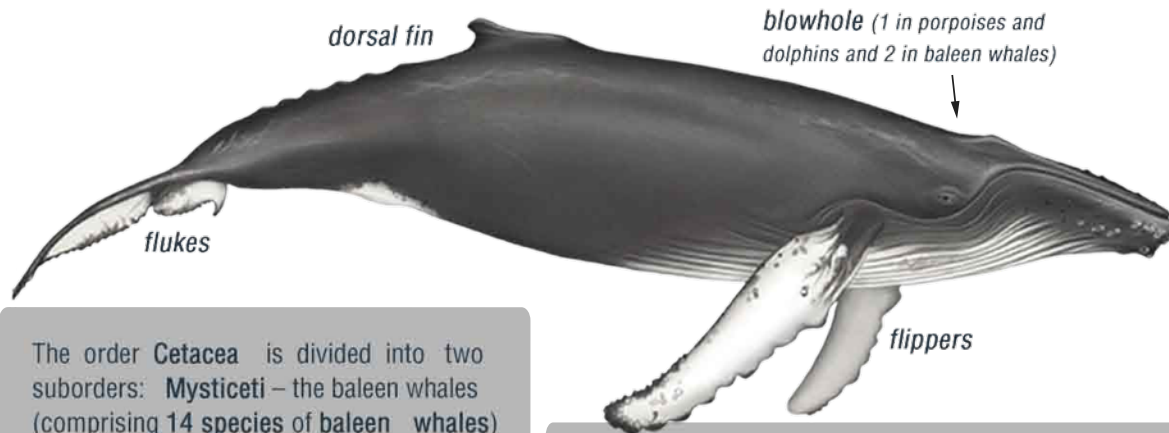


# Cetaceans











## Whales, dolphins & porpoises



The order **Cetacea** is divided into two suborders: **Mysticeti** – the baleen whales (comprising 14 species of baleen whales) and **Odontoceti** – the toothed whales (comprising 75 species). Currently a total of 89 species of cetaceans (whales, dolphins and porpoises) are recognised over the world.

This ID Guide includes the more representative cetaceans species found in Caribbean waters.

All over the world, **cetaceans** face different and multiple **threats** that are represented in this ID Guide by the following symbols:

- |   |   |
|---|---|
|  Pollution           |  Reduced prey resources  |
|  Human disturbance   |  Collisions with vessels |
|  Entanglement        |  Hunting                 |
|  Habitat degradation |  Climate change          |
|  Marine debris       |  Captivity               |

The present guide was specially compiled for the **Responsible Whale Watching and Conservation Workshop** held in Bequia, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, in October 21st - 24th, 2014. This was conducted by **Fundación Cethus** from Argentina with the auspices of the **Animal Welfare Institute (AWI)**, **Cetacean Society International (CSI)**, **OceanCare** and **Whale and Dolphin Conservation (WDC)** in collaboration with the **Saint Vincent and the Grenadines National Trust**.

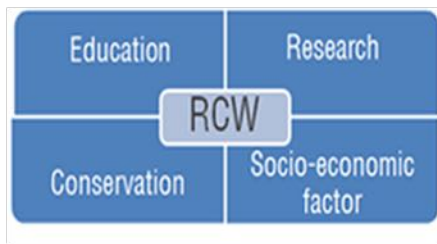
Whales and dolphins are highly intelligent animals. They are sensitive to disturbance and can be hit by vessels, including their propellers.

If they approach the boat or bow-ride, maintain your course at a slow and constant speed until they are clear of your vessel.

Cetaceans should never be chased or harassed in an attempt to watch them, allow them to determine the nature of the encounter and never disrupt their natural behaviour and movement.

### RESPONSIBLE Whale Watching

Responsible whale watching is not only recreational but it has many other advantages as well. These include economic, educational, scientific and conservation. It can provide substantial benefits to local communities, companies, scientists, conservation societies, whale watchers and, ultimately, the whale themselves.

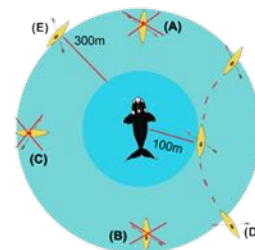


When watching marine mammals please follow these simple guidelines:

- **KEEP** your distance. Never go closer than 100m (200m if another boat is present)
- **NEVER** drive head on to, move between, scatter or separate dolphins. If unsure of their movements, simply stop and put the engine into neutral
- **PLEASE** spend no longer than 15 minutes near the animals
- **SPECIAL** care must be taken with mothers and young, do not come between a mother and calf
- **MAINTAIN** a steady direction and slow 'no wake' speed
- **NEVER** try to swim with cetaceans for your safety and theirs
- **NEVER** feed or attempt to feed a wild cetacean, as it alters their natural behaviours and puts them at risk of injury
- **DO NOT** touch or attempt to touch cetaceans

While many countries do not have legislation in place, it is common practice to follow guidelines or a Code of Conduct when approaching cetaceans. This ensures that not only are they not disturbed but it is also important for your own personal safety.

- On the approach to a cetacean avoid making loud noises and sudden movements.
- Never attempt to approach from the front (A), from behind (B) or from the side of the animal (C), instead make the approach from behind and slightly to the side (D), always maintaining a minimum distance of approx. 100m.
- Another option is to do the approach from the front and slightly to the side of the animal (E) and stay there, at a distance of 300m.



