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**RESOLVING BOTTLENOSE DOLPHIN-FISHERIES ASSOCIATION PROBLEMS IN MALTESE WATERS,
CENTRAL MEDITERRANEAN**

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Abstract

Research on bottlenose dolphin, *Tursiops truncatus*, distribution and ecology since 1997 has allowed the comparison of distribution of this species throughout the year in relation to anthropogenic activities including fishing and aquaculture. Bottlenose dolphins have been observed to increasingly forage close to the large tuna-penning zones, South East of Malta. As this area is also a traditional artisanal fishing zone, impacts on the fishing catches due to depredation and net damages by dolphins has caused hostile reactions by some fishermen. The use of pingers has been tested during a pilot research project to keep dolphins away from fishing gear in order to avoid entanglement and avert the increasing negative reactions by frustrated fishermen. Preliminary results indicate pingers may prove helpful to both dolphins and fishermen.