

Lone Rangers

a report on solitary sociable dolphins and whales
including recommendations for their protection



THIRD EDITION 2024





Since the first edition of our Lone Rangers report was produced in 2008, there has been an increasing number of dolphins and whales around the world living solitary lives. Although their occurrence is not as rare as may be thought, the question most asked, and remains to be answered, is precisely why some cetaceans become solitary in the first place. Bottlenose dolphins are by far the most common species to become solitary, the most well-known was Fungie who lived in Dingle Bay, County Kerry, Western Ireland for over 35 years, until one day he quietly vanished.

More than any other species, cetaceans represent all that is wild and free. This report is not only a historic record of solitary, sociable dolphins and whales, but also highlights their individuality and why it is vital that we respect them as wild animals.

Margaux Dodds and Liz Sandeman

Third Edition, 2024

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Introduction



Solitary cetaceans (dolphins, whales and porpoises) should not be seen as an unusual occurrence within the cetacean realm, or indeed amongst social mammalian species as a whole. There exists a wide range of species which exhibit a solitary lifestyle or are solitary at some point during their life (Müller & Bossley, 2002). Some cetacean species only meet conspecifics in response to feeding or to finding a mate and reproducing and so spend the majority of their lives in a solitary existence.

The bottlenose dolphin (*Tursiops truncatus*) is perhaps the best example to use when discussing the solitary dolphin phenomenon. Not only is this the most frequently observed solitary species, but its solitary existence can in part be explained through the social society in which it lives. Instead of residing in a matrilineal grouping, the bottlenose dolphin has elected for a fission-fusion society i.e. one that is constantly changing. Whilst pods (dolphin groups) can be identified and the relationships between the individuals established, the members of the pod may not change from year to year. Conversely, there are circumstances when individuals will form new associations, and relationships, along with their pods will change. For instance, it is possible that a group of eight one year, will become a group of five and three the next. For others, the group may split up entirely or join new individuals making a larger pod. Changes in the group can be the result of a variety of environmental cues but may also be age and sex related i.e. bachelor males reaching sexual maturity, mothers and calves, nursery groups, all female groupings etc. (Müller & Bossley, 2002). As a consequence of this life history, a lone bottlenose dolphin does not necessarily mean that it is a solitary dolphin, rather it may have been observed scouting for predators or for food, or it may be between pods.

Despite this dynamic lifestyle, the phenomenon of the solitary dolphin does exist. As yet we do not fully understand why some individuals choose to live a solitary lifestyle, or indeed whether the choice is their own. It is not however, just the bottlenose dolphin for which this state exists, there are other accounts of orca (*Orcinus orca*), beluga whales (*Delphinapterus leucas*), common dolphins (*Delphinus delphis*), Risso's dolphins (*Grampus griseus*), spotted dolphins (*Stenella frontalis* and *Stenella attenuata*) and rare cases of dusky dolphins (*Lagenorhynchus obscurus*), tucuxi (*Sotalia fluviatilis*) and even a narwhal (*Monodon monoceros*) as solitary individuals.

There are many different theories behind the existence of the solitary cetacean. Their solitary state may have arisen from socio-ecological variables such as food availability, predator disturbance or reproductive strategies (Müller & Bossley, 2002). It may have been because of the loss of a mate or companion. In Australia's Shark Bay, males are usually found in coalitions, though if one member of the pair dies the other will often remain alone (Müller & Bossley, 2002). The solitary state may have been through environmental conditions, such as when rough seas or severe weather forces group separation – individuals may be lost to the group and may become solitary as a consequence.

A young pilot whale (*Globicephala macrorhynchus*) separated from the pod remained very close to the Plymouth, Massachusetts "H" buoy for weeks, but was adopted or at least tolerated by Atlantic white-sided dolphins (*Lagenorhynchus acutus*) and seen with them for years afterwards. It may also be a consequence of life history and dispersal of individuals. In bottlenose dolphins, at least those belonging to large populations, both sexes leave their natal group as sub adults between four and ten years old (Müller & Bossley, 2002). Males also travel for reproductive purposes with females of neighbouring communities. Smolker et al (1997) described how several female dolphins in the Shark Bay area demonstrated a unique feeding strategy involving carrying sponges in their mouths, possibly as protection for the rostrum. Animals using this technique were solitary. Calves learned to carry sponges at a young age and also grew up to be solitary (Müller & Bossley, 2002), demonstrating a lifestyle choice passed on from generation to generation.

Finally, another theory is that of the social outcast, those with behavioural problems, or some physical handicap. Dr Darlene Ketten, of Woods Hole Oceanographic Institution, and a leading expert on cetacean hearing and the effects of noise, has suggested that some solitaries may have hearing problems. People very familiar with particular solitary dolphins have verified her theory in some cases. A few have been profoundly deaf in one or both ears before they died in accidents, but they showed no signs that the handicap had impaired their survival.

The solitary state may be either temporary, or it may become a permanent feature of the individual cetacean (Lockyer & Müller, 2003). In addition to this lifestyle condition, the individual animal may or may not choose to interact with other dolphins/whales on a short-term basis.

Whilst some solitaries are not known to interact with others, there are those which have been reported with fresh teeth rake marks on their skin, demonstrating a recent interaction with conspecifics. At times this interaction with their own kind may result in their reintegration into dolphin society and on other occasions it may only be a temporary engagement.

For the bottlenose dolphin at least, despite their somewhat unique status, solitary individuals do not vary in their behavioural repertoire from other bottlenose dolphins in the wild, although their interactions are directed towards humans as opposed to other dolphins (Müller et al, 1998a). Whilst most behavioural scientists categorise cetacean behaviour into key behaviours such as feeding, travelling, socialising, resting, avoidance and other (Shane et al, 1986), cetacean behaviour is a diverse range of individual nuances of activity, which include overt signs as well as more subtle indications of interaction and/or emotion, which may be directed towards humans, termed assimilation tendency (Frohoff, 2000). The term was first used to describe this behavioural treatment of keepers by zoo animals by Hediger (1964). Thus, humans may satisfy both the fission and fusion aspects of society for the dolphin.

Whilst each solitary individual is unique and so our understanding of them is perhaps limited, this uniqueness probably arises from environmental, locational and human differences in each case. In addition to these varying factors, in any one case, the dolphin may meet and engage with a number of different people in a short space of time. Whereas in dolphin society bonds are formed, enemies made, lessons and skills are learnt, for the dolphin there is a lack of consistency in the not only the humans which it meets but in the responses which they exhibit.

Whilst there are many differing theories behind the existence of solitary cetaceans and many different cases, we have found that these animals may become habituated to human presence to the point where they become what are known as 'solitary, sociable cetaceans'. For the purpose of this report that definition will apply to **cetaceans who have little or no contact with conspecifics and who regularly closely approach humans, often including touch, social, sexual, play & aggressive/boisterous behaviours**. It is recognised however, that not all individuals living in isolation from conspecifics have displayed human-oriented behaviours.



Stages in the development of solitary, sociable cetaceans (Wilke, 2007; Wilke et al, 2005)

In an attempt to further understand the solitary individual and the process through which it becomes a solitary, sociable cetacean, Monika Wilke and colleagues have classified the various stages of habituation.

- Stage 1** The cetacean appears and remains in a new home range, usually providing abundance and accessible prey. Initially, the dolphin explores its new range but will sometimes restrict itself to a smaller, protected part of the range often < 1km². Sometimes there is an exclusive rest area within its range, often a moored vessel or buoy. The dolphin may follow boats (usually fishing boats) or inspect fishing gear but does not yet approach humans.
- Stage 2** The individual becomes habituated to the new range and may start to regularly follow boats. Local people becoming aware of its presence may attempt to swim with the animal. The individual may appear curious but remains at a distance from swimmers. It may also bow ride or inspect ropes, chains and buoys, etc.
- Stage 3** The individual becomes familiar with the presence of one or more people who may have deliberately attempted to interact with it. At this stage, the dolphin interacts with only a limited number of people in the water. Human-dolphin interactions may include physical contact. Aerial behaviour of various kinds is common during this stage.
- Stage 4** The presence of the animal becomes widely known, often assisted by media exposure. It becomes a local celebrity and tourist attraction. During this stage, inappropriate human behaviour may provoke unwanted and possibly dangerous behaviour in the dolphin, including dominant, aggressive and sexual behaviours directed at humans.

For some individuals, there may be a further two stages in this process.

- Stage 5** Whilst still interacting with humans and engaging with vessels, the individual may proportion a greater amount of time to other forms of interaction in the area. In some cases, this may involve other cetacean species or pinniped and bird individuals.
- Stage 6** Finally, for a few individuals there may come a time when the individual begins to interact with their own species once more. Whilst it cannot be proven in many cases, this may explain the sudden disappearance of a solitary individual from the area which for the previous weeks, months and in some cases years had been home.

In addition to the first four stages, Wilke (2007) has further developed the possible levels which may exist within stage 3 and 4, demonstrating different degrees of sociability:

Level 1	Interactions only with boats during the whole period of sociability
Level 2	Interactions with humans without ever allowing direct contact
Level 3	Interactions with direct contact, often with a select few
Level 4	Non-selective direct contact, without sociosexual and/or dominance behaviours
Level 5	Non-selective direct contact, regular sociosexual and dominance behaviour

If an individual becomes habituated to humans it means that they lose their natural wariness, unfortunately making them easy targets for misconduct and/or disturbance. It also means that any interaction with the individual should be of a precautionary nature as the dolphin/whale will react differently to a member of the same species, opposed to that of a human.

Whilst many engage and interact with solitary dolphins with no detrimental effects, there are risks to both the cetacean and human which should be taken into consideration. In situations where due consideration and respect is not given to the cetacean, negative interactions can ensue placing both parties at risk of illness, injury and in one remote case, death. Here we examine in brief the threats posed by irresponsible interaction with solitary cetaceans.

Potential threats to solitary cetaceans



As solitary individuals may in many cases interact on a regular basis with humans, boats etc. this altered state could result in compromised well-being; when more than one aspect of the behavioural repertoire is altered, regardless of whether such changes are short or long-term (Morton & Griffiths, 1985). For solitary individuals there are two behavioural states which are crucial to the well-being of the animal and should not be disrupted: resting and feeding. Should either of these states be disrupted it is likely that the ecological fitness of the animal will be reduced accordingly, placing them at greater risk from other threats. Indeed, those exhibiting the highest degree of interaction are at the greatest risk of injury, illness and even death (Frohoff, 2003) from any of the potential threats listed below:

- Human disturbance, misconduct and harassment
- Vessel-based disturbance, misconduct, harassment or accidental injury
- Fishing interactions. A direct threat from entanglement in fishing gear but also retaliation by fishermen who have had gear damaged, moved or altered by solitary individuals
- Anthropogenic impacts, such as pollution i.e. oil spillage, disposal of wastes (Müller et al, 1998a)

It must be remembered that even the most well-intentioned sociable human interactions with cetaceans are accompanied by unpredictable impacts/risks to the animals, some of which may be cumulative, long-term and life threatening (Frohoff, 2003).

It is important that any solitary individual is monitored and if necessary, the situation assessed to ensure the animal has adequate opportunities to re-associate itself with conspecifics. Where this does not happen and the solitary state becomes long-term or possibly even permanent, it may be necessary for people management structures to be put in place to monitor and protect the well-being of all involved.

Potential threats to humans engaging in interactive encounters

Just as there are risks to the cetacean in irresponsible interactions, there are perhaps greater risks to humans, as some of the threats are effectively unseen. A cetacean for instance can appear as a healthy individual, however, many carry parasite, disease and pollutant burdens, some of which can be passed onto humans e.g. *Brucella*. There is also the possibility for disease transfer from the human to the dolphin. The more obvious risk is through injury. This may range from minor scratches to being badly bitten. On two separate incidents in the United States, swimmers were taken to hospital for treatment of wounds to the hands and feet, some of which required stitches.



In what, to date is an isolated incident a bottlenose dolphin in Brazil is known to have killed one swimmer and injured 29 others, when the attention from humans escalated to harassment (Santos, 1997). Lockyer & Morris (1986) have suggested that in situations where the cetacean is constantly surrounded by people, and thereby disrupting crucial feeding and resting periods, the cetacean may become unstable temperamentally. Whilst these incidents may appear alarming, they have arisen from irresponsible interactions and a lack of respect for the cetacean, which remains a wild and extremely powerful animal. This draws into light the need for precautionary management of situations surrounding solitary cetaceans to ensure that incidents like that described above are not repeated.

Solitary, sociable cetaceans: past and present

In order to examine the solitary cetacean in full it was necessary to review all known solitary individuals to date (Table 1) below. A full summary on each dolphin can be found in Appendix I.

Table 1: All solitary cetaceans known to date (2024)

No.	Name	Species	Sex	Location	Country	Year(s) Observed	Current Location/Status
1	Danny (Splashy)	Bottlenose dolphin	M	Cornwall & Dorset	UK	2017 - 2020	Dead
2	Dolly	Bottlenose dolphin	UNK	South Coast	UK	2007	Presumed dead
3	Dave	Bottlenose dolphin	F	Kent	UK	2006 - 2007	Presumed dead
4	Chas	Bottlenose dolphin	M	Canvey Island & The Thames	UK	2006 - 2007	Presumed dead
5	Marra	Bottlenose dolphin	F	Maryport, Cumbria	UK	2006	Dead
6	Jet (Spinnaker)	Bottlenose dolphin	UNK	Portsmouth	UK	2005	Dead
7	Georges (Dony / Randy)	Bottlenose dolphin	M	Ireland, South England	UK, France, Belgium, Holland	2001 to date	Brittany, France
8	Freddie	Bottlenose dolphin	M	Amble, Northumberland	UK	1987 - 1992	Presumed dead
9	Simo	Bottlenose dolphin	M	Solva, Wales	UK	1984 - 1986	Dead
10	Percy	Bottlenose dolphin	M	Portreath, Cornwall	UK	1981 - 1985	Dead
11	Donald (Beaky)	Bottlenose dolphin	M	Wales & Cornwall	UK	1972 - 1978	Dead
12	Charlie	Bottlenose dolphin	F	Eyemouth, Scotland	UK	1960 - 1967	Dead
13	Gabriel	Bottlenose dolphin	M	Stoke	UK	1814	Dead
14	Zafar	Bottlenose dolphin	M	Brittany & Wijk aan Zee	France / Netherlands	2018 - 2020	Dead
15	Kaimi	Bottlenose dolphin	F	San Francisco Bay, California	USA	2016 to date	SF Bay, USA
16	Nimmo	Bottlenose dolphin	M	Galway Bay	Ireland	2015 to date	Ireland
17	Yera	Bottlenose dolphin	F	New South Wales	Australia	2012 to date	NSW, Australia
18	Clet	Bottlenose dolphin	M	Brittany, France & UK wide	France / UK	2008 - 2018	Unknown
19	Fiete	Bottlenose dolphin	M	Kiel	Germany, France	2016 - 2017	Unknown
20	Bobi	Bottlenose dolphin	M	Zadar	Croatia	2014 - 2016	Presumed dead
21	Stinky	Bottlenose dolphin	M	Grand Cayman	Caribbean	2009 - 2012	Unknown
22	Moko	Bottlenose dolphin	M	Mahia	New Zealand	2007 - 2010	Dead
23	Dougal (Duggie)	Bottlenose dolphin	M	Tory Island, Co Donegal	Ireland	2006 - 2008	Unknown
24	Wifi	Bottlenose dolphin	M	Brittany	France	2007 - 2011	Unknown
25	Marco	Bottlenose dolphin	M	Eilat	Israel	2006 - 2008	Unknown
26	Lucero	Bottlenose dolphin	F	Veracruz	Mexico	2005 to date	Mexico
27	Maurice	Bottlenose dolphin	UNK	Brandon, North Kerry	Ireland	2004 - 2005	Unknown
28	Un-named	Bottlenose dolphin	UNK	Luanda	Africa	2003 - 2004	Unknown
29	Dusty (aka Marra, Sandy)	Bottlenose dolphin	F	Doolin, County Claire	Ireland	2000 to date	Ireland
30	Pechocho	Bottlenose dolphin	M	Topolobampo Bay	Mexico	1992 to date	Mexico

