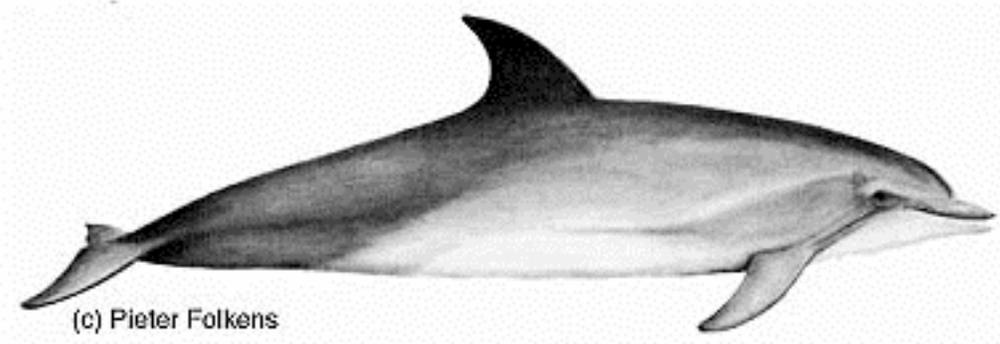


Bottlenose Dolphin

Tursiops truncatus



Bottlenose dolphins from the Southern California Bight have been found to have the highest pollutant levels yet measured among marine mammals--a true concern among marine biologists.

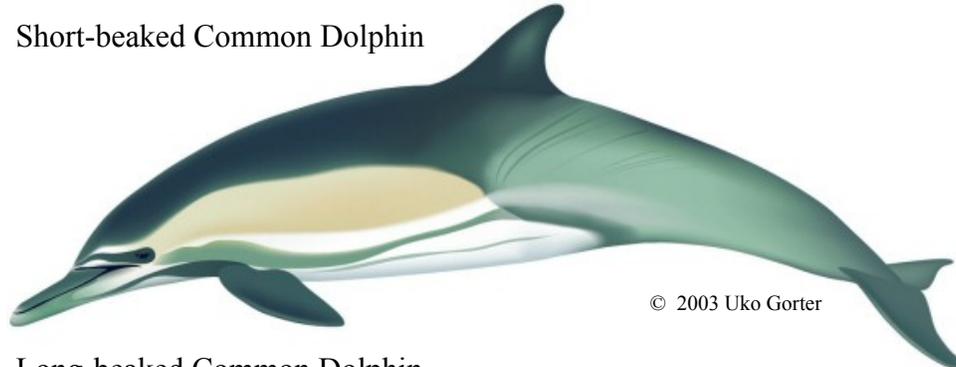
Brief Description:

- * Typical full-grown length: up to 4 meters (13 feet)
- * Color: dark gray on back; lighter gray on sides; belly is white to pink
- * Dorsal(back): dorsal fin is tall and its back is curved
- * Beak: thick and short
- * Other distinguishing characteristics: rides bow waves, often turning its head downwards or to the sides while doing so
- * Habitat: temperate and tropical, usually within 20 miles of shore (often in bays, lagoons, and large rivers) and around islands, but extending seaward of the continental shelf.



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Short-beaked Common Dolphin



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Long-beaked Common Dolphin

The common dolphin is often confused with a wide variety of other dolphins such as, striped dolphins, spinner dolphins, and the Atlantic white-sided dolphin. It is distinguished by an elaborate criss-cross or hourglass pattern. To double the confusion, in 1994, it was recognized that there are actually two species, now given the names: short-beaked (*Delphinus delphis*) and long-beaked common dolphin (*Delphinus capensis*) (Heyning, J.E., and W.F. Perrin. 1994. Evidence for two species of common dolphins (Genus *Delphinus*) from the eastern North Pacific. Contributions in Science, Natural History Museum of Los Angeles County, No. 442).

Brief Description:

- * Color: Gray, black, purple-black, or brownish cape with V shape under dorsal fin. Tan or yellowish patch on both sides near the head. White or creamy-white underside with a slender, pale gray tail stock.
- * Dorsal: Tall dorsal fin with pointed tip and a concave trailing edge.
- * Body: Prominent beak. Broad black or gray flippers with slightly pointed tips and convex leading edges.
- * Habitat: Both species are widely distributed and occur in all oceans (except polar).

The short-beaked common dolphin is a pelagic species that ranges from the coast to hundreds of miles from shore. While the U.S. west coast stock area includes California, Oregon, and Washington, sightings north of California are rare.