# Bryde's Whale

*Balaenoptera edeni*



## Global Threats



**Other Names:** Tropical whale

**Length (m/ft):** 13-17m / 40-55ft

**Weight (kg/lbs):** 12,000-20,000kg / 26,000-44,000lbs

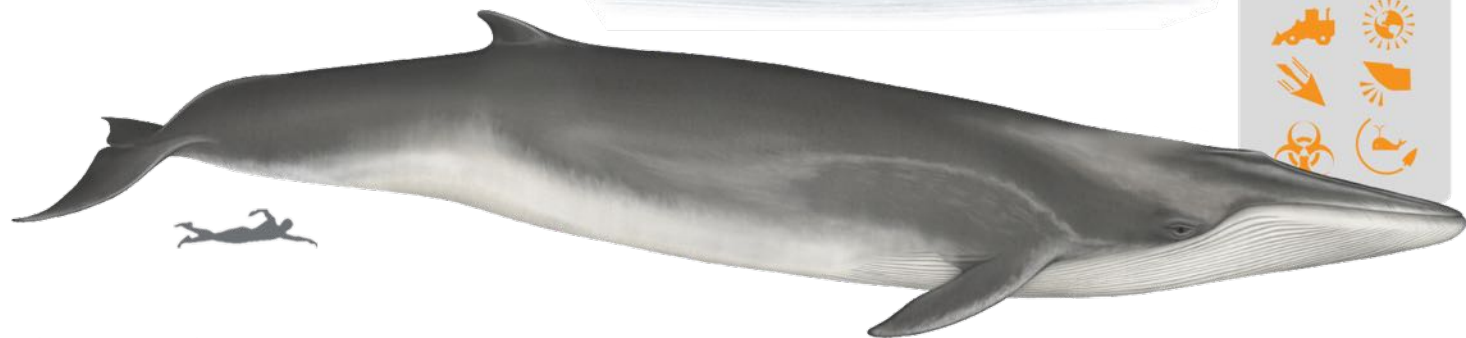
**Distinctive Markings:** Three parallel ridges on the top of their head (making it distinguishable from minke, fin, and other baleen whales who have only one ridge). They also have between 40-70 white or yellowish throat pleats. Bryde's whales bodies are slender, smoky blue-grey in colour with possible scarring. Flippers are slender, pointed and short. Their prominent dorsal fin is situated far behind the center of their body and has a deeply concave trailing edge. Their tail flukes are not commonly seen above surface.

**Behaviour:** Bryde's whales are usually found alone or in pairs, except on feeding grounds where groups of up to 30 individuals can be found. During feeding, which they engage in all year round, they are known to suddenly change direction. They have irregular breathing patterns and may blow 3-7 thin, hazy spouts before diving. When surfacing they tend to only show the top of their head. They are occasionally inquisitive, may approach boats and can sometimes be seen breaching clear of the water.

**IUCN Conservation status:** Data Deficient (DD)

# Fin Whale

*Balaenoptera physalus*



## Global Threats



**Other Names:** Common rorqual, Herring whale

**Length (m/ft):** 18-22m/60-72ft

**Weight (kg/lbs):** 30,000-80,000kg/66,000-176000lbs

**Distinctive Markings:** The upper half of the body is dark grey or brownish, while the belly is white. The head has a single medial ridge and has distinctive asymmetrical markings: the lower lip, mouth cavity and baleen plates of the right side are white, whereas these features are dark on the left. The fin whale has a small, falcate dorsal fin and slightly concave trailing edges to its flukes, which are rarely raised out of the water. Its exceptionally large size, asymmetrical head colouration and small dorsal fin are probably the best identifying features.

**Behaviour:** The fin whale feeds on plankton (including krill) and schooling fishes. When they eat they often turn on their side with the right side facing downward; in this position the lighter head colouration makes them less visible to prey. The fin whale generally travels alone or in pairs, and rarely breaches or spyhops.

**IUCN Conservation status:** Endangered (EN)



# Humpback Whale

*Megaptera novaeangliae*



## Global Threats



**Other Names:** Hump-backed whale

**Length (m/ft):** 17-19m/ 55-60ft    **Weight (kg/lbs):** 25,000-30,000kg/ 55,000-66,000lbs

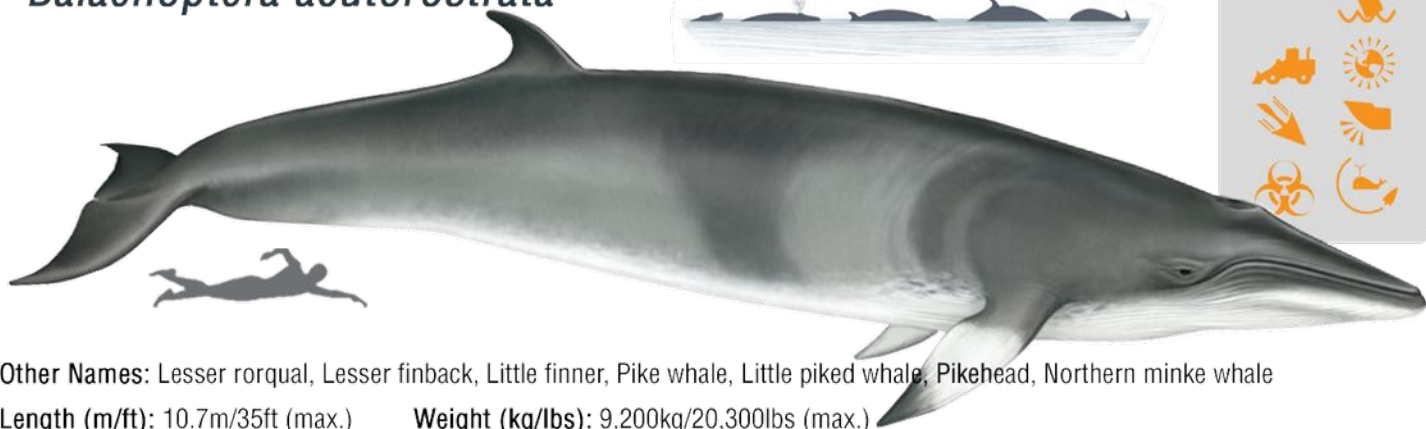
**Distinctive Markings:** One of the easiest whales to identify as they have exceptionally long flippers that can measure up to 5 meters in length. They have a slender, knobby head and lower jaw and a large dark grey or blue-black stocky body. Before diving, they raise their flukes out of the water making it easy to identify individuals as all have a unique black and white pigmentation on their undersides.