No.	Name	Species	Sex	Location	Country	Year(s) Observed	Current Location/Status
31	Siary	Bottlenose dolphin	UNK	Bay of Islands	New Zealand	1992 - 1994	Presumed dead
32	Jack	Bottlenose dolphin	M	Port Underwood	New Zealand	1989 - 1990	Presumed dead
33	Aihe	Bottlenose dolphin	F	Golden Bay	New Zealand	1987 - 1993	Presumed dead
34	Fungie	Bottlenose dolphin	M	Dingle Bay, County Kerry	Ireland	1984 - 2020	Dead
35	Venus	Bottlenose dolphin	F	Basket Islands, County Kerry	Ireland	2005 - 2006	Unknown
36	Un-named	Bottlenose dolphin	M	Coulagh Bay, County Cork	Ireland	2005	Unknown
37	Un-named	Bottlenose dolphin	UNK	Santa Catarina	Brazil	2005	Unknown
38	Jean Floch	Bottlenose dolphin	M	Brittany	France	2003 - 2010	Dead
39	Flipper	Bottlenose dolphin	M	Skudenshavn	Norway	1991 - 2002	Unknown
40	Flint (Paquito)	Bottlenose dolphin	M	San Sebastian	Spain	1998 - 2005	Dead
41	Filippo	Bottlenose dolphin	M	Masfredonia	Italy	1996 - 2004	Dead
42	Kodo	Bottlenose dolphin	M	Ashdod & Ashkelon	Israel	1995 - 1996	Presumed dead
43	Koko	Bottlenose dolphin	F	Toshima	Japan	1995	Presumed dead
44	Piko	Bottlenose dolphin	UNK	Toshima	Japan	1995	Presumed dead
45	Tião	Bottlenose dolphin	M	San Sebastião	Brazil	1994 - 1995	Presumed dead
46	Zero Three (Jock/Jacques)	Bottlenose dolphin	M	Adelaide	Australia	1988 - 1993	Dead
47	Maui (Woody)	Bottlenose dolphin	F	South Island	New Zealand	1992 - 1997	Unknown
48	Crispy	Bottlenose dolphin	M	Eilat	Israel	1992	Unknown
49	Jotsa	Bottlenose dolphin	F	Boka Kotorska Bay	Montenegro	1988 - 2001	Dead
50	Beggar	Bottlenose dolphin	M	Sarasota	Florida	1990 - 2012	Dead
51	Françoise	Bottlenose dolphin	F	Arcachon	France	1989 - 2001	Dead
52	Dolphy (Dolly)	Bottlenose dolphin	F	Coiloure	France	1989 - 1995	Presumed dead
53	Pita (Sugar)	Bottlenose dolphin	F	Lighthouse Reef	Belize	1988 - 1994	Presumed dead
54	Billie (Billy)	Bottlenose dolphin	F	Adelaide	Australia	1987 - 2009	Dead
55	Joca	Bottlenose dolphin	M	Boka Kotorska Bay	Montenegro	1987 - 1993	Unknown
56	Fanny	Bottlenose dolphin	F	Marseille	France	1987 - 1994	Unknown
57	Marine	Bottlenose dolphin	F	Marseille	France	1987 - 1994	Unknown
58	Romeo	Bottlenose dolphin	M	Bay of Naples	Italy	1985	Presumed dead
59	Indah	Bottlenose dolphin	M	Kent Islands	Australia	1982 - 1983	Presumed dead
60	The Costa Rican	Bottlenose dolphin	M	Chira Island	Costa Rico	1981 - 1983	Dead
61	Jojo	Bottlenose dolphin	M	Providenciales, Turks & Caicos	Caribbean	1980 to date	Turks & Caicos
62	Delle	Bottlenose dolphin	M	Svendborg / Travemunde	Denmark / Germany	2019 to date	Germany
63	Finn	Bottlenose dolphin	M	Carlingford Lough	Ireland	2020 - 2023	Unknown
64	Eric	Bottlenose dolphin	M	Port Broughton	Australia	2024	Australia
65	Dolphin 56	Bottlenose dolphin	M	Florida & New York State	USA	1979 - 2011	Dead
66	Dobbie	Bottlenose dolphin	M	Eilat	Israel	1979	Dead
67	Horace	Bottlenose dolphin	M	Hawkes Bay	New Zealand	1978 - 1979	Dead

No.	Name	Species	Sex	Location	Country	Year(s) Observed	Current Location/Status
68	Jean-Louis	Bottlenose dolphin	F	Brittany	France	1976 - 1988	Dead
69	Dolly	Bottlenose dolphin	F	Florida Keys	Florida	1975	Dead
70	Nina	Bottlenose dolphin	F	La Corogna	Spain	1972	Dead
71	Georgy Girl	Bottlenose dolphin	F	Florida	USA	1970	Dead
72	Nudgy	Bottlenose dolphin	M	Powell Lake, Florida	USA	1965	Dead
73	Wallis (Wally)	Bottlenose dolphin	UNK	Exact location unknown	Australia	1961 - 1962	Dead
74	Carolina Snowball/Peaches	Bottlenose dolphin	F	South Carolina	USA	1955 - 1965	Dead
75	Opo (Goldie/Dorrie)	Bottlenose dolphin	F	Hokianaa Harbour	New Zealand	1954 - 1955	Dead
76	Scar	Bottlenose dolphin	M	Doubtful Sound	New Zealand	Unknown	Presumed dead
77	Izzy	Bottlenose dolphin	F	Texas	USA	2020 - 2022	In captivity
78	Confi	Bottlenose dolphin	M	Muros y Noia Estuary	Spain	2019 to date	Spain
79	Nick	Bottlenose dolphin	M	Isles of Scilly & Cork	UK/Ireland	2020 - 2021	Dead
80	Muirin	Common dolphin	UNK	Carlingford Lough	Ireland	2022 - 2023	Unknown
81	Unknown	Common dolphin	UNK	Krk	Croatia	2022 to date	Alive
82	Luca	Common dolphin	F	Sundby	Denmark	2020 - 2021	Dead
83	Sandy	Common dolphin	F	Eckernforde Bay	Germany	2020 - 2021	Dead
84	Schwenteeny	Common dolphin	M	Kiel	Germany	2019	Unknown
85	Kylie	Common dolphin	F	North Ayrshire, Scotland	UK	2006 to date	Ayrshire, Scotland
86	Stormy	Common dolphin	M	New Quay, Wales	UK	2014 - 2015	Unknown
87	Olin (Uleen/Holly)	Spotted dolphin	F	Gulf of Eilat	Egypt/Israel	1994 - 2004	Dead
88	Sandy	Spotted dolphin	M	San Salvador Island	Bahamas	1976 - 1978	Dead
89	Pelorus Jack	Risso's dolphin	M	Cook Strait	New Zealand	1888 - 1912	Dead
90	SC1	Striped dolphin	F	Vinodol Channel	North Croatia	2004 - 2009	Unknown
91	Viola	Tucuxi	M	Sao Vicente County	Brazil	1997 - 1999	Dead
92	Tammy	Dusky dolphin	M	Auckland	New Zealand	1984	Presumed dead
93	Benny	Beluga whale	UNK	Thames Estuary, Essex/Kent	England, UK	2018 - 2019	Unknown
94	Q	Beluga whale	M	Bay of Fundy, Nova Scotia	Canada	2008 - 2010	Unknown
95	Un-named	Beluga whale	UNK	Musquaro, Quebec	Canada	2004 - 2005	Unknown
96	Chance	Beluga whale	UNK	Trinity Bay, Newfoundland	Canada	2004 - 2005	Unknown
97	Poco (Helis)	Beluga whale	UNK	Gloucester, Massachusetts	USA	2004	Dead
98	Ce'Sea	Beluga whale	F	Newfoundland	Canada	2003	Unknown
99	Un-named	Beluga whale	UNK	Mingan Is, Quebec	Canada	2003	Unknown
100	Charlie-Bubbles	Beluga whale	F	Newfoundland	Canada	2001 - 2002	Dead
101	Echo (Casper)	Beluga whale	M	Newfoundland	Canada	2001 - 2002	Unknown1
102	Lenni	Beluga whale	F	Newfoundland	Canada	2000 - 2002	Unknown
103	Kuus	Beluga whale	M	Newfoundland	Canada	1999	Unknown

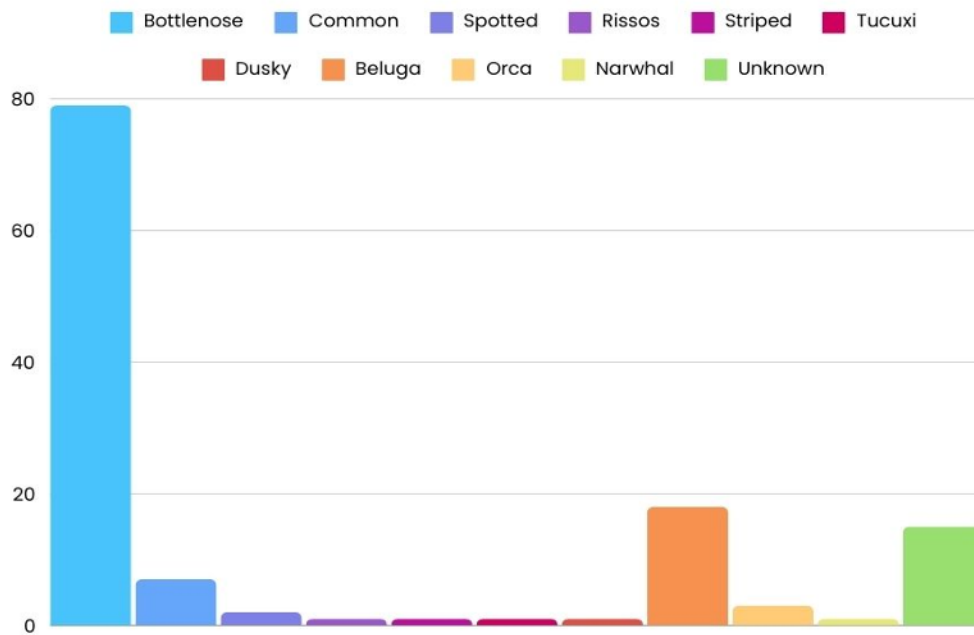
No.	Name	Species	Sex	Location	Country	Year(s) Observed	Current Location/Status
104	Un-named	Beluga whale	F	Chevery, Quebec	Canada	1998	Unknown
105	Wilma (Foster, Willy, Elvis)	Beluga whale	F	Nova Scotia	Canada	1993 - 1999	Unknown
106	BW	Beluga whale	F	New York	USA	1985	Dead
107	Bella	Beluga whale	F	New York	USA	1980	Dead
108	Korin	Beluga whale	F	Lake Notoroko	Japan	2015 – 2020	Dead
109	Bluey	Beluga whale	M	Newfoundland	Canada	2019 – 2021	Dead
110	Hvaldimir	Beluga whale	M	Hammerfest	Norway	2019 - 2024	Dead
111	Luna	Orca	M	Nootka Sound, Vancouver	Canada	2001 - 2006	Dead
112	Elsa	Orca	F	Provincetown, Cape Cod	USA	1982	Dead
113	Okkie	Orca	M	Brae Oil Field, Scotland	UK	1988 - 1989	Unknown
114	Nar Billy	Narwhal	M	Conception Bay Newfoundland	Canada	2003	Dead

There have been reports of individual solitary dolphins or whales appearing in several locations around the world but not remaining in the area for sufficient time to allow them to be classed as a solitary, sociable animal. There are in total 114 individuals which have been recorded to date, although there are undoubtedly further individuals who have not been recorded or monitored which are not listed in this report.



When you consider the list in terms of species represented, they are wide ranging, however, by far the greatest are bottlenose dolphins (*Figure 1*).

Species represented and number of individuals recorded



Interestingly though, there is no noticeable difference in the sex composition of those individuals who, at some point in their lives choose a solitary existence (*Figure 2*).

Sex composition of number of individuals recorded



When we consider the distribution of these individuals across the world, there does not appear to be any form of pattern. Although there are regions which appear to be frequented more often by solitary, sociable cetaceans, there does not appear to be any region or ocean (apart from Antarctica and the Southern Ocean), which are devoid of them (Figure 3).



Figure 3: Location of each solitary cetacean worldwide to date (2024)

If we consider distribution over time, we note that the number of solitary cetaceans would appear to be on the increase, so far peaking in 2019 (Figure 4). This would certainly indicate that since 1980 we have seen the number of individual solitary cetaceans increasing from two to 21 individuals at any one time, across the world.

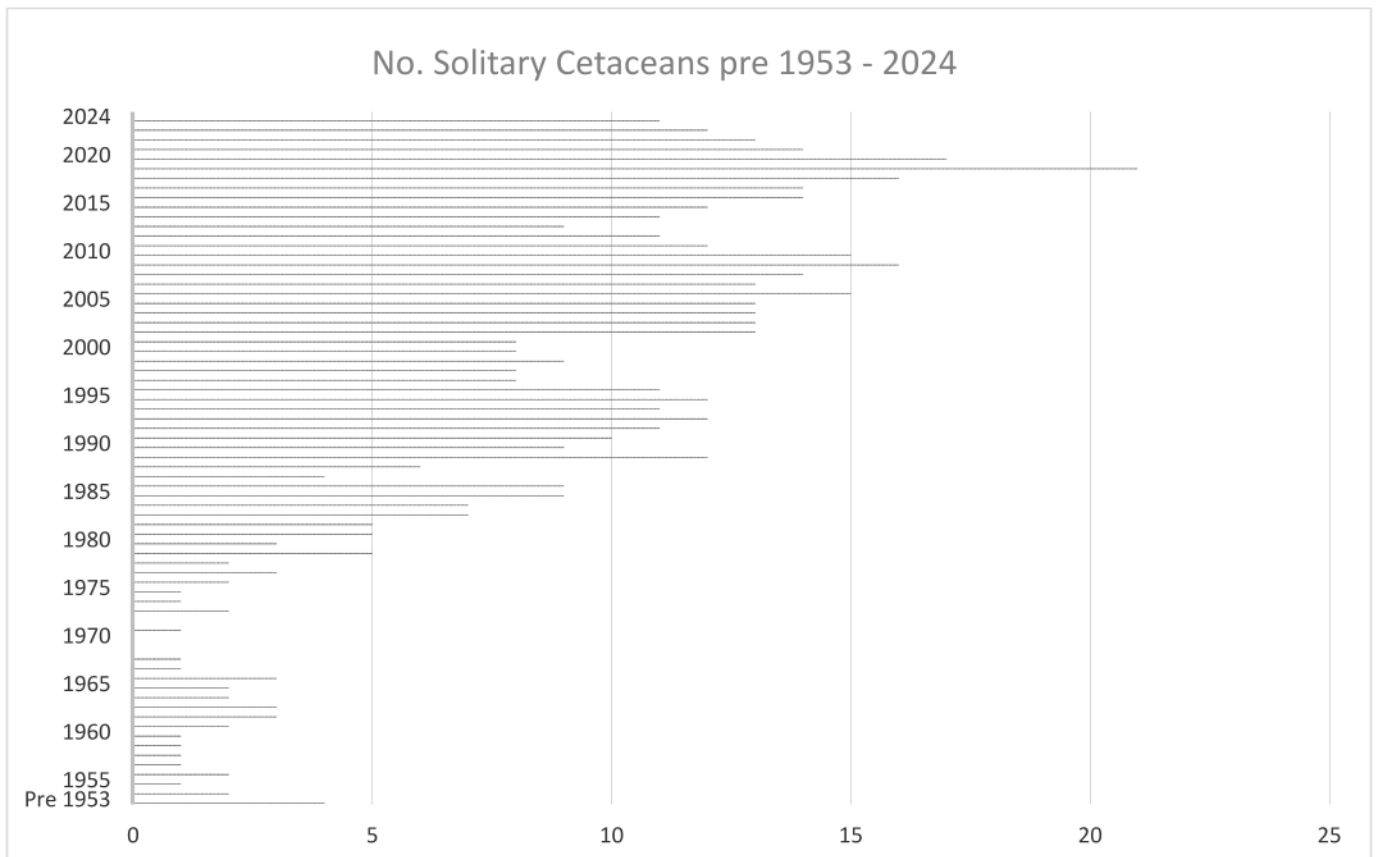


Figure 4: Number of solitary cetaceans in existence within any year (pre 1953 to 2024)

Why are some cetaceans solitary, is this increasing and the need to protect them

Whilst this is documenting an increase, it is however, an incredibly small proportion of the total number of cetaceans found worldwide.