The vast majority of U.S. long-beaked common dolphins are found in the shelf waters of the Southern California Bight (where their distribution overlaps with the short-beaked species). They are rare north of Point Conception. Long-beaked

Common Dolphin

Delphinus delphis & D. capensis

common dolphins are the most abundant small cetacean in the Southern California Bight.

Feeding, Behavior, and Interesting Facts

The common dolphins are fast swimmers and energetic acrobats that perform many behaviors like flipper-slaps, lobtails, slaps water with chin, bow-rides, and breaches (sometimes turning somersaults). Their dives can last up to about 8 minutes, although usually last 10 seconds to 2 minutes.

These dolphins are highly vocal and can often be heard above the surface.

The common dolphins are one of the most abundant of all cetaceans, probably numbered in the millions. The most recent population estimate for U.S. west coast short-beaked common dolphins is approximately 450,000. The corresponding population estimate for long-beaked common dolphins is 43,360.

Differences Between the Two Species of Common Dolphin:

(Many of these are difficult to spot in the field. The first characteristic listed is probably the most reliable. In addition, long-beaked common dolphins are seen in Santa Barbara Channel much more frequently than short-beaked common dolphins.)

Characteristic	Long-beaked (<i>C. capensis</i>)	Short-beaked (<i>C. delphis</i>)
Area between eye and pectoral fin	Has dark pattern	Much lighter
Base of melon, above beak	Dark "mask" extending back to the eye	Relatively plain
Top edge of large tan patch on the forward flank	Slight depression in the middle	Continuously convex
Melon	More sloped (flatter) as it comes down to the beak	More rounded and comes down at a sharper angle
"Relative" characteristics, of less value in field		
Beak	Longer	Shorter
Body	More slender	Heavier, more robust
Dorsal fin and flippers	Smaller	Larger
Dark 'V' under the dorsal fin (the middle of the hour-glass)	Less distinct	More distinct

(Note that there is variability among individuals, and that some of items noted here may be inconsistent.)



(c) Pieter Folkens

In the northern North Pacific Ocean, the Dall's porpoise is the most frequently encountered and probably most abundant small cetacean.

Brief Description:

- * Typical full-grown length: up to 2.5 meters (8.25 feet)
- * Color: strikingly black with well-defined white side (flank) and belly patches; also gray-white to white on the dorsal fin
- * Shape of head: small with indistinct beak
- * Dorsal (back): small, nearly triangular, and tipped with white
- * Body: robust body, not streamlined in appearance
- * Other distinguishing characteristics: very vigorous and fast swimmer; active bow-rider
- * Habitat: subarctic (Pribilof Islands) to cold temperate (central Baja California)

Northern Right-Whale Dolphin

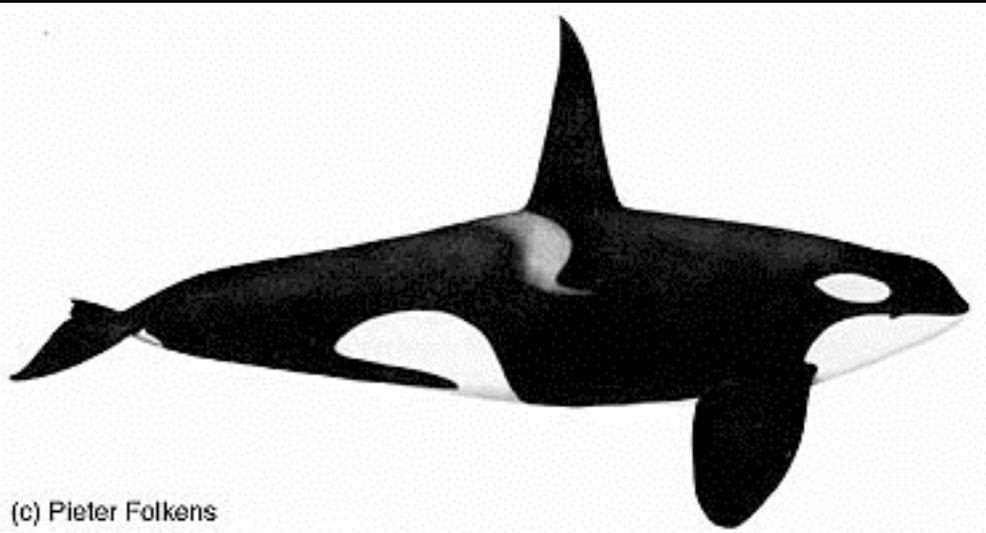
Lissodelphis borealis



The Northern right-whale dolphin is the only finless small cetacean in the CINMS. They are gregarious animals, often assembling in herds of 1,000 animals or more. They do approach vessels and ride in the bow waves, but tend to do so most frequently when accompanied by other dolphins.

