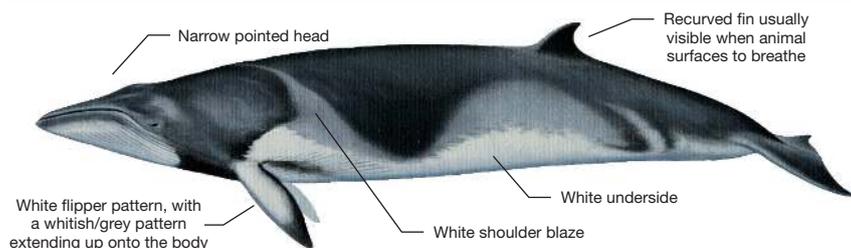


Dolphins & Small Whales of Northern Australia

IDENTIFICATION GUIDE

SMALL WHALES & LARGE DOLPHINS (OCEANIC) From 5 to 10 metres (16-30 feet) long

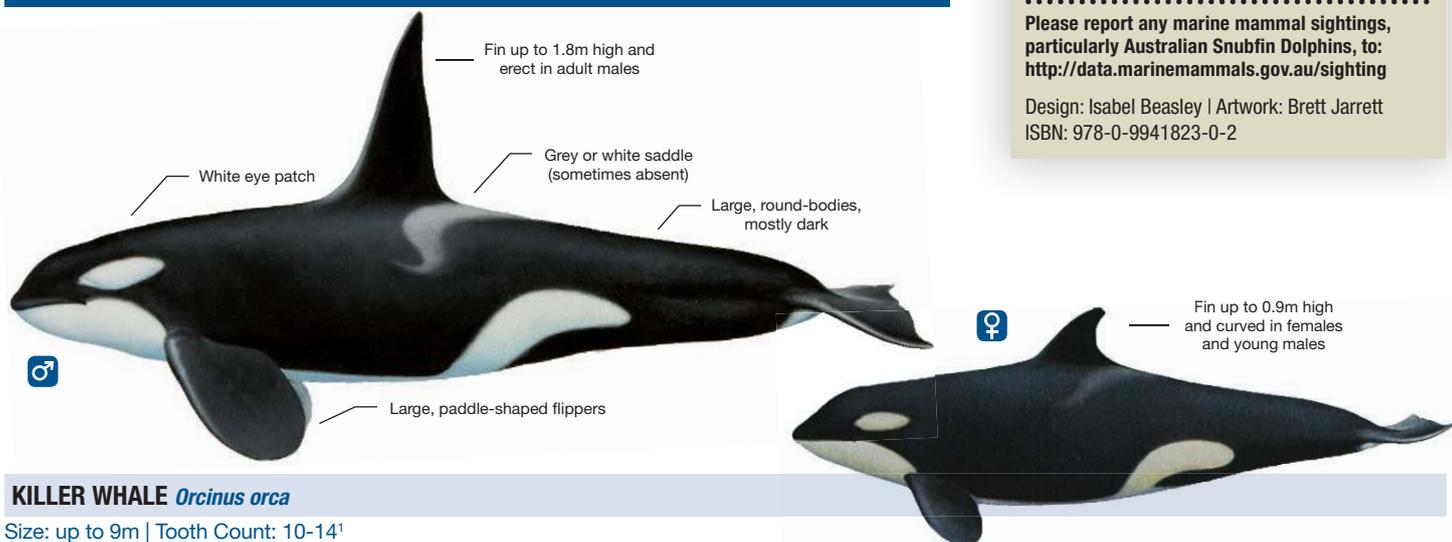
RELATIVELY SMALL FIN SET FAR BACK ON BODY



DWARF MINKE WHALE *Balaenoptera acutorostrata*

Size: up to 7.8m | Baleen Plates: 231-285 pairs of short, white/cream colored plates
Small, sleek, dark body. Usually seen singly or in small groups. Dwarf minke whale tends to be inquisitive and circle boats. The Antarctic minke whale, *Balaenoptera bonaerensis* may be sighted from May-August.

