

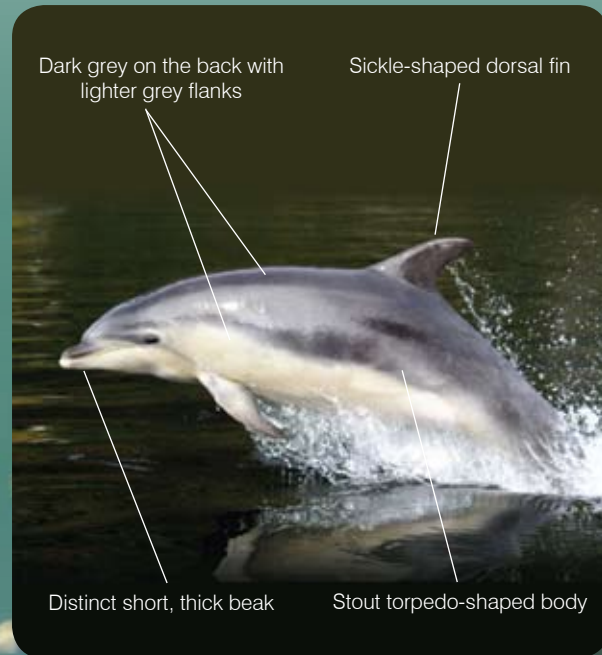
How to Recognise a Bottlenose Dolphin

Bottlenose dolphins are easily distinguished from all the other dolphins found in Fiordland.

They are a larger species, with males growing up to four metres and weighing as much as 260 kilograms. Their fins are relatively smaller and upper bodies lighter grey coloured than Common and Dusky dolphins. They are the 'classic' dolphin shape and colour.

Distinguishing features

- Dark grey on the back with lighter grey flanks
- Stout torpedo shaped body
- Distinct short, thick beak
- Sickle shaped dorsal fin

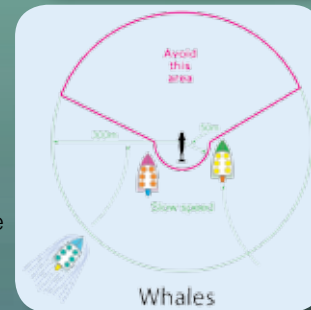
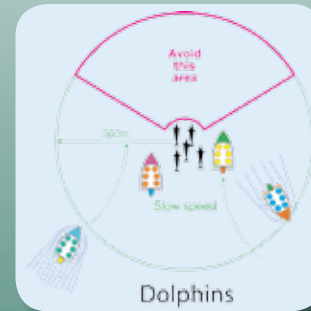


Bottlenose dolphins. DOC
Cover – Flying calf. Rohan Currey

Marine Mammals Protection Regulations

Please remember that you must also abide by the Marine Mammal Protection Regulations (1992)

- Ensure that you travel no faster than idle or 'no wake' speed within 300m of any marine mammal.
- Approach whales and dolphins from behind and to the side (see diagrams).
- Do not circle, obstruct or cut through any group of marine mammals.
- Avoid sudden or repeated changes in speed or direction.
- Do not disturb or harass any marine mammal.
- Be especially careful around calves.
- Idle slowly away. Speed may be gradually increased to out-distance dolphins and should not exceed 10 knots within 300m.



Further Information

This is a brief summary of the full Doubtful Sound Dolphin Protection Plan. For more information please contact:

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or visit the Department of Conservation website:
www.doc.govt.nz

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Doubtful Sound Bottlenose Dolphins



FIORDLAND



Department of Conservation
Te Papa Atawhai

What's the Issue?

The bottlenose dolphins found in Fiordland's Doubtful/Patea, Bradshaw and Thompson Sounds form a small resident population living at one of the southernmost locations in the world for this species. There is little evidence of interaction between this group and the other populations found in Dusky Sound and the northern fiords of Fiordland.

Research has shown that this population has decreased by at least a third since 1994, with the latest estimate in 2008 at fifty six dolphins. This decline may be linked to lower calf survival in recent years. The causes behind the population decline are not well understood but may include human-related effects such as vessel activity and habitat modification. This rate of decline is not sustainable for such a small population.

What's Being Done?

As an extra level of protection to the Marine Mammal Protection Regulations (1992), the Department of Conservation, the Doubtful Sound tourism operators and other stakeholders are working together to implement new protection measures for these dolphins. These measures are aimed at reducing the potential impacts of boats on the dolphins. They include Dolphin Protection Zones and recommend dolphin encounters being left to chance. An increase in public awareness, education, monitoring and research will complement these measures and hopefully help stop the decline of dolphins of the Doubtful Sound/Patea region.

How You Can Help

When visiting the Doubtful Sound/Patea region, please be aware of the new protection measures and follow the guidelines below.

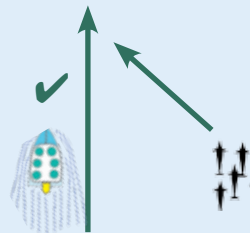
Dolphin Protection Zones

- Parts of the fiords now have zones 200 metres out from the shore that have restricted access to vessels (see map).
- If dolphins are not present you can enter these zones to access fishing and diving spots, anchorages and shore features, using the most direct route in and out.
- Do not enter the Dolphin Protection Zones if dolphins are present.
- If dolphins approach whilst you are in the Dolphin Protection Zones and you are stationary, please let them pass before moving off. If you are already moving, stay on the same heading where safe to do so.
- Speed in the Dolphin Protection Zones must be five knots or idle, as required under Maritime Safety Bylaws (2003).

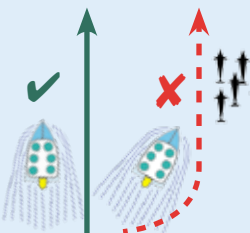
Leave dolphin encounters to chance

- Vessels should not seek out or initiate encounters with dolphins.
- Don't use the radio to tell others where dolphins are located.
- Give them time on their own and make sure that encounters are left to chance. The diagrams below help to explain a chance encounter.

This vessel has continued on its intended route straight ahead. However, the dolphins have approached the vessel. This type of encounter is permitted.



This vessel's intended route is straight ahead. A deviation towards the dolphins would not be considered a 'chance encounter'.



Doubtful Sound Dolphin Protection Zones

