



UK Sightings Network News

December 2012

Sightings Summary

Unsurprisingly, sightings declined from 389 in October to 308 in November. We would expect the number of sighting reports to stabilise over the next couple of months before picking up again in the spring, as it has done in the last two years. It should, however, be pointed out that we have had more reports this November than in 2010 and 2011.

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Regional Round-ups

A breakdown of sightings by region.

[Read more...](#)

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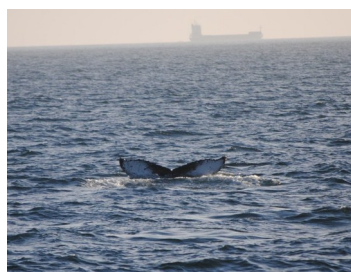
Questions or comments? E-mail us at sightings@seawatchfoundation.org.uk or phone 01545 561227

Editorial

Welcome to Sea Watch's "new-look" newsletters! After much deliberating, we hope that this format will provide you with an interesting read, as well as keeping you up to date with cetacean observations near you and around the UK. I would welcome any contributions to this newsletter in the form of photos or news articles, and encourage you to get in touch with any comments that you have about the newsletters. Many thanks to all the observers, boat operators, and regional coordinators for their sightings and support!!! Particular thanks also to Jessica Case and Mark Hosford for their help managing incoming sightings during October and November. Merry Christmas!!

Danielle Gibas, SWF Sightings Officer

Photo of the month



This great shot of a humpback whale was taken by SWF Regional Coordinator and Chairman of the board of trustees, Robin Petch, off Whitby, N. Yorks on 20th October. Humpbacks rarely "fluke up" in UK waters so this is an extraordinary photo. Well done Robin!

*To have your photo featured in the section, please send it to
danielle.gibas@seawatchfoundation.org.uk*

Dates for your diary

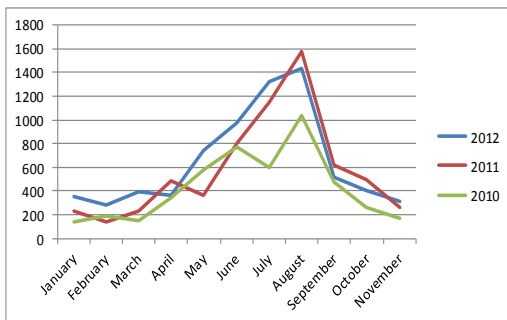
Closing date for 2013
internship applications
31st January 2013

National Whale and Dolphin
Watch

27th July—4th August 2013

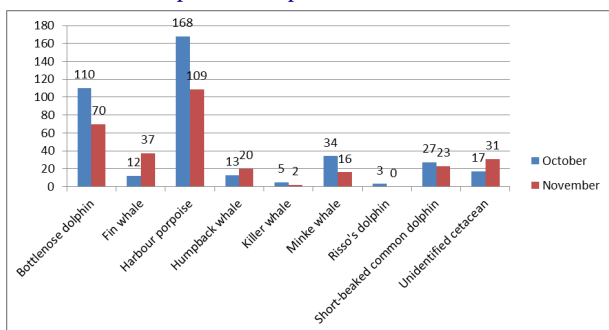
Sightings Summary

Unsurprisingly, sightings declined from 389 in October to 308 in November. We would expect the number of sighting reports to stabilise over the next couple of months before picking up again in the spring, as it has done in the last two years. It should, however, be pointed out that we have had more reports this November than in 2010 and 2011. This is in large part thanks to the fantastic diversity of marine mammal life that was logged off the Republic of Ireland last month by members of the Irish Whale and Dolphin Group.



Number of sightings per month for 2010, 2011 and 2012

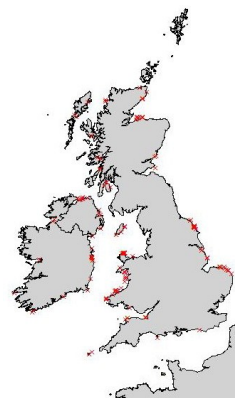
Despite lower light levels and inclement weather, observers around the country have been diligently surveying whenever possible, enabling us to report on sightings of eight species for October and seven in November. Most of these displayed the anticipated seasonal trends in distribution, with the exception of a few surprises!



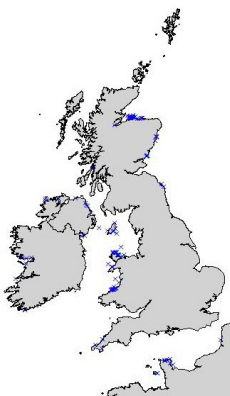
Number of sightings per species during October and November 2012

Harbour porpoise was the most regularly reported species – 168 sightings in October, 109 sightings in November. The locations of these sightings were widespread around most of the British and Irish coastlines, which is typical of this species' regular year round occurrence in these waters. The largest group, comprising 40 animals, was noted off the Isles of Scilly on 22nd October.

Bottlenose dolphins saw a major decline in their number of sightings – no sightings in October, 70 sightings in November. This marked decrease can be explained, at least in part, by the cessation of Sea Watch's land-watches and boat surveys in Cardigan Bay, where Britain's largest coastal bottlenose dolphin population resides (see news item). Nevertheless, the distribution of sightings of this species highlights the locations of these well-documented populations in the Moray Firth and Cardigan Bay. And indeed, these sightings constitute the bulk of reports. Other reports, including a group of 100 animals, came from the Isle of Man and North Wales, indicating the beginning of the winter northward movement of the Cardigan Bay population. In Ireland, Counties Antrim, Clare, Donegal, and Louth were all witness to bottlenose dolphins. Cornwall and the Channel Islands also had some reports of this species. Finally, in addition to Moray Firth sightings, the rest of eastern Scotland had its share of bottlenose dolphins, with reports from Aberdeen and Arbroath in Aberdeenshire whilst there was one report from the Hebrides. The most unusual bottlenose sightings occurred in Northeast England with a group of 70 animals reported off Seahouses Northumberland (see news item).



