DOLPHINS





Types of dolphins









Dolphin



Dolphin is a common name of aquatic mammals within the infraorder Cetacea. The term dolphin usually refers to the extant families Delphinidae (the oceanic dolphins), Platanistidae (the Indian river dolphins), Iniidae (the New World river dolphins), and Pontoporiidae (the brackish dolphins), and the extinct Lipotidae (baiji or Chinese river dolphin). There are 40 extant species named as dolphins.

Dolphins range in size from the 1.7-metre-long long and 50-kilogram (110-pound) Maui's dolphin to the 9.5 m and 10-tonne (11-short-ton) killer whale. Several species exhibit sexual dimorphism, in that the males are larger than females. They have streamlined bodies and two limbs that are modified into flippers. Though not quite as flexible as seals, some dolphins can travel at speeds 29 km/h (18 mph) for short distances. Dolphins use their conical shaped teeth to capture fast moving prey. They have well-developed hearing which is adapted for both air and water and is so well developed that some can survive even if they are blind. Some species are well adapted for diving to great depths. They have a layer of fat, or blubber, under the skin to keep warm in the cold water.

Although dolphins are widespread, most species prefer the warmer waters of the tropic zones, but some, like the right whale dolphin, prefer colder climates. Dolphins feed largely on fish and squid, but a few, like the killer whale, feed on large mammals, like seals. Male dolphins typically mate with multiple females every year, but females only mate every two to three years. Calves are typically born in the spring and summer months and females bear all the responsibility for raising them.

Mothers of some species fast and nurse their young for a relatively long period of time. Dolphins produce a variety of vocalizations, usually in the form of clicks and whistles.

Dolphins are sometimes hunted in places such as Japan, in an activity known as dolphin drive hunting. Besides drive hunting, they also face threats from bycatch, habitat loss, and marine pollution. Dolphins have been depicted in various cultures worldwide. Dolphins occasionally feature in literature and film, as in the film series Free Willy. Dolphins are sometimes kept in captivity and trained to perform tricks. The most common dolphin species in captivity is the bottlenose dolphin, while there are around 60 captive killer whales.

White-bellied dolphin



The Chilean dolphin, also known as the black dolphin, is one of four dolphins in the genus Cephalorhynchus. The dolphin is only found off the coast of Chile; it is commonly referred to in the country as tonina.

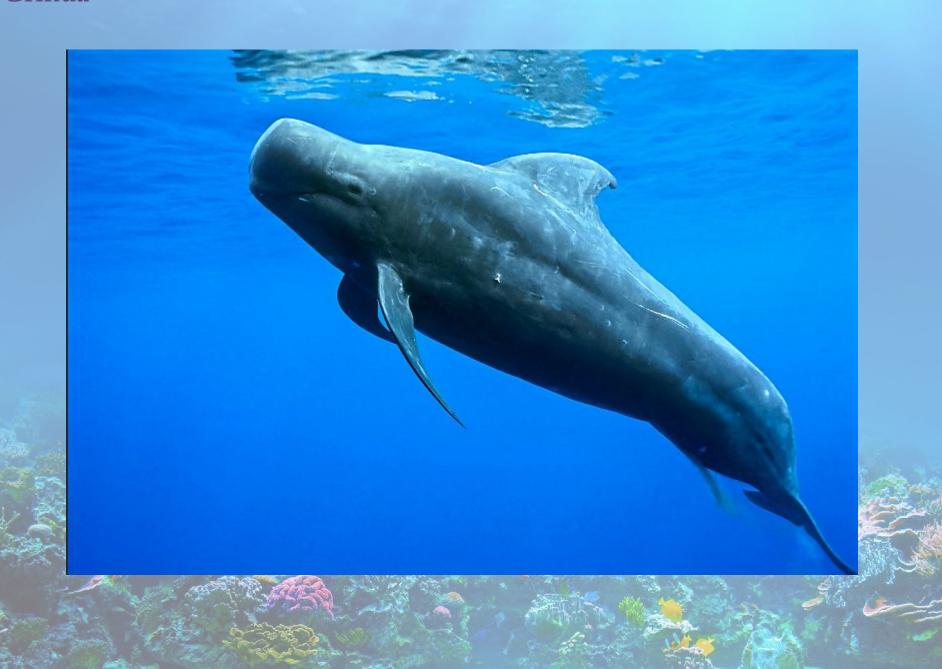
The Chilean dolphin is small at around 1.7 m in length, with a blunt head. These characteristics often make for its incorrect identification as a porpoise. This dolphin is thickly shaped with its girth up to two-thirds its length. The dorsal fin and flippers are small in proportion to body size in comparison with other dolphins. The throat, underside, and the closest part of the flippers to the body are white. The remainder of the body is a mix of greys. It has 28–34 pairs of teeth in the upper jaw and 29–33 in the lower.