Additionally, it is impossible to note whether this observed increase is genuine or a consequence of better reporting and use of the internet for information transfer. This should not mean that they are afforded any less protection than those that are found living in social groups. Indeed, these individuals may require better protection and management mechanisms to be in place in order to respond to their unique behaviour and in doing so draws into question the protection currently offered to cetaceans as a whole.



We do not understand why some cetaceans choose a solitary lifestyle. There are many theories, some of which are outlined in this report. What is clear is that the numbers are increasing – again we do not know why.

It is important however, that we have adequate procedures and mechanisms in place to afford these individuals protection. Often they present the most difficulties as people wish to engage and interact with them.

Wild dolphin in this area



It is exciting to see a wild dolphin and understandable people want a closer look - but this could put you, and the dolphin, in danger – remember this is a wild animal.

Please follow these recommended guidelines:


PUBLIC OBSERVERS

- DO NOT - enter the water to attempt to touch, grab or interact with the dolphin
- DO NOT - feed or attempt to feed the dolphin as this can lead to health problems and invite contact
- DO - watch from the shore from a safe area
- DO - report any inappropriate activity such as harassment of the dolphin by calling 101 **

WATER USERS

- DO - keep to a steady straight course, put engine in neutral if dolphin approaches
- DO - keep your distance (100m)
- DO - if the dolphin is frequenting a specific area (to rest or feed), do not disturb
- DO NOT - chase or change direction to follow the dolphin as sudden manoeuvres can result in impact
- DO NOT - encourage the dolphin near your vessel as this can result in injury from propellers

** It is an offence to disturb or harm dolphins under Section 9 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981
 DO - respect this as a wild animal, not trained for entertainment
 DO - above all, enjoy having the experience of seeing a dolphin wild and free



marineconnection.org
07931 366352

Image © Colin Garrett

Marine Connection designed this poster which is displayed in areas where a solitary, sociable dolphin remains for a period of time, to ensure its welfare.



Current legislative protection

At an international level there are many pieces of legislation which aim to protect cetaceans from harm. There are multinational directives, as we see within Europe and unilateral acts, bills and notices, some of which arise from European legislation being transposed into unilateral law and others out of a need to do more on a countrywide basis, often in response to specific problems.

Despite, what may appear to be comprehensive, worldwide coverage of protective legislation, the solitary social cetacean presents a unique case, which in many cases is not offered adequate protection.

United Kingdom: In England and Wales disturbance of all cetaceans is an offence under the **Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981** and **The Wildlife (Northern Ireland) Order 1985**. The Act makes it "an offence (subject to exclusions) to intentionally kill, injure, or take, possess, or trade in any wild animal listed in Schedule 5, and prohibits interference with places used for shelter or protection, or intentionally disturbing animals occupying such places". This piece of legislation provides the legal structure to prosecute for disturbance or injury to a solitary dolphin, however, with the main focus being on 'intentional' disturbance it has been notoriously difficult to prosecute. This was amended in 2000, when the **Countryside & Rights of Way Act** received Royal Assent. Schedule 12 of the Act amends the Wildlife & Countryside Act 1981, strengthening the legal protection for threatened species. The provisions make certain offences 'arrestable', "create a new offence of reckless disturbance, confer greater powers to police and wildlife inspectors for entering and obtaining wildlife tissue samples for DNA analysis and enable heavier penalties on conviction of wildlife offences".

In Scotland, the country's government has responsibility for the conservation and protection of all whales, dolphins and porpoises within Scottish waters which are protected under the **EU Habitats Directive** (more formally known as Council Directive 92/43/EEC on the Conservation of natural habitats and of wild fauna and flora). The **Nature Conservation (Scotland) Act 2004** also makes it an offence to intentionally or recklessly disturb a dolphin or whale.

Cetaceans are protected under the **Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017**, known as the 'Habitats Regulations'. Under the Regulations, it is an offence to deliberately capture, injure, disturb or kill any wild animal of a European Protected Species (EPS). Deliberately, has a broad meaning, however, in the context of capture and killing, the European Court of Justice (ECJ) has interpreted it to include "accepting the possibility" of capture or killing (see paragraph 71 of ECJ case C-221/043). In other words, "an offence may be committed by a person who might not intend to capture or kill an EPS specimen but nevertheless performs the relevant action, being sufficiently informed and aware of the consequences his action will most likely have". Whether this wide interpretation applies more generally (i.e. to other Habitats Directive provisions which use the word "deliberate") is however, unclear from the judgment. The Habitats Regulations apply only as far as the limit of territorial waters - 12 nautical miles from the country's baseline.

Cetaceans are also protected under the **Conservation of Offshore Marine Habitats and Species Regulations 2017** which fulfil the UK's duty to comply with European law (Habitats & Wild Birds Directive) beyond 12 nautical miles, but within British fishery limits (up to 200 nautical miles). The Regulations protect marine species through a number of offences that aim to prevent environmentally damaging activities. For example, "deliberately killing or significantly disturbing a protected species (such as dolphins) in the offshore area". Solitary dolphins however, by the characteristics which make them unique often, as far as we know, occupy coastal regions and inshore environments not covered by this piece of protective legislation.

Whilst it could be argued that solitary dolphins present a case for protection under the **Animal Welfare Act 2006**, rather than under any other piece of unilateral legislation in the UK, this act covers all animals, except those in the wild, and does not apply to the sea. Where irresponsible actions arising from interactions with solitary cetaceans occur, the impact on the welfare of the individual animal is the primary factor, however, as the law currently stands within the UK there is no mechanism by which to protect the individual cetacean from harm, apart from that offered under the Wildlife & Countryside Act 1981 and the Countryside & Rights of Way 2000 (CROW Act).

In other parts of the world, cetaceans have been offered protection separate to that of other marine species and habitats, being recognised through targeted legislation for marine mammals. Countries include the United States, Australia and New Zealand.

Despite what may seem comprehensive protection for cetaceans, when we consider past solitary, sociable cetaceans, in the majority of cases the protective measures brought into action have been voluntary, often enacted by concerned welfare and/or conservation groups and/or local people. When a solitary cetacean takes up residence in a particular area, it is often the local people who are the first to react to the needs of the animal, although in many cases this is supported by conservation and welfare non-governmental organisations (NGOs). In some instances, local liaison groups have been formed, UK examples of where this has taken place include Simo, Dave, Marra and Chas. In response to these individuals and in recognition of the need for a more structured strategic approach in some cases, a solitary dolphin working group was established. Further afield, Jean Floch (France & Spain) has also had a local management group set up by Réseau Cétacés, to deal with his circumstances. For others, including Dolphy, Fanny and Marine (all France), "Friends of..." Committees have been established to undertake this task.

Additionally, groups such as British Divers Marine Life Rescue, in the UK and the Whale Stewardship Project, in Canada have diversified their roles to monitor, patrol and intervene in rescues should it be required, in order to offer these individuals (inc. Chaz, Dave, Marra, Georges (all UK), Poco, Echo, Kuus, and Wilma (all Canada)) some protection whilst they choose to remain solitary.

In one case of action by a local group, the group were able to bring about the prevention of a powerboat race in the home range of the solitary dusky dolphin, known as Tammy, in New Zealand. Pelorus Jack (Cook Strait) and Nina (Spain), both had a special law passed in order to provide them with greater protection. In the case of the Spinner dolphins of Brazil, although not solitary, the local management group, through intensive campaigning, was able to convince government officials for the need of protection which resulted in the bay which the dolphins used to be declared a Marine Reserve. Here swimming, diving and the stopping of vessels in the vicinity is banned.

In a few cases, the need to protect these individuals has resulted in the appointment of exclusive guardians, whose task it is to look after the wellbeing of the dolphin, managing interactions and ensuring that distress and/or disturbance to the individual is minimised. Dolphy, Fanny, Marine (all France) and Jojo (Providenciales) all had guardians appointed.

In relatively few cases has the legislative framework been used to protect these unique individuals. Often it is the local liaison groups, conservation and welfare NGOs who provide educational and often managerial and/or patrolling roles in responding to the phenomenon that is the solitary, sociable cetacean.

There is a limit to which any of these groups can go however; and when not supported by the necessary legislation and enforcement, offences against these individuals are often not followed up either due to a severe lack of protective legislation in the first place, or to the unwieldy and time consuming process required to bring about a conviction.



The UK does not present the worst case of legislative protection, in many cases we are ahead of other countries, however, we are by no means, the best. Whilst some would argue that improvements could be made to the legislation in New Zealand and the United States, they do have targeted Marine Mammal Protection Acts which have more scope for protecting the individual cetacean, or bringing about special laws where required.

A focused Marine Mammal Protection Act would be a huge task for the UK, however, as a first step towards better protection for the solitary, sociable cetacean and for cetaceans as a whole, we need to see the measures to protect these species more effectively implemented, including stronger byelaw making powers for local councils, and immediate penalty notices issued for disturbance events, whether impacting on the favourable conservation status of the species, or having a negative impact on the solitary individual.

These measures, we believe, would act as a deterrent if properly enforced, and could support the education programmes put in place by organisations offering proactive and manageable solutions to the problems which sometimes arise when solitary cetaceans appear. They would also act to offer UK cetaceans the further protection they so desperately need, as they would have far wider application for solely solitary cetaceans.



Management of the situation

We will now outline actions which Marine Connection believes are of crucial importance in the management of situations which arise around solitary, sociable cetaceans. It is important to stress however, that these suggested actions should not be in place of adequate legislative protection; rather the legislation should be in place to support the actions of local management groups.

Management of the situation surrounding any solitary cetacean should be well thought out, include education, monitoring, applied research and enforcement, supported by legislation. All too often however, this is not the case.

At the outset there are a number of options which will depend on the sex, age and personality of the cetacean and the physical and social characteristics of the area in which the cetacean has established its range (Wilke et al, 2005). It has been suggested that as soon as a cetacean progresses to stage 3 of habituation, that a management plan is essential, however, the process should have been started before the cetacean has reached that stage. Ideally, suitable management of the situation could prevent this occurring and allow the opportunity for the individual to re-integrate with their conspecifics.

Management options

1. Minimising human intervention, to allow more opportunity for re-integration with conspecifics
2. Establish a working group, committee or otherwise to engage all stakeholders (public, fishermen, boat owners, water sports clubs and local businesses)
3. Devise a set of guidelines and rules to ensure cetacean welfare
4. Devise a public education programme, including distribution of leaflets, pamphlets, posters, notice boards, public talks etc.
5. If appropriate nominate an exclusive guardian
6. If appropriate, consider buoyed areas for exclusion of swimmers, vessels and other craft to permit the cetacean important feeding and resting times/areas. NB. This is only possible where the home range is small
7. Undertake a full research and monitoring programme in order to document changes in the cetacean and/or situation
8. Where required render veterinary assistance to the cetacean, i.e. removal of foreign objects, fish hooks, entanglements, administering antibiotics in response to injury
9. Work with local authorities, government departments and enforcement agencies to provide legislative protection (where it is in existence)

Area and human considerations

If a cetacean takes up residence in a busy port or harbour, the activities of both the dolphin and keen watchers may impede daily business. Similarly, if the cetacean is in a heavily fished area, there may be greater risk to the cetacean from entanglement and greater discussion of the situation required with local fishermen to reach a mutually beneficial outcome. In these cases, management extends beyond the situation surrounding the cetacean to include the area and people as well.

In cases of easy access to the cetacean it may also be necessary to consider human management guidelines to supplement those above. Any one or more of the following procedures may be necessary depending on the circumstances of each case:

1. Restriction on the number of swimmers/people in the water, as too many people can disrupt the normal behavioural patterns of the cetacean, potentially eliciting a negative response
2. Restriction on the number of vessels and marine craft in the area
3. Restriction on the type of boats, i.e. no high speed or planing hulled vessels
4. An understanding of dolphin etiquette may be required, i.e. no touch areas, blowhole, eyes, genital areas
5. A ban on feeding the cetacean should also be required

As with the restriction on the number of vessels in the area, it may also be necessary to extend the educational programme to water-based users of the marine environment, by advising local clubs, groups and/or private owners to take into consideration the dolphin when on the water.

The only such course in the UK which currently offers guidance on responsible actions around solitary cetaceans is the WiSe scheme www.wisescheme.org which has been set up to deliver training and accreditation for owners who wish to view marine wildlife. Over 500 operators/marine professionals have been trained to date. All WiSe accredited operators have to attend and pass a course designed to ensure they have an understanding of how to approach marine wildlife, and how to minimise any disturbance to those animals. All operators have additionally, agreed to abide by appropriate Codes of Conduct for the animals created to ensure that their operations are safe and sustainable. Marine Connection has worked alongside the WiSe Scheme to provide guidelines on how vessels should be operated in the vicinity of solitary, sociable cetaceans (See Appendix II for guidelines.)



Recommendations

It is important that a precautionary approach is taken to the protection and where needed management of the situation surrounding solitary, sociable cetaceans. Management should be well thought out, including education, monitoring, applied research and enforcement, support by legislation.

- With increasing numbers of solitary cetaceans being recorded in the UK there is a clear requirement here for targeted protective legislation.
- This should include consideration of both short- and long-term measures.
 - Short-term measures should include;
 - o Emergency STOP orders
 - o Increased and streamlined byelaw making powers
 - o Immediate penalty notices issued on acts of disturbance/misconduct
 - o Recognised temporary, closed areas to fishing, boats and swimmers
 - Long-term measures should include;
 - o Structured, strategic legislative protection for cetaceans
- There should be adequate resources for enforcement of the above.
- The management options and area and human considerations should be implemented for every solitary cetacean which arises. As there is no central marine mammal organisation these tasks should be initiated and co-ordinated by researchers, NGOs and welfare organisations working in the field. For these to be truly effective however, it is important that they are supported by the legislative recommendations made above.

Appendix I

UK - Bottlenose Dolphin (*Tursiops truncatus*)



Danny (m)

Cornwall & Dorset, UK 2017 – 2020

Danny appeared in the Portland area, summer 2018. Residing around the marina area over the winter months, in 2019 the dolphin moved between Weymouth, Swanage and Poole harbours, often following boats and interacting with divers. Marine Connection worked with both Portland Port and Weymouth Harbour to raise public awareness on how to behave around Danny when he was in the vicinity. In October 2020 Danny was accidentally killed by a vessel in Portland Harbour, he was only 10 years of age. Further identification confirmed that Danny was the same dolphin known as Splashy, seen around Newquay and Penzance in Cornwall from early 2017 until early 2018. Depending which location he was sighted in, he was also known as Splashy/Pierre. This helped join the jigsaw pieces together of Danny's earlier life and in August 2021, Marine Connection unveiled a memorial to Danny at Portland Marina, Dorset, the first of its kind in the UK.

