

## THE OCEAN WAVERIDERS

# THE BOTTLENOSED DOLPHIN

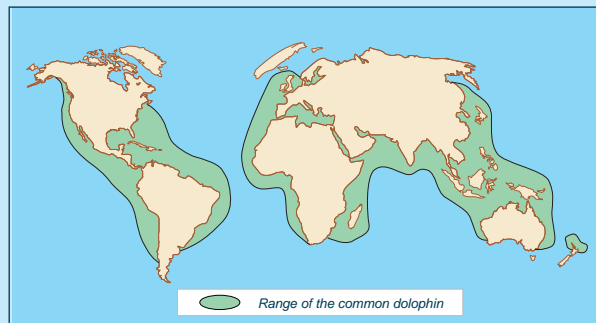


The bottlenose dolphin (*Tursiops truncatus*) is distributed worldwide, although they are generally found within 800 km of land. Growing to a length of 3 to 4 meters, the bottlenose can weigh up to 275 kg. They have been recorded to live for up to 25 - 30 years.

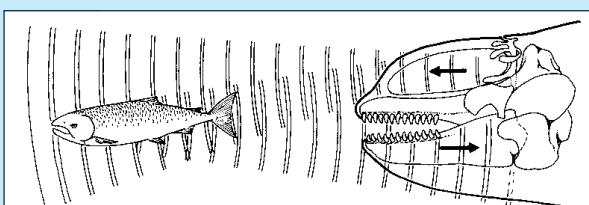
Dolphins are gregarious, skilled hunters often working in groups to round up schools of fish, putting on incredible bursts of speed when required.

They prey largely on inshore, bottom-dwelling fish but will take eels, crabs, catfish, sharks, rays, shrimp and even pelagic (surface feeding) fish, eating 8 - 15 kg a day. Most feeding occurs in relatively shallow water, with the dolphins often herding their prey up against the shore or rock face before striking. Some researchers believe dolphins are capable of using sponges as tools, possibly to help find food and ward off attackers.

Female dolphins breed every 2 years, the young are born tail first, in spring or summer. The length of the newly born dolphin is about 0.9 - 1.2 m. A social group of several dolphins gather around the mother for protection during the birth, while two adult females acting as midwives, assist by lifting the newborn to the surface for its first breath. Young dolphins are nurtured very protectively by the mother until they are weaned and may remain with the family group for a period of time following weaning. A female dolphin could be expected to have a total of 8 calves in her lifetime.



*Range of the common dolphin*



*Echolocation*

Echolocation is one of the dolphins main senses. Sending out a series of sounds, clicks and pings, the dolphin uses the echo (reflected sound waves) from objects to both locate and distinguish the details of the object. With the returning echoes the dolphin creates a detailed sound picture. This location method also serves as communication with the dolphins being able to identify known individuals by the echoes returned.