



FACTSHEET

Bottlenose Dolphin



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Common Name: Bottlenose Dolphin

Scientific Name: *Tursiops truncatus*

Conservation Status: The waters around Rottneest Island are a designated Marine Reserve. All cetaceans are protected within the Australian Whale Sanctuary under the EPBC Act. The Sanctuary includes all Commonwealth waters from the three nautical mile State waters limit out to the boundary of the Exclusive Economic Zone (out to 200 nm and further in some places). The Bottlenose Dolphin is also subject to International Whaling Commission (IWC) regulations and protected within the Indian Ocean Sanctuary and Southern Ocean Sanctuary.

Habitat: Coastal and offshore waters

Body length: 3-4 m

Weight: 500 kg

Gestation period: 12 months

Number of young: 1

Description:

The Bottlenose Dolphin is a very recognisable animal. These animals are mostly dark grey with a light grey underside although the actual shade of grey can vary. The Bottlenose Dolphin has a sturdy, streamlined powerful body and tail. It has two pectoral fins and one iconic, large, slightly hooked dorsal fin halfway along its body. It has a powerful tail which ends in wedge-shaped tail fin. They have a rounded head with a small round blowhole on top. They have a short and thick beak which is shaped like a bottle giving them their name. Their mouths are curved so it looks like they are always smiling.

Diet:

Fish, shrimp, squid, crustaceans.





In the Wild:

Bottlenose dolphins live all around the world except in the coldest waters. They are very intelligent and social animals and live in groups called pods. There are separate inshore and offshore populations. The pods of inshore dolphins made of 10-50 dolphins. The offshore pods are much bigger and can number several hundred. They communicate with each other by a complicated system of squeaks and whistles and will sometimes interact with humans.

They are very powerful and agile animals. They have a foraging/travelling speed of 5 km/h, a cruising speed of 10 km/h and can sprint at speeds up to 37 km/h. They can often be seen jumping and twisting out of the water or riding waves.

Dolphins breathe air. They surface 2-3 times per minute to breathe through their blowholes. They hold their breath to dive. Inshore dolphins rarely dive for longer than 3-4 minutes, but offshore dolphins dive up to 600 m and hold their breath for 15 minutes. Bottlenose Dolphins sleep for a few minutes at a time on the surface of the water so they can breathe through their blowholes. They can rest one half of their

brain while keeping the other half alert to regulate their breathing and sense danger. They alternate which side is active so that both get a rest.

Dolphins search and track prey using echolocation. They make up to make up to 1,000 clicking noises per second to build up a picture. They can hunt on their own but normally feed in groups where they can work together as a team to herd the fish together.

Threats:

- Pollution
- Boat traffic
- Entanglement in fishing nets
- Entanglement in debris/rubbish
- Intentional killing
- Overfishing
- Stranding

DID YOU KNOW?

Bottlenose Dolphins were hunted for their meat and oil. Their oil was used in lamps and for cooking although it was not considered as good as whale oil.