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## How many more readers must suffer?

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## How many more dolphins must die?

That accusatory appeal against offshore drilling packs a particularly powerful punch on kids of all ages — maybe even including you.

Thus, many readers were distressed by this first sentence of a Thursday front-page story from seaworthy Post and Courier colleague Bo Petersen:

“Forty-six dolphins found stranded on Gulf state beaches died from bacterial pneumonia, adrenal disease and lung lesions caused by pollutants from the 2010 Deepwater Horizon oil spill, a federal study of the strandings has concluded.”

So again: How many more dolphins must die?

Then again, why are so many so fond of dolphins?

Sure, they’re cute, especially when frolicking to and fro above and below the water’s surface.

And the theme song of a memorable 1964-67 NBC series conditioned a now-aging generation of viewers, including me, to hold dolphins in high esteem.

From that catchy tune about the show's title character (music borrowed from "The Love Song of Paris" by Henry Vars, title-character-praising lyrics by William "By" Dunham):

"They call him Flipper, Flipper, faster than lightning,

No one you see is smarter than he,

And we know Flipper lives in a world full of wonder,

Flying there under, under the sea"

No offense, dolphin fans, but as pointed out in this space a while back, if dolphins are smarter than we are, why do so many of them persist in the self-destructive practice of swimming into tuna nets?

After all, people — even those who aren't so bright — rarely swim into tuna nets.

### **Did you smelt that, too?**

Yes, our kind should respect — and protect — nature.

Yet how many more years must the devastating consequences of California's long-term drought be severely intensified by a federal fiat aimed at saving a fish that's not nearly as big — nor nearly as charismatic — as the dolphin, which, of course, is a marine mammal, not a fish?

As The Wall Street Journal's Allysia Finley wrote last month:

"In California, it takes about 1.1 gallons of water to grow an almond; 1.28 gallons to flush a toilet; and 34 gallons to produce an ounce of marijuana. But how many gallons are needed to save a three-inch delta smelt, the cause célèbre of environmentalists and bête noire of parched farmers?"

"To protect smelt from water pumps, government regulators have flushed 1.4 trillion gallons of water into the San Francisco Bay since 2008. That would have been enough to sustain 6.4 million Californians for six years.

"Yet a survey of young adult smelt in the Sacramento-San Joaquin River Delta last fall yielded just eight fish, the lowest level since 1967. An annual spring survey by state biologists turned up six smelt in March and one (in April). In 2014 the fall-spring counts were 88 and 36. While the surveys are a sampling and not intended to suggest the full population, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service warns that 'the delta smelt is now in danger of extinction.'"

Meanwhile, our proliferating, polluting species (7 billion of us and rising) takes up ever-more space on our finite planet, spews ever-more carbon and needs ever-more water.

Some people in some places approve of drilling for oil and natural gas — and the money and jobs that they can fuel — off their shores.

But most of us around here — presumably including dolphins — don't want it off our shore. John Warren's column on Page A17 strongly defends that widespread S.C. coastal-resident view.

So how many “drill, baby, drill” elected officials, including our governor and too many state lawmakers, will keep defying the wishes of the South Carolina seaboard masses?

How many politicians here and elsewhere will keep ignoring the current, vivid Santa Barbara evidence of what drilling infrastructure can do to a beach?

### **By reason of insanity**

More leading — and perhaps emotionally blackmailing — questions to ponder:

How many more children must suffer because so many adults are so cruel, irresponsible and/or stupid?

How many Americans who were born after 1964 and want to blame all of our nation's problems on us baby boomers realize how permanently traumatizing it was for us to “grow up in the shadow of The Bomb” — and without video games and cellphones?

How many more people must keep moving here as Charleston surges toward becoming our state's most populous city (see Friday's front page)?

How many more roads must we build to accommodate the evidently relentlessly incoming tri-county crowd, only to learn anew that more roads attract more people, creating the need for more roads, which attract more people, creating the need for more roads, which ...

And how many more ominous questions haunt you?

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