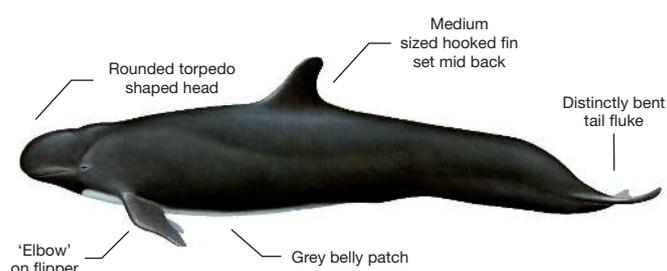
CONSPICUOUS BLACK AND WHITE MARKINGS



KILLER WHALE *Orcinus orca*

Size: up to 9m | Tooth Count: 10-14¹
Highly social. Groups (2-200+ individuals) often travel together, particularly in coastal areas. Fast swimmers with unpredictable movements and behaviour, sometimes inquisitive and approachable.

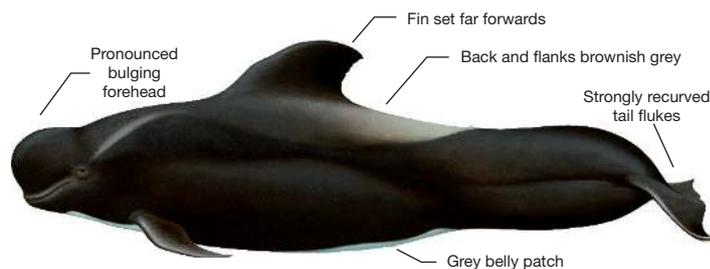
RECURVED FIN SET MID-BACK ON BODY



FALSE KILLER WHALE *Pseudorca crassidens*

Size: up to 6.1m | Tooth Count: 7-12
Group size varies from 10 to 100s, typically scattered over several kilometres. Fast-moving and energetic, very acrobatic and frequently bow-ride.

FIN CLOSER TO HEAD THAN TAIL



SHORT-FINNED PILOT WHALE *Globicephala macrorhynchus*

Size: up to 7.2m | Tooth Count: 7-9
Pilot whales form large groups. There are two species, not easily distinguishable at sea. The short-finned pilot whale, *Globicephala macrorhynchus* is most likely to be sighted around Northern Australia.



Australian Government

Department of the Environment



PLEASE REPORT ANY STRANDED WHALES, DOLPHINS OR DUGONGS TO THE FOLLOWING NUMBERS:

QUEENSLAND
RSPCA Hotline - 1300 ANIMAL (1300 264 625)

WESTERN AUSTRALIA
Department of Parks and Wildlife
Wildcare - 08 9474 9055

NORTHERN TERRITORY
Marine Wildwatch - 1800 453 941

Please report any marine mammal sightings, particularly Australian Snubfin Dolphins, to:
<http://data.marinemammals.gov.au/sighting>

Design: Isabel Beasley | Artwork: Brett Jarrett
ISBN: 978-0-9941823-0-2

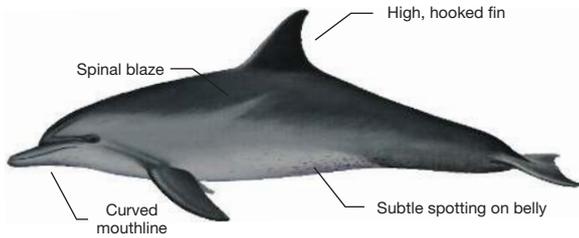
¹ Tooth counts are per tooth row, with typically 4 tooth rows. Some species have no upper tooth rows. Tooth counts based on Jefferson, T.A.J., Webber, M. & Pitman, R. 2007. *Marine Mammals of the World: A Comprehensive Guide to their Identification*.

