

Coastal Dolphin & Dugong Identification Guide



Dr Isabel Beasley (courtesy of GHD)

To report SIGHTINGS
of DOLPHINS and DUGONGS text/call:

0439 896 697

Email: blanche.danastas@gmail.com

To report INJURED, STRANDED or DEAD
marine animals, call:

1300 ANIMAL

1300 264 625

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Drawings by Owen Li. We wish to thank Dr Guido J. Parra, Dr Daniele Cagnazzi, Dr Isabel Beasley, Dr Helen Penrose and Whale and Dolphin Conservation for sharing their invaluable knowledge. Funding was provided by:



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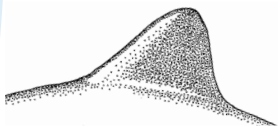
Australian Snubfin Dolphin

Orcaella heinsohni

Dr Daniele Cagnazzi



Dr Guido J Parra



FIN: Small, triangular, rounded tip

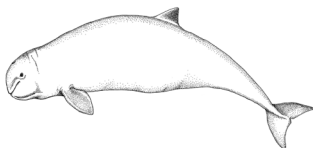


FACE: Blunt, no snout

COLOUR: Brownish to grey

HABITAT & BEHAVIOUR

Native to Australia, occur in coastal waters within 10km of coastline and less than 15m depth, very site attached, usually found within 20km of estuary mouths. Feed and socialise in just 1-2m of water in estuaries (which are their critical habitat). Often found in groups of 5-6 dolphins. May spit water as a method of herding fish. Very shy.



LENGTH: Adult 2-2.75m



Indo-Pacific Humpback Dolphin

Sousa chinensis

Dr Isabel Beasley



Dr Daniele Cagnazzi

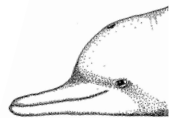


FIN: Large, wide, triangular, pointed tip

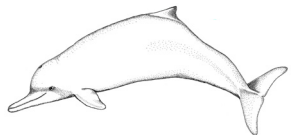
COLOUR: Pale grey, adults have pink patches on snout & dorsal fin

HABITAT & BEHAVIOUR

Usually seen in coastal waters less than 15m deep (but up to 30m), feed in or near estuaries, in water depths of 2-5m depth (slightly deeper than Snubfins). Usually found in small groups of 2-5 animals, but groups of up to 10-30 animals have also been reported. Known to follow trawlers as a method of hunting fish.



FACE: Long, cylindrical, pointed snout



LENGTH: Adult 2.5-3.2m



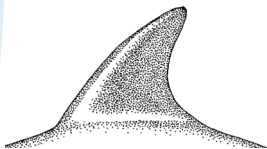
Bottlenose Dolphin

Tursiops spp.

WDC/Mike Bossley



WDC/Mike Bossley



FIN: Large and curved



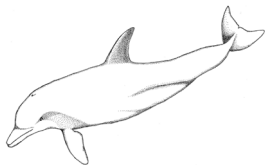
FACE: Distinct pointed snout

COLOUR: Light to dark grey

HABITAT & BEHAVIOUR

Bottlenose dolphins can be found inshore in shallow coastal waters including estuaries, mangroves, beaches, bays and offshore, throughout the world.

Very approachable, often bow-ride and exhibit aerial activity. Found in groups of 1-10, but can occur in groups of 100's in offshore waters.



LENGTH: Adult 2.4-3m



Dugong

Dugong dugon

Great Barrier Reef Marine Park Authority

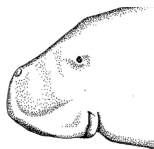


FIN: No fin

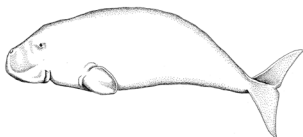
COLOUR: Brownish to tan

HABITAT & BEHAVIOUR

Dugongs generally live in warm shallow waters where their primary food source, seagrass, occurs. Found in water from 2-40m deep. Sea grass beds form part of their critical habitat. Highly migratory, known to travel distances of up to 600km. Usually shy.



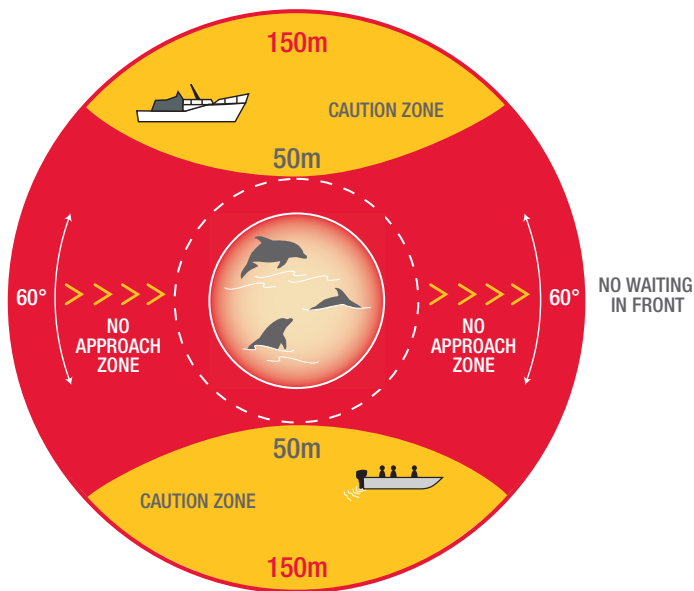
FACE: Blunt with no pronounced snout



LENGTH: Adult 2.7-3m



Approach Distances for Dolphins



Courtesy of the Department of the Environment, Water, Heritage and the Arts. For more information visit:
www.environment.gov.au/coasts/publications/whale-watching-guidelines-2005.html

WDC/Mike Bossley