**Behaviour:** The most energetic of the large whales, humpback whales may breach, lobtail and flipper slap at the surface. They also like to lie on their side or back, holding one or both flippers in the air. Showing little fear of boats, humpback whales may be highly inquisitive and readily approach slow-moving or stationary vessels. They are slow swimmers, with dives usually lasting between 3 and 9 minutes. Humpback whales migrate in winter to breeding grounds in warmer waters where males sing complex songs to attract a mate. In the summer and autumn they migrate to cooler waters to feed where they eat prey such as fish and krill, sometimes by bringing them to the surface in a 'bubble cloud', and then swimming through the cloud with their mouth open. Individuals can travel at a speed of 25 km/h or more.

**IUCN Conservation status:** Least Concern (LC)

# Common Minke Whale

*Balaenoptera acutorostrata*



## Global Threats



**Other Names:** Lesser rorqual, Lesser finback, Little finner, Pike whale, Little piked whale, Pikehead, Northern minke whale

**Length (m/ft):** 10.7m/35ft (max.)      **Weight (kg/lbs):** 9,200kg/20,300lbs (max.)

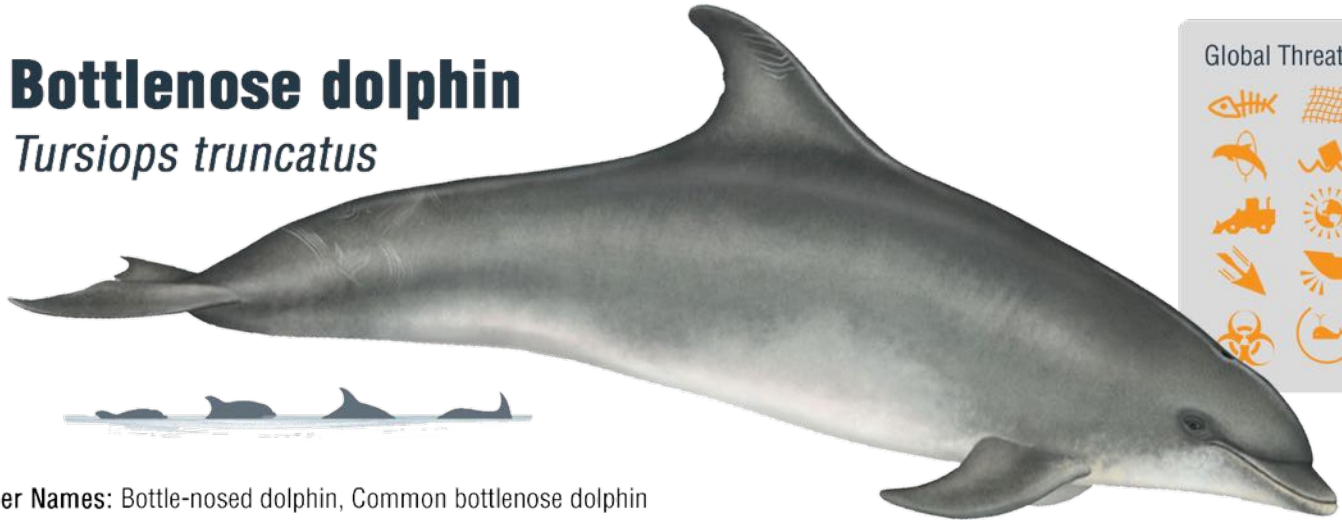
**Distinctive Markings:** Minke whales are the smallest and most abundant of the rorqual whales. They have a sharply pointed snout, straight mouthline and a long ridge along the head with two blowholes. They have hundreds of baleen plates 20 to 30cm long growing from their upper jaws and between 50 and 70 pleats running from their throat and ending just past their flippers. The body colouration is black, dark brown, or grey on the upper side with a lighter belly. The dorsal fin is positioned far behind the centre of the back. In the northern hemisphere individuals have a white band on each flipper, though many in the southern hemisphere do not. The fluke is rarely seen above the surface.

**Behaviour:** Mainly solitary or in groups the two or three. Relatively fast swimmers, occasionally spy-hopping and breaching. When they surface to breathe, their snout appears first. They can stay under water for as long as 20 minutes. Sometimes they swim beside vessels for some distance and can be seen at the surface feeding beneath flocks of seabirds.

**IUCN Conservation status:** Least Concern (LC)

# Bottlenose dolphin

*Tursiops truncatus*



**Other Names:** Bottle-nosed dolphin, Common bottlenose dolphin

**Length (m/ft):** 3-4m/7-13ft **Weight (kg/lbs):** 150-650kg/330-1,435lbs

**Distinctive Markings:** Size and appearance are highly variable both among individuals and between different populations. A bottlenose dolphin is generally a large dolphin, robust and chunky, and under most lighting conditions it appears a featureless uniform grey however their colouring is fairly complex. They have a distinctly short, stubby beak, set off from the melon (forehead) by a crease, a high falcate dorsal fin, long slender pointed flippers, and pointed flukes. In areas where more than one population can be found they are often separated into inshore and offshore types, the inshore ones generally being smaller.

