

Research

The Sussex coast is one of the most poorly studied cetacean (Whales, Dolphins & Porpoises) habitats in England, and thought to be home to few. Yet recently we have been getting more and more sightings reported to us. In order to conduct our research, we rely heavily on you, the public, to be our eyes and ears in order to cover a larger area. In these early stages, our main aims are to learn what species are being spotted, where are they seen, and what is the best time of year to see them more sightings reported to us.

If you do see any Dolphins or Seals, please fill in the sheet overleaf. We would greatly appreciate it if you could send us your images and videos to the following channels, so we can learn more about these animals:

 Brighton Dolphin Project

 @BriDolpProject

 info@brightondolphinproject.org

About Us

The Brighton Dolphin Project is an initiative from the World Cetacean Alliance that aims to improve awareness about the importance of local marine ecosystems.

As part of our work, we have a research programme where we aim to:

- Study marine mammals found along the Sussex coastline by documenting sightings and collecting images to identify individuals.
- Improve awareness in the local community about the importance of local marine ecosystems.

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Bottlenose Dolphin

Tursiops truncatus



Bottlenose dolphins are the most common species of oceanic dolphin spotted off the Sussex coast.

Key features:

- Size - between 2.2 - 2.8m
- Smooth dark grey colouring along the back, pale underbelly.
- Short, blunt beak.
- Large, hooked dorsal fin
- Stocky body.

Harbour Seal

Phoca vitulina



Harbour seals are commonly sighted off the Sussex coast.

Key features:

- Size - between 1m - 1.8m
- Cat-like facial features
- Colour from light tan to brown, lighter chest.
- Darker speckles on body.

Spotting sheet

Species:

Bottlenose Dolphin Harbour Porpoise
 Common Dolphin
 White-beaked Dolphin

Harbour Seal

Grey Seal

Number of animals:

1 - 5 5 - 10 10 - 15
 15 - 20 20 +

Location:

Coordinates:

Or

Nearest landmark:

Juveniles present Y / N ? (Please circle)

Behaviours:

Normal swimming
 Fast swimming Interacting with boat
 Feeding Stationary

Resting on land (seals)

Date: / / Time: :

Any images taken please send to any of the channels given overleaf.

Common Dolphin

Delphinus delphis



Common dolphins live in temperate and tropical waters. Despite the name "common" they are one of the rarer species spotted around the Sussex coast.

Key features are:

- Size - Between 1.6 - 2.6m
- Slender, curved dorsal fin
- Hourglass-shaped pattern of tan & light grey, dark grey back
- Slender head and distinct beak

Grey Seal

Halichoerus grypus



Grey seals are less commonly sighted off the Sussex coast but we still have a small number here.

Key features:

- Size - between 1.6m - 2.8m
- Dog-like facial features, straight nose.
- Colour from light grey to dark grey,
- Darker speckles on body.

White-beaked Dolphin

Lagenorhynchus albirostris



White-beaked dolphins are often seen in groups of 5-20 animals. Very fast swimmers.

Key features:

- Size - Between 2.5 - 3m
- Tall, falcate dorsal fin
- Large and very robust shape
- Dark grey or black in colour, with white patches along body

Harbour Porpoise

Phocoena phocoena



Small and shy, Harbour Porpoises are often difficult to see but are found in shallow coastal waters around the UK.

Key features:

- Size - between 1m - 1.8m
- Small triangular dorsal fin
- Smooth dark-grey back
- Behaviour - shy and quiet