

Long, slender head tapers

to rounded snout with no

pronounced beak

Head hangs over

mouth

Dark grey/black body

colour with only a faintly

darker cape (variable)

False Killer whale (pseudorca crassidens) Distribution: coastal and primarily offshore waters in tropical and temperate regions (see map below and

Prominent dorsal fin is

usually curved and slightly

rounded at the tip

Distribution: coastal and primarily offshore waters in tropical and temperate regions (see map below and full list of countries in the detailed species account online at: https://wwhandbook.iwc.int/en/species/false-killer-whale

Body may be scarred

Long, slender body

Adult length: Up to 6m (male)/5m (female) Adult weight: up to 2,000kg (m) Newborn: 1.6-1.9m /Unknown

Threats: entanglement, contaminants

Habitat: offshore Diet: squid, fish

IUCN Conservation status: Data deficient

False killer whales can eat large prey species like this Ono/Wahoo. photo courtesy of Daniel Webster, Cascadia Reserach

Flukes are small in relation to body size



Fun Facts

Lighter grey anchor or

"W" shaped patch on

chest between the flippers

(variable)

False killer whales are so named because the shape of their skulls, not their external appearance, is similar to that of killer whales.

Like killer whales and sperm whales, false killer whales form stable family groups, and females who no longer produce calves themselves probably help to look after the young of other females

False killer whales participate in prey-sharing; a behaviour thought to reinforce social bonds This photo illustrates the bullet-shaped head and typically 'S' shaped flippers that help observers to distinguish false killer whales from pilot whales. Photo courtesy of Paula Olson/SEFSC/NOAA.





False killer whales often behave like big dolphins, bow-riding with vessels and sometimes leaping clear of the water. They have some of the closest and longest lasting family bonds of any marine mammal species. Photos courtesy of Robin Baird

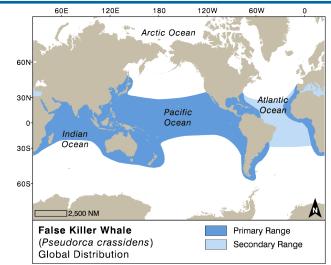
Long strongly curved flipper

with a pronounced corner or

bend giving the flipper an 'S'

shape – unique to this species





False Killer whale distribution. Adapted by Nina Lisowski from Würsig,B., Thewissen, J.G.M. and Kovacs, K.M. Editors (2018) "Encyclopedia of Marine Mammals", 3rd ed. Academic Press, Elsevier: San Diego. CA. Copyright Elsevier: http://www.elsevier.com

False killer whales are found in tropical and temperate waters between latitudes of 50° and 50° N. They are generally uncommon and poorly studied in most regions. They appear to occur more frequently in deeper open ocean waters, but can occasionally move into nearshore areas.