**Behaviour:** Extremely inquisitive and playful, highly sociable and highly surface active. They can often be seen lobtailing, breaching, spyhopping, bowriding on ships and large whales and playing with fish, seaweed or marine debris. Usually they form small groups associating with other species of dolphins, whales, and even sharks and sea turtles. They are known to co-operate with local fishermen, driving fish towards shore into nets. Solitary individuals are known from several locations around the world.

**IUCN Conservation status:** Least Concern (LC)

# Short & Long-beaked Common dolphins

*Delphinus delphis* & *Delphinus capensis*



## Global Threats



**Other Names:** Criss-cross dolphin

**Length (m/ft):** 2-3m/ 7-9 ft

**Weight (kg/lbs):** 70-110kg/155-245lbs

**Distinctive Markings:** The common dolphin has very distinctive colouring, forming an hourglass pattern on its side. A yellow panel runs down the front half of both sides, separated from the grey panel in the rear by a cape of black that forms a saddle just below the dorsal fin. Most short-beaked common dolphins have a prominent white patch on the dorsal fin, one characteristic that distinguishes them from the long-beaked common dolphin. The short-beaked common dolphin is slightly stockier than the long-beaked common dolphin, has a more rounded melon and as its name suggests, a shorter beak. The distinctive hourglass pattern and yellow flash on the animal's side may also be brighter and more pronounced. The short-beaked common dolphin also has a more spectacled appearance with a patch around the eye.

**Behaviour:** Typically travel in large social groups numbering between 10 and, occasionally, thousands of individuals. They are very acrobatic and can often be seen breaching and somersaulting through the air. Entire pods will bow-ride large ships and they are often seen with other marine mammals (sometimes bow-riding the wake of large whales) and feeding seabirds.

**IUCN Conservation status:** Least Concern (LC) & Data Deficient (DD)

# Dwarf Sperm Whale

*Kogia sima*



## Global Threats



**Other Names:** Owen's Pygmy sperm whale

**Length (m/ft):** 2.5-2.7m / 8-9 ft

**Weight (kg/lbs):** 135-270kg/ 300-600lbs

**Distinctive Markings:** The head of a dwarf sperm whale is a conical shape, having an almost shark-like appearance with a single blowhole slightly to the left. They have an underslung jaw and a creamy-white false gill behind each eye. Their teeth are long, curved, and very sharp. They have a small, flatter back and the broad, short flippers are located forward on body. Their skin color is dark blue to grey-black (dorsal side) and paler (or pinkish) on the belly.

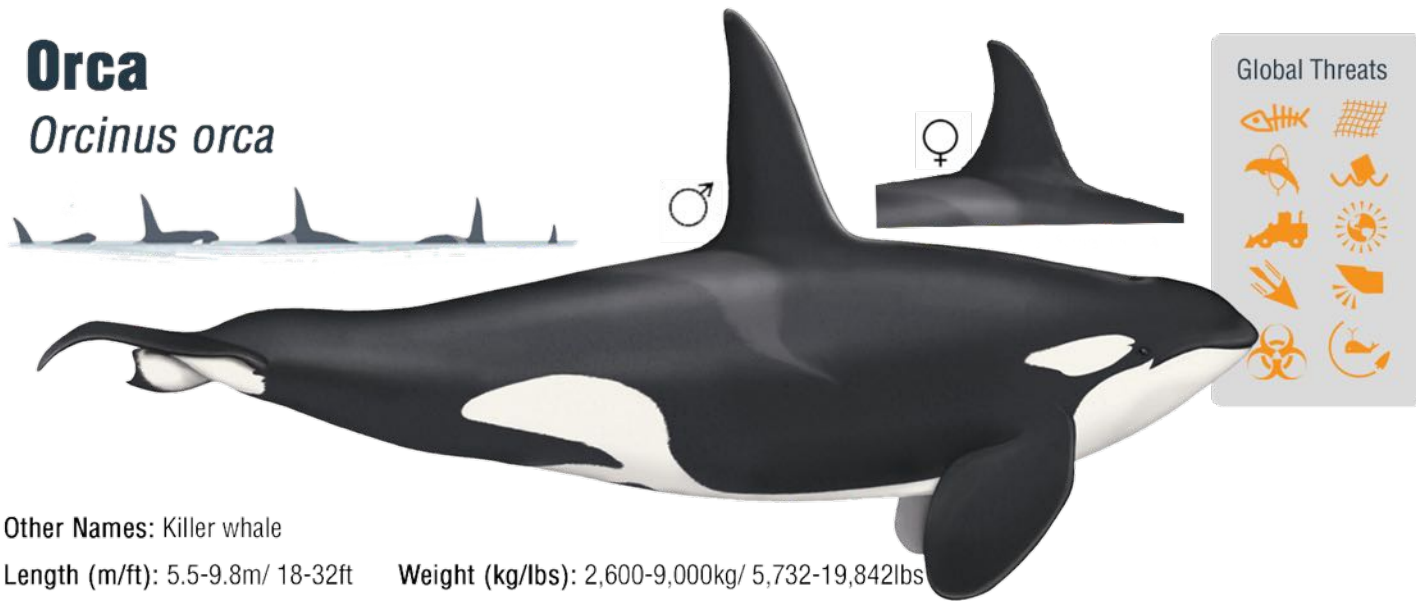
**Behaviour:** Slow, deliberate swimmers. Occasionally float motionless at the surface. Slowly rise to the surface, and then appear to just drop (not dive) out of sight. They will rarely approach boats and when startled may excrete a reddish brown intestinal fluid before diving, leaving behind a dense cloud in the water (perhaps as a decoy like the ink of a squid). They are found to travel in groups of less than 10 individuals.

