



Sataya Visitors Info

Keep Quiet and Swim Gently in the Presence of Dolphins!



Being in the presence of dolphins is wonderful.
Few places worldwide are as inviting as the Sataya Lagoon.
Because it is easily accessible it is vulnerable.
Increasing dolphin tourism in the Sataya Lagoon, Fury Shoals, Egypt, takes its toll and causes serious problems.

Below Sataya spinner dolphin enthusiasts and tour organizers will find some information and guidelines for encounters with wild dolphins. They are of great importance to avoid further harm to the Sataya dolphins in the future.

Most of the daily human interactions with dolphins as currently witnessed have negative impacts on the local dolphins: we have observed zodiacs searching for dolphins in the lagoon; then guests are taxied to the dolphins to swim with them, the dolphins sometimes being chased for hours. This kind of harassment is particularly harmful to mother-calf groups since newborns and small calves are less agile and therefore easier to approach. Larger dolphin groups are separated into small groups.

Due to the continuous daily harassment by visitors, the animals suffer injuries; their overall health is declining; and the total number of dolphins is on the decrease.

Sataya lagoon is a *resting place for *Stenella longirostris*, or spinner dolphins.* After hunting at night, these dolphins are exhausted and need *5 - 6 hours rest during the day* to recover. They also need time for social interaction with one another during this period of relaxation. Forced encounters with humans are harmful to the dolphins' health and welfare and detrimental to their social structures.

It is impossible to discern from the outside whether the dolphins have had enough food or whether they have low blood sugar levels. Visitors cannot see whether dolphins are pregnant, or whether they are sick, or whether they are in distress for some natural reason.

Most visitors also do not recognize obvious avoidance behaviour in dolphins, misinterpreting their reaction for instance as some particularly vivacious interaction between young individuals.

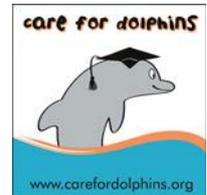
The presence of the very noisy and dangerous zodiacs not only forces the animals to be alert, thus preventing them from sleeping and relaxing, the boats often also cause serious lesions, cuts, and mutilations. While sleeping, the dolphins' mobility and ability to react physically is reduced. Whether a dolphin is sleeping is barely visible to the untrained human eye. This leads to misunderstandings and critical situations, putting the dolphins under almost continuous stress.

In order to allow the dolphins to rest and to remain undisturbed during the "activity transition time" (i.e., the transitional phase from awakening to sleeping, and vice versa), it is of utmost importance that the following points be observed:



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Do not approach the dolphins at all. If you are near them: no splashing! Stay very calmly on the surface. Unobtrusive observation is vital.

No zodiac taxis and no dolphin chase. If the dolphins are close or if they are approaching – enjoy. If the distance is too far – you will have to wait.

Observe only! Remain in one spot. If the dolphins feel comfortable, they will stay with you. If not, let them be. Do not chase them - do not even slowly follow them - neither by boat nor by swimming.

If the dolphins are left undisturbed, they will exhibit a totally different behaviour. Often they stay for a long time in the same small area even in proximity to anchored boats or people staying *calmly* in the water.

Do not touch the dolphins even if they seem to invite you. They may catch diseases from your skin which are invisible to us yet harmful to the dolphins – and the other way round.

Stay at the surface – do not try to attract the attention of resting animals by diving down to them. When dolphins dive away in tight groups this is a clear sign of avoidance: the dolphins are trying to get some sleep.

It is possible to encounter and observe *Stenella longirostris* in the water without using dangerous and noisy zodiacs, without touching the animals, without hitting the water with your diving fins or your hands, and without chasing the dolphins. It is a privilege to visit the marine mammals in their sanctuary and this demands absolute respect for them.

Non-forced encounters or observations in the absence of pressure and danger have a completely different character and allow the Sataya spinner dolphins to return to their natural behaviours - if *all* visitors stick to the rules. Therefore, the dolphins' needs have to be respected by all visitors.

Please help the dolphins by spreading this information.

Sataya Dolphin Resting Lagoon

Gesellschaft zur Rettung der Delphine e.V.
www.delphinschutz.org

Care for Dolphins
www.carefordolphins.org

Kornwegerstr. 37 - 81375 München
E-Mail: info@delphinschutz.org