means less time at sea as well as sufficient warning on squalls'.(42) Lord Toric was not so enthusiastic, resenting 'talking animals' and the fact that dolphins treated life as a game.(43) But, ever the pragmatist, he was quick to see how they could be used to his advantage, as did Holder Jayge when he requested that the dolphins 'patrol the waters off his holding and warn of any more unauthorized landings(44), a new 'game' that they were delighted with, much to the disgust of Toric.(43) Jayge's wife Aramina, was less enamoured of the 'fish', flatly refusing to accept them, precipitating Readis' leaving the Hold.(9)

One person quick to accept dolphin abilities was Master Oldive, particularly when it was discovered that dolphins could use their sonar to 'accurately diagnose not only pregnancy but bodily tumors and growths and often other illnesses in their early stages'.(45) Their ability to detect tiny puncture wounds made by thorns was highly valued by those living on the Southern Continent and one which the young Readis ignored, resulting in the infection that damaged his leg.(9) The dolphins' healing skills resulted in the building of 'a small healer cothold at Fort Seahold. A float was rigged at the end of the pier so that patients could be lowered into the water for the dolphins to use their sonar capacity on them. There were similar facilities at four other locations: Ista, Igen, Nerat and Eastern Weyr'.(46) These floats would, in Ancient times, have been constructed of wood. In making his first such platform Alemi used bamboo with air bladders to increase flotation,(47) but it is likely that most permanent platforms in the present day will be made from wood. Through all this The Tillek had been watching events with interest and eventually this culminated in her contacting humankind in 2538 (9P/31), requesting that the Dolphincraft be revived and that Readis, by then eighteen, be the first dolphiner.(48)

The Dolphincraft on Pern is now 17 Turns old and reasonably well established. Undoubtedly the Healer cotholds, particularly that at Fort, will have expanded and many Holds will have their own dolphiner. These

dolphineers would be working crafters with maybe only one apprentice as the holders would probably be unwilling to pay for more especially considering that, for many tasks, the fishermen themselves can communicate with the dolphins after only a little training. However some fishermen might still be uncomfortable with the idea of communicating directly with 'fish' that think they're as intelligent as man. Dolphineer Crafhalls may exist at the large Seaholds of Southern (where in TDOP a bell was installed}, Ista and Tillek, the site of the main Fishercraft. In TDOP the dolphins notify the Tillek Seahold first of an impending storm 'as the Master fishman should know'.(49)

Interacting with dolphins has its problems, illustrated by their giving information as sonar readings and predilection for seeing everything as a game, being easily bored and leaving if they lose interest. Master Idarolan created one aid that may have become widespread, that of a map of Pern with the seas in 'the bright primary color the dolphins could recognize as sea as opposed to the 'dark' landmasses'.(49) The dolphins can use this map to point out the track of imminent storms, fish shoals and unseen reefs. Dolphins are also described as highly loyal and possessive creatures, proud of having a dolphineer and fond of giving 'gifts' of fish, shells, and 'man things' located from the seabed.(9) Being tactile animals they enjoy being scratched, particularly under the chin and can be insulted...try calling a dolphin 'fishface' and watch the reaction!(50)

One other interesting element to dolphins is that they appear to be able to hear dragons. The dolphins themselves do not quite understand this; 'Dragons talked to their riders in a fashion that dolphins did not quite understand. They felt the speech and saw the results -- the dragon doing what the rider asked.(52) Dolphins are fond of dragons and the feeling appears to be mutual with each enjoying playing games with the other. Their riders might not be so keen. especially when they get dunked as a result of a dolphin scratching a ticklish dragon belly!(9.52)

Finally, as mentioned previously, there are two species of dolphins on Pern, the gregarious, friendly bottlenoses who have been waiting so long to renew contact, and the oceanic striped dolphin. It is likely that with its lifestyle and habitat the striped dolphin does not come into contact so often with humans. Because of this, and due to the fact that they are not mentioned in books about present day Pern, it is conceivable that they have little interest in reestablishing relationships with the humans who ignored them for so long, and their language abilities would have lessened over time. Even here on Earth, only certain populations show any interest in interacting with humans. It's possible that the dolphineers haven't even realized yet that there is another species and contact lies in the future.

In addition to a disinterested second species, not all bottlenose dolphins can be assumed to wholly support the re-establishment of dolphin-human communications. After all, they are individual creatures, not one giant hive mind. It is probable that there will be those who uphold the dolphin contract but who don't live so closely with humans, as

contrasted to those who take dolphineers as partners and work closely with fishermen. These might include oceanic bottlenoses and those living far away from human habitations, some of which might prefer to continue on their own as they have done for centuries, little seeing the need for the help of those creatures who abandoned them. Furthermore it is possible that there are 'renegade' dolphins, those who blatantly dispute the reasoning behind upholding the dolphin contract and who may adhere to an angry grudge against humankind, refusing to assist them no matter what the circumstances.

Dolphins cannot be assumed to be aquatic 'humans', analogous to us in their behavior and attitudes. Certainly research here on Earth has highlighted some startling, and sometimes unpleasant, similarities but we should remember that their environment is totally different to the one we live in. We can enter it, but never fully experience or understand it, and therein lies the excitement and challenge of the Dolphincraft.

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