Brief Description:

- * Typical full-grown length: up to 3 meters (10 feet)
- * Color: black or brownish-black; belly has white hourglass pattern
- * Body: long and slender
- * Tail: tail is small and slender, with lighter coloring near tips--top and bottom
- * Habitat: temperate (30°E to 50°N), primarily offshore



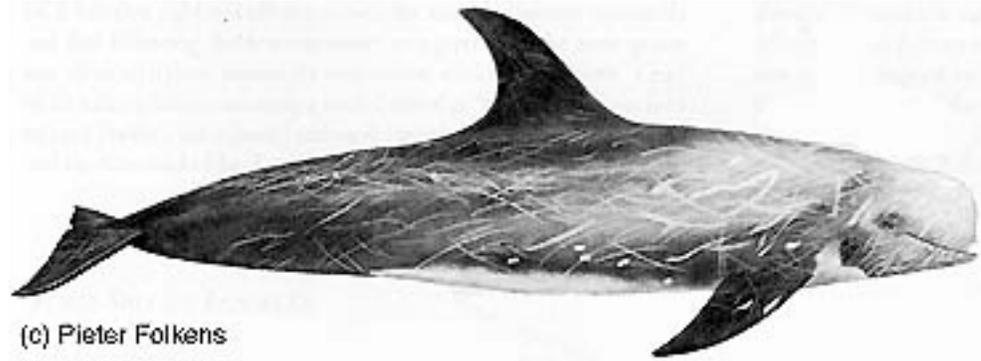
Killer whales do not harm people in the wild. Other names include orca and great killer whale.

Brief Description:

- * Color: Widely recognized around the world for its black and white color variation. Black tops with a white bottom and a very distinctive and conspicuous white patch behind each eye.
- * Dorsal: Very distinctive dorsal fin. In older males, fins can reach up to 6 feet in height. Some older males have a wavy dorsal fin.
- * Body: Adults can reach up to 32 feet and weigh 9 tons. Birth weight can reach almost 400 lb.
- * Habitat: All oceans of the world and particularly in the polar regions. Killer whales can mostly be seen within 500 miles of the shoreline. Prefer deep waters, but are also seen in shallow bays, inland seas, and estuaries.
- * Migration: There are no regular long migrations; however, some ice cover in the higher latitudes may determine which direction they go.

Feeding, Behavior and Interesting Facts

They have been known to eat squid, fish, birds, sea turtles, seals, dolphins and are known to even attack large animals like blue whales. Breaching is common for both the males and the females. The process is a beautiful leap out of the water and a dramatic entry that can be heard far away. Killer whales can travel up to 34 mph and are very inquisitive animals. There are two distinct forms of killer whales based on behavior and grouping. Transients form smaller pods (1 to 7), while residents form larger pods (5 to 25) and have smaller home ranges. Marine mammals are the preferred food of transients; fish are the preferred food of residents.



The distinctly battered appearances of these dolphins make this species quite easily identified, especially as they get older and bare more scars. This extensive body scarring is caused by the teeth of other Risso's dolphins which occurs during sexual contact.

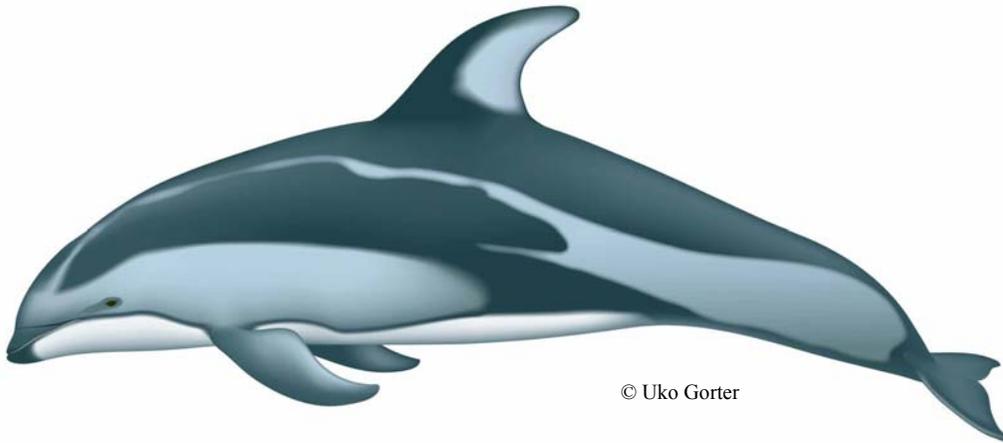
Brief Description:

- * Color: Blue-gray, gray-brown, or almost white body color covered in white scars with a variable pale underside.
- * Dorsal: Very tall dorsal fin, up to 20 inches high, tip may be pointed or rounded with a concave trailing edge.
- * Body: Slightly bulging forehead slopes steeply to mouth. The body is robust in front of the dorsal fin. Long curved flippers with pointed tips.
- * Habitat: Prefers deep offshore waters, but may be seen close to shore in the area of oceanic islands like the Channel Islands of central California, or where there is a narrow continental shelf.

Feeding, Behavior and Interesting Facts

- They feed almost exclusively on squid, octopus, and also schools of fish. Risso's dolphins rarely bow-ride, but may swim alongside a vessel or in its wake.
- Older animals tend to do a half-breach, unlike the younger animals of the species which are commonly known for breaching frequently.
- As the Risso's dolphin ages, their body color tends to lighten and they may become as white as belugas, yet there is a great deal of variation between individuals. Some adult animals may become as dark as pilot whales.
- The very tall dorsal fin is similar to female or juvenile killer whales or bottlenose dolphins.
- The Risso's dolphin can be better distinguished by identifying a species-unique crease down the center of the forehead, from the blowhole to the upper "lip."
- Risso's dolphins are sometimes seen mixed in with different schools of dolphins as well as swimming with pilot whales.
- These dolphins are absent or scarce in the Southern California Bight during cold water periods, but are relatively abundant when warm currents dominate.

Pacific White-sided Dolphin *Lagenorhynchus obliquidens*



Pacific white-sided dolphins are often found in large herds of 90 to 100. They are avid bow-riders and acrobatic jumpers.

Brief Description:

- * Full-grown length of 7 to 8 feet (2.1 to 2.4 m) and weigh 300 pounds (150 kg)
- * Length at birth is 31 to 37 inches (80 to 95 cm)
- * Gestation period is estimated to be 9 to 12 months
- * Short, rounded, thick beak containing 23 to 32 small, rounded slightly curved teeth in each side of the upper and lower jaws
- * Back is black and sides are light gray with thin, white stripes that extend from above the eye along the sides, widening towards the tail; its belly is white
- * Black beak and lips and a black ring around each eye
- * Dorsal fin is tall and sharply hooked, and is located at the center of the back. The leading edge is black and the rear portion is light gray
- * Flippers are small and curved and rounded at the tips
- * Flukes are notched in the center

Feeding, Behavior and Interesting Facts

They eat squid and small schooling fish such as anchovies, herring, sardines, and hake. It is believed they feed largely at night. Sexual maturity for both sexes is reached when they are 6 feet in length (1.8 m), but this can vary according to geographical location. This dolphin inhabits temperate, coastal waters in the North Pacific, avoiding both tropical or Arctic waters. Its eastern Pacific range extends from Amchitka Island in the Aleutians, to the Gulf of Alaska south along the coast of North America to the tip of Baja California. They are considered residents in some parts of their range, notably Monterey Bay and off southern California and northwestern Baja California. These resident populations are joined by transient groups from other areas from fall to spring.