**IUCN Conservation status:** Data Deficient (DD)



# Orca

*Orcinus orca*



**Other Names:** Killer whale

**Length (m/ft):** 5.5-9.8m/ 18-32ft      **Weight (kg/lbs):** 2,600-9,000kg/ 5,732-19,842lbs

**Distinctive Markings:** Orcas are distinctive in appearance with large black bodies, a white underside, a white patch above and behind the eye, and a grey 'saddle patch' behind the dorsal fin. At up to nearly 10 metres long, males are larger than females and have a tall dorsal fin - up to nearly 2 metres in height. The tall sword-shaped and strikingly visible dorsal fin makes them almost unmistakable at sea. Female length is about 20 percent less and the curved dorsal fin is much smaller than the male's. They are found throughout the world's seas, typically in extended pods, or family groups, that share a common dialect.

**Behaviour:** Orcas are the apex predators of the sea and the largest members of the dolphin family. They are highly intelligent, highly adaptable and able to communicate and coordinate hunting tactics. Depending on the type of social group and location, orcas will hunt fish, squid, seals, sea lions, seabirds and even whales much larger than themselves.

**IUCN Conservation status:** Data Deficient (DD)

# Pygmy Sperm Whale

*Kogia breviceps*

## Global Threats



**Other Names:** Lesser cachalot, Short-headed sperm whale, Lesser sperm whale

**Length (m/ft):** 2,7-3,4m/ 9-11ft      **Weight (kg/lbs):** 315-400kg/ 694,5-882lbs

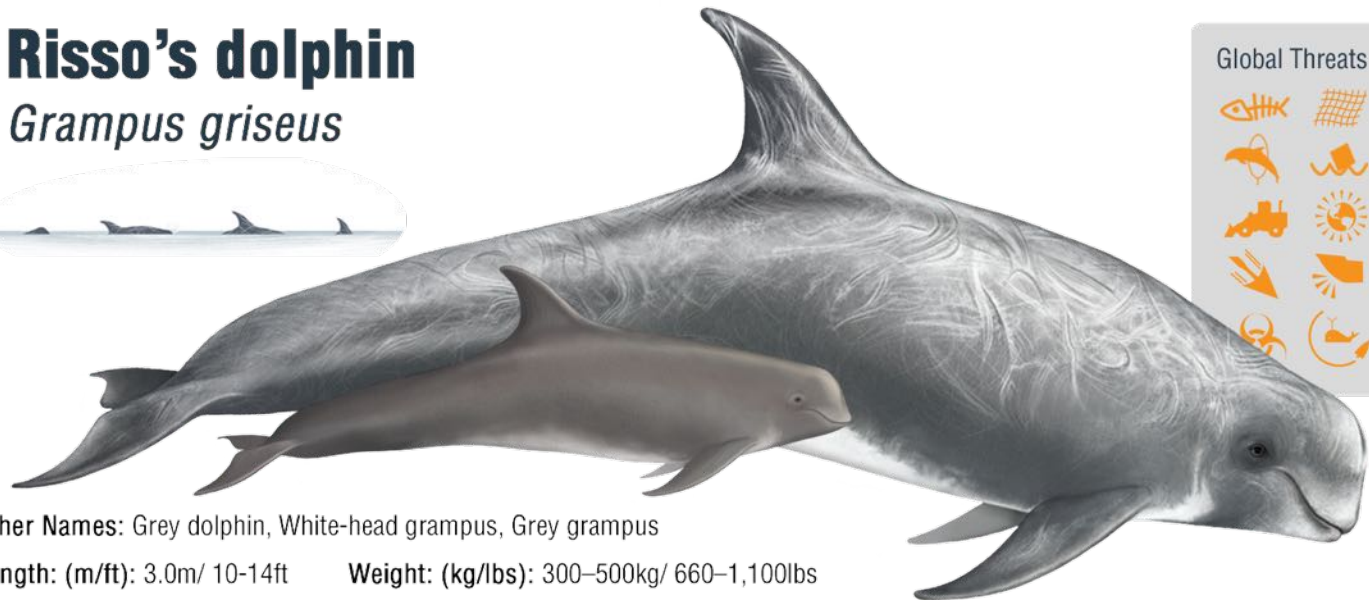
**Distinctive Markings:** (compared to the dwarf sperm whale) they have a small robust body and a squarish head with a single blowhole set slightly left of centre. They have a small underslung jaw, with 9-16 pairs of teeth in the lower jaw, and occasionally 3 pairs of teeth in the upper jaw. Just behind the eye is a false gill, and this feature (which may be an adaptation to help them 'mimic' their main predators, sharks), along with the underslung jaw often causes the pygmy sperm whale (and the dwarf sperm whale) to be initially confused for a shark when sighted or stranded. The dorsal side of the body is grey to blue-grey, fading to whitish or sometimes pale blue or pinkish on the belly. Individuals also have a small circular white patch in front of the eye, whilst the eye itself is circled in black. In the wild they may be confused with the very similar looking dwarf sperm whale and even with stranded individuals, genetic confirmation of the species is sometimes required.

**Behaviour:** Rarely seen at sea and most of what is known about them is derived from stranded individuals. When they are spotted at sea, they are usually resting, floating motionless at the surface with the back and head exposed, and the tail hanging loosely in the water. Pygmy sperm whales are slow, deliberate swimmers and, unusually for their size, drop below the surface like a stone rather than rolling like most other cetaceans. They travel alone or in groups of 6 or 7.