Dolly (sex unknown)

South coast of England, UK 2007

A bottlenose dolphin was first seen during spring of 2007 off the coast of Cornwall, bow-riding vessels in and out of the harbour at Falmouth. Although later reports cannot be confirmed as the same animal, a lone bottlenose dolphin was then seen in April off Southampton docks, following container vessels in and out of the harbour. In July what is thought to be the same animal was then observed in Portsmouth harbour, once again bow-riding and following vessels. In the same area the dolphin was also seen in a marina, thought to have come into the area to feed as locals reported large numbers of fish sheltering in the marina itself. During all the above occasions whenever anyone approached the dolphin would disappear, demonstrating that it was still wary of humans, although not of boats.

This individual was observed approaching rowing boats in Portsmouth and on one occasion remained in the general area whilst there were swimmers in the water, although it maintained a distance from them (Lepe, Southampton). The dolphin was maintaining a wide home range between Portsmouth, Southampton, Southsea and the Isle of Wight, with local people keeping a careful watch on the situation liaising with organisations monitoring its welfare. This dolphin has not been seen since the summer of 2007.

Dave (f)

Kent coast, UK 2006 - 2007

Dave, first identified as a young, male bottlenose dolphin, was later re-identified as female, but kept the name Dave, as she was widely known by the time of identification. She first arrived off Sandgate in April 2006 and was then later seen in Folkestone and at various locations between the two. At this point, although she was maintaining a small home range, she was wary of boats and people and was keeping her distance from them. She would regularly be seen feeding and hunting within the bay, taking time to rest by a yellow buoy, 180m from Sandgate beach.

It wasn't until June 2006 that human-dolphin interactions began to occur. By the middle of September swimmers could approach Dave but no closer than approximately 4m; kayakers were usually still avoided. By the beginning of October, however this changed, and she began to investigate swimmers closer. In November, she was observed following kayaks at Seabrook beach, where at the end of December she began to interact with them. Interestingly however, during the winter of 2006 she remained at the beach of Seabrook but did not engage in interactions. It wasn't until June 2007 that the first human-dolphin physical contact was made. From July/August she increased interactions with kayakers and swimmers. On June 9th, two men were arrested at Seabrook after Police observed them swimming with Dave at 5am and allegedly disturbing her. The case, the first of its kind to be heard in the UK, went to Folkestone Magistrate's Court where both men were found guilty of recklessly disturbing a wild animal under the Wildlife & Countryside Act 1981, and ordered to carry out 120 hours of unpaid work in the community and pay £350 each towards court costs.

The last reported sighting of Dave was in November 2007. However weeks previously, she was seen with a severe injury to her tail fluke, thought to be caused by a propeller strike and therefore the dolphin in all probability died from the serious wounds sustained.

Chas (m)

Canvey Island, Essex & River Thames, UK 2006 - 2007

Chas arrived at Hole Haven Creek, Canvey Island in May 2006. Colleagues from BDMLR went out to gain information about Chas's health. He appeared to have no scars/identifying features and was in very good body condition. He kept his distance from boats most of the time but did enjoy bow riding (particularly the container vessels). Towards the end of his time at Canvey he did start to bow ride most boats and would jump over the bow of RIBs and dinghies.

The biggest problems arose from jet skiers and some boat owners as many wanted to try to interact with him. Chas however, paid them little attention. On occasions when he was surrounded by jet skiers, he was observed slapping the surface of the water with his tail – a potential sign of aggression, or a warning that they were too close. Jet skiers and other water users were advised that there was a dolphin in the area and to obey the 8-knot speed limit.

His range for the duration of his stay was about 200 by 200m around a buoy mooring in the bay. He seemed to focus his attention on the buoy most of the time. The current was too strong for people to swim with him and so the only people interacting with him were those on jet skis. Chas left Hole Haven Creek around 11 August 2006. He then spent the next 5 months in the Thames Estuary favouring the buoys in the main shipping channel. He was last seen in late January 2007.

Marra (f)

Maryport, Cumbria, UK 2006

Marra was first reported by local fishermen as a solitary dolphin approaching boats in the area around Workington harbour. She was not interacting with humans or boats, though some reports suggest that she was fed by local fishermen during this time. At the beginning of January 2006, Marra was sighted off Maryport pier for the first time and later became trapped in the marina, where concern for her wellbeing arose. The marina had a freshwater input, was full of boats and their respective discharges and being early January was occasionally freezing at one end overnight.

After some weeks in the marina, where she was regularly fed by a fisherman, a rescue team, coordinated by BDMLR attempted to lure her out with boats, playing underwater sounds and even using a bubble curtain without success. At the end of January, she began to show a loss of weight and limited feeding. At this point the team decided that intervention was necessary, and she was captured and released into the sea. It appears that from this time Marra remained in the vicinity as from May onwards she was regularly observed interacting with humans with increasingly closer contact.

At the end of May however, she was found stranded at Beckfoot beach and was refloated by local BDMLR medics. Despite this episode she continued to be regularly sighted close to shore, within harbours and allowed even closer human contact. At the end of August and again in mid-September, Marra was struck by a boat, but, despite this, she did not modify her behaviour. Sadly, on the 12 December 2006, Marra was found dead on Silloth beach. Post mortem analysis showed that she died of septicaemia caused by an infection, which is likely to have been as a consequence of the wounds she received earlier.

Jet (aka Spinnaker) (sex unknown)
Solent, Isle of Wight/Portsmouth, UK 2005

Jet first appeared in September 2005 in the Solent area of the Isle of Wight and Portsmouth. This dolphin followed different vessels, particularly the Gosport ferry and would regularly enter Portsmouth harbour, attracting huge crowds of people. Jet roamed widely, being reported by locals up to five miles out to sea. Whilst no photo-identification confirmation was provided the individual sightings of a lone dolphin at this time, were thought to be that of Jet.

Unfortunately, the dolphin's regular trips into Portsmouth harbour resulted in a collision with a tugboat propeller. In the accident, the dolphin was reported to have lost its tail and was seen to be bleeding. A search by the local lifeboat followed, although no body was found. It was assumed that the dolphin would have died shortly afterwards of the injuries sustained.

Georges (aka Dony/Randy) (m)
South of England, Ireland, Channel Islands, France, Belgium & Holland 2001 to date

This dolphin not only has a number of names, but has exhibited an extensive home range, making contact with people in Ireland, southern England, Belgium, France and Holland. He was first seen and named Dony in Co. Kerry, Ireland where he remained from May to July 2001. He was then sighted near La Rochelle, France from July to September that year.

From October 2001 until March 2002 the dolphin, who had by now also become known as Georges or Randy, travelled between Cherbourg, Jersey, Guernsey and Alderney and from March until September 2002, was seen at Portland, Weymouth, Salcombe and Plymouth, England (Rossiter, 2002). His previous two more recent visits to the south coast of the UK were surrounded in controversy as various ideas and suggestions were put forward concerning his welfare. At the time of publication, Georges was regularly being sighted around Brest, France (November 2024).

He is a boisterous individual, who appears to enjoy playing rough, but conversely can also be incredibly gentle. He was given the name Randy, because of his sexual arousal on interacting with female swimmers. He has however, on occasion inflicted injury on those engaging with him, just as he has received a number of injuries himself from boats and propellers (Wilke *et al*, 2005).

Freddie (m)
Amble, Northumberland, UK 1987 - 1992

Freddie first appeared off Amble, Northumberland in 1987. At the same time a female dolphin was found dead, thought to have perhaps been his mate/companion, which could have explained his solitary existence from that point on. After the initial sightings Freddie remained during the winter months, escorting boats in and out of the harbour. A dive club also reported seeing him, however, he showed no interest in the divers when they were in the water.

During these initial months, he remained in a distinct, small home range that was rarely deserted. His solitary existence remained, without any direct contact or interaction with humans or boats.

In 1988 two reports were made of interaction with Freddie although no physical contact was made. The first of these was with members of the dive club; he appeared interested but wary and would flit in and out of their view. The second time was with swimmers at the surface where he seemed more confident and would approach to within a metre. Freddie would also interact with floating birds; surfacing underneath them and causing them to fly off and with boats and two navigational buoys. He also showed a particular fascination for inflatables with outboard motors, swimming upside down below them, hanging close to the propeller.

Another interesting aspect of his behaviour was his fascination for the sewage outlet pipe in the harbour – when this was being flushed out the dolphin was seen to hang facing the pipe in time to receive a rather unsavoury facial! This may have also accounted for the white markings on his skin, which were thought to be caused by toxins in the water.

These interactions progressed, as did his reputation in the area. Physical contact was made, and swimmers could regularly engage with interactions with him. Apparent sexual and aggressive behaviour began to increase with incidents of couple splitting, swimmers being breached on, ducked, tail swiped, mouthed, physically dragged around and generally dominated by the dolphin (*Bloom, 1991*). Conversely, as the interactions increased, from June 1989, so his resting behaviour decreased. Observations made throughout the year indicated that it was generally low with the exception of February and was not observed at all in August or November (*Bloom, 1991*). Freddie was then badly injured by a police launch propeller and fears grew for his safety and welfare, he was last seen in Amble harbour in mid-March 1992, a couple of sightings followed but he never returned to Amble.

Simo (m)

Solva, Wales, UK 1984 -1986

Fishermen first became aware of the dolphin in spring 1984. The dolphin was estimated to be 2 years old, and much of his behaviour followed that of other solitary, sociable dolphins. He was curious about any underwater activity and would watch divers with a keen interest. Simo appeared to have favourite human companions both in the water and aboard boats. Like some of the other dolphins mentioned in this report, he allowed swimmers to touch him and take hold of his dorsal fin. He would then pull them along at great speed for distances of several hundred metres. The dolphin initiated play by coming alongside and pressing his dorsal fin against the body of the swimmer. He exhibited sexual arousal and behaviour with swimmers and would occasionally play rough, pushing people around and circling boats. It was clear however, that Simo would adapt his behaviour to the abilities of the swimmer, if swimmers were gentle with him then he responded likewise (*Lockyer, 1990; Lockyer & Morris, 1986*).

Some studies of his diving and swimming ability were conducted (*Lockyer & Morris, 1986*). Those interested in Simo's welfare published a special pamphlet for visitors, warning them of Simo's vigorous antics and advising swimmers to wear buoyancy-aids and to stay calm if he grew too excited and to avoid hurting his delicate skin with any sharp, hard objects (*Doak, 1989*). Simo disappeared at some point in 1986.

Percy (m)

Portreath, Cornwall, UK 1981 - 1985

Percy was first sighted following the local lobster and crab fishing boat, stopping at each buoyed pot trap and occasionally swimming ahead to the next in anticipation of the routine (*Lockyer & Morris, 1986*). Encounters with divers and swimmers, which were initially wary, become closer and prolonged. After becoming more familiar with people he would approach to within a few centimetres. This was however, always on his terms as he would back off if a hand was extended out to reach him.

With time he did eventually become sociable, permitting physical contact with swimmers and allowing them to hold onto his dorsal fin. He was not always friendly when over-excited visitors attempted to make contact and *Lockyer and Morris (1986)* reported a number of incidents of injury to people who were the object of sudden aggression. This dolphin, like Donald and others, developed a habit of pushing swimmers and even surfers out to sea, and actively preventing them from swimming ashore (*Lockyer, 1990*). Percy's behaviour could be very unpredictable, with episodes of gentleness, sexual overtures and aggression. He was reported butting swimmers in the chest and pushing them out to sea. As concern began to rise and action was called for, rather fortunately Percy left the area. (*Lockyer & Morris, 1986*).

Donald (aka Beaky) (m)

Wales & Cornwall, UK 1972 - 1978

Donald set up a series of home ranges at small harbours along the Welsh and Cornish coast over a six-year period (Lockyer, 1978). In each of these his range was definable, where he could always be located until he chose to move onto the next. The time he chose to spend at any one place could last for months and in some cases years, before he would be gone as suddenly as he had arrived (Lockyer, 1990).

During his stay in Cornwall his movements often seemed to be related to those of the local mackerel fishing fleet (Wilke *et al*, 2005). He was naturally curious and approached people at a much earlier stage, compared to other solitary, sociable dolphins. Despite this however, direct contact was not made for several months. When it eventually did occur, he permitted swimmers to hold his dorsal fin, taking them for tows – he frequently carried people out to sea, rather than into shore. He also exhibited sexual arousal and behaviour with swimmers and could become a nuisance by occasionally pinning divers to the seabed for short periods of time (Wilke *et al*, 2005). There is evidence of contact with other dolphins off the Isle of Man, demonstrating that he did at times interact with conspecifics.

As with some of the dolphins mentioned in this report, he also became a problem; towing boats and overturning small, moored craft, moving anchors and thus setting small craft adrift and disrupting small-yacht races by turning craft around at the wrong moment by surfacing underneath them. There was evidence that at some point he had sustained a gunshot wound to the head (Lockyer, 1990; Lockyer & Morris, 1990; Lockyer & Morris, 1986). In 1977 he appeared in Falmouth, Cornwall where he was observed spending hours around a particular boat. He was last seen in 1978 just prior to the worst storm on record (WDCS, 2005).

Charlie (f)

Eyemouth, Scotland, UK 1960 - 1967

In 1960 this dolphin had lived off the coast of the Firth of Forth near Edinburgh. However, it wasn't until 1967 off Eyemouth, Scotland that scuba divers started meeting a large bottlenose nicknamed Charlie. Prior to this she would escort all the boats, and always approached when scuba divers were in the water. Local divers believed that she only fed for a few hours each day, around high water and at night when especially strong current swept past Hurker's Rocks. Fish could sometimes be seen sheltering in the lee of the rocks when Charlie was observed feeding in the tidal race.

During the winter months Charlie disappeared suddenly only to be re-identified further south off Northumberland, about 100km distant (Lockyer, 1990; Lockyer & Morris, 1986), however there were no further reported sightings recorded.

Gabriel (m)

Stoke, England, UK 1814

Gabriel made his home 8km up the River Dart at Stoke. He was a favourite amongst children who watched his antics from the riverbanks, and he soon had a following of admirers far and wide. Sadly, Gabriel died when enterprising showmen decided to capture him and travel with him to London, stopping off at villages along the way. They had only supported him on straw and so the unsupported weight of his body eventually crushed his internal organs (Doak, 1989).



UK & Ireland - Common Dolphin (*Delphinus delphis*)



Kylie (f)

North Ayrshire, Scotland, UK 2006 to date

This dolphin has been resident around Fairlie Bay and Largs coastline for numerous years, occasionally disappearing for a time but always returning back to the area. Hailed as a scientific marvel, Kylie is known to interact with the resident porpoises in the area, striking up associations with many individuals and modifying her vocalisation to speak within porpoise frequencies, which is exceptionally rare. On multiple occasions female porpoises have been seen bringing their young calves to meet Kylie.

Stormy (m)

New Quay, Wales, UK 2014 - 2015

Stormy frequented the Cardigan Bay/Aberystwyth area for approximately four months before heading back out to deeper waters. The reason for its departure was possibly due to the bottlenose dolphins returning to the area after the winter season. Stormy was regularly sighted and monitored from land and due to it being outside peak time for tourism there was very little commercial boat traffic out at sea which would have otherwise caused potential disturbance to the marine mammal.