Table 1 Cetaceans: Odontocetes - Oceanic dolphins

Genus & Species	Population or Stock Size	Protected Status	Seasonality	Normal Habitat
Long-beaked common dolphin (<i>Delphinus capensis</i>)	Stock size: 32,239	Protected under MMPA	Year-round	Coastal - up to 300 nautical miles offshore
Short-beaked common dolphin (<i>Delphinus delphis</i>)	Stock size: 373,573	Protected under MMPA	Year-round	Coastal up to 50 nautical miles offshore
Short-finned pilot whale (<i>Globicephala macrorhynchus</i>)	Stock size: 970	Protected under MMPA; strategic	Most often summer and fall	Shelf, slope and offshore
Risso's dolphin (<i>Grampus griseus</i>)	Stock size: 16,483	Protected under MMPA	Year-round	Shelf, slope and offshore
Pacific white-sided dolphin (<i>Lagenorhynchus obliquidens</i>)	Stock size: 25,825	Protected under MMPA	Usually summer and fall	Shelf to farther offshore
Northern right whale dolphin (<i>Lissodelphis borealis</i>)	Stock size: 13,705	Protected under MMPA	Winter and spring	Continental borderland and slope
Orca or killer whale (<i>Orcinus orca</i>)	Offshore stock: 285 Transient stock: 346	Protected under MMPA	Year-round	Shelf, slope and offshore
False killer whale (<i>Pseudorca crassidens</i>)	Not available for region	Protected under MMPA	Warm water months	Shelf to offshore and pelagic
Spotted dolphin (<i>Stenella attenuata</i>)	Not available for area	Protected under MMPA	Unknown	Pelagic
Striped dolphin (<i>Stenella coeruleoalba</i>)	Stock size: 20,235	Protected under MMPA	Unknown	Pelagic
Long-snouted spinner dolphin (<i>Stenella longirostris</i>)	Not available for area	Protected under MMPA	Unknown	Pelagic
Rough-toothed dolphin (<i>Steno bredanensis</i>)	Not available for area	Protected under MMPA	Unknown	Pelagic
Bottlenose dolphin (<i>Tursiops truncatus</i>) Offshore stock	Stock size: 956	Protected under MMPA	Year-round	Shelf, slope and offshore
Bottlenose dolphin (<i>Tursiops truncatus</i>) Coastal stock	Stock size: 206	Protected under MMPA	Year-round	Surf zone up to 1km offshore

Source: Carretta *et al.* 2001

Created by: Howorth/ SBMMC

Table 2 Cetaceans: Odontocetes - Mesoplodonts

Genus & Species	Population or Stock Size	Protected Status	Seasonality	Normal Habitat
Hubb's beaked whale (<i>Mesoplodon carlhubbsi</i>)	Not available for region*	Protected under MMPA	Unknown	Slope, deep sea
Blainville's beaked whale (<i>Mesoplodon densirostris</i>)	Stock size: 360	Protected under MMPA	Unknown	Slope, deep sea
Ginkgo-toothed whale (<i>Mesoplodon ginkgodens</i>)	Not available for region*	Protected under MMPA	Unknown	Slope, deep sea
Hector's beaked whale** (<i>Mesoplodon hectori</i>)	Not available for region*	Protected under MMPA	Unknown	Slope, deep sea
Stejneger's beaked whale (<i>Mesoplodon stejnegeri</i>)	Not available for region*	Protected under MMPA	Unknown	Slope, deep sea

Table 3 Cetaceans: Odontocetes - Other beaked whales

Baird's beaked whale (<i>Berardius bairdii</i>)	Stock size: 379	Protected under MMPA	Late spring to early fall	Slope, deep sea
Cuvier's beaked whale (<i>Ziphius cavirostris</i>)	Stock size: 5,870	Protected under MMPA	November through April	Slope, deep sea

Table 4 Cetaceans: Odontocetes - Sperm Whales

Genus & Species	Population or Stock Size	Protected Status	Seasonality	Normal Habitat
Pygmy sperm whale (<i>Kogia breviceps</i>)	Stock size: 4,746	Protected under MMPA	Unknown	Deep sea, pelagic
Dwarf sperm whale (<i>Kogia simus</i>)	Dwarf or pygmy stock size: 1,813	Protected under MMPA	Unknown	Deep sea, pelagic
Sperm whale (<i>Physeter macrocephalus</i>)	Stock size: 1,640	Endangered under ESA. Protected, depleted and strategic under MMPA.	April to mid-June & August to mid-November	Deep sea

Table 5 Cetaceans: Odontocetes - True Porpoises

Genus & Species	Population or Stock Size	Protected Status	Seasonality	Normal Habitat
Harbor porpoise (<i>Phocoena phocoena</i>)	Morro Bay stock size: 932	Protected under MMPA	Fall and winter	Shallow coastal
Dall's porpoise (<i>Phocoenoides dalli</i>)	Stock size: 117,545	Protected under MMPA	Winter and spring	Shelf to well off-shore

Sources: Carretta *et al.* 2001 and 2002

*The combined stock size for all mesoplodonts is 3,738.

**Sightings and strandings of Hector's beaked whales may represent Perrin's beaked whale (*Mesoplodon perrini*), a new species that has been proposed. (Heyning, Los Angeles County Natural History Museum, pers. comm. 2002)

Table Created by Howorth/ SBMMC