

Indo-Pacific Bottlenose Dolphin

Tursiops aduncus

Distinguishing Features

- Indo-Pacific bottlenose dolphins grow to 2.6m and weigh 230kg when mature. At birth, calves are around 1m in length and weigh between 9 and 21kg.
- Distinguished by their large curved dorsal fin, grey dorsal colouration and white ventral surface colouration. Adults have dark grey speckling on the underside that increases with age.

Bottlenose Dolphin Societies

- Indo-Pacific bottlenose dolphins are typically found in groups of 5-15 individuals. Occasional aggregations of over 100 can be encountered.
- Bottlenose dolphins are very social animals and live in complex societies that can often be sexually segregated.
- Mature males often form a strongly bonded alliance with at least 3-4 other males.
- Females live in large groups and maintain a large network of associates within their home range.
- Many communities of bottlenose dolphins will remain in small home ranges along the coastal zone and have year-round residence.
- Bottlenose dolphins can be very active at the surface and can be seen leaping, surfing and tail-slapping.

Distribution & Habitat

- Indo-Pacific bottlenose dolphins are a coastal species that inhabit