**IUCN Conservation status:** Data Deficient (DD)

# Risso's dolphin

## *Grampus griseus*



### Global Threats



**Other Names:** Grey dolphin, White-head grampus, Grey grampus

**Length:** (m/ft): 3.0m/ 10-14ft      **Weight:** (kg/lbs): 300–500kg/ 660–1,100lbs

**Distinctive Markings:** The body of adults generally is grey almost hidden by the pattern of white scars. Risso's are born with an olive or chocolate brown body and a white belly. Over time the back changes to a uniform grey colour, sometimes appearing black in juveniles. With age, their bodies can become covered in scars and some individuals (especially males) can appear to be almost white. Risso's dolphins have a bulbous forehead with no beak, and the mouth line slopes up to look like a smile. They have tall falcate dorsal fins and long sickle-shaped flippers. Between 4-14 teeth are found in the lower jaw but teeth are rarely found in the upper jaw.

**Behaviour:** Young animals are known to be quite boisterous at the surface, breaching, spyhopping and surfing waves. Seldom known to bow-ride however can be inquisitive and may swim alongside a vessel for a short period of time. Sometimes seen in mixed schools with other species of dolphins and with pilot whales.

**IUCN Conservation status:** Least Concern (LC)

# Short finned pilot whale

*Globicephala macrorhynchus*



## Global Threats



**Other Names:** Blackfish, Potthead whale

**Length (m/ft):** 5.5–7.3m / 18-24ft    **Weight (kg/lbs):** 1,000 – 3,000kg / 2,200-6,600lbs

**Distinctive Markings:** Pilot whales are large with a jet black or dark grey body with a pale grey saddle patch behind the dorsal fin. They also have a white anchor-shaped patch on their chest and a pale white stripe that spans diagonally upward behind eye. They have a bulbous head with no discernible beak and an upturned mouthline. Long slender curved fins with a pointed tip are positioned relatively close to head whilst the dorsal fin is low but prominent and located far forward on the back.

**Behaviour:** Highly sociable, strong familiar bonds, groups of 10 to 50 individuals. Super pods of several hundred individuals are not uncommon. Rarely breach but occasionally porpoise when swimming fast. May be seen lobtailing, spyhopping, or surfing in wake of large waves and entire pods may allow close approach by boats. Are thought to feed mostly at night.

**IUCN Conservation status:** Data Deficient (DD)

# Sperm Whale

*Physeter macrocephalus*



## Global Threats



**Other Names:** Cachalot, soufflé

**Length (m/ft):** 12-18m/ 40-60ft

**Weight (kg/lbs):** 20,000-60,000kg/ 45,000-130,000lbs

**Distinctive Markings:** With a single blowhole located on the left side of a giant square shaped head –which takes up to 1/3 of the overall body size– they have a distinctive angled bushy blow. Their skin is wrinkly, prune-like, and dark or brownish grey. There can be white markings around the lower jaw, which is barely visible when mouth closed and their bodies may have scars, especially in older males. The dorsal fin is absent and instead they have a triangular or rounded hump with 'knuckles' present from the hump down to the fluke. Sperm whales have triangular tail flukes with a thick keel stock which is raised high just before diving

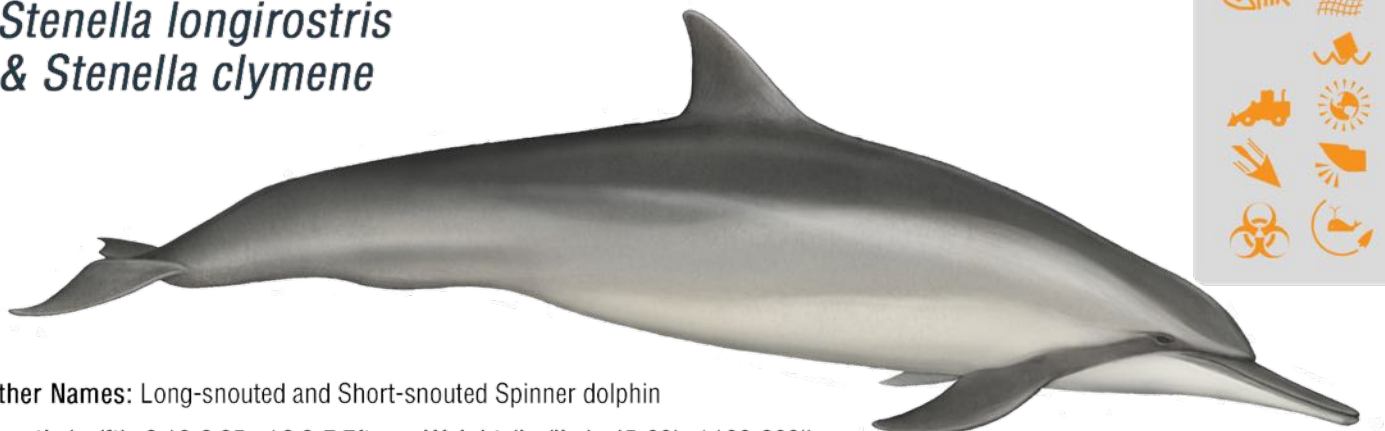
**Behaviour:** Average dive time is less than 45 minutes, but individuals can stay submerged for over two hours. Their main prey is deep water squid and they often surface near the same place that they dived. When at the surface, they usually remain relatively still however they are known to breach, spyhop, and lobtail and, if alarmed, are capable of high speeds. Individuals are split into two main groupings: bachelor schools of young males with older males tending to be solitary and females with young of both sexes usually numbering 20-25 individuals.

**IUCN Conservation status:** Vulnerable (VU)



# Spinner Dolphin & Clymene Dolphin

*Stenella longirostris*  
& *Stenella clymene*



## Global Threats



**Other Names:** Long-snouted and Short-snouted Spinner dolphin

**Length (m/ft):** 2.10-2.35m/ 6.8-7.7ft      **Weight (kg/lbs):** 45-90kg/ 100-200lbs

**Distinctive Markings:** These two species can be easily confused at sea as both have a dark grey or black cape dipping below the dorsal fin, with a lateral band of lighter grey along the side, and a paler, sometimes white or pinkish belly. Tip of beak and 'lips' are black and additional stripes and markings on the face can give the clymene dolphin a moustached appearance. Both species have a slightly falcate dorsal fin although spinner dolphins tend to have a more triangular shaped fin that leans forward instead of back. Both have long slender bodies and thin flippers.