Muirin (unknown)

Carlingford Lough, Ireland 2022 - 2023

Muirin was first spotted in Carlingford Lough Autumn 2022 and regularly ventured much further in towards the marina area. At the same time, Finn the bottlenose dolphin was also in the area, but they never interacted. Muirin remained in the area for a year and was mainly viewed by the locals/visitors from shore rather than directly on/in the water. One day Muirin disappeared before the winter months set in (2023) and was never sighted in the area again.



WORLDWIDE - Bottlenose Dolphin (*Tursiops truncatus*)**Zafar (m)**

Brittany, France 2018 - 2020

Zafar initially appeared around the Bay of Brest, staying for a few months before heading south to the Landévennec area. Within a short period, concern was raised over Zafar's zealous behaviour towards swimmers and kayakers. The mayor in place at the time put a ban in place to stop members of the public swimming in the bay when the dolphin was around or approaching the dolphin within 50m to stop Zafar unintentionally causing an accident. The dolphin continued to travel around Brittany and in summer 2019 was sighted with Georges, another solitary male bottlenose, known to frequent the French coastline. In May 2020 after travelling hundreds of miles from France, Zafar was found dead on the beach at Wijk aan Zee in the Netherlands. His stomach full of fish, indicating a healthy animal, but sadly his tail fluke was missing, possibly due to a vessel/propellor strike.

Kaimi (f)

San Francisco Bay, USA 2016 to date

Kaimi led a solitary life for about a year beginning July 2016, however in summer 2017 the dolphin was sighted in the company of an adult female dolphin known as Arc. In 2018 two further dolphins joined Arc and Kaimi and in 2019 Kaimi left the bay. Since then, she has been seen twice off the coast of Pacifica, a town not far south of San Francisco, once in 2020 and once in 2024. Both times in a tight group with several other bottlenose dolphins, she is now* a subadult and apparently socializing normally. (*2024)

Nimmo (m)

Galway Bay, Ireland 2015 to date

Nimmo was first sighted around Galway Bay in April 2015 but never remains permanently. He appears each year around the same time, usually February to July and therefore is classed as semi-resident. Where the dolphin frequents the rest of the year is unknown, however in more recent years, when around Galway Bay, he is accompanied by three dolphins from the Shannon population that left the estuary some time ago.

Yera (aka Sally & Dolly) (f)

New South Wales, Australia 2012 to date

Yera was estimated to be 3-4 years old when found alone and trapped in Sussex Inlet. After some time, she became habituated, regularly interacting with swimmers. After 9 months a decision was made to capture and relocate Yera back to the open ocean in the hope she would possibly join a pod of dolphins. However she continues to travel solitary, and has been sighted in various areas including Sydney beaches and Illawarra.

Clet (m)

Brittany, France 2008-2011 & UK/Ireland 2011-2018

This fascinating lone male dolphin was first sighted and documented in 2008 following fishing boats along the Brittany coast, travelling around this part of the French coastline for some years before heading over to UK waters.

UK & Ireland 2011 – 2018

Clet has been sighted in five countries since first being recorded in 2008 and is the first known solitary dolphin to be tracked across so many UK regions. Covering hundreds of nautical miles, Clet is easily identified by his distinctive fin, and from September 2011 to April 2014, spent most of his time between the coastlines of Cornwall and Devon before moving off to visit the south-west of Ireland. From Cork to Kerry and then to Galway, Clet was often sighted in various harbour locations along the way and at one point, was spotted interacting with Dusty the female solitary, sociable dolphin who was at that time frequenting the area between Doolin and Inisheer - the pair stayed together for several days.

In December 2014, Clet ventured even further north, travelling into the west of Scotland and was identified around the Isle of Mull. However not one for hanging around too long, he dropped by the Isle of Man just before Christmas of that year. In early 2015 Clet continued his travels down the Pembrokeshire coast before heading south once more to Cornwall, he was seen in the Fowey Estuary in February. In the following months, Clet was sighted over 25 times along the coasts of Cornwall, Devon and Dorset before disappearing in August of that year. However, in July 2018, this male dolphin surprised everyone who had been monitoring his movements by re-appearing on the Welsh coast! Clet was seen with 40 other dolphins in Pembrokeshire's waters, but only for a short period of time before disappearing once more.

Fiete (m)

Germany & France 2016 - 2017

Fiete appeared in Kiel Fjord, Germany between August and December 2016. Becoming an instant attraction to whichever area he was spotted in, he interacted with anyone who entered the water to be with him, allowing children to hang on to his dorsal fin. The dolphin was often seen passing through the locks into the canal which connects the Baltic and North Seas and Fiete seemed to have no fear of the larger vessels he encountered. Identifiable by various scars around his face, Fiete disappeared for two months before turning up in Saint Malo, France in February 2017. He had travelled more than 2,000km and similar to before, was noted for swimming through locks - this time to gain entry into Vauban port. He soon left the area and his whereabouts is currently unknown.

Bobi (m)

Zadar, Croatia 2014 - 2016

Bobi first appeared near Zadar on the Adriatic coast in autumn 2014, reportedly playing with children soon after turning up around Karin. With the beach area being popular with families and swimmers, there were many who wished to interact with the dolphin and Bobi stayed around for some time before leaving and being spotted further south near peninsula Pelješac. Bobi eventually travelled back up north, being seen in various areas including Neum and Montenegro before disappearing. In August 2016, a dead dolphin was found around Karinsko where Bobi was usually spotted, however the body was never identified.

Stinky (m)

Grand Cayman 2009 - 2012

Wild dolphins in waters around the Cayman Islands are quite rare, therefore it was a surprise to many locals when this male dolphin appeared in the area and stayed around for some time. Stinky was presumed to be adult and due to his dominant characteristics over a period of time (including jaw snapping), the Cayman Islands Department of Environment advised swimmers, snorkellers and divers to keep their distance from the dolphin due to his robust behaviour which could result in unintentional injury to the dolphin, or anyone interacting with him.

Moko (m)

Mahia, New Zealand 2007 - 2010

A friendly dolphin was reported in the area during August 2007 however during the early part of 2008 the dolphin was reported to be interacting with children and providing fin tows off the coast in Mahia, south of Gisborne, demonstrating an increasing friendliness towards humans. The dolphin had also been reported assisting in the rescue of two pygmy sperm whales which live stranded in March 2008, having guided the two whales out into safer water.

In summer 2010, the body of a dolphin believed to be that of Moko was found on an eastern beach on New Zealand's North Island. A post-mortem by the Department of Conservation was inconclusive as to cause of death due to post mortem decomposition, therefore sadly cause of death is unknown. Such was the community's love for Moko, his remains were buried in a small blue coffin with a traditional Māori ceremony, on the shore at Matakana Island.

Dougal (aka. Duggie) (m)

Tory Island, County Donegal, Ireland 2006 -2008

Estimated to be between five and six years old, Dougal first appeared in April 2006 off Tory Island in County Donegal. He was perhaps best known for his interactions with dogs, one in particular a Golden Labrador called Ben, who regularly interacted with the dolphin several times a day, so unique was this friendship that it is still making headlines in the media. He regularly accompanied the local ferries and demonstrated a particular fascination with outboard motors but was very willing to engage with swimmers taking part in the same seaweed games which are also observed in wild dolphin populations.

Wifi (m)

Brittany coast, France 2007 - 2011

This dolphin was first observed in 2007 on the Brittany coast, and over the years was seen to prefer a small roaming range, staying close to mooring buoys whilst resting. Although Wifi lived a solitary life for many years, in July 2011 he was sighted with another dolphin, however that dolphin did not remain in the area for too long, leaving Wifi once again living a solitary life until he eventually disappeared.

Marco (m)

Eilat, Israel & Jordan 2006 - 2008

For the last few months of 2006, a young solitary, sociable bottlenose dolphin named Marco, established his home range between Eilat and Jordan. At the time of our initial report in 2008, Marco was not permitting any contact with swimmers (Goffman & Granit, 2008) and his current whereabouts are unknown.

Lucero (f)

Veracruz, Mexico 2005 to date

This dolphin, estimated to be over 20 years old, lives in the salty lagoon of Tamishua which connects to the Gulf of Mexico. Appearing around 2005, Lucero befriended the local fishermen after her companion dolphin died and over the years, has become very interactive and sometimes boisterous towards any swimmers which enter the water to be with her. Now seen as a local attraction, Lucero is often seen taking fish from the local fishermen but appears healthy and is monitored regularly.

Maurice (sex unknown)

Brandon, North Kerry 2004 - 2005)

A solitary dolphin which had been seen in September 2004 and nicknamed Maurice by locals, was observed again in January of the following year. Reports were that the dolphin could be seen around the mooring buoys and on occasion this dolphin would demonstrate acrobatic displays but would not interact with swimmers.

Unnamed (sex unknown)

Luanda, Africa 2003 - 2004

This friendly dolphin appeared on the west coast of Africa and stayed around Mussulo Bay for approximately one year. The sex of the marine mammal was never determined. There were rumours that the dolphin was killed by explosives used by the local fishermen to kill schools of fish in the same area of water frequented by the dolphin, but this was never confirmed and why it left the area is not known.

Dusty (aka Marra, Sandy, Aran or the Clare dolphin) (f)

Doolin, County Clare, Ireland 2000 to date

This female bottlenose dolphin first interacted with people in Doolin, Co. Clare, in the summer of 2000. In 2001 she moved up the coast to Fanore, Co. Clare, later moving to near Milltown Malbay and Inisheer in the Aran Islands where she interacted very closely with swimmers. Dusty was immediately interested in objects such as cameras and surfboards and was particularly keen on fins. She would mouth these gently and was totally fascinated with monofins. She remained close by even when the wearer was sitting on the rocks with just the fin in the water.

Dusty has interacted with people for up to eight hours at a time, with on occasion over 20 people in the water. She has also been observed in extremely shallow water, though has not come to any harm she will avoid those who try to grab at her and in one incident rammed a swimmer, breaking two of their ribs. In 2005 she reportedly attacked a visitor who went swimming with her, resulting in internal injuries and hospital treatment (WDCS, 2005). Whilst Dusty spends a lot of time with human companions it is clear that she also regularly meets other dolphins and was observed with a porpoise calf. In spring 2019 Dusty disappeared from the area for a few months but in July 2019 reappeared off the coast of County Clare, an area she continues to frequent.

Pechocho (m)

Topolobampo Bay, Mexico 1992 to date

Over the years, all types of rumours have circulated with regards to this dolphin and why he has remained alone since a youngster, one being he has stayed in the area following the death of his mother in the secluded estuary. Pechocho is well known for greeting small boats when they arrive in the area and has approached swimmers to interact with him when entering the water.

Siany (sex unknown)

Bay of Islands, New Zealand 1992 - 1994

When first sighted, this dolphin had various injuries including a damaged dorsal fin, it was also visibly thin. After arriving in the area with five other dolphins, Siany remained when they left, occasionally interacting with people, but never developing close friendships. From time to time the dolphin had fresh tooth rakes on its body indicating it came into contact with other dolphins during its stay. In early 1994 Siany was spotted with two bottlenose dolphins and left the area shortly afterwards.

Jack (m)

Port Underwood, New Zealand 1989 - 1990

This young dolphin was first spotted hanging around one of the salmon farms in the area and within a short period of time started following the workers in their vessels as they moved between the fish cages. Jack was interested in propellers and would regularly interact with one of the divers who anchored the cages down. Jack stayed around the area for some time before simply disappearing.

Aihe (f)

Golden Bay, New Zealand 1987 - 1993

Aihe was a juvenile dolphin when she arrived in the area. Known to travel several miles along the coastline, in each direction, her favourite resting place was near an unused jetty in the centre of her range. Similar to many solitary dolphins, Aihe would interact with pods of dolphins that passed through the area but never left and over time became sociable with swimmers which entered the water to be with her.

For some reason Aihe had a tendency to strand, having to be rescued on seven different occasions. The dolphin eventually avoided contact with regular swimmers and left the area, the last sighting of her was near Pepin Island, in the company of another bottlenose dolphin.

Fungie (aka Dorad) (m)

Dingle Bay, County Kerry, Ireland 1984 - 2020



Fungie was one of the longest surviving and well known of all solitary, sociable dolphins, generating a vast amount of income for the local community. He became resident in mid 1984. In 1986 divers Brian Holmes and Sheila Stokes heard of Fungie, forming a relationship with him beginning with intensive and exclusive contact, spending 14 hours a day with the dolphin. This meant that a relationship and contact formed quickly.

In the early years Fungie was very selective about permitting physical contact, allowing only those with whom he had established trust. For the most part he would only approach tourists in the water provided they were holding a tow line. If they released it and swam towards him, Fungie would move away. Despite his popularity, rather surprisingly, when

compared to other solitary cases, contact with him was not considered excessive, but over the years as boat traffic increased, and the dolphin aged, a protection plan was discussed to ensure his welfare was not compromised. Towards the end of his life, it would appear that by the dolphins' own choice, his interactions with people in the water became few and far between. Tooth rake markings on his skin however, indicated that over the years Fungie did occasionally engage with other dolphins. He disappeared from Dingle Bay in October 2020, and sadly is presumed to have died.

Venus (f)

Blasket Islands, Ireland 2005 - 2006

In the last week of May 2005, Venus was observed and named by Ute Margreff. In the early days the dolphin could be seen around one of the mooring buoys near Ventry pier. At this point Ute was the only person to have interacted with her, the dolphin ignoring the presence of others including those in kayaks. Soon after this Venus travelled to the Blasket Islands where she was seen frequently by lobster fishermen. In July, whilst Ute continued to engage in seaweed carrying games with the dolphin, Venus began to interact with other swimmers. Most of her time was spent around a single yellow mooring buoy off the main Blasket Island beach, although Venus was observed to swim a short way off to fish or follow boats. She tended to ignore the passing groups of bottlenose dolphins and instead remained a solitary, sociable dolphin for at least six months. With autumn storms in 2005 it was not possible for researchers to get out to the island and by spring 2006 she had disappeared.

Un-named (m)

Coulagh Bay, County Cork, Ireland 2005

This dolphin apparently frequented an area around a salmon farm on the south side of Inishfarnard, a small island in Coulagh Bay, part of the Kenmare River estuary. There was only one reported encounter with this dolphin, during which he did not permit physical contact but remained interested by divers.

Un-named (sex unknown)
Santa Catarina, Brazil 2005

A bottlenose dolphin was reported as under investigation (WDCS, 2005), although no further reports or information can be found.

Jean Floch (m)
Brittany, France & Galicia, Spain 2003 - 2010

Jean Floch first appeared in 2003 at Finistere, off Brittany, when he did not interact with humans but appeared curious about them. This allowed people to get gradually closer to him, to the point where he became habituated to their presence. He demonstrated a desire to get hold of objects which interested him including oars, paddles and small boats. In June 2003, Jean-Floch was beaten violently with a wooden oar (it was never revealed by who), but in spite of this attack he continued to follow boats. He was observed turning over small boats when empty and occasionally whilst they were occupied. In late 2004/early 2005 Jean Floch was also frequently seen in the company of Georges (Dony/Randy). In February 2008 he was reported off Galicia, Spain but has not been sighted since 2010 and now presumed dead.

Flipper (m)
Skudeneshavn, Norway 1991 - 2002

Flipper, a male bottlenose dolphin first appeared near Karmøy. He initially spent time swimming alongside boats and surfboards, before gradually increasing his interaction with humans, ultimately pushing surfers off their boards. As time progressed, he spent more and more time interacting with swimmers and would move between beaches at Akrasanden, Sandvesanden and Skudenshavn. His behaviour also included hanging around where divers filled their air tanks (WDCS, 2005). He was already clearly scarred and marked from interactions, however during his stay he sustained several deep cuts on his head and back from a propeller but appeared to recover well. Last seen in 2002, his current whereabouts are unknown.

