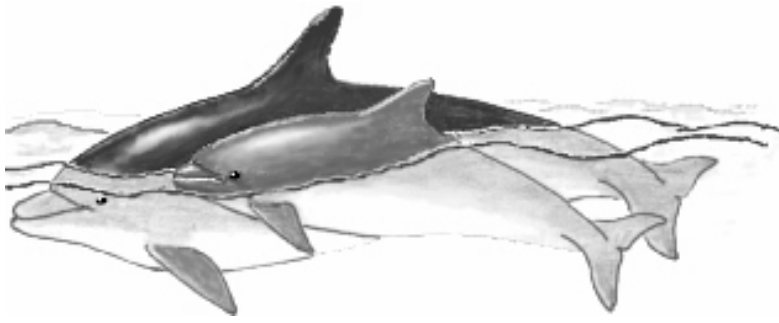


Things to consider when filling out this form, key features to note, and why we need this information.

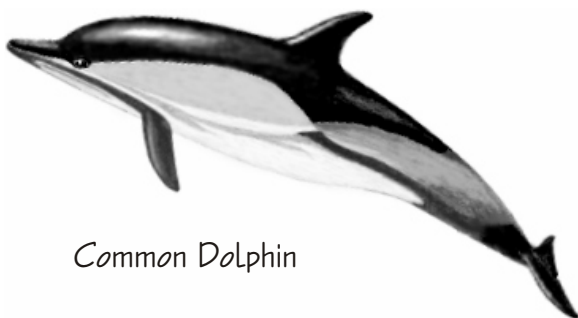


Bottlenose Dolphin

Key features

What colour was it? Did it have distinctive markings or mottled patterns? What was the shape of the head - did it have a beak? What was the shape of the fin and the tail fluke? How long was it? If you saw it from a boat you can compare its length to that of the boat. Did you see all of the mammal or just its head, fin or blow? If it was a seal was it more brown or grey; was it <2m or >2m; what was the shape of its head?

This is also vital information for identifying the mammal and again different species have key individual features which help with identification.



Common Dolphin

Behaviour

Was the mammal feeding, playful, inquisitive, in a group or alone? Did you see or hear it blow? How close to the shore was it? If seen from a boat how did it behave - was it inquisitive, did it bow ride or did it steer away from the boat.

This information is important because it gives vital clues to the identification of the mammal. Different species behave different behavioural patterns, sometimes distinct to that species e.g. Some marine mammals bow ride, others don't; some are playful and acrobatic, others aren't. This information helps build up the bigger picture, identify the mammal and we can also learn from this information.



Harbour Porpoise

Other details

Weather and state of the sea - it is easier to see and identify marine mammals on a calm day than a stormy, choppy day when every wave looks like a dorsal fin! Circling sea birds can indicate fish near the surface of the sea 'rounded' up by hunting marine mammals below. By recording what direction it is traveling in makes it possible to track the mammal's movements and with further records and sightings determine how many individuals are in the area.

All of these pieces of information and clues can be pieced together to help give a positive and valid identification of the mammal.

Drawings by Nick Tregenza. Three of the more common species you are likely to spot around the Cornish coast other species do occur, please try to be as accurate as possible with identification of the species

DATA PROTECTION ACT - All the information you provide will be added to the computer database at the Environmental Records Centre for Cornwall and the Isles of Scilly. Wildlife information may be passed onto third parties but personal details will not be passed on without prior permission being given by the individual. Some wildlife information may also be available on a web-site but personal details will not. Please contact us if you have any objections to this.