

# VANESSA J. MINTZER, PH.D.

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As a conservation ecologist with an interdisciplinary background, I collaborate with diverse partners to study the effects of anthropogenic activities on aquatic mammals. Primarily by integrating population ecology with human dimensions, I aim to better understand human-dolphin interactions to inform conservation and management. My core knowledge and skills include small cetacean biology and conservation, population ecology, mark-recapture and spatial modeling, and participatory research. For over 15 years, I have created, developed, and/or facilitated cetacean research projects in various countries, with a focus on furthering long-term research on at-risk small cetacean populations and species. Concurrent with my research, I develop public outreach initiatives and citizen-science programs.

## EDUCATION

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### **Ph.D. in Interdisciplinary Ecology (2013)**

School of Natural Resources and Environment, University of Florida

*Concentration:* Wildlife Ecology and Conservation, *Certificate:* Tropical Conservation and Development

### **Master of Environmental Management (2006)**

Nicholas School of the Environment and Earth Sciences, Duke University

*Concentrations:* Coastal Environmental Management, Environmental Education

### **Bachelor of Science (2004)**

School of Natural Resources and Environment, University of Florida

*Major:* Environmental Science, *Minor:* Zoology

## CAREER PROFILE

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- 2024-Present **Research Associate Professor of Marine Mammal Conservation**, Robert K. Johnson Center for Marine Conservation, Rosenstiel School of Marine, Atmospheric, and Earth Sciences, University of Miami, Miami, FL USA
- 2024-Present **Director of Dolphin Research and Conservation**, Galveston Bay Dolphin Research Program, Galveston Bay Foundation, Kemah, TX USA
- 2020-Present **Courtesy Faculty**, Fisheries and Aquatic Sciences Program, School of Forest, Fisheries & Geomatics Sciences, University of Florida, FL USA
- 2019-Present **Founder and Research Director**, Wildlife Research Partnerships, LLC., Asheville, NC, USA
- 2023-2024 **Director of Research**, Galveston Bay Dolphin Research Program, Galveston Bay Foundation, Kemah, TX USA
- 2019-2022 **Research Scientist**, Galveston Bay Dolphin Research Program, Galveston Bay Foundation, Kemah, TX USA
- 2015-2016 **Postdoctoral Research Scholar**, School of Natural Resources and Environment, University of Florida, FL USA
- 2014-2019 **Research and Conservation Fellow**, Galveston Bay Dolphin Research Program, Galveston Bay Foundation, Houston, TX USA
- 2009-2013 **Doctoral Researcher and Teaching Assistant**, School of Natural Resources and Environment, University of Florida, FL USA
- 2009-2013 **Field Researcher**, Projeto Boto, Mamirauá Sustainable Development Reserve, Brazil
- 2010 **Field Supervisor**, Stratus Consulting, LA and FL USA
- 2007-2009 **Director of Community Programs**, Galveston Bay Foundation, Webster, TX USA
- 2006-2007 **Outreach and Membership Coordinator**, Galveston Bay Foundation, Webster, TX USA

- 2005-2006 **K-12 Program Coordinator and Teaching Assistant**, Duke Environmental Leadership Program, Duke University, NC USA
- 2005-2006 **Graduate Researcher**, Duke University Marine Laboratory, NC, and Sarasota Dolphin Research Program, FL USA

### **SELECT PUBLICATIONS**

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- Da Silva, VMF; Brum, SM; Magalhães Drummond de Mello, D.; de Souza Amaral, R; Campbell, E; and **Mintzer, VJ**. 2023. The Amazon River dolphin, *Inia geoffrensis*: What have we learned in the last two decades of research? Latin American Journal of Aquatic Mammals 18(1). <https://doi.org/10.5597/lajam00298>
- Mintzer, VJ**, Quackenbush, A, and Fazioli, K. 2022. Site fidelity of bottlenose dolphins (*Tursiops truncatus*) in a highly industrialized region of Galveston Bay, TX. Marine Mammal Science. <https://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/abs/10.1111/mms.12984>
- Mintzer, VJ**; Fazioli, K. 2021. Salinity and water temperature as predictors of bottlenose dolphin (*Tursiops truncatus*) encounter rates in Upper Galveston Bay TX. Frontiers in Marine Science. <https://doi.org/10.3389/fmars.2021.754686>
- Mintzer, VJ**; da Silva, VMF; Martin, AR; Frazer, TK; Lorenzen, K. 2020. Protected area evaluation for endangered Amazon River dolphins (*Inia geoffrensis*). Biological Conservation. 252. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.biocon.2020.108851>
- Fazioli, K; **Mintzer, VJ**. 2020. Short-term effects of Hurricane Harvey on bottlenose dolphins (*Tursiops truncatus*) in upper Galveston Bay, TX. Estuaries and Coasts. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s12237-020-00751-y>
- Mintzer, VJ**; Diniz, K; Frazer, TK. 2018. The use of aquatic mammals as bait in global fisheries. Frontiers in Marine Science 5: 191. DOI: [10.3389/fmars.2018.00191](https://doi.org/10.3389/fmars.2018.00191)
- Mintzer, VJ**; Martin, AR; Lorenzen, K; Frazer, TK; da Silva, VMF. 2016. Seasonal movement of Amazon River dolphins (*Inia geoffrensis*) in a protected floodplain. Marine Mammal Science 32(2): 664-681. <https://doi.org/10.1111/mms.12298>
- Mintzer, VJ**; Martin, AR; da Silva, VMF; Barbour, AB; Lorenzen, K; Frazer, TK. 2013. Effect of illegal harvest on apparent survival of Amazon River dolphins (*Inia geoffrensis*). Biological Conservation 158: 280-286.

#### **SAMPLE OUTREACH PUBLICATION:**

- Mintzer, VJ**; Fazioli, K. 2022. Galveston Bay Dolphin Research Program – Quarterly Newsletter, April-June 2022. Available at <https://galvestonbaydolphin.org/july-2022-quarterly-newsletter/>

### **ADDITIONAL INFORMATION**

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**Languages:** Spanish (Native), English (Native-like), Portuguese (Intermediate)

**Technical skills:** wildlife population and spatial modeling using Program MARK, ArcGIS, R and RStudio, Stochastic SRA, FISHMOD, Ecopath with Ecosim 6, vortex; qualitative analyses using NVivo

**Professional affiliations:** Society for Marine Mammalogy, Society for Conservation Biology, Sociedade Latino-americana de Especialistas em Mamíferos Aquáticos, Citizen Science Association

**Reviewer:** Marine Mammal Science, Biological Conservation, Landscape Ecology, Frontiers in Marine Mammal Science, Aquatic Biosystems, Biotropica, Endangered Species Research

**Formal training and/or experience:** scientific meetings/event planning and facilitation, public speaking, conflict management, research and sampling design for cetacean monitoring, cetacean photo-identification, cetacean necropsies and stranding response

**Media coverage of cetacean research:** Newsweek (US), Houston Public Media (US), Houston Chronicle (US), National Geographic (Italy), Le Monde (France), The Independent (UK), BBC-Earth (UK), Public Radio International (Austria), El País (Spain)