Flint (aka Paquito) (m)
San Sebastian, Spain 1998 - 2005

Flint resided in the harbour at San Sebastian, regularly interacting with two human males from 1998. Flint would approach swimmers and divers to within 10 metres and sometimes as close as 1-2 metres. He usually came over immediately to greet the people he knew, but did not allow himself to be touched. Sadly, after leaving the harbour with a group of bottlenose dolphins in 2004, he is believed to have died of pneumonia in 2005.

Filippo (m)
Manfredonia, Italy 1996 - 2004

A dolphin named Filippo was observed in the Gulf of Manfredonia, South-East Italy for several years and from May 1998 began to interact with swimmers. Filippo interacted with humans, but on occasion was found to bite arms or feet causing minor wounds. Subsequently, there were concerns raised by those observing his behaviour that the dolphin may be harmed, or cause harm to humans. Filippo has not been sighted since his disappearance in 2004.

Kodo (m)
Ashdod & Ashkelon, Israel 1995 - 1996

From 1995, for a year, Kodo, a solitary adult male bottlenose dolphin was documented in the southern part of the Mediterranean coast of Israel between the ports of Ashdod and Ashkelon. He mainly escorted boats and did not permit bodily contact (Goffman & Granit, 2008).

Koko & Piko (f) (calf sex unknown)
Toshima, Japan 1995

During 1995 a female, bottlenose dolphin was residing off the island of Toshima and had become familiar with the islanders, fishermen, and divers alike. In 1998, she gave birth to a calf. The local villagers endeavoured to protect the mother and calf, even going as far as to register them as residents of the island. Despite this local status as residents however, fishermen of the nearby islands of Ni-jima and Shikine-jima claimed that they had the right to fish off of Toshima. Since the Ni-jima fishermen used huge nets, which presented a threat to the dolphins, Toshima islanders feared for the long-term survival of Koko and Piko (Upton, 2000). Their fate is unknown.

Tião (m)
San Sebastião, Brazil 1994 - 1995

In May 1994, the dolphin which had first been reported in March was still present and seeking contact. In August he moved northward to Caraguatatuba and the encounters became more frequent. People would try and grab onto Tião's dorsal fin, however, his response was negative inflicting cuts and bruises to his pursuers. In December 1994 interactions progressed, and a series of buoys and line were placed around all bays, except one. Tião would avoid any of the buoyed bays but remained visiting the one clear bay. Sadly, Tião was abused at this beach by swimmers and he retaliated, ramming a man, who subsequently died from a ruptured spleen. Tião disappeared in August 1995, his fate unknown (Wilke et al, 2005; Frohoff & Peterson, 2003).

Zero Three (aka Jock/Jacques) (m)
Adelaide, Australia 1988 - 1993

Zero Three was managed informally for five years in a unique manner, which involved keeping his identity and location a secret. Formal scientific observations were made of the young male bottlenose dolphin on a weekly basis, which documented playful human/dolphin interactions. The dolphin was led out to the ocean to other dolphin pods, and as he began to form relationships with other dolphins the interaction with humans significantly reduced. Sadly, Jock was found dead only weeks after he had apparently successfully re-integrated into the dolphin population. Post-mortem results indicated that the cause of death was the accumulated poisons in his body. The river he lived in was found to have high levels of toxicity from heavy industry polluting it for years.

Maui (aka Woody) (f)
South Island, New Zealand 1992 - 1997

Maui frequented different ranges around the South Island of New Zealand. During the period in which Maui was interacting with the public, she made several major changes in her activity patterns and range of movement. The first of these was around Motonau, followed by the Kaikoura peninsula, before she moved onto Goose Bay. She later returned to Kaikoura and ranged further north, finally she was sighted around Marlborough Sounds where she spent her pregnancy and finally gave birth to her calf.

Maui would engage in fin tows, but if people became too enthusiastic, she could easily dislodge an unwelcome fin tow and avoid grasping hands. She seemed to enjoy the fin-tow game, and it may not have been a problem if not excessive, although toward the end of her solitary, sociable phase she actively repelled swimmers. Following some extended interactions she also attempted to prevent swimmers leaving the water (Müller et al, 1998a, b). She was also suspected of having fatally injured a Hector's dolphin after being observed flinging it out of the water and pushing it around (Müller et al, 1998a,b).

The character of her social behaviour changed during the six years of observation from being human-oriented to being more focused on other dolphin species (Dusky and Hector's) and finally socialising with other bottlenose dolphins. In March 1997 she gave birth and focused her social behaviour on her calf and also on humans again (Müller et al, 1998a, b). For Maui, six stages of behavioural categories or habituation were identified (Muller et al, 1999a).

Crispy (m)

Eilat, Israel 1992

Crispy interacted with humans for a few months. He used to visit a fish farm and accompany divers during cage maintenance. At times he would carry and hide equipment, his favourite game appeared to be changing locations to surprise swimmers. Only after a few months of observations at the fish farm did the dolphin permit contact by those familiar to him. If close contact stopped, Crispy would gently bite the person as if asking for more. During this time, he developed a close relationship with one spear gun diver who claimed that Crispy would stun fish with echolocation so that the diver could shoot and collect them (Goffman, 2003). On at least one occasion, Crispy also helped a diver in distress to the surface (Goffman, 2003).

Jotsa (f)

Montenegro 1988 - 2001

Jotsa was a solitary bottlenose dolphin who appeared having reportedly broken away from a group of dolphins which frequented the area and began to interact with swimmers/boat users. Jotsa was found dead in 2001 but was so loved by locals that, as with Fungie in Ireland, a statue was built to her memory.

Beggar (m)

Indian River Lagoon, Sarasota Bay, Florida, USA 1990-2012

This dolphin was named Beggar after his behaviour, following boats to literally beg for food and handouts. Bizarrely he developed a taste for human food due to his habit of begging and boaters feeding him (which under US law is illegal). Beggar stopped foraging on his own and began to frequent the same area instead of roaming more widely and also stopped socialising with other dolphins - probably due to being fed. Signs were erected and educational pamphlets handed out to boaters that were attempting to engage in interactions with Beggar. Some people claimed they did not know feeding wild dolphins was against the law and others said they did not care. A few people were issued with notices, but generally there was little enforcement of the law not to feed Beggar (Cunningham-Smith et al, 2005). He was found dead in September 2012.

Françoise (f)

Arcachon, France 1989 - 2001

Françoise was a sub adult female bottlenose dolphin, resident at Arcachon from 1989, where she followed boats and sometimes approached swimmers. During 1989, she was at times observed with other bottlenose dolphins, but when apart from the group, Françoise was often observed closely approaching swimmers and bow-riding around boats and jet skis. She would also rub her body against ropes and play with buoys and other floating objects (WDCS, 2005). Françoise did not arouse concern over human interaction (Wilke et al, 2005) and died in the summer of 2001 (Lockyer & Müller, 2003).

Dolphy (aka Dolly) (f)

Colioure, South of France 1989 - 1995

Dolphy ranged widely along the Mediterranean coast from Spain to France. Dolphy's rest area was beneath a boat, alongside a jetty allowing her to remain undetected by the public. It wasn't until late 1990 and 1991 that she allowed close interactions with divers and swimmers. Behaviour included regularly swimming with a dog in the open sea and in the harbour of Banyuls-Sur-Mer, for many hours at a time. In 1994, rake marks from other bottlenose dolphins were observed on Dolphy's skin.

As encounters from the beach were creating issues, the local mayor supported a specially appointed guardian who was equipped with a mobile phone and instant police back up. The appointed guardian and local committee took special measures to prevent people holding her dorsal fin for rides, because they were convinced her fin was suffering physical damage from such attention (Wilke et al, 2005).

In May 1995, Dolphy was observed together with two other bottlenose dolphins, and they were seen travelling with her daily between the harbours of Valencia and Gandia. During this time, Dolphy still entered harbours to follow boats and approach swimmers, but the other two bottlenose dolphins remained outside of the harbour entrances until Dolphy rejoined them. Dolphy disappeared in 1995 (Lockyer & Müller, 2003).

Pita (aka Sugar) (f)

Lighthouse Reef Atoll, Belize 1988 - 1994

For at least eight years, Pita lived off the coast of Belize and frequented the waters surrounding Northern Two Cay, Lighthouse Reef Atoll. In the last four/five years of her residence she actively sought human contact. Pita exhibited both aggressive and sexual behaviour towards humans and was advertised as a tourist attraction by some in the area. Several people were injured when Pita blocked them or hit them with her rostrum as they attempted to leave the water (Dudzinski, et al. 1995). As a juvenile she was fed by humans but as an adult reportedly refused such handouts. Pita eventually left the area, it was assumed with other dolphins (Samuels, et al, 2000).

Billie (aka Billy) (f)

Adelaide, Australia 1987 - 2009

Known as 'the horse-training dolphin' - Billie arrived with her mother in Adelaide's Port River and become fascinated by a horse trainer who used to exercise his horses each day behind a dinghy. As the fascination grew, Billie's mother left, and she remained. Before long Billie was accompanying the horses on their swim, sometimes brushing alongside them (Doak, 1989). In 1998 Billie was found stranded and taken to Marineland, West Beach and upon release began to interact with other dolphins giving birth to at least one calf. Billie died in 2009.

Joca (m)

Boka Kotorska Bay, Montenegro 1987 - 1993

Named Joca by the locals this well-known solitary male bottlenose dolphin frequented the area around Boka Kotorska Bay. Not reluctant towards humans at all, he became the main tourist attraction, staying in the bay area from 1987 to 1992/93. Joca was granted special protection and became the first marine mammal protected by law in Montenegro.

Fanny & Marine (f)

Marseille, France 1987 - 1994

In July 1987 a dolphin began to linger around a beacon moored near the little Mediterranean port of Carro. Water Police first reported her bow riding any vessel within half a mile of the beacon. She showed some interest in boats, but it wasn't long before she was interacting with swimmers, though she remained a few metres away at first.

In September 1988, Fanny was joined by another female bottlenose dolphin, Marine and the two became inseparable. Marine was pregnant and it seemed she had been looking for another female to assist her with pregnancy and birth. Fanny protected Marine from swimmers, divers and boats and prevented anyone approaching her. Following a heavy storm during the winter of 1988-1989, the two dolphins disappeared for several weeks. They were not observed again until March 1989 and had clearly suffered serious harassment. Fanny was wounded and Marine had aborted her calf. Their behaviour had also changed, with both dolphins appearing anxious and keeping their distance from boats and swimmers. In May 1989, Marine left Fanny and disappeared from the Marseille area. In September 1990, Fanny appeared again in the polluted harbour and channel of Port-Saint-Louis du Rhône and remained there until her disappearance in May 1994. Here she swam daily with a twelve-year-old girl, eventually accepted body contact and would allow the girl to ride on her dorsal fin (WDCS, 2005; Lockyer & Müller, 2003).

Romeo (m)

Bay of Naples, Italy 1985

In 1985, Romeo began playing with people on several beaches 50km north of Naples. Around the same time, two other dolphins, possibly his companions died, one from swallowing a plastic bag, the other shot. He had a range of 15km and would often travel between beaches moving from one location to another. He had no special relationships but would rub alongside vessels and flick water at fishermen. He was known to have exhibited apparent sexual arousal and behaviour with swimmers of both sexes.

Indah (m)

Kent Islands, Australia 1982 - 1983

Indah began swimming with people around the Kent group of islands, located between Australia and Tasmania. When people entered the water with the dolphin it would initially remain just out of reach, but would gradually interact playfully with people, demonstrating the seaweed game, famous amongst dolphin populations. The last report of Indah was in March 1983 (Doak, 1989).

The Costa Rican (m)

Chira Island, Costa Rico 1981 - 1983

After his companion was shot this dolphin began interacting with humans at Chira Island, Costa Rica. The local people in the village reported that he arrived after following a small fishing boat back to the village. Initially he would play with a local dog, but later would play with a variety of objects and often pushed around a small canoe. The dolphin could be called close to shore by thumping on the side of a wooden dugout canoe with a paddle. As soon as people swam out from the beach he would appear. Eventually the dolphin permitted physical contact and would provide local people and visiting researchers with fin tows. The Costa Rican would however tire quickly of the same games/experiences and would need to be entertained to hold his attention. In 1983 a local fisherman found the dolphin entangled in his net, calmly waiting to be released. Instead of releasing him, the fisherman killed him and took his carcass back to the horrified villagers (Doak, 1989).

Jojo (m)

Providenciales, Turks & Caicos 1980 to date

JoJo has been interacting with swimmers and divers since 1980 and is still regularly sighted in waters of the Grace Bay area of Providenciales. In 1984 through continued harassment by tourists to the Turks & Caicos, JoJo developed aggressive behaviour towards those in the water and was officially appointed a guardian, avid swimmer, and dive instructor Dean Bernal, whose role, at the time, was to interact with the dolphin daily, mitigating the negative interactions. In 1990 JoJo became trapped in a seine net after which the JoJo Dolphin Project was set up for his protection.

JoJo's interest in boats however has led to him receiving severe injuries over the years and the dolphin is easy to identify due to propeller scars on his back and a missing tip of his left pectoral fin. In 1989 JoJo was declared a National Treasure by the Turks and Caicos Islands Government, and he is now the longest recorded solitary dolphin to date.

Dolphin 56 (m)

East Coast, USA 1979 - 2011

In 1979 this male wild dolphin was captured to be part of a National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) research study in relation to the dolphin populations in northeast Florida's Indian River Lagoon system. Estimated to be approximately 12 years old at the time, his dorsal fin was freeze-branded for future identification purposes. Over a 32-year period, Dolphin 56 adopted a solitary lifestyle and was documented travelling from Florida to Long Island, New York State every year. He was reported as a memorable animal due to his friendly approach to other water users, especially kayakers and surfers.

Dobbie (m)

Eilat, Israel 1979

Dobbie interacted with humans around Eilat in 1979. He would playfully bite at scuba exhaust bubbles and imitate diver's movements, but always stayed out of reach. Sadly, some months later he was found dead, killed by gunshots (Lockyer, 1990; Doak, 1989.)

Horace (m)

Hawkes Bay, New Zealand 1978 - 1979

Horace set up residence around a marker buoy off Westshore beach and soon attracted the attention of local people. As he remained in the area a group of locals began to track and record his movements, and one particular diver spent large proportions of time with Horace and was particularly interactive with him. As the summer advanced Horace was then recorded actively trying to prevent a young boy from leaving the water when playtime was over (Lockyer, 1990). Horace would escort yachts and fishing boats leaving Napier, however this also became a game, with which he appeared to enjoy, altering the rudder on many boats to either immobilise them or alter their course (Lockyer & Morris, 1986). What happened to Horace is unknown, but an oil spill and underwater blast also occurred shortly after Horace's last known appearance in the area in 1979 (Doak, 1989).

Jean-Louis (f)

Brittany, France 1976 - 1988

The interactions with Jean-Louis began when a local fisherman went out to check his lobster pots and, whilst lifting, discovered a dolphin holding onto the other end of the line. She remained present in the same area where she became habituated to people and was still solitary after more than seven years. Despite the attention she received from human visitors, she would still not permit direct tactile contact, remaining wary of intensive public attention from divers, swimmers and kayakers for ten years. She achieved this by having an adjacent refuge area: a rocky reef where she could elude persistent swimmers in turbulent white water, returning later to the rocky cover where she interacted with people (Lockyer, 1990; Lockyer & Morris, 1986). In December 1988, she suddenly disappeared and was never seen again.

