

1978

Grand Isle, 5 New Orleans, Louisiana. (State Park)

Jan. 1, 1978

mileage here 82733.0. At 9:00 A.M. went down to beach and observed approx. 20 atlantic bottle-nosed dolphins? moving as singles, two or three to the east. They acted more like whales than dolphins, especially as concerns the slow movement when the animal surfaced. They were confined to within the first breaker and $\frac{1}{16}$ mile beyond. Those working near shore exposed more of the dorsal fin than those in deeper water and also produced more splashing of the tail. Occasionally the entire head would be exposed in profile as a rounded anterior head. The tail movement was vigorous and sent water splashing in one direction as if attempting to left fish out of the water. One such fish was seen flying thru the air from the tail region to the head of the dolphin. Frequently they moved rapidly in a straight course but more frequently in a zigzag pattern. One travelled at great speed on and with the crest of an incoming wave. The most noticeable sign was the splashing of the tail which was held above the water. The action continued for about 20 minutes as they slowly but progressively moved toward the east. Dorsal fin upright and did not lean posteriorly. Tail fluke notched, ridge above mouth. Color grayish black. Dorsal fin about $\frac{1}{2}$ way between head and tail. Twenty four black skimmer flew by in one flock. All birds seemed to be moving east including the laughing gull, ring-billed and herring gull. Sanderling most common sandpiper, but noted one pair of ^{ruddy} turnstone. Brown pelicans flew east at about one every 5 minutes. Cormorant fewer in number. Because of recent rains, all sands damp with standing water on beach. One cannot get used to this area which is far removed from high country. The road leading to Grand Isle seems to be only 2 or 3 feet above the surrounding water and only a slight increase in water level would inundate the road and escape route. Since 9:00 A.M. there has been a dramatic increase of birds flying E over the ocean including the above named birds and the tern. It is now 10:30 A.M. From camp counted the birds that past east along the ocean.