The Chilean dolphin is normally sighted in small groups of around two to 10 individuals, with some larger gatherings occasionally sighted.

Longevity, gestation, and lactation periods are not known, but are believed to be similar in length to the more studied, and similar, Hector's and Commerson's dolphins which have a gestation period of about 10 months to one year and maximum longevity of 20 years.



Grinda



Risso's dolphin



Risso's dolphin is the only species of dolphin in the genus Grampus. It is commonly known as the Monk dolphin among Taiwanese fishermen. Some of the closest related species to these dolphins include: pilot whales, pygmy killer whales, melon-headed whales, and false killer whales.

Risso's dolphin has a relatively large anterior body and dorsal fin, while the posterior tapers to a relatively narrow tail. The bulbous head has a vertical crease in front.

Infants are dorsally grey to brown and ventrally cream-colored, with a white anchor-shaped area between the pectorals and around the mouth. In older calves, the nonwhite areas darken to nearly black, and then lighten (except for the always dark dorsal fin). Linear scars mostly from social interaction eventually cover the bulk of the body; scarring is a common feature in toothed whales, but Risso's dolphin tend to be unusually heavily scarred. Older individuals appear mostly white. Most individuals have two to seven pairs of teeth, all in the lower jaw.

Length is typically 10 feet, although specimens may reach 13.12 feet. Like most dolphins, males are typically slightly larger than females. This species weighs 300–500 kilograms, making it the largest species called "dolphin".

White-sided dolphin



The Pacific white-sided dolphin, also known as the hookfin porpoise, is a very active dolphin found in the cool to temperate waters of the North Pacific Ocean.

The Pacific white-sided dolphin has three colors. The chin, throat and belly are creamy white. The beak, flippers, back, and dorsal fin are a dark gray. Light gray patches are seen on the sides and a further light gray stripe runs from above the eye to below the dorsal fin, where it thickens along the tail stock. A dark gray ring surrounds the eyes.

The species is an average-sized oceanic dolphin. Females weigh up to 150 kg and males 200 kg with males reaching 2.5 m and females 2.3 m in length. Pacific white-sided dolphins usually tend to be larger than dusky dolphins. Females reach maturity at seven years. From 1990 to 1991, a study conducted by Richard C. Ferrero and William A. Walker revealed the vast majority of Pacific white-sided dolphins that fell victim to the drift nets were between the ages of 8.3 to 11 when they sexually matured. The gestation period usually last for one year. Individuals are believed to live up 40 years or more.

The Pacific white-sided dolphin is extremely active and mixes with many of the other North Pacific cetacean species. It readily approaches boats and bow-rides. Large groups are common, averaging 90 individuals, with supergroups of more than 300. Prey includes mainly hake, anchovies, squid, herring, salmon, and cod.

They have an average of 60 teeth.

White-beaked dolphin



The white-beaked dolphinis a marine mammal belonging to the family Delphinidae (oceanic dolphins) in the suborder Odontoceti (toothed whales).

The white-beaked dolphin is a robust species of dolphin with a short beak. Adults can reach 2.3 to 3.1 m long and weigh 180 to 354 kg. Calves are 1.1 to 1.2 m long at birth and probably weigh about 40 kg. The upper body and flanks are dark grey with light grey patches, including a 'saddle' behind the dorsal fin, while the underside is light grey to almost white in color. The flippers, fluke, and the tall, falcate, dorsal fin are all a darker grey than the body. As the common name implies, the beak is usually white in color, but it may be a dark, ashy grey, in some older individuals.

White-beaked dolphins have 25 to 28 teeth in each jaw, although the three teeth closest to the front of the mouth are often not visible, failing to erupt from the gums. They have up to 92 vertebrae, more than any other species of oceanic dolphin. Although the young are born with two to four whiskers on each side of the upper lip, these disappear as they grow, and, as in other odontocetes, the adults are entirely hairless. The humerus of the right flipper has been recorded as being longer and more robust than that on the left, indicating a degree of lateralized behavior.

Cross-shaped dolphin



Dark dolphin



Whale dolphin



Large-toothed dolphin



Bottlenose dolphin