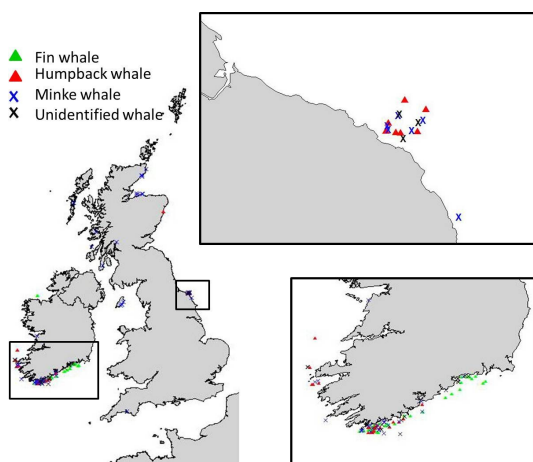
Harbour porpoise sightings in Oct-Nov 2012. [Click map for large image](#)



Bottlenose dolphin sightings in Oct-Nov 2012. [Click map for large image](#)



Sightings Summary (continued)



Whale sightings Oct-Nov 2012. [Click map for large image](#)

Minke whale sightings also declined from October to November – 34 sightings in October, and 16 sightings in November. This species was seen at a number of different locations: Northeast of Scotland (Caithness and Moray Firth), the Hebrides, Isle of Man; off Whitby in North Yorkshire; the south coast of Ireland, and even off Plymouth in Devon (report made by the Durlston Marine Project). The traditional view of seasonal movements of minke whales at these latitudes is that they travel offshore and generally southwards into warmer waters. However, in recent years, possibly due to better

coverage, we are observing minke whales around the British Isles and Ireland over the winter months. One particularly interesting sighting was of two minke whales on 25th November near the Isle of Muck in the Inner Hebrides, one of which was a newborn calf. This suggests that at least some minke whales breed in our waters, which had not been known before.

Interestingly, fin whale sightings demonstrated an almost mirror image trend to that of the minke whale, with 12 sightings in October and 37 in November. All of these sightings were on the south coast of Ireland. This coastline has long been known for its fin whales, particularly in autumn and winter. These waters provide excellent feeding grounds for large whales at this time of year, and there is evidence that some breed here during the winter months.

Humpback whales were reported in good numbers – 13 sightings in October, and 20 sightings in November. In this instance, they were not only seen off the coast of Ireland along with the other whale species, but also were spotted repeatedly off Whitby, in North Yorkshire (see news item). In addition, there was a single “probable” humpback sighted off Belhaven, Aberdeenshire.

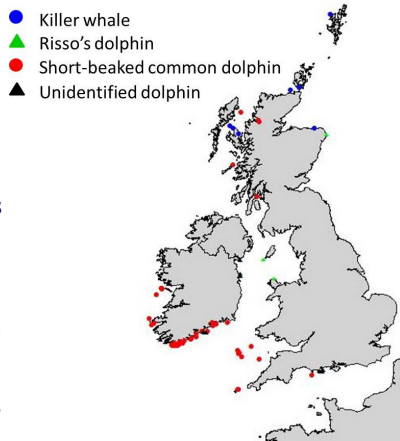
Short-beaked common dolphin sightings saw little change between October and November – 27 sightings in October, and 23 sightings in November. The majority of these records were made from the south of Ireland. Other groups were reported from the Celtic Sea and off the Isles of Scilly. There were also four sightings reported off the west coast of Scotland including a very large group in Loch Broom, Highland Region (see news item). Common dolphins were also seen off Portland Bill in Dorset by observers from the Durlston Marine Project.



Sightings Summary (continued)

Killer whales were seen seven times in total, with five sightings in October, and two sightings in November. Sightings were reported exclusively from Scotland: the Hebrides, Caithness, Moray, and the Shetland Isles. The most spectacular of these took place in Ronas Voe, Shetland where a large pod numbering c. 50 orcas was reported. For photos from Shetland Wildlife, click [here](#).

Risso's dolphins were seen exclusively in October (with just three sightings). They were observed from both the Isle of Man and North Wales in October (see news item). There was also a sighting of this species just north of Peterhead, Aberdeenshire (see news item).



Dolphin sightings in Oct-Nov 2012. [Click map for large image](#)

Sea Watch News

We had a Whale of a time...



Almost 6,000 visitors from across Europe landed on Brighton's shores on 27th and 28th October for Whale Fest 2012. Organised by Brighton based Planet Whale, the world's largest celebration of wild whales and dolphins was a huge success, more than doubling the number of visitors from 2011. A combination of workshops and lectures were on offer as well as a number of attractions which included 35 life sized whales and dolphins, virtual whale watching trips, a try dive tank and, of course, the Sea Watch Foundation stand!

The event gave the Sea Watch team (Chiara, Georgina, Wendy, Robin and Kris) the chance to spend two days catching up with cetacean enthusiasts from all around the world. The SWF stand attracted a lot of attention, particularly the 'Face in a Hole' board! A few people even tried the UK cetacean ID quiz, and impressed us with their ID skills. For anyone who found the quiz tricky, our Yorkshire regional coordinator Robin Petch was on hand with his scheduled 'Cetacean ID Workshop' which ran on both days and was very successful, despite clashing with personalities, Mark Carwardine and Bill Oddie. Regional coordinators from Sussex, Stephen Savage and Kate Green, joined the team for the day on Sunday, and were able to offer local knowledge of cetacean sightings in the area, and encourage local people to get involved. Overall, we felt that Whale Fest was a massive success and we hope to see you all again there next year!