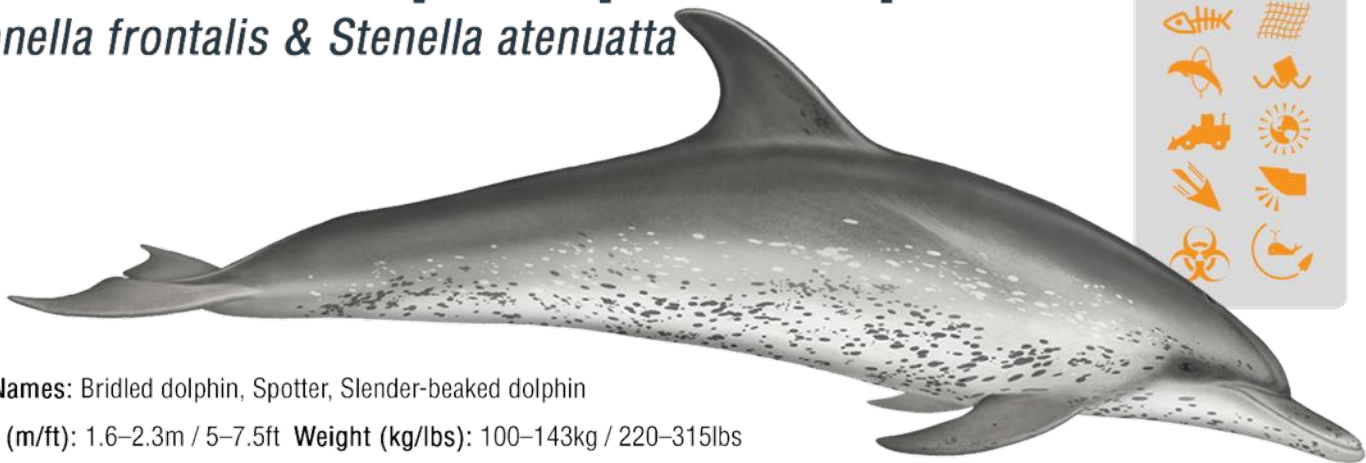
**Behaviour:** Highly energetic, leaping up to 3m (9ft) out of the water they can complete as many as 7 revolutions before reentering the water. Will commonly approach boats and bow ride for up to 30 minutes. Travel in groups ranging from 5-200 individuals. Feeding nocturnally on small pelagic fish, shrimp, and squid while resting inshore in coastal waters during the day.

**IUCN Conservation status:** Data Deficient (DD) (both)

# Atlantic & Pantropical Spotted Dolphin

*Stenella frontalis* & *Stenella attenuata*

## Global Threats



**Other Names:** Bridled dolphin, Spotter, Slender-beaked dolphin

**Length (m/ft):** 1.6–2.3m / 5–7.5ft **Weight (kg/lbs):** 100–143kg / 220–315lbs

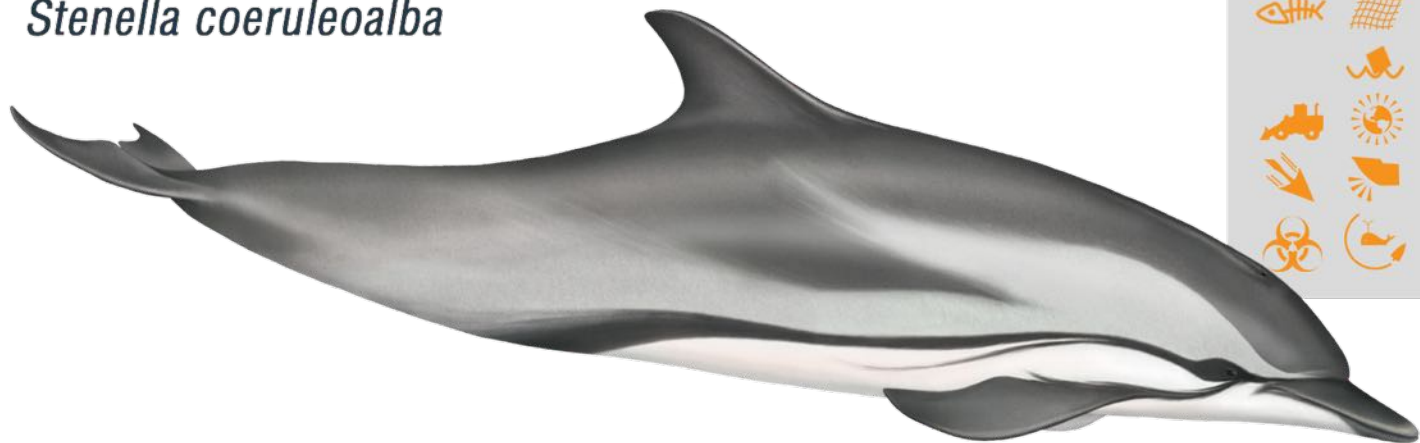
**Distinctive Markings:** Spotting in adults varies greatly from one individual to another, and from region to region, increasing with age. Newborn animals are unspotted. Juveniles develop dark spots on the underside of their bodies, followed by light spots on the upper side. Bodies are robust and compact with a dark cape, grey sides, and whitish belly. A paler grey band may be present along each side below the dark cape and in front of the dorsal fin. Atlantic and pantropical spotted dolphins can be difficult to tell apart. The pantropical species however tends to have a narrower, darker upper and lower jaw, with a dark band connecting the lower jaw and flippers.

