

In Memoriam
Hardy Jones
Marine Wildlife Conservationist and Filmmaker
1943-2018
by Howard Hall

In 1983, hovering over a seamount in the Sea of Cortez, I trained my underwater 16-mm movie camera on a giant manta ray that trailed a tangle of heavy fishing line and long-line hooks. Descending through a cloud of scuba bubbles, Hardy Jones landed on the ray's back, pulled his dive knife from the scabbard strapped to his leg, and began cutting the line free. Had the ray bolted, Hardy might have been impaled by the long-line hooks and dragged away into the depths beyond the seamount. But he never hesitated, and the ray seemed to sense his intentions. Soon, Hardy had cut away the lines, and he ascended to the surface, whooping and hollering with joy as he held the nest of hooks and lines high over his head. He had saved the manta, and nothing could have given him more joy. This is how I knew Hardy Jones, and it is but one of many moments I shared with him never to forget.

In 1978, Hardy walked away from a promising career in journalism and began pursuing a life devoted to the study and protection of dolphins. This decision had a profound effect on many lives, including mine. Some of those lives were the thousands of dolphins he saved. Others, like me, were inspired and eager to follow Hardy as he fell ever more deeply in love with the ocean wilderness and its amazing inhabitants.

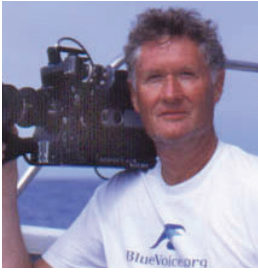
After graduating from Choate and Tulane University, Hardy was employed by WNOE radio in New Orleans and, later, for United Press International, *The Peruvian Times*, and CBS News. At some point in the mid-1970s, Hardy became fascinated with the minds of cetaceans. When he heard about a pod of spotted dolphins that regularly visited and interacted with a team of treasure divers in The Bahamas, Hardy dropped everything, assembled a small crew of divers, and set off to study and film the animals. Since 1978, when Hardy's first film, *Dolphin*, was released, thousands of divers, scientists, and underwater filmmakers have visited the Bahama Banks to

study, photograph, and swim with these animals.

Hardy's fascination with dolphins soon led to outrage as he became aware of fisheries that targeted these intelligent animals. In 1979 and again in 1980, I followed Hardy to Japan to document the killing of dolphins by Japanese fishermen. During that second trip, Hardy became the first Westerner to stand on the beach as Japanese fishermen killed hundreds of bottlenose dolphins and pilot whales. Within 24 hours, the 16-mm film with which he captured that day's events appeared on the CBS evening news and was immediately syndicated worldwide, resulting in formal letters of protest to the Japanese government. During the years that followed, Hardy made numerous trips to Japan in efforts to curtail the killing. In some cases, Hardy's efforts led to the release of dolphins that had been herded into bays and trapped for slaughter. I was in Taiji, Japan, with Hardy when he negotiated the release of several hundred melon-headed whales.

During the years that followed, Hardy produced more than 70 conservation films for broadcasters such as PBS, Discovery, TBS, and National Geographic. One especially powerful film, *If Dolphins Could Talk*, hosted by actor Michael Douglas, included footage of dolphins dying in tuna nets. The film's impact led the H. J. Heinz Company, owner of the Star-Kist brand; the Van Camp Seafood Company, which markets Chicken of the Sea tuna; and Bumble Bee Seafoods Inc. to announce that they would stop buying tuna that is caught in nets that also trap and kill dolphins. "Dolphin-Safe" labels on tuna cans are a direct result of Hardy's film.





In 2000, Hardy was joined by film actor/ocean activist Ted Danson in founding BlueVoice.org, an organization dedicated to the protection of dolphins and whales. In recent years, the organization's focus

has been to end the brutal slaughter of dolphins in Peru, where as many as 15,000 dolphins are killed yearly for use as shark bait as well as for human consumption. The campaign has included filming expeditions that returned with graphic photographic evidence of massive illegal hunts for dolphins. Additionally, undercover surveys revealed the illegal sale of dolphin meat in violation of dolphin protection laws. Hardy's efforts and those of BlueVoice.org have recently resulted in new laws forbidding the harpooning of dolphins for shark bait. The Peruvian campaign is documented in Hardy's most recent film, *The Killing Feather*, which he finished just a week before his passing.

In 2011, Hardy authored *The Voice of the Dolphins*. The book recounts more than 30 years

of work with dolphins in the wild and the efforts of BlueVoice.org to end the killing of dolphins worldwide. The book also reveals the increasing menace of chemical contaminants in the marine food chain.

Hardy's commitment to ocean conservation was intense, and his accomplishments were profound. For those of us fortunate enough to know him, Hardy was an intelligent, gentle man who was great fun to be around. He loved being surrounded by ocean wilderness and the mysteries of life it held. And his enthusiasm was extremely contagious. To me, he was far more than a film producer for whom I enjoyed working on many occasions. He was a close and caring friend.

Hardy's numerous awards include the 2005 Filmmaker of the Year Award from Filmmakers for Conservation, a Lifetime Achievement Award from the International Wildlife Film Festival, the Genesis Award of the Humane Society of the United States, the Special Jury Award of the Explorers Club, and a NOGI Award from the Academy of Underwater Arts and Sciences.

Hardy passed away on 12 December 2018 after a long battle with multiple myeloma. He is survived by his wife Deborah Cutting and his sister Betsy Jones.