More information at www.whale-fest.com

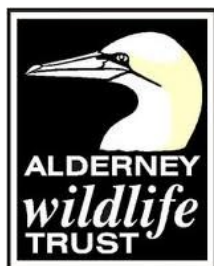


Sea Watch News

End of season for the New Quay Office

The 26th October brought the 2012 field season to a close at the New Quay Sea Watch Office. There have been many highlights this season: outstanding encounters with large groups of bottlenose dolphins in Cardigan Bay, a well-deserved minke whale sighting off Anglesey, and a sunny National Whale and Dolphin Watch in New Quay to name but a few. For Sea Watch staff, the most memorable aspect of the season will, as always, be the hard work and laughter contributed by our team of volunteers. Without their help in the field in and out of the office, we just couldn't have achieved all that we have this year. Thanks guys, and we wish you all the very best of luck in the future!!!

Training course in the Channel Islands with Alderney Wildlife Trust



The weekend of the 27th October was a weekend of "firsts" for Danielle, SWF Sightings Officer. First time in a Trislander Plane, first visit to the Channel Islands, first sight of a sea state seven (or was it eight??). Arriving on Alderney, the northernmost of the Channel Islands, on Friday 26th, Danielle was just in time to join the last day of the Inter-Island Conference. This is an annual meeting between representatives from all of the Channel Islands. Various topics are covered, and this year's agenda included marine mammal and seabird monitoring.

The following day was dedicated to a Sea Watch cetacean Identification course which was open to the public. Danielle started the morning by giving lectures introducing the Sightings Network and cetacean data collection. At midday, everyone headed out to a view point to conduct a very wind-swept land-watch. After an hour of doggedly scanning the waves for the sight of a dorsal fin, the group called off the land-watch, and headed back indoors for a cup of tea and ID-quiz. Despite the lack of sightings, the course served its purpose well. The attendees should be able to confidently collect effort data, both from land and at sea, and have a good basic knowledge of cetacean identification. We look forward to hearing of their sightings!!

We'd like to thank the Alderney Wildlife Trust for their invitation, and hope that this course will be the first step to developing a comprehensive cetacean monitoring network around the island.

Fieldwork success for Bangor University Marine Mammal Module

Every year in October, Sea Watch staff Daphna Feingold and Danielle Gibas join SWF Director, Peter Evans, in North Wales to deliver the *Marine Mammal Module* to students at Bangor University. The module comprises a series of lectures on various aspects of marine mammal biology (conservation, data collection and analyses, cetacean ID, etc.), which are followed by a weekend of fieldwork. For this year's fieldwork, students were split into two groups. One group joined Lauren Hughes, SWF North Wales Regional Coordinator and Jan Hiddink, Senior Lecturer at the School of Ocean Sciences on a land watch at Point Lynas, Anglesey. The second group surveyed the north coast of Anglesey onboard *R.V. Prince Madog* with Danielle and Peter. Unbeknown to all, this was to be the most successful field trip ever to take place during a marine mammal module.



Sea Watch News (continued)

Fieldwork success for Bangor University Marine Mammal Module (continued)

Point Lynas did not disappoint either and the land-watch team was treated to the sight of porpoises foraging throughout their land-watch on both days of the weekend. This was not unexpected as Point Lynas is notorious for providing good views of porpoises, particularly at high tide. However, it was the vessel based surveys where the surprise lay. Not only were bottlenose dolphins spotted in groups of 40 and 45 individuals respectively, on Saturday and Sunday, but on the Sunday *Prince Madog* team were also witness to a group of four Risso's dolphins quietly travelling along the north coast of Anglesey - the first sighting of this species off Anglesey this year. Three species in two days! How's that for an introduction to cetacean surveying?

Sea Watch Foundation at ASCOBANS



On 22nd- 24th October, Peter Evans, SWF Director, joined government representatives from eight countries as well as representatives of international organizations such as the European Commission, the International Whaling Commission (IWC), the OSPAR Commission, the sister Agreement in the Mediterranean (ACCOBAMS) and the North Atlantic Marine Mammal Commission (NAMMCO) in Brighton, to decide future priorities to better protect small whales, porpoises and dolphins under the Agreement on the Conservation of Small Cetaceans of the Baltic, North East Atlantic, Irish and North Seas (ASCOBANS). The meeting agreed a number of measures to protect these marine mammals in European waters.

A new Conservation Plan for the Harbour Porpoise Population in the Western Baltic, the Belt Sea and the Kattegat aims to intensify research and conservation efforts in this heavily used sea area shared by Denmark, Germany and Sweden. Activities such as fishing, marine construction, extraction of resources and shipping can be a threat to harbour porpoises. Experts expect that the plan will help not only to understand better the scope of the threats but also to address them effectively. To this end, governments, the private sector, IGOs and NGOs are joining forces with the aim of reducing threats, particularly bycatch in fishing nets, supporting research and monitoring as well as safeguarding suitable habitats for the harbour porpoise and its prey species. This Plan adds to the two existing Conservation Plans for the harbour porpoise, one for the North Sea and the other for the Baltic proper.

In addition, participants agreed on priorities for research and conservation actions in the western part of the ASCOBANS Area, which comprises the Irish Sea and the European North Atlantic. A large diversity of whale and dolphin species, as well as the harbour porpoise, roam these waters. However, knowledge of their abundance and distribution as well as the magnitude of different threats remains scarce. Member States in the region therefore agreed to collaborate closely towards enhancing data collection in order to close these knowledge gaps. A working group for this area has been established, which Peter Evans chairs.

Sea Watch News (continued)

Sea Watch Foundation at ASCOBANS (continued)

As chemical pollution, primarily from PCBs, continues to affect marine mammals, new types of contaminants are also entering the seas, with poorly understood effects on marine life. Member States identified priority research areas in order to improve the understanding of how lesser-studied contaminants or those of particular concern affect individuals and populations. They also stressed the need to limit the introduction of chemical substances into the marine environment.

For more information go to www.ascobans.org

Welcome to our new Regional Coordinator

We would like to welcome a new recruit to the Sea Watch team! Wildlife enthusiast, Adrian Clarke, has recently been appointed as Regional Coordinator for Cumbria. Passionate about all marine life, Adrian aims to increase public involvement in cetacean conservation as much as possible.

Adrian explains: *My interest in marine mammals started when I was a youngster sea fishing for shark with my father. I was fascinated by the diversity of marine mammals around the Scottish coastline. Later, I took a great interest in wildlife rehabilitation and have followed various wildlife rescue and rehabilitation courses. I applied for the Regional Coordinator post as I feel it's important to protect our marine mammals and educate the public on the work accomplished by the Sea Watch Foundation and ways in which they can become involved in cetacean conservation.*



Look out for future events in Cumbria, and if you are keen to get started or would like to report a cetacean sighting in Cumbria, contact Adrian at kungfuclarke@gmail.com.

Sightings News

Cetacean activity in Whitby, North Yorkshire

The week of the 15th October provided some excellent cetacean spotting on the east coast of England. Robin Petch (Sea Watch Regional Coordinator and Chair of Trustees) not only saw minke whales when sailing onboard *Specksionneer* but has also witnessed the, now yearly, appearance of humpback whales off Whitby.

Robin explains: *"On the 18th October, there were two animals; one was a juvenile and another large whale with a big blow was seen in the distance. I believe Chris got some video footage so we hope to be able to identify these animals. They may be the same two which overwintered in the North Sea and were frequently seen off Scotland. Or maybe our 2010 humpback has returned?"*



Sightings News (continued)

Cetacean activity in Whitby, North Yorkshire (continued)



Humpback whale— Robin Petch

Three days later, we saw a single humpback again. It was feeding, coming up head first, water streaming from its mouth and we even heard the jaws clack shut a couple of times! It buzzed the boat a number of times from all angles! Unfortunately, on our afternoon trip, we had to cut the encounter short when a really thick fog came in from nowhere. On the same trip, we also had a porpoise “bow ride”, 3 tail prints port side, one starboard side then on the surface briefly before darting off and surging to starboard. What a day!”

Common dolphins in Loch Broom, Highland

On 21st, Noel Hawkins of “Summer Queen” out of Ullapool, Highland Region, reported a group of 150 common dolphins in Loch Broom.

Noel said: *“I have encountered large pods further out at sea and around the Summer Isles many times but I have never seen a pod of this size so far in the loch close to the shore.”*

“It is also strange as it is very late in the year for them. The pod contained large adults and a number of juveniles, and appeared to be hunting fish up and down the loch. We observed them for a few hours as did many members of the public who could see the animals from the main road and banks of Loch Broom, and the animals showed no sign of distress or abnormal activity.”

On the west coast of Scotland, common dolphins are mainly observed in the Sea of Hebrides and the southern part of the Minch but have been increasingly observed into the northern part of Minch ranging eastwards into the North Sea. Although this species is present year-round in UK waters, peak numbers in terms of sighting rates and group sizes occur in June and July off Western Scotland so, as Noel pointed out, this sighting is certainly notable.



Common dolphin— Noel Hawkins

Bottlenose dolphins off Seahouses, Northumberland

An unexpected sighting of bottlenose dolphins in NE England was reported on 22nd October by Alan Leatham of “Ocean Explorer”, that operates trips to the Farne Islands. The “Ocean Explorer” crew encountered a group of 70 dolphins approximately 400 metres off Seahouses harbour in Northumberland on an early morning trip.

The group, which included juveniles and calves, were spread over a large area close to shore and were heading south. Two hours later, they were reported again off Craster, Northumberland, approximately ten miles south of the initial sighting.



Sightings News (continued)

Bottlenose dolphins off Seahouses, Northumberland (continued)

Bottlenose dolphins occur regularly on the east coast of Scotland. Hotspots such as the Moray Firth and Aberdeen coast provide wildlife enthusiasts with a reliable source of land-based sightings of these animals. Although bottlenose have been seen further south, this sighting is unusual both in its location (south and so close to land) and the sheer size of the group. It's impossible to say whether this is a one-off or a sign of things come. What it does demonstrate is the necessity to keep reporting those sightings!



Bottlenose dolphin—Alan Leatham, Ocean Explorer

Many thanks to Alan for his report!!

Photos of this encounter available on the facebook page.

Risso's dolphins off Peterhead, Aberdeenshire

Regional Coordinator, Kevin Hepworth, was lucky enough to spot four Risso's dolphins just north of Peterhead on 29th October. Risso's dolphins are rare in the North Sea but the number of sightings of this species in the region has increased in the winter months (December, January) off East Scotland. This could be related to the high numbers of squid and other cephalopods currently frequenting the North Sea. If you are in the area, look out for the distinctive sight of the Risso's square head, tall dark fin and body often covered with grey pencil scratches and of course if you see anything, let us know!!!

Bottlenose dolphins between North Wales and the Isle of Man

Every winter, around this time of year, large groups of bottlenose dolphins congregate in the waters between North Wales and the Isle of Man. 2012 is no exception with groups of between 20 and 100 animals spotted in this area since the end of October. More on the sightings on our [recent sightings page](#) and in this [BBC report](#).

Using a technique called photo-ID (where animals are identified using nicks, notches, and markings on their dorsal fin), Sea Watch Foundation and the Manx Whale and Dolphin Group have been able to prove that some of these animals come from Cardigan Bay, having travelled over 200 km. This is a great example of how this completely non-invasive technique can give us valuable insight into the way in which bottlenose dolphins use their habitat throughout the year. This type of information is crucial when setting up protected areas and monitoring their effectiveness.

Regional Round-ups

Shetland, Orkney and N Scotland (1-2)

Just four sightings were reported in October and November in the northernmost part of the British Isles. Three of these were **killer whale** sightings. Six animals were seen off Scrabster, Caithness on 4th October followed by an outstanding group of 50 captured on camera in Ronas Voe, Shetland on the 21st, and another six in the Pentland Firth on 4th November. The remaining sighting was of a single **harbour porpoise** seen in Dunnet Bay, Caithness, on 2nd October.



Killer Whale—Shetland Nature

E Scotland (3-6)

The east coast of Scotland produced 50 cetacean sightings in October and 31 in November.

October

Bottlenose dolphins were the most reported species in October with 24 sightings. The majority of these were recorded off the Moray and Banffshire coastline or in the vicinity of Arbroath, Aberdeenshire. **Harbour porpoises** were seen less frequently (16 times) but nonetheless were more widespread. Sightings were scattered all along the east coast of Scotland, ranging from Caithness southwards to the Isle of May. Eight reports of **minke whales** were made from three locations: Lybster and Noss Head, Caithness, and Lossiemouth, Moray. October's most unusual records were those of a single **Risso's dolphin** reported north of Peterhead on the 29th and a probable **humpback whale** seen off Belhaven, East Lothian, on the 21st.

November

As in October, **bottlenose dolphin** was the most commonly recorded species with a total of 22 groups sighted. The location of these reports remained similar to those of the previous month (the Moray and Banffshire coasts, and off Arbroath), with the addition of a few sightings off Aberdeen. **Harbour porpoise** were only reported five times, thus displaying a marked decrease by comparison to November. This species was observed four times off the Moray and Banffshire coasts and once off Lybster, Caithness. **Minke whales** were reported twice off Burghead on the 4th whilst fourteen **killer whales** were reported in the atypical location of Gardenstown Bay, Aberdeenshire on the 1st.

North-East England (7-10)

Sighting numbers in North-east England were fairly steady with 68 sightings in October and 66 in November.

October

The bulk of sightings came from Scarborough, with 46 sightings of **harbour porpoises** off the now well-known Marine Drive. Harbour porpoises were also seen off Whitby, North Yorkshire on the 13th and 21st, and off Lang Nab, Burniston on the 7th and 8th. Two large whale species, **humpback** and **minke whales**, were also reported during the month, making a seasonal change from the consistent year-round porpoise sightings produced for this region. Humpback whales were reported seven times between the 18th and 21st off Whitby, North Yorkshire. Minke whale sightings started earlier in the month but were seen in a similar location to the humpback whales. Remarkably, **bottlenose dolphins** were also encountered in North-East England this month. These unusual sightings took place off Holy Island, where seven animals were reported on the 7th, and then off Seahouses where as many as 70 animals were seen on the 21st.

Regional Round-ups (continued)

November

All of November's 66 sightings were of **harbour porpoises**, and reported in Yorkshire. These were all seen off Marine Drive, Scarborough, with the exception of four sightings off Whitby (one on the 25th and three on the 18th), two off Lang Nab, Burniston (on the 15th and 29th), and one off Filey Brigg, Scarborough (on the 24th).

South-East England (11-14)

Nine reports of **harbour porpoises** were submitted in October, and three in November. All of these sightings were made along the Norfolk coastline.

South England (15-19)

Six cetacean reports were received from the south coast of England in October and four in November.

October

In October, **unidentified dolphins** were observed five times off Durlston Head, Dorset (two reports) and St Aldhelm's Head, Dorset (three reports). These animals were very probably bottlenose dolphins as this is the only species regularly seen in the area. Two **harbour porpoises** were also seen off Brighton in East Sussex on the 14th.

November

Seven **harbour porpoises** were seen off Portland Bill, Weymouth, on the 10th. A notable sighting of thirty **common dolphins** was also reported in a similar area on the 15th. Finally, two sightings of **unidentified dolphins** were made off Durlston Head, Dorset on the 11th.

South-West England (21,22 & 23)

Seventeen sightings were recorded in the South-west of England in October, whereas only one was reported to us in November.

October

Harbour porpoises were seen twice off the Isles of Scilly on 21st and 22nd, five times off Capstone Point, Ilfracombe in North Devon on the 10th, and once in Woolacombe Bay, North Devon on the 8th. **Bottlenose dolphins** were seen off Cornwall three times in October: off Durgan on the 19th, in Newquay Bay on the 23rd, and St Ives on the 27th. **Common dolphins** were seen in the same location on the 18th and the 22nd, and three times in the westernmost part of the Bristol Channel, off North Devon on 1st and 2nd October. Finally, one **minke whale** was seen off Plymouth, Devon, on the 24th.

November

November's only sighting was of four **bottlenose dolphins** in Newquay Bay, North Cornwall on the 8th.

Regional Round-ups (continued)

Channel Isles (22)

The Channel Isles had just one report of twenty **bottlenose dolphins** in October off Jersey, on the 5th, and two reports of groups of ten and thirty bottlenose dolphins on 10th and 30th November respectively, also off Jersey.

Wales and the Bristol Channel (24-26)

Wales and the Bristol Channel saw a sharp decrease in sighting reports in the period covered by this newsletter, going from 100 sightings in October, to just 39 in November. Some of this decline will be due to lower observer effort.



Bottlenose dolphin—Val Lewis

October

Bottlenose dolphins and **harbour porpoises** dominated sightings reports for Wales and the Bristol Channel in October. Bottlenose dolphins were reported 66 times. The majority of these sightings resulted from the New Quay land watches and surveys within Cardigan Bay. In addition to these, there were observations of large groups off Anglesey (three reports) and the Llyn Peninsula (one report), and off the Great Orme, Conwy (one report). Harbour porpoises were reported 33 times, with locations ranging from Fishguard in Pembrokeshire, all around the Welsh coast across to Llandudno, Conwy. The final report was of four **Risso's dolphins** seen off Middle Mouse, Anglesey, on the 14th.

November

All 39 of November's Welsh **bottlenose dolphin** reports took place in North Wales around Anglesey and the Llyn Peninsula, illustrating the northbound winter movement of Cardigan Bay's semi-resident population. **Harbour porpoises** were also reported ten times north of Anglesey. An additional four reports of harbour porpoises were made from Hurlstone Point, Somerset (on the 7th, 9th, 17th and 30th). Finally, **common dolphins** were reported three times offshore in the outer Bristol Channel on the 7th and 8th November.

North-West England and the Isle of Man (27-30)

The Manx Whale and Dolphin Group reported 14 sightings in October, and three in November. There were no sightings submitted from NW England.

October

Harbour porpoises were seen most frequently in October, with five sightings recorded between the 7th and the 15th. All of these were located on the east of the Island: east of Ramsey, Maughold Head, on Wart Bank and east of Little Ness. **Bottlenose dolphins** were reported four times. Small groups were seen off Ballaghennie on the 21st (two animals) and in Douglas Bay on the 26th (five animals) and large groups off Marine Drive on the 23rd (65 animals) and off Dalby on the 25th (40 animals).

Single **minke whales** were each reported four times: off Marine Drive on the 7th, off Laxey Bay on the 20th, and twice in Douglas Bay on the 29th.

In addition, a single report of two **Risso's dolphins** was made on the 7th three miles south-

Regional Round-ups (continued)

November

In November, large groups of **bottlenose dolphins** were reported three times in Manx waters: off Marine Drive on the 5th, and in Douglas Bay on the 10th and 14th.

West Scotland and Hebrides (31-34)

West Scotland and the Hebrides also saw a dramatic drop in sighting reports: from 29 sightings in October to two sightings in November.

October

Harbour porpoises were frequently reported (16 times). Sightings took place in the Sound of Bute and Firth of Clyde, around the Isle of Mull, and off the Outer Hebrides. **Common dolphins** were reported five times: twice off Ullapool, Highland Region (20th), once in the North Minch (13th), once in the Firth of Clyde (20th), and once off the Isle of Coll in the Inner Hebrides (10th).

Minke whales were reported five times in the southern part of this region: once off the Mull of Kintyre on the 7th, three times around the Isle of Mull (on the 3rd, 9th and 29th), and two animals (one newborn) off the Isle of Muck on 29th. **Killer whales** were seen three times, twice off the Isle of Skye (on the 7th and the 10th), and once in the middle of the Minch (on the 3rd).

Bottlenose dolphins were reported once off Kinuachdrachd, Isle of Jura in Argyll and Bute, on the 8th.

November

A single minke whale was recorded off Baleromindubh, Isle of Colonsay on the 11th.

Northern Ireland (34)

Nine sightings were reported in October, which increased to 12 in November.

October

Harbour porpoises were reported five times in Northern Ireland in Counties Derry (off Mussenden Temple and Portstewart), Antrim (off Ramore Head and Ballintoy) and Down (off Belfast). The only other species reported in Northern Ireland during October was the **bottlenose dolphin**, which was seen four times in Co. Antrim (off Dunluce Castle, off Red Bay in Waterfoot, off south of Glenarm, and off Carnlough).

November

November was similar to the previous month in Northern Ireland. **Harbour porpoises** were recorded seven times in Counties Derry (Portstewart), Antrim (Ramore Head and Portmuck) and Down (Kilough and Groomsport). **Bottlenose dolphins** were reported twice off Ardglass in Co. Down and off Whitehead in Co. Antrim.



Regional Round-ups (continued)

Republic of Ireland (36)

Eighty-two sightings were reported in October increasing to 136 sightings in November.

October

Harbour porpoises were widespread, and reported 24 times off the coasts of Counties Louth (Carlingford Lough), Dublin (Killiney Bay and Dun Laoghaire), Wicklow (Bray Head), Waterford (Ram Head), Cork (Cape Clear Island), Kerry (Slea Head) and Donegal (Rosstown and Bundoran).

Short-beaked common dolphins were observed 17 times off the South and South-west of Ireland. Groups were noted off Counties Waterford (Helvic Head, Ram Head), Cork (Ballycotton, Cape Clear, Galley Head, Old Head of Kinsale, Rosscarbery Bay, Toe Head), Kerry (Blasket Islands and Slea Head) and off the Aran Islands, Co. Clare. Common dolphins were seen most frequently and in the largest groups off Co. Kerry where group sizes reached 350 individuals.

Fin whales and **minke whales** were also recorded several times. Fin whales were reported 12 times off Counties Waterford (Helvic Head and Tramore) and Clare (Baltimore, Cape Clear, Galley Head, Kedge Island, Knockadoon Head, Toe Head) while minke whales were seen 11 times off Counties Cork (Baltimore, Cape Clear Island, Galley Head, Glandore, Kedge Island, Rosscarbery Bay, Toe Head), Kerry (Slea Head) and Clare (West of Ailladie). **Humpback whales** were seen five times off Counties Cork (Galley and Toe Head) and Kerry (Slea Head). **Bottlenose dolphins** were seen three times, all on the west coast, off Counties Clare (Loop Head and Ailladie, The Burren) and Galway (Galway Docks).

November

The number of sightings in the Republic of Ireland rose sharply to reach 136 sightings for the month. Large whales dominated sighting reports. **Fin whales** were seen 37 times. The majority of these sightings came from Co. Cork with frequent reports from Kedge Island, Sherkin Island and Toe Head. In addition, fin whales were also observed in Counties Waterford and Wexford with repeat sightings from Dunabrattin Head, Co. Waterford.

Humpback whales were seen 20 times in Counties Cork and Kerry. The majority of these sightings took place at Kedge Island and Toe Head in Co. Cork and Slea Head in Co. Kerry.

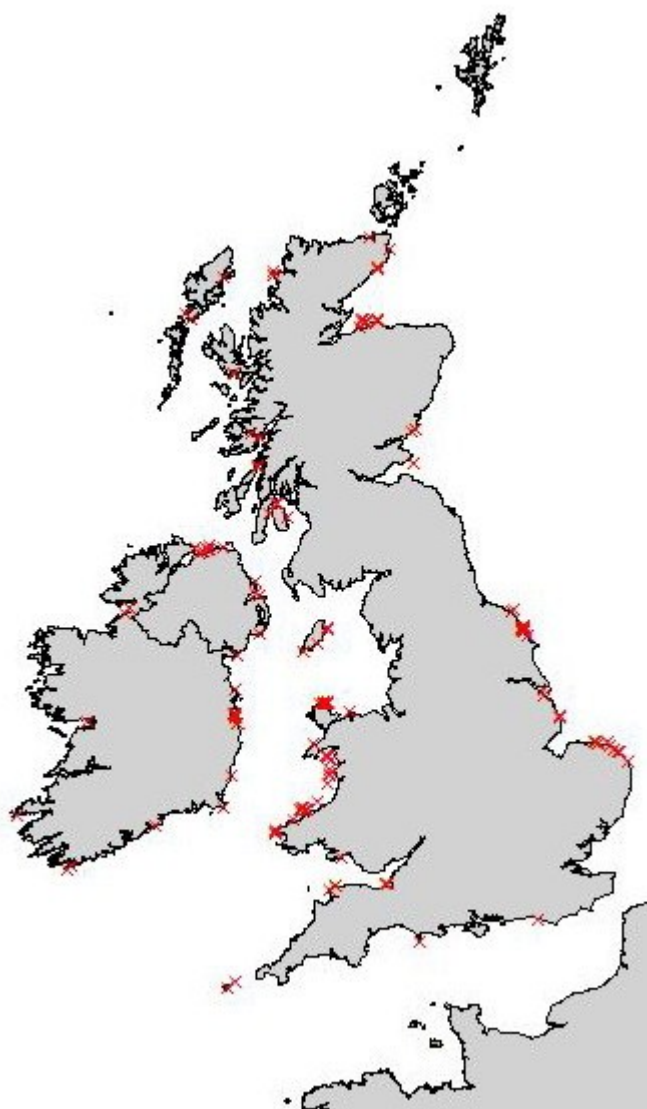
Minke whales were noted 13 times in counties Clare, Cork and Waterford. The majority of these reports came from the waters off Co. Cork near Kedge Island and Toe Head.

Common dolphins were recorded 20 times in similar areas to the large whales: mainly off Co. Cork off Kedge Island and Toe Head but also off various locations in Counties Wexford, Waterford and Kerry.

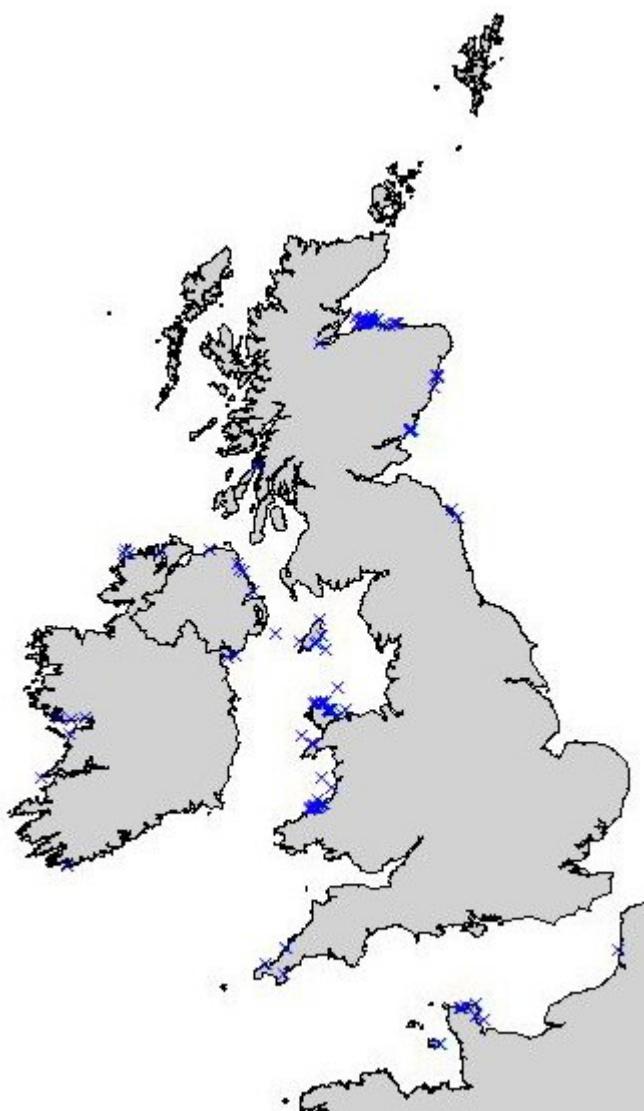
Harbour porpoise were seen 13 times, but had a completely different distribution to the large whale species, with sightings spread all around the Irish coast off Counties Dublin, Wicklow, Wexford, Cork, Galway and Donegal. Repeat sightings were recorded off Dun Laoghaire, Co. Dublin and Bray Head, Co. Wicklow.

Lastly, **bottlenose dolphins** were reported eight times off Counties Louth (Carlingford Lough), Cork (Sherkin Islands), Galway (Rossaveal and Spiddal) and Donegal (Bloody Fore-

Further details on all our activities can be found on the Sea Watch Foundation website (<http://www.seawatchfoundation.org.uk>) or by e-mailing info@seawatchfoundation.org.uk



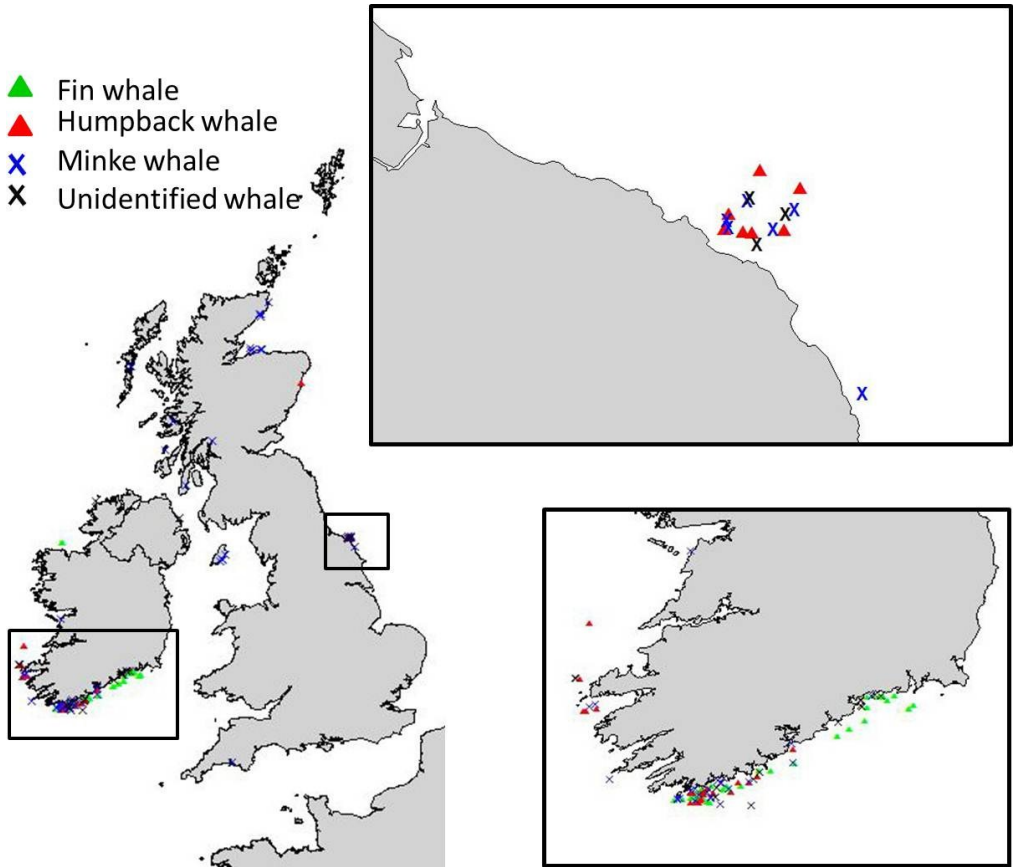
Sightings of harbour porpoises during October and
November 2012



Sightings of bottlenose dolphins during October and
November 2012



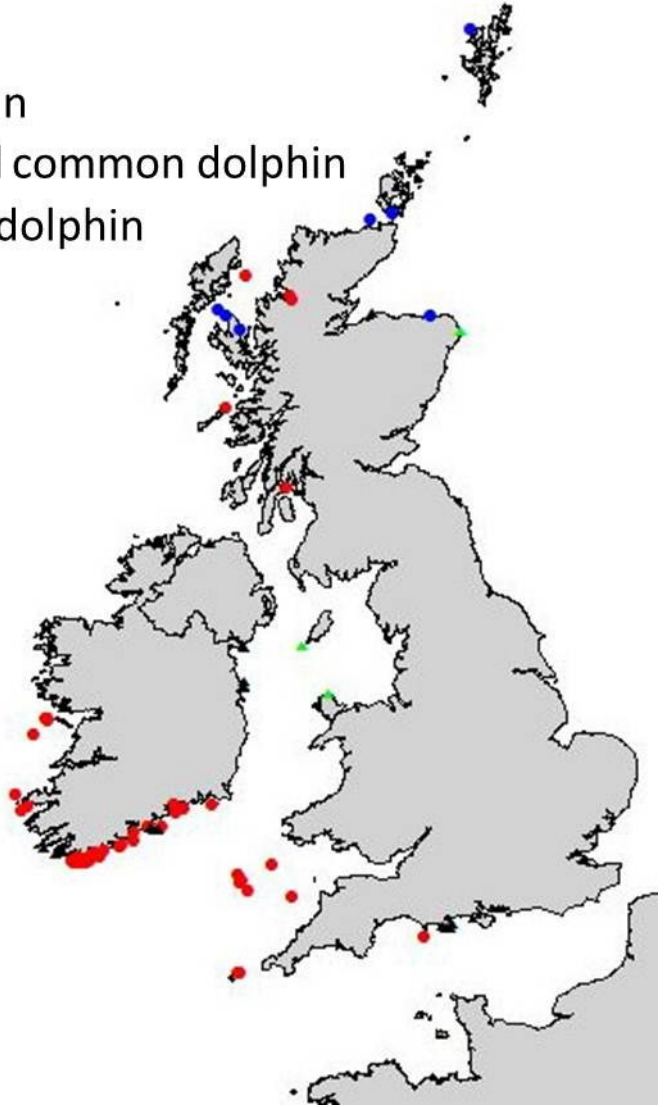
- ▲ Fin whale
- ▲ Humpback whale
- × Minke whale
- × Unidentified whale



Sightings of fin whales, humpback whales, minke whales and unidentified whales
during October and November 2012



- Killer whale
- ▲ Risso's dolphin
- Short-beaked common dolphin
- ▲ Unidentified dolphin



Sightings of killer whales, Risso's dolphins, short-beaked common dolphins and unidentified dolphins during October and November 2012