**Behaviour:** Very active at the surface. Coastal populations of Atlantic spotted dolphins usually number between 5 to 15 individuals, with larger groups in offshore populations. Pantropical populations can form groups of between 50-1,000 individuals. Known to approach boats often, both species are fast swimmers and avid bowriders, frequently breaching and sometimes hurling themselves into the air, where they hang before falling back with a splash. In tuna fishing areas some individuals flee from boats.

**IUCN Conservation status:** Data Deficient (DD) & Least Concern (LC)

# Striped Dolphin

*Stenella coeruleoalba*



## Global Threats



**Other Names:** Gray's dolphin, Whitebelly, Streaker porpoise

**Length (m/ft):** 2.4-2.6m/ 7.8-8.5ft

**Weight (kg/lbs):** 90-150kg/ 200-330lbs

**Distinctive Markings:** The dorsal side of a striped dolphin is bluish grey and the underside a white to pink colour. The most distinguishable feature is a stripe running from the dark prominent beak, above the eye, across its flank and down to the underside at the rear of the body. Another stripe runs below the eye to the pectoral flipper. May or may not have a black patch around each eye.

**Behaviour:** Striped dolphins travel in groups from a few dozen individuals to over 500. While swimming at speed, up to 1/3 of the pod will be above the surface at any one time. Known to bow ride in some areas, they frequently breach, and are capable of amazing acrobatics including back somersaults, tail spins, and upside-down porpoising.

**IUCN Conservation status:** Least Concern (LC)

# Beaked whales: less common cetaceans

## Sowerby's beaked whale

*Mesoplodon bidens*

5 - 5.5m



IUCN Conservation status: Not Evaluated (NE)

## Gervais' beaked whale

*Mesoplodon europaeus*

4.5 - 5.2m



IUCN Conservation status: Not Evaluated (NE)



## True's beaked whale

*Mesoplodon mirus*

4.9 - 5.5m

IUCN Conservation status: Data Deficient (DD)

**Distinctive Markings:** The Ziphius family comprises of 21 species also known as beaked whales. All are medium to large-sized animals, with the females typically larger than males. With few exceptions, only males have 1 or 2 pairs of functional teeth on their lower jaw. Perhaps considered the most mysterious whales; in some cases only remnants of skulls or partial skeletons exist as evidence of living species at sea.

### Global Threats



## Blainville's beaked whale

*Mesoplodon densirostris*

4.4 - 4.6m



IUCN Conservation status: Data Deficient (DD)

## Cuvier's beaked whale

*Ziphius cavirostris*

5.5 - 7m



IUCN Conservation status: Least Concern (LC)

## ABOUT IUCN Red List of Threatened Species

The IUCN Red List Categories and Criteria are intended to be an easily and widely understood system for classifying species at high risk of global extinction. The general aim of the system is to provide an explicit, objective framework for the classification of the broadest range of species according to their extinction risk.

IUCN Red List Categories explained:

### EXTINCT (EX)

A taxon is *Extinct* when there is no reasonable doubt that the last individual has died. A taxon is presumed Extinct when exhaustive surveys in known and/or expected habitat, at appropriate times, throughout its historic range have failed to record an individual.

### EXTINCT IN THE WILD (EW)

A taxon is *Extinct in the Wild* when it is known only to survive in cultivation, in captivity or as a naturalized population (or populations) well outside the past range. A taxon is presumed Extinct in the Wild when exhaustive surveys in known and/or expected habitat, at appropriate times, throughout its historic range have failed to record an individual.

### CRITICALLY ENDANGERED (CR)

A taxon is *Critically Endangered* when the best available evidence indicates that it meets any of specific established criteria for Critically Endangered, and it is therefore considered to be facing an extremely high risk of extinction in the wild.

### ENDANGERED (EN)

A taxon is *Endangered* when the best available evidence indicates that it meets any of specific established criteria for Endangered, and it is therefore considered to be facing a very high risk of extinction in the wild.

### VULNERABLE (VU)

A taxon is *Vulnerable* when the best available evidence indicates that it meets any of specific established criteria for Vulnerable, and it is therefore considered to be facing a high risk of extinction in the wild.

### NEAR THREATENED (NT)

A taxon is *Near Threatened* when it has been evaluated against the criteria but does not qualify for Critically Endangered, Endangered or Vulnerable now, but is close to qualifying for or is likely to qualify for a threatened category in the near future.

### LEAST CONCERN (LC)

A taxon is *Least Concern* when it has been evaluated against the criteria and does not qualify for Critically Endangered, Endangered, Vulnerable or Near Threatened. Widespread and abundant taxa are included in this category.

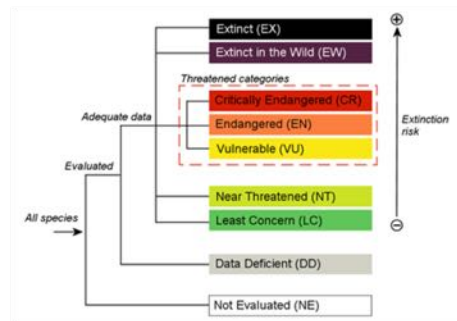
### DATA DEFICIENT (DD)

A taxon is *Data Deficient* when there is inadequate information to make a direct, or indirect, assessment of its risk of extinction based on its distribution and/or population status.

### NOT EVALUATED (NE)

A taxon is *Not Evaluated* when it has not yet been evaluated against the criteria.

Further information: <http://www.iucnredlist.org/>



Structure of IUCN Categories



