

South Wales Evening Post

Monday, August 5, 2002

[Page 3]

Grant will aid study into protected marine mammal Rare porpoise seen swimming in docks

By Paul Lewis



A RARE species of friendly porpoise has been sighted in Port Talbot docks. The Harbour Porpoise is rarely seen in local waters. But it has been spotted in the waters off the town with increasing frequency in the past year. Now 21st century technology is going to be used to track the movements of the protected marine mammal.

Neath Port Talbot Council has teamed up with Bridgend, Swansea and Carmarthen councils along with the Gower Marine Society.

A grant of £10,000 was awarded by the Countryside Council for Wales under its Species Challenge Fund towards a survey of the movement of the harbour porpoises along part of the South Wales coastline.

The grant has to be matched pound for pound or in terms of volunteer time.

At a meeting on Thursday, Neath Port Talbot councillors are expected to approve paying the authority's contribution of £1,400.

Economic, environment and consumer services director Adrian Jenkins said: "Harbour porpoises have been sighted at

Port Talbot Docks on a number of occasions this year and last.

"Detailed studies of marine mammals have been undertaken off the West Wales coast and Cardigan Bay, but no such surveys have ever been undertaken east of the Carmarthenshire-Pembrokeshire boundary."

Mr Jenkins said there was a lot of interest in developing coastal areas, with schemes ranging from sand dredging to wind farms.

"It has become increasingly important to gain information on the movement of these protected marine mammals, partly for their own sake and partly for planning purposes," he said.

The Neath and Port Talbot study focuses on Port Talbot Docks, the Neath Estuary and the River Kenfig. It involves the use of Pods, special recording equipment featured on Tomorrow's World last month.

"It is intended to continue to use the pods beyond the 12-month funded period to increase the information on marine mammal movements which should prove invaluable," said Mr Jenkins.

FRIENDLY VISITOR The Harbour Porpoise is being seen more and more in Port Talbot Docks. Now a study is underway to find out as much as possible about the rare marine mammal.

•paul.lewis@swwp.co.uk.



Created on 06/08/2002 11:35
Last printed 06/08/2002 11:43

office@howie.info
www.howie.info

Howie Watkins
18 Mary Street, Neath.
SA11 1PN. UK

+44 (0)1639 633947 (tel)
+44 (0)8712 772058 (fax)
+44 (0)7771 708178 (mob)