

Harbour porpoise (Phocoena phocoena)

Distribution: Temperate and subpolar waters of the Pacific and Atlantic (see map below and full list of countries in the detailed species account online at: https://wwhandbook.iwc.int/en/species/harbour-porpoise)

Adult length: 1.4-1.9m Adult weight: 45-70kg Newborn: 70-80cm / 5kg

Blunt-tipped dorsal fin. With a broad base Gradual and mottled transition from light to dark shading on the A dark grey upper-body flanks. can appear black or dark brown in certain liaht Flukes dark on top and bottom, but rarely raised above surface Black 'lips' and 'chin' White or pale underbelly, 1-3 dark stripes from sometimes extending up jaw to flippers the flanks Small, dark flippers with slightly rounded edges

Threats: bycatch, pollutants, coastal development,

habitat degradation

Habitat: estuarine, coastal/nearshore

Diet: fish

IUCN Conservation status: Least Concern -with the exception of those in the Baltic and Black Seas, which are critically endangered and endangered respectively.



The gradual shift in from light to dark shading on the harbour porpoise's sides is characteristic of the species.

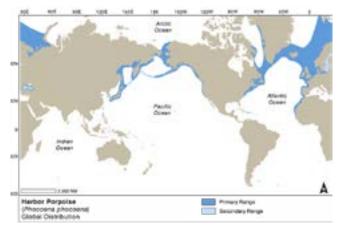
Fun Facts

- [In parts of the British Isles, the harbour porpoise used to be known as the 'puffing pig' because of the sound it made when surfacina.
- [In Dutch the harbour porpoise is known as the 'brownfish', while in German it is the 'pigwhale'.
- 🔁 Harbour porpoises are preyed on by killer whales and sharks, but also attacked and killed by bottlenose dolphins and gray seals.



Photo courtesy of Nicola Hodgins/WDC

Harbour porpoises are often found close to shore, and can be observed from land in many locations.



Harbour porpoise 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

There are currently three formally recognised subspecies of harbour porpoises: The Pacific harbour porpoise (Phocoena phocoena vomerina), the Atlantic harbor porpoise, (P. p. phocoena), and the Black Sea Harbor Porpoise (P. p. relicta). A fourth subspecies has been proposed for harbour porpoises found around the Iberian Peninsuala and north Africa (P. p. meridionalis). Throughout its range the species is found in cool temperate or subpolar waters, usually coastal areas and depths of less than 100m.