Dolly (f)

Key West, Florida Keys, Florida, USA 1975

Dolly was an ex-US Navy dolphin who was thought to have escaped from a base in Key West, Florida. In this respect she was not a truly wild animal, but persisted in seeking human company, the result of habituation rather than spontaneous sociability. Dolly's home range became the channels of the Florida Keys where she befriended a number of families living close to the water, in particular the Ashbury family and their children, whom she would permit to interact with her (Lockyer, 1990).

Nina (f)

La Corogna, Spain 1972

Nina first began interactions by following fishing boats. The first person she approached was a clam diver, with whom she sought body contact within only a few weeks. She would engage playfully with all boats and people off the beach, allowing swimmers to touch her. Nina would never accept fish from people, instead, each day she would disappear for some time, presumably to feed or rest. She had a brief encounter with members of a passing pod of dolphins, but elected not to join them during her five month stay in a bay (Lockyer, 1990).

As concerns for her safety grew, outboards were forbidden in her vicinity, fishing nets were banned from Lorbe Cove. During the winter, some fishermen reported seeing Nina out near the clam beds. She seemed to be in distress. Five weeks later, her body washed ashore along the coast (Wilke et al, 2005; Doak, 1989).

Georgy Girl (f)

Florida, USA 1970

Georgy Girl befriended a family in Florida, though she would not permit body contact for nearly two months after the initial human contact. Eventually, she would surprise swimmers by surfacing between their legs (Lockyer, 1990).

Nudgy (m)

Powell Lake, Florida, USA 1965

During a hurricane, two dolphins entered Powell Lake, a few days later one of the dolphins was unfortunately found dead. As the lake was landlocked until spring, the surviving dolphin then had to spend the winter there, where he chose to remain. As his interactions with humans developed, similar to other solitary, sociable bottlenose dolphins, Nudgy was also fascinated by boats and engines (Lockyer, 1990). Although attempts were made to entice him back out to sea, even when this succeeded, he would always return to the lake. It also appeared that attempts were made to kill the dolphin, as spear marks appeared on his flanks, and when the local aquarium showed interest in taking him into captivity, the locals became protective of what they saw as 'their' dolphin. Eventually Nudgy's fascination with boats and fishermen caused conflict and he was enclosed using a wire fence, being released at night to feed, but by day would return of his own accord. One night he disappeared, and his fate remains unknown.

Wallis (aka Wally) (sex unknown)

Australia 1961 - 1962

Wallis was first observed inside a disused public sea pool. A member of the public threw the dolphin a few fish from his boat which were accepted. The next day the dolphin was still there and over the coming days, Wallis continued to accept fish and would approach a little closer, until eventually being hand fed. Word spread and people soon came to see the dolphin who had become boisterous and playful with children who were now feeding it. In early 1962, the member of the public who had originally fed Wallis applied to close off an area of the enclosure to keep the dolphin there permanently. However, a local aquarium owner claimed that Wallis was in fact Jo-Jo, a dolphin which had been swept from his enclosure during a cyclone. The application to permanently house Wallis was denied and the debate continued over its identity. Fate intervened when a side of the enclosure collapsed, and the dolphin decided to leave. Whilst several attempts were made to entice Wallis back, it disappeared and was not reported in the area again. (Doak, 1989).

Carolina Snowball (aka Peaches) (f)

South Carolina, USA 1955 - 1965

A rare albino dolphin frequented the US Atlantic coast between South Carolina and Georgia. She had been familiar to many of residents of the area and local fishermen regularly interacted with those approaching from the shore. A local shrimper recalled that she did not accept food offerings or approach vessels. Being such a rare specimen, this dolphin was a much sought after animal by the captivity industry that mercilessly chased and eventually captured her in the Edisto River and took her to the Miami Sea Aquarium, where she was held in a tiny tank, surviving for only three years, dying in captivity. (Lockyer & Morris, 1986; Lockyer, 1990).

Opo (aka Goldie/Dorrie) (f)

Hokianaa Harbour, New Zealand 1954 - 1955

Opo would often interact with children while frequenting Hokianga Harbour and quickly became a solitary, highly sociable animal (Wilke et al, 2005; Lockyer, 1990; Doak, 1989; Lockyer & Morris, 1986). She appeared to be able to discriminate particular people who were her favourites, seeking them out from other swimmers. She came into extremely shallow water to be with people, so that even small children could wade out to her (Lockyer, 1990). Early in January 1955 however, Opo was hit with a propeller and received two large scars, despite this her friendliness was undaunted. Fears for her welfare lead to calls for special protection, however Opo finally disappeared under mysterious circumstances, and whilst there were many rumours surrounding her death, none can be substantiated (Lockyer, 1990).

Scar (m)

Doubtful Sound, New Zealand - Date unknown

The name Scar was given to a solitary dolphin that appeared in the Sound and was badly scarred, possibly due to his keen interest in propellers. The dolphin was often seen placing his rostrum (beak) a few centimetres from a spinning propeller, which it preferred to bow riding. He was reportedly fed by fishermen during his time in the Sound but was unfortunately euthanised after being very badly injured having been reversed over by a fishing boat.

Finn (m)

Carlingford Lough, Ireland 2020 - 2023

Finn the dolphin appeared in Carlingford Lough, Ireland in March 2020. Staying mainly around the same buoy for some time, over the following months he soon started taking an interest in the Carlingford passenger ferry over to Greencastle. The area is busy over the summer months with marine craft and water users. In 2021, the public started interacting with the dolphin directly on/in the water and like many other solitary, sociable dolphins, he became much more habituated over the months, sustaining various injuries. In April 2023, Finn left the area and not been sighted since.

Nick (m)

Isles of Scilly, UK & Ireland 2020 - 2021

Nick was first spotted at the Isles of Scilly in June 2020, and then sighted in Co. Cork, Waterford and Wexford in Ireland from April to late July 2021. Early August he was back in Scilly and made occasional trips to Cornwall, visiting the Helford estuary, Mount's Bay and St Ives Bay. Often spotted interacting closely with boats and swimmers, his last sighting alive was in Hayle on 22nd August 2021 but on 12th September of the same year, his body was seen floating at the entrance to Cork Harbour. He had died due to a vessel strike.

Eric (m)

Port Broughton, Australia 2024

Eric was first sighted in Port Broughton in 2022 and is easily recognisable due to his distinctive bent dorsal fin. There have been safety concerns with regards to people in the water, deliberately getting too close to the dolphin and trying to touch or ride him. Locals have been reporting this inappropriate behaviour to authorities and Marine Connection contacted the local media to highlight the reasons why the public must keep their distance from Eric, for the safety of both the dolphin and swimmers.

Izzy (f)

North Padre Island, Texas, USA 2020 - 2022

Izzy lived off North Padre Island, Texas, from a young age and over a two-year period, her habituation to people and boats increased, despite an educational programme being put in place discouraging the public from swimming or interacting with her. Having suffered injuries and poor body condition, Izzy was taken into medical care at the end of June 2002. In August of that year, NOAA determined that it was not in the dolphin's best interest to be released back into the wild. Human interaction was to blame for her fate, as those that ignored advice to keep their distance from Izzy played a part in this decision and her future. She will remain in captivity for the remainder of her life.

Confi (m)

Portosín, Spain 2019 to date

Confi was a juvenile when he appeared around Portosín, northwestern Spain in December 2019. He is usually sighted between both areas of Portosín and Freixo and over the years direct interaction from the public has increased, with many entering the water to swim with the dolphin. He is now habituated and for reasons unknown becomes quite aggressive at times to those in the water. In October 2022 Confi appeared with some type of harpoon in his side which he seemed to remove himself and over the following months, the wound healed. How he sustained this injury, whether it was deliberate or not, is unknown.

Delle (aka Yoda) (m)

Denmark/Germany, 2019 to date

A male bottlenose dolphin appeared in Svendborg, Denmark in 2019 and was named Delle. Later identified as one of Scotland's Moray Firth dolphin population born in 2007, when scientists at University of Aberdeen's Cromarty Field Station had catalogued him as Yoda but had disappeared by 2017. Within months of being in Denmark, Delle's behaviour changed from a wild dolphin to being classified as habituated mainly due to water users/swimmers. The local community however monitored any threats that Delle faced including oil spills from the working harbour. In 2020 Delle suffered a major injury to both sides of his tail fluke, thought to have been sustained by a propeller but over a period of time, healed. In 2023, Delle left Denmark and re-appeared in several areas of Germany including Travemünde, Rostock and Warnemünde, where he is still often sighted.

OTHER SOLITARY CETACEANS



Beluga Whale (*Delphinapterus leucas*)

Benny (sex unknown)
Thames Estuary, UK 2018 - 2019

In September 2018, a beluga whale was sighted near Coalhouse Fort, Essex and a day later sighted further inland, at Gravesend, Kent. Named Benny and thought to be a sub-adult, the whale remained in the area for several months. Throughout the duration of its time whilst in the River Thames, Benny exhibited foraging behaviour, likely feeding, as well as surfacing and diving, consistent with a healthy whale. Benny did not exhibit any social behaviour whilst in the area and was last sighted in early 2019.

Q (m)
Bay of Fundy, Nova Scotia, Canada 2008 - 2010

Q appeared off the coast of Cape Chignecto and was thought to be a juvenile beluga whale from the St Lawrence population, approximately several hundred miles from Fundy. Belugas live in the Arctic and sub-Arctic waters of the world, some inhabit the St Lawrence River estuary of Canada. Over the time Q remained in the area, he sustained various injuries, many of them possibly from propellers. In 2010 Q re-surfaced off the coast of St Martins, New Brunswick, 35 km from Cape Chignecto but disappeared shortly after.

Un-named (juvenile, sex unknown)
Musquaro, Quebec, Canada 2004 - 2005

No detailed information is available about this young whale, whereabouts now unknown.

Chance (sex unknown)
Trinity Bay, Newfoundland, Canada 2004 - 2005

Chance was first observed in February 2004 frequenting wharfs in the Trinity Bay area. Similar to other solitary, sociable beluga whales, although initially hesitant around humans, Chance was later seen observing divers engaged in maintenance work and interacting with them over five days. Research by the Whale Stewardship Project (WSP) indicated that Chance may have also been seen by fishermen during the summer of 2005.

Poco (aka Helis) (sex unknown)

Gloucester, Massachusetts, USA 2004

In early March 2004 a young beluga whale was seen in coastal waters off Gloucester, Massachusetts and photographed interacting with moorings as they were being raised and lowered. The beluga was later identified as Poco, a male of approximately 2-3 years in age, first seen off Pocologan, Canada in September 2003. Frequent sightings of Poco continued through the summer and autumn. During this time the whale actively sought interactions with vessels, divers, and swimmers. The whale's attraction to small outboard motors was of particular concern and there were several times where Poco sustained minor injuries, presumably from these encounters. Unlike many of the solitary, sociable beluga cases studied to date, the whale often spent only a day or two in one region before moving to the next. Poco ranged from Southwest Harbour, Maine to Provincetown, Massachusetts. Sadly, Poco was found stranded dead in a marsh in South Portland, Maine on 15th November 2004 (Hartley et al, 2005).

Government officials and stranding network members spent nearly nine months monitoring this animal and educating the public. On days of high visibility, which was much of the summer, stranding network participants were spending the better part of their day working on this case. Although they did not instigate a 24-hour onsite monitoring program, they did spend a great deal of time on the water looking for the whale, observing its behaviour, working with local officials and distributing education materials to boaters.

Ce'Sea (f)

Newfoundland, Canada 2003

Ce'Sea was a young beluga whale, of approximately 2m in length, nicknamed by a Newfoundland resident who documented her behaviour. She first appeared at the end of July 2003, after being observed by boaters in a remote region of Newfoundland. Ce'Sea's behaviour in mid-August differed from that of other recorded solitary belugas in that she did not interact with boats or humans. Whilst she occasionally made exceptionally close approaches these never involved direct physical contact, and she tended to keep her distance from vessels that had their motor's running. Local researchers recommended that people refrain from engaging in interactions in order to avoid habituation of a naturally cautious whale to human interference.

Un-named (juvenile, sex unknown)

Mingan Island, Quebec, Canada 2003

No detailed information is available about this young whale, whereabouts now unknown.

Charlie-Bubbles (f)

Newfoundland, Canada 2001 - 2002

The juvenile female Charlie-Bubbles a Newfoundland, solitary beluga was killed in May 2002 by a propeller (Rossiter, 2002).

Echo (aka Casper) (m)

Codroy Harbour, Newfoundland, Canada 2001 - 2002

Echo was originally discovered in the company of two other juvenile beluga whales, known as Shadow and Phantom along the Quebec coast near the Strait of Belle Isle. Sadly, Echo's two companions died 14km up the St Paul's River where they had travelled together. Echo was subsequently rescued from the river and released into the Gulf of St Lawrence. Eight months later, Echo was identified in Codroy Harbour, off Newfoundland as a solitary, sociable beluga – he quickly became a tourist attraction and the focus of local research, public education programmes and protection. He interacted with people in boats, or in the water with him.

On July 31, 2002, Echo was hit by the propeller of a large vessel. The Whale Stewardship Project (WSP) implemented a special emergency response programme for Echo, in consultation with marine mammal veterinarians and other experts. Two weeks after his injury, Echo disappeared but was soon re-sighted 150km north. In October 2002, the WSP was fortunate enough to document the healing process of Echo's original injuries. The last sighting of Echo was in October 2002.

Lenni (f)

Green Bay, Newfoundland, Canada 2000 – 2002

In June 2000, Lenni, a young solitary beluga whale arrived in Green Bay, Newfoundland. She had become entangled in fishing net but was fortunately released by a local fisherman – this left her scarred, but she added to those markings by continually interacting with other fishing gear, chains and ropes from mooring lines. Whilst she was initially wary of both humans and boats, she soon began interacting and demonstrating a marked increase in sociability. Every spring she would visit different regions of Newfoundland, inhabiting harbours until autumn/winter sea ice forced her to leave. The last sighting of Lenni was on the 31st October 2002.

Kuus (m)

Green Bay, Newfoundland, Canada 1999

Kuus (pronounced Coo-us) was about 2 years old when first seen in Green Bay, Newfoundland in the spring of 1999. Throughout the summer he interacted with residents and tourists in the three communities of Nippers Harbour, Middle Arm and King's Point-Rattling Brook. Unfortunately, as is often the case with solitary, sociable individuals, Kuus' close contact with humans resulted in two small notches cut out of the ridge on his back by a boat propeller. As soon as Whale Stewardship Project heard of Kuus they responded immediately by implementing their programmes for Kuus in Newfoundland. The whale was last seen in the area at the end of September 1999.

Un-named (f)

Chevery, Quebec, Canada 1998

This whale was around 2 years old when sighted, however no other detailed information is available, and her whereabouts now unknown.

Wilma (aka Foster, Willy, Elvis) (f)

Chedabucto Bay, Nova Scotia, Canada 1993 – 1999

In 1993, a 2-year-old whale called Wilma appeared in Chedabucto Bay. DNA sampling indicated that she originated from the endangered St Lawrence River belugas. As with other beluga whales, whilst initially cautious of humans and boats she became increasingly habituated to humans, boats and other objects and soon became an international celebrity. As Wilma became susceptible to injury from human interactions, the Whale Stewardship Project implemented a comprehensive research, protection and education program in 1998 with approval from the Department of Fisheries and Oceans, Canada. In the spring of 1999, she disappeared.

BW (f)

Long Island, New York, USA 1985

In February 1985 a juvenile beluga appeared in the waters of Long Island Sound near New York City, far from its usual arctic home waters. It was quickly nicknamed BW and would swim around boats and visited popular beaches, eventually even pushing around inflatables with humans inside. Contact was permitted when hands were trailed over the side of inflatables as the whale swam beneath them. Sadly, in May of 1985 year a female beluga was found dead, presumably BW, with three bullet wounds in her body. There was a huge protest from local residents and worldwide media coverage of a major reward to find those that killed the beloved BW (Doak, 1989).