BEAKED DOLPHINS

Less than 5 metres (16 feet) long

MEDIUM BEAK

COASTAL: DISTINCT MELON ON FOREHEAD, LARGE FIN



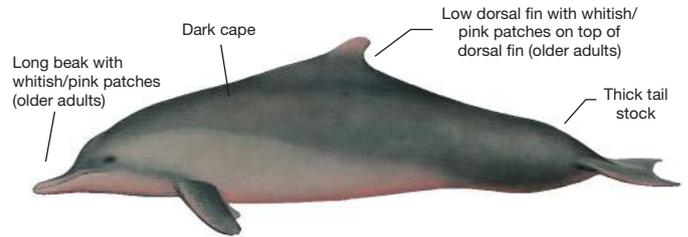
INDO-PACIFIC BOTTLENOSE DOLPHIN *Tursiops aduncus*

Size: up to 2.6m | Tooth Count: 21-29

Generally playful, approachable and inquisitive. Occasionally bow-ride, although groups can also be shy and less playful. Distinguished from other inshore dolphins by their high, curved dorsal fin.

LONG BEAK

COASTAL: LOW, WIDE DORSAL FIN

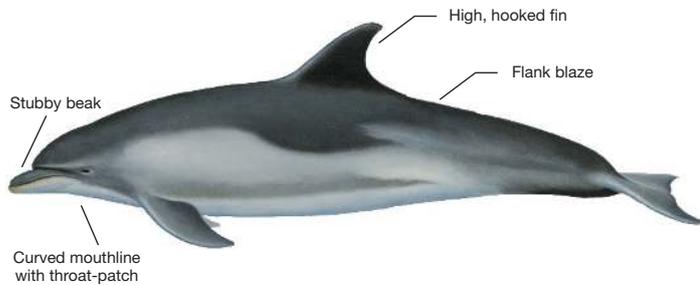


AUSTRALIAN HUMPBACK DOLPHIN *Sousa sahulensis*

Size: Up to 2.7m | Tooth Count: 31-35

Slow moving coastal species that rarely bow-ride or leap out of water. Usually seen in small groups of up to six animals. Mottled light to dark grey in colour, with patches of whitish/pink on dorsal fin and head in older adults.

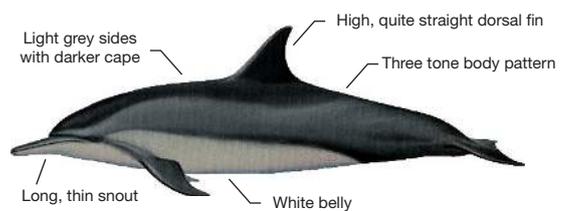
OCEANIC: LARGE FIN & LARGE GROUP SIZE



COMMON BOTTLENOSE DOLPHIN *Tursiops truncatus*

Size: up to 3.8m | Tooth Count: 18-27

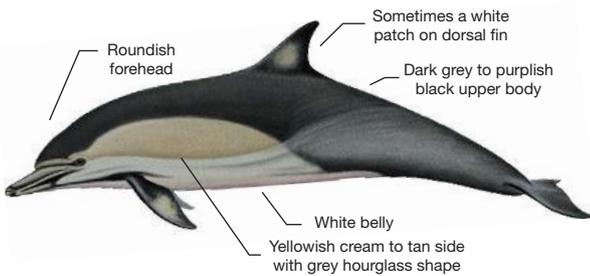
Large, strong swimmer, that spends a lot of time at the surface. Group size from 10 to 100s. Very playful, frequently bow-ride, with numerous associated acrobatics.



SPINNER DOLPHIN *Stenella longirostris*

Size: up to 2m | Tooth Count: 40-62

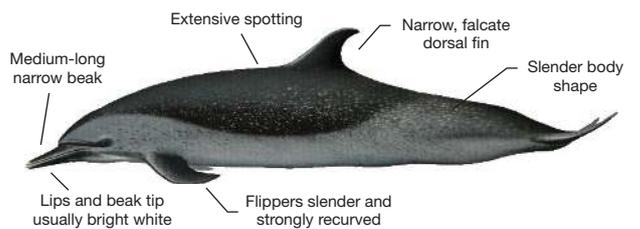
Some groups rest in shallow coastal waters and oceanic islands during the day, however most groups primarily oceanic. Very small, fast, highly acrobatic dolphin which can 'spin' when leaping.



SHORT-BEAKED COMMON DOLPHIN *Delphinus delphis*

Size: up to 2.4m | Tooth Count: 41-57

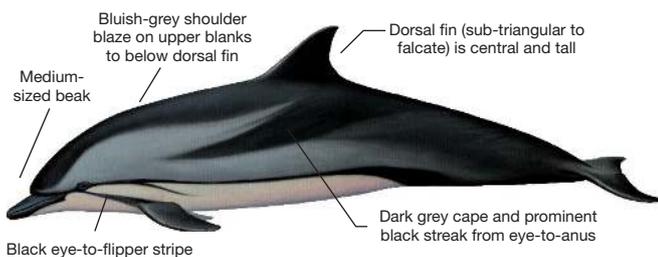
Distinct 'hourglass' colour pattern on sides. Usually seen in open ocean, often in large schools.



PANTROPICAL SPOTTED DOLPHIN *Stenella attenuata*

Size: up to 2.5m | Tooth Count: 34-48

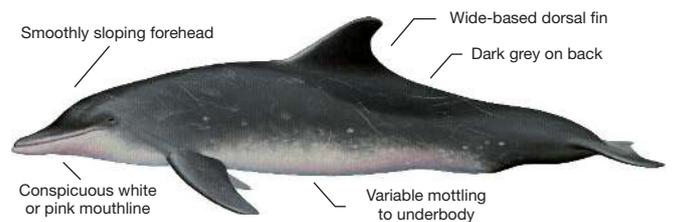
Extensive spotting over body is visible when close to individuals, young animals unspotted (some populations little or no spotting visible). Fast and acrobatic, frequently bow rides. Lips and beak tip usually white.



STRIPED DOLPHIN *Stenella coeruleoalba*

Size: up to 2.7m | Tooth Count: 40-55

Fast, energetic swimmer, bow-rides in some areas. Black eye-to-flipper stripe and shoulder blaze the main distinguishing features.



ROUGH-TOOTHED DOLPHIN *Steno bredanensis*

Size: up to 2.7m | Tooth Count: 19-28

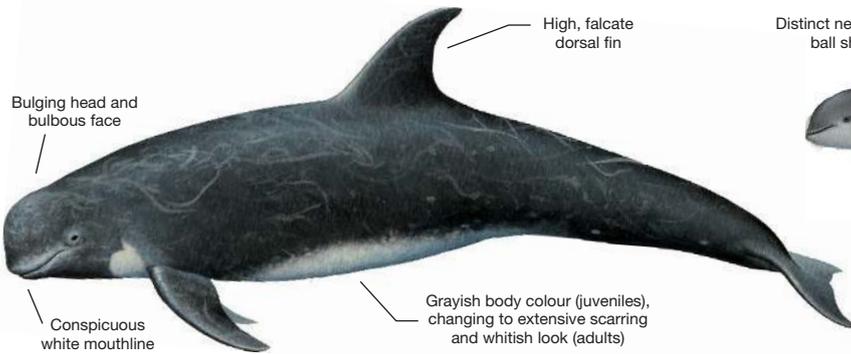
Usually sluggish and does not porpoise out of the water when traveling. Often swims shoulder-to-shoulder with others in group, with beak and tip of chin out of water. Occasionally leaps out of water. Sloping forehead the main distinguishing feature.

BLUNT HEADED DOLPHINS & DUGONG

Less than 5 metres (16 feet) long

LARGE DORSAL FIN

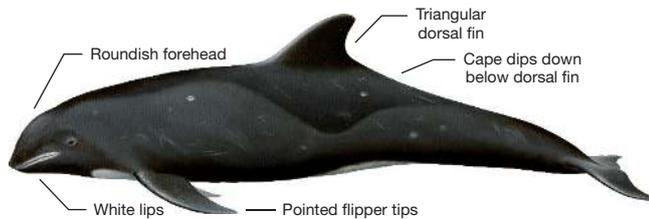
OCEANIC: LARGE BODY SIZE



RISSO'S DOLPHIN *Grampus griseus*

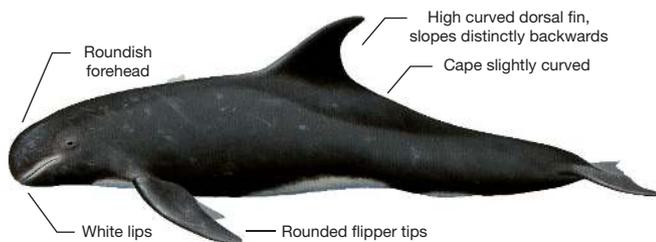
Size: up to 4m | Tooth Count: 2-7 (lower), 0 (upper)
Often active at the surface, forming lines when hunting. Group size of 5-50+. Often extensive scarring over body.

OCEANIC: SMALL BODY SIZE



MELON-HEADED WHALE *Peponocephala electra*

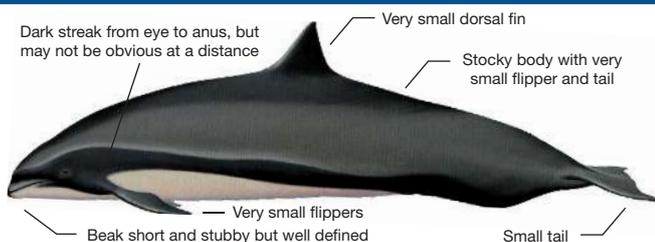
Size: up to 2.8m | Tooth Count: 20-25
Fast swimmer, porpoising regularly in low leaps with much spray, highly gregarious. Dark cape dips down below dorsal fin. Flippers have pointed tips. White chin/lips.



PYGMY KILLER WHALE *Feresa attenuata*

Size: up to 2.8m | Tooth Count: 8-13
Commonly sighted in small groups of 6-10 individuals, which roll synchronously shoulder-to-shoulder. Often a slow sluggish swimmer. Dark cape sweeps down slightly near dorsal fin. Flippers have rounded tips. White chin/lips.

OCEANIC: SMALL BODY SIZE & VERY SHORT BEAK

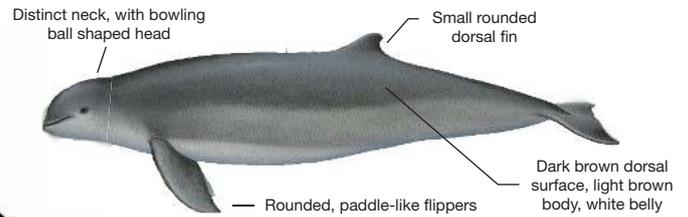


FRASER'S DOLPHIN *Lagenodelphis hosei*

Size: up to 2.7m | Tooth Count: 38-44
Usually seen in open ocean off the continental shelf. Fast, aggressive swimmers with a lot of splashing. Commonly in large groups of 100s to even 1000s.

SMALL DORSAL FIN

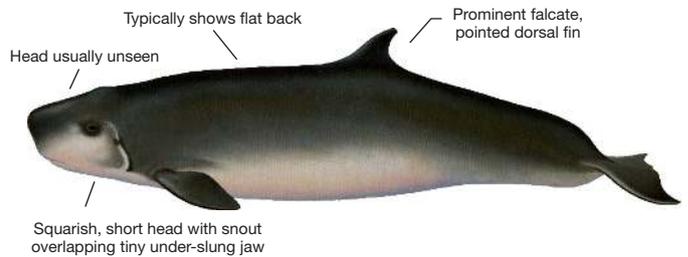
COASTAL: ROUND HEAD & SHY



AUSTRALIAN SNUBFIN DOLPHIN *Orcaella heinsohni*

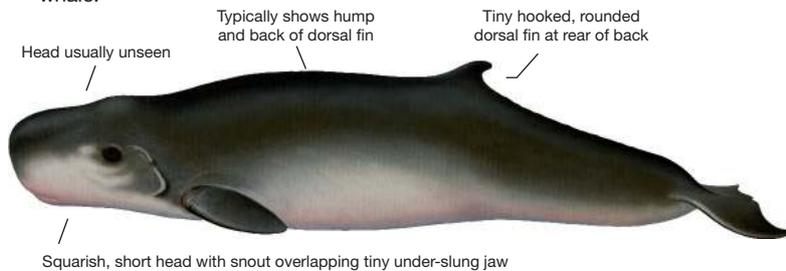
Size: up to 2.3m | Tooth Count: 11-22
Occurs singly or in small groups, sometimes up to 20 individuals. Commonly sighted near mangrove, river habitats. Shy and does not bow-ride, keeps low on the surface.

OCEANIC: LOGGING AT SURFACE



DWARF SPERM WHALE *Kogia sima*

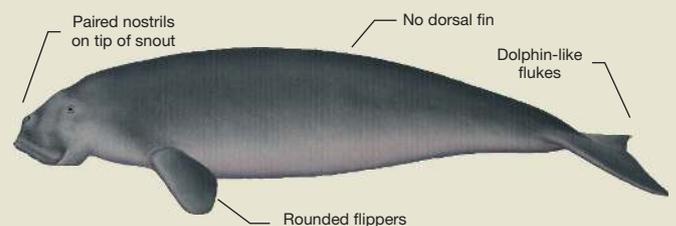
Size: up to 2.7m | Tooth Count: 7-13 (lower), 3 (upper)
Smaller size with tall, pointed dorsal fin distinguishes the dwarf from pygmy sperm whale. Inconspicuous surfacing similar to pygmy sperm whale.



PYGMY SPERM WHALE *Kogia breviceps*

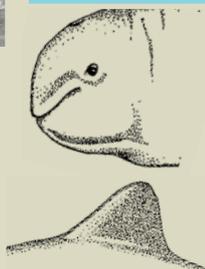
Size: up to 3.5m | Tooth Count: 10-16 (lower), 0 (upper)
Difficult to detect unless sea conditions calm. Typically rises to surface and floats motionless with blowhole and back out of water, then sinks below surface without rolling.

DUGONG *Dugong dugon*



Size: up to 3.3m
More robust and slow moving than a dolphin. Round grey-brown body, usually seen singly or in small aggregations, although large groups of 100's can sometimes be seen.

Coastal species identification



AUSTRALIAN SNUBFIN DOLPHIN

Orcaella heinsohni

Fin: Small, triangular, rounded tip

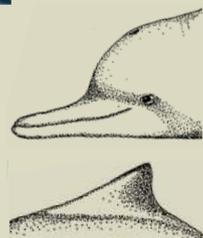
Colour: Brownish to grey

Face: Blunt, no snout

Length: Up to 2.3m

Habitat & Behaviour:

Endemic to Australia, occur in coastal waters within 10km of coastline and less than 15m depth, very site attached, usually found within 20km of estuary mouths. Feed and socialise in just 1-2m of water in estuaries (which are their critical habitat). Often found in groups of 5-6 dolphins. May spit water as a method of herding fish.



AUSTRALIAN HUMPBAC DOLPHIN

Sousa sahalensis

Fin: Low & wide, triangular, pointed tip

Colour: Pale grey, adults have pink patches on snout & dorsal fin

Face: Long, pointed snout

Length: Up to 2.7m

Habitat & Behaviour:

Usually seen in coastal waters less than 15m deep (but up to 30m), feed in or near estuaries, in water depths of 2-5m (slightly deeper than snubfins). Usually found in small groups of 2-5 animals, but groups of up to 10-30 animals have also been reported. Known to follow trawlers as a method of hunting fish.



INDO-PACIFIC BOTTLENOSE DOLPHIN

Tursiops aduncus

Fin: Tall & curved

Colour: Light to dark grey

Face: Distinct forehead, medium length snout

Length: Up to 2.6m

Habitat & Behaviour:

Indo-Pacific bottlenose dolphins can be found inshore in shallow coastal waters including estuaries, mangroves, beaches and bays. Very approachable, occasionally bow-ride and exhibit aerial activity. Found in groups of 1-10, but can occur in groups of 20s in some areas.



DUGONG *Dugong dugon*

Fin: No fin

Colour: Grey to brown

Face: Blunt, no pronounced snout

Length: Up to 3.3m

Habitat & Behaviour:

Dugongs generally live in warm shallow waters where their primary food source, seagrass, occurs. Commonly found in water depths of 10 metres or less. Seagrass beds form part of their critical habitat. Known to travel distances of up to 600km. Usually shy and avoid boats.