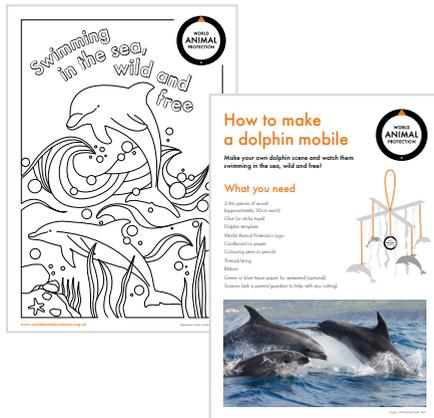


You can fold these pages together to make your own dolphin fact-pack



For more fun dolphin activities, download our colouring-in activity and make a dolphin mobile!

www.worldanimalprotection.org.uk/kids



All About Dolphins

Fun facts about our ocean friends!

Front cover Image: Mandurah Cruises, Australia

World Animal Protection Registered charity number 1081849

Did you know?

1

There are over **40 species**, or types, of dolphins in the world.



2

Dolphins are **cetaceans** (pronounced "set-ay-shens"). This is a group that includes whales and porpoises. Although they live in the sea they are **mammals** and not fish.



3

Dolphins are highly intelligent - in fact, a bottlenose dolphin's brain is bigger than a human's. Bottlenose dolphins and orcas are among the few species that have been shown to recognise themselves in a mirror which shows high intelligence and self-awareness.



Hello? (hello?) (hello?)

Dolphins make clicking noises and whistles to communicate, hunt and to find food.

They use **echolocation** to hunt and to understand their surroundings. Have you ever stood in an empty cave or tunnel, shouted and heard yourself repeated moments later? This is an **echo** - sound waves bounce off the wall and back to you so you hear the sound again.

Dolphins use this to understand what is around them. They let out a fast clicking sound which bounces off their surroundings at different rates and builds a picture to show the dolphin where things are, including fish.



There are a few other animals that use echolocation - can you think of any?

Clever hunters



Groups of dolphins in different parts of the world have come up with clever ways to hunt for fish:

In Western Australia dolphins have been seen putting cone-shaped sea sponges onto their beaks before hunting for fish on the sea floor. It is thought to be to protect their sensitive snouts (called '**rostrums**').

A group of dolphins off the coast of Florida have been seen using 'mud-netting' to catch fish in shallow water - one dolphin will swim in a circle beating its tail on the sea floor, which causes the mud to make the water cloudy, trapping fish inside. The dolphins then wait for the fish to try and jump out of the muddy 'net' and catch them.

Did You Know?

A dolphin's 'nose' is actually its blowhole on the top of its head



Six things you might not know about dolphins...

1



Dolphins sleep by resting just half of their brain at a time as their breathing is not automatic so they need to stay alert to breathe and to sense danger

2

Dolphins are very sociable animals and live in groups called 'pods'. These can range from a few dolphins to more than thirty. In fact, in some cases, huge groups of up to 1000 dolphins have been seen together in a 'super pod'



3

Dolphins can dive to depths of 55 metres underwater - that's the height of 11 double-decker buses stacked on top of each other on the sea bed!



4

Some dolphins have been shown to swim in a home area (or '**range**') of 400 square kilometres - that is bigger than the Isle of Wight!



5

The last **dolphinarium** closed in the UK in 1992 but there are still over 3000 dolphins in captivity around the world, performing in shows for tourists



6

It is illegal to keep dolphins in **captivity** for entertainment in a number of countries, such as Canada, Switzerland and India. If an animal is in captivity it means that they are kept in tanks or cages and can't get away. A dolphin's range is up to 200,000 times larger than an average tank



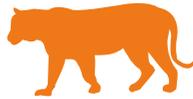
Killer whale – not a whale!

The largest species of dolphin is the orca which is also known as the killer whale. It is not actually a whale. It is thought that it could be that it used to be known as 'whale killer' but the name was switched around.

The killer whale is an **apex predator**. This means that they are top of the food chain and no other animals in nature hunt them. However they are threatened by pollution, ship strikes, whaling and live capture for the entertainment industry.



Circle which of these animals you think are apex predators?



Local residents

The best place to see dolphins is in the wild. There are many species of dolphin that can be seen in the waters around the UK.

These include:



Common dolphin



Bottlenose dolphin



Risso's dolphin



White-beaked dolphin



Striped dolphin



Orca

Great spots to see dolphins in the UK are the south-west of England (1), the west coast of Ireland (2), the Moray Firth (3) and the north-west of Scotland (4) and Cardigan Bay in Wales (5).

