

















# Whales and dolphins around the British Isles I

<p><b>Harbour Porpoise</b></p>  <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Small and stocky, 1.4 - 1.8m</li> <li>• Small triangular dorsal fin</li> <li>• Dark grey or brown colour</li> <li>• No beak, no forehead bulge</li> <li>• Unobtrusive</li> <li>• Usually in small groups or individuals</li> </ul>	<p><b>Long Finned Pilot Whale</b></p>  <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Mainly black whale, 4 - 6m</li> <li>• Bulbous rounded head</li> <li>• Low backwards pointing dorsal fin</li> <li>• Long flippers (front fins)</li> <li>• Usually in tight compact schools</li> <li>• More often seen in deeper water</li> </ul>
<p><b>Common Dolphin</b></p>  <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Commonest in South-west</li> <li>• Small dolphin, 1.6 - 2.5m</li> <li>• Dorsal fin slender &amp; curved</li> <li>• Hourglass pattern on sides</li> <li>• Lower flanks cream, pale grey behind</li> <li>• Streamlined body, slender beak</li> <li>• Breaches and bow-rides</li> </ul>	<p><b>Killer Whale or Orca</b></p>  <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Very large, males grow to 9m</li> <li>• Noticeably black and white</li> <li>• Distinct white oval patch behind eyes</li> <li>• Pale saddle-patch behind dorsal fin</li> <li>• Males have very tall erect dorsal fin</li> <li>• Acrobatic, fast and active, breaches</li> </ul>
<p><b>Bottlenose Dolphin</b></p>  <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Large, robust dolphin, up to 4m</li> <li>• Large central curved dorsal fin</li> <li>• Uniform grey or brown colour</li> <li>• Pale undersides</li> <li>• Distinct short beak, rounded forehead</li> <li>• Acrobatic, breaches and bow-rides</li> </ul>	<p><b>Minke Whale</b></p>  <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Most common baleen whale in UK</li> <li>• Large, 7 - 9m long; triangular head</li> <li>• Curved dorsal fin 2/3rds along back</li> <li>• Brief arching roll</li> <li>• Large white stripe across flippers</li> <li>• Often seen quite close to shore</li> </ul>
<p><b>White-beaked Dolphin</b></p>  <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Common in N. Sea / N.W. Britain</li> <li>• Stocky dolphin, 2.5 - 2.8m</li> <li>• Black with white on sides and over back behind fin</li> <li>• Tall, curved dorsal fin.</li> <li>• Short, thick beak, white-tipped</li> <li>• Breaches and bow-rides</li> </ul>	<p><b>Fin Whale</b></p>  <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Huge baleen whale, 18 - 24m</li> <li>• White right lower jaw; pointed head</li> <li>• Long, slow shallow roll</li> <li>• Small dorsal fin seen soon after blow</li> <li>• Tall cone-shape blow, up to 6m high</li> <li>• Usually seen offshore in deeper waters</li> </ul>

Please report sightings to Sea Watch Foundation Email: [sightings@seawatchfoundation.org.uk](mailto:sightings@seawatchfoundation.org.uk), Tel: 01545 561227, Web: [www.seawatchfoundation.org.uk](http://www.seawatchfoundation.org.uk)

# Whales and dolphins around the British Isles II

<p><b>Humpback Whale</b></p>  <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Robust whale, 11.5 - 15m</li><li>• Low dorsal fin 2/3 along the back</li><li>• Knobs on head and lower jaw</li><li>• Long flippers with white markings</li><li>• Tail has serrated edge and is white underneath</li><li>• May breach, lobtail and flipper slap</li></ul>	<p><b>Sei Whale</b></p>  <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Rare visitor from deep waters</li><li>• Slender dark grey whale, 13.7 - 21m</li><li>• V-shaped, slightly arched head</li><li>• Tall dorsal fin erect, strongly sickle shaped and 2/3 along back</li><li>• Vertical, bushy blow, 3m high</li><li>• Fin usually shows same time as blow</li></ul>
<p><b>Sperm Whale</b></p>  <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Large deep-water toothed whale, 8.3-15.8m</li><li>• Male much larger than female, huge square head, small lower jaw</li><li>• Cigar-shaped, skin corrugations</li><li>• Small distinct triangular dorsal hump</li><li>• Bushy blow up to 5m high, directed forwards and to left</li></ul>	<p><b>Northern Bottlenose Whale</b></p>  <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Rare, offshore species</li><li>• Long, robust cylindrical whale, 7 - 9m</li><li>• Bulbous forehead</li><li>• Short dolphin-like beak</li><li>• Tall, erect, hooked dorsal fin</li><li>• Body chocolate to olive brown</li><li>• Slightly forward pointing bushy blow</li></ul>
<p><b>Risso's Dolphin</b></p>  <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Large dolphin, up to 3.8m</li><li>• Mature adults very pale to white.</li><li>• Often heavily scarred head to fin</li><li>• Tall curved dorsal fin</li><li>• Large rounded head, no beak</li><li>• Breaches and spy-hops</li></ul>	<p><b>Atlantic White-sided Dolphin</b></p>  <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Offshore species, often in large groups</li><li>• Small dolphin, 2.1 - 2.6m</li><li>• Dorsal fin tall and curved</li><li>• Sloping black head and black on back</li><li>• Cream/white into yellow flank patches</li><li>• No white on back behind fin</li><li>• Breaches and occasionally bow-rides</li></ul>
<p><b>Cuvier's Beaked Whale</b></p>  <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Rare, deep-(warm)water species</li><li>• Long, robust whale 5.1 – 6.9m</li><li>• Small sloping head, slightly concaved</li><li>• Triangular, slightly hooked dorsal fin</li><li>• Back dark rust brown, grey or fawn</li><li>• In older adults, almost white head and back of neck</li></ul>	<p><b>Sowerby's Beaked Whale</b></p>  <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Rare, deep-water whale</li><li>• Slender dark grey body, 5.0 - 5.5m</li><li>• Small head, slightly concaved forehead</li><li>• Long slender beak</li><li>• Two flattened teeth protruding from middle of lower jaw in adult males</li><li>• Triangular or slightly hooked fin</li></ul>

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