Bella (f)

Long Island, New York, USA 1980

In 1980 a friendly beluga visited Long Island near New York City, much to the delight of the locals but disappeared after attempts were made by aquarium owners to capture her.

Hvaldimir (m)

Hammerfest, Norway 2019 - 2024

Hvaldimir the beluga whale was first spotted in waters surrounding the island of Ingøy in Norway, late April 2019. Wearing a harness thought to belong to the Russian Navy and later removed by fishermen, Hvaldimir was clearly already habituated and comfortable around humans. After following a boat into Hammerfest harbour and looking malnourished, a feeding programme was put in place until he started finding fish for himself. Hvaldimir eventually left the harbour area and went on his travels, popping up in various locations including Seiland. In mid-2020, he sustained a severe injury on his body but recovered. In early 2021 Hvaldimir stayed nearby fish farms in the Bodø region before moving around once again and in summer 2023 he ventured as far south as Sweden, staying for several weeks before returning to Norway where he stayed throughout 2024.

There were plans to relocate the beluga whale to northern Norway, sparking international concern with scientists, veterinarians, marine mammal experts and organisations including Marine Connection as the proximity to Russia, where he was to be relocated to by One Whale, posed risks including potential recapture by the Russian military. There was no compelling reason to forcibly move Hvaldimir but sadly on August 31, 2024, his lifeless body was discovered floating near the southwestern town of Risavika. At time of death, he was estimated to be between 14 and 17 years old. A final post-mortem examination by Norway's Veterinary Institute concluded that Hvaldimir's probable cause of death was bacterial infection, possibly due to a wound in the mouth from a 14-inch lodged stick discovered in the soft tissue between his teeth and the base of his tongue.

Korin (f)

Lake Notoroko, Hokkaido, Japan 2015 - 2020

The young female beluga whale befriended a local fisherman who she would visit regularly when he was out in his boat. The lake was connected to the Okhotsk Sea and despite it being busy with boat traffic as a popular fishing spot for shrimp and flatfish, Korin remained there for approximately five years. Over the period of time she remained in the area, she suffered various injuries to her back and underside and in June 2020 washed ashore dead, having sustained injuries caused by a propeller strike.

Bluey (m)

Clareville, Newfoundland, Canada 2019 - 2021

Bluey appeared in the Clareville area in 2019 where he remained for two years, interacting, and following local boat operators. Often becoming entangled in ropes and fishing gear, he had to be rescued several times. However sadly in November 2021, Bluey became entangled in an old mooring cable and died before a rescue attempt could be made.





Common Dolphin (*Delphinus delphis*)

Schwenteeny (m)
Kiel, Germany 2019

This common dolphin was observed in Kiel Fjord in early April 2019 and over the months became more interactive with those directly on the water, for example kayakers who were around the marina/harbour. Schwenteeny only stayed in the area for 3-4 months before leaving.

Sandy (f)
Eckernförde Bay, Germany 2020 - 2021

Sandy appeared around Eckernförde Bay in spring 2020 and stayed for just under a year before being discovered dead on the ocean floor. Autopsy results revealed that the dolphin was approximately six years of age and had died of severe pneumonia. Sandy was interactive with various divers in the area and days before she died, some observed changes in her behaviour. At the time of her death, it was discovered that she suffered from considerable health impairments, particularly of the lungs.

Luca (f)
Sundby, Denmark 2020 - 2021

At the time of her death, Luca was estimated to be two to four years old. She was first seen around Aalborg in April 2020, where she spent most of the summer months. In mid-September of the same year she appeared at Sundby Harbour, occasionally disappearing for days or weeks, Luca was last seen around mid-January 2021 at Vilsund but found dead late February on the shore at Eshøj. The Limfjord area (a long fjord where the dolphin lived) was covered with ice and the necropsy results revealed little to what caused her death except that she was a bit thin, in all probability, due to lack of fish. Sadly, being a common dolphin, she was in the wrong location at the wrong time of year.

Unknown (unknown)
Krk Island, Croatia 2022 to date

A common dolphin appeared around the island of Krk in 2002, mainly staying in various harbours. The area is known for sightings of both common and bottlenose dolphins, however this individual has not shown interest in joining a common dolphin pod since appearing and is now allowing people to closely approach it.



Striped Dolphin (*Stenella coeruleoalba*)

SC1 (f)

Vinodol Channel - northern Croatian Adriatic Sea 2004 - 2009

In 2004 a striped dolphin was initially spotted in the Vinodol Channel and over the years was sighted in various areas between Jadranovo and Klenovica. SC1 was occasionally seen in the company of other unidentified dolphins, however one confirmation was that of a common dolphin. The female striped dolphin was known for showing a particular interest for buoys and moored vessels but was not observed in any social interaction with humans.



Dusky Dolphin (*Lagenorhynchus obscurus*)

Tammy (m)

Auckland, New Zealand 1984

In 1984 a young male dusky dolphin appeared in the Tamaki Estuary in the heart of Auckland, much further north than a Dusky's usually inhabit. He quickly endeared himself to the hearts of the locals who watched out for his safety. Tammy would stay mostly around a certain moored boat, and each and every diver who entered the water was inspected, and a special greeting ceremony appeared to take place each time, before the dolphin would permit the divers to enter his particular 4m radius of the boat in question.

When people did not honour the greeting ritual, Tammy would disappear into the estuary and re-appear over the other side by another boat. Tammy quickly became a local favourite playing with floating logs and seaweed. It is thought that later Tammy simply returned to the open sea, and probably cooler waters. Thankfully he was able to live in a heavily built-up area for several months without being harmed in any way. In fact, locals made sure boat races were cancelled in order to protect him, after authorities failed to intervene. The locals explained the situation to the powerboat owners who were happy to comply, not wishing to harm the dolphin (Lockyer, 1990; Doak, 1989).



Orca (*Orcinus orca*)

Luna (m)

Nootka Sound, Vancouver, British Columbia 2001 - 2006

L-98, Luna was born in 1999, as part of the Southern Resident orca population, but just two years later he appeared alone in a bay off Vancouver Island's Nootka Sound. To prevent a surge of curious people Luna was quietly and secretly monitored by experts who, in January 2001, released information that he was doing well. After considerable monitoring he seemed to be capable of surviving alone, if protected from the curious, and the official position of Fisheries and Oceans Canada marine mammal scientists at the time was to leave him alone. Luna, however, was fascinated by propellers and suffered injuries through encounters with boats. Concern over his fate grew, as his encounters with vessels and agitated boaters was a constant problem, especially during the summer months (Rossiter, 2002). Sadly, this young whale was not so fortunate when, in the early part of 2006, he was killed by a tugboat.

Elsa (f)

Provincetown, Cape Cod, Massachusetts, USA 1982

In September 1982 a young orca who became known as Elsa entered Provincetown Harbour, Massachusetts, behind a large fishing boat that came in for repairs. She received a lot of attention from the media, officials and tourists, and interacted with people in boats (especially with one woman in a kayak), displaying a spectrum of behaviour that had people worried about her for many reasons. Soon after Elsa's arrival the New England Aquarium made plans to capture her, fishermen fed her and rumours circulated about an escapee from a secret Navy operation, plausibly denied. During these events experts declared that no one could physically restrain her unless she officially stranded. After about a month she left, reportedly with the same fishing boat. Despite excellent photo-identification she has never been seen again (Rossiter, 2002; Doak, 1989).

Okkie (m)

Brae Oil Field, Scotland, UK 1988 - 1989

A killer whale was first sighted on 2 April 1988 around the Brae Area oil field which lies approximately 170 miles (274 km) north-east of Aberdeen. The whale was initially seen during a man overboard exercise, coming up underneath the fast rescue craft as it was being brought onboard. The whale appeared to be a young adult, attracted by the noise of the outboard motors and operating equipment around the rig, playing with the propellers and thruster wash of vessels around the oil platform. He was also attracted by the water from the fire hose when sprayed over the side, he would interact with the jet, spy hopping and vocalising when the crew were nearby. Okkie stayed for almost a year before disappearing.

**Narwhal** (*Monodon monoceros*)**Nar Billy (m)**

Conception Bay, Newfoundland 2003

A sub-adult but there have been no reported sightings to date.



Risso's Dolphin (*Grampus griseus*)

Pelorus Jack (m)

Cook Strait, New Zealand 1888 - 1912

A well-known companion to ships in the Cook Strait off New Zealand, from 1888, Pelorus Jack was a feature of the area for about 24 years although he never became more sociable than this. In 1904, public attention and concern for the dolphins' safety meant pressure was applied to the government to enable a special law to be passed (Wilke et al, 2005; Lockyer, 1990). In 1904, someone aboard the SS Penguin tried to shoot him with a rifle and following the incident, Pelorus Jack became protected by under the Sea Fisheries Act September 1904 and remained protected by that law until his disappearance in 1912.



Spotted Dolphin (*Stenella attenuata* & *Stenella frontalis*)

Olin (aka Uleen/Holly) (f)

Gulf of Eilat, Egypt/Israel 1994 - 2004

Olin lived along the Gulf of Eilat and was first sighted in 1994 in the company of another male dolphin who was later found washed up on the beach dead. She soon befriended the fishermen of a local Bedouin tribe and would escort dinghies on their way back to the Bedouin fishing village of Nuweiba 'el Muzeina, on the western shore of the Gulf of Eilat. As word got around, visitors from around the world came to visit her.

In the first few weeks she would get to within centimetres of contact, before allowing full contact soon after. Olin was considered a gift from Allah by the locals.

Olin was very playful, but after several years, people began to take advantage of her friendly nature – disturbing her rest and disrespecting her space. At first, she was passive to these actions but eventually this resulted in her asserting her authority – biting fingers and slapping or butting those in the water with her tail fluke or rostrum. During seven years Olin had four calves (2 male, 1 female, 1 unknown). She lost both males and the birth of her third calf, a female, resulted in Olin changing her behaviour, limiting interaction and extending her home range (Goffman, 2003). Olin's fourth known calf born in 2004 unfortunately died at 7 weeks. Sadly, Olin herself was found dead on a beach north of Nuweiba on the December 9, 2004, and it was not clear what caused her death (Upton, 2000). Her female calf which had been called Mapsutta, was reported as still being alive and living in the Gulf of Aqaba (WDCS, 2005).

Sandy (m)

San Salvador Island, Bahamas 1976 - 1978

Sandy was a juvenile Atlantic spotted dolphin who interacted with scuba divers at San Salvador Island. Gradually Sandy became bolder and in 1977 allowed human contact. During his very friendly stage of about 10 months, he became quite famous and a total of 2,500 divers met him at some point during this time. He would nudge people for attention and open his mouth or hold people by the snorkel/facemask until they renewed their attentions. He was said to be quite mischievous and to have invented many games. He would remove people's face masks when they weren't looking at him, pull people's hair or tap their head with his rostrum. A particular favourite of his was Chris Adair who could free dive to 35m. One day Chris was free diving with Sandy and Sandy pointed with his beak to the reef below. He had found Chris's cross he had been wearing until it broke off its chain. Sandy had prominent scars, and shortly before he disappeared was hit with a propeller. He was last seen by a research boat in the area, apparently having healed in 1978. It is not known if he had simply rejoined other dolphins (Lockyer, 1990; Lockyer & Morris, 1986).



Tucuxi (*Sotalia fluviatilis*)

Viola (m)

Sao Vicente County, Brazil 1997- 1999

In November 1997, a solitary, sociable dolphin was living in the local estuarine waters of Sao Vicente County, Brazil. A juvenile tucuxi, the dolphin easily approached anyone who got into the water with it. Local people believed that the dolphin's mother was killed by a fisherman. Viola would approach fishing boats and accept food offered by hand (WDCS, 2005). There were concerns that this dolphin's safety was being put at risk from overzealous swimmers and controls were put into place to ensure it was not harmed.

Unknown Species

Simo & Partner (sex unknown)
Hippo, Tunisia 109AD

Pliny the younger wrote of a dolphin that befriended a boy swimming offshore, bringing him back to the beach. The following day the dolphin returned accompanied by another, but the boy and his friends fled from the sea. For several days the dolphins played in the bay, until eventually the boy and his friends returned to the water. A deep friendship developed between boy and dolphin, however the dolphin's reputed fame altered city life, and it was secretly put to death (Doak, 1989).



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Appendix II



WiSe SOLITARY, SOCIABLE DOLPHIN CODE OF CONDUCT

Historically, solitary dolphins have appeared around our shores for many different reasons. Sometimes these animals are simply passing through an area – on their way to join another dolphin group, however, there are occasions when these solitary animals remain in an area, become habituated to human presence and are eventually termed a sociable, solitary dolphin. All too frequently, the result of encountering these unique individuals ends to the detriment of the dolphin as the wish to interact with these individuals overrides our commonsense.

There is an additional problem with these animals; each is unique, and each may, depending on the stage of habituation actually seek out contact. Often, following a standard code of conduct will not take into consideration the unique behaviour displayed by these animals and so the WiSe course has made the decision to provide a special mention of these animals so that operators are prepared for an encounter which will be determined by the dolphin and could be different in every case and/or encounter.

ALL OF THE POINTS WITHIN THE CETACEAN CODE OF CONDUCT FOR BOAT OWNERS APPLY HERE, WITH THE ADDITION OF THE FOLLOWING POINTS:

- Maintaining a distance of 100m may be possible with a dolphin group, however a solitary, sociable dolphin is likely to approach you. Whereas other dolphin groups will choose to leave when they lose interest, solitary dolphins may not wish to leave your vessel and so may follow you away from the site of encounter.
- It is important that, where possible, you ensure the dolphin is not still following you when you return to harbour/marina facilities. If it is unavoidable then inform the harbour authorities upon your arrival. They may already be aware of the dolphin in the vicinity, however if not, advise them to call British Divers Marine Life Rescue (01825 765546) or Marine Connection (07931 366352), who will decide whether further action needs to be taken.
- Solitary, sociable dolphins appear to have a fascination with boat propellers and may get dangerously close to the rotation propellor. If that is the case, and it is safe to do so, put your engine into neutral and drift. The dolphin will eventually lose interest, however, be warned that the dolphin is likely to return to your vessel once the engine is re-started if still in the vicinity. They may also hover beside a stationary boat propeller or rub alongside a rudder. Be aware of this if in a small boat – they may not realise their own strength and unsteady the vessel and its passengers.
- If the dolphin continues to follow you and/or get close to the propellor then maintain a steady speed and course until returning to the harbour/marina and then take appropriate action if necessary.
- Avoid any known areas of rest or feeding for an individual, or if you observe resting/feeding behaviour at the surface. Do not approach, even to within 100metres. These are the most crucial behaviours and are perhaps more important for solitary, sociable dolphins who do not have other dolphins to rely upon.
- If another boat is engaged in an encounter with a solitary dolphin do not try to entice the dolphin away. Have good manners and put your engine in neutral and observe from a distance – the next encounter could be yours and this prevents the dolphin getting stressed.
- If there is a resident solitary, sociable dolphin in the area you may wish to consider fitting a propeller guard to minimise the risk of injury to the dolphin, although this may depend on the individual dolphin and its particular behaviour.
- It is even more important that you do not swim with, touch or feed a solitary, sociable dolphin. This helps to habituate them to humans, permitting them to lose their natural fear and can lead to them requiring management to prevent injury, disturbance or in the worse cases, death.

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Reg Office: Lime House, Regency Close, Uckfield, East Sussex, TN22 1DS, UK

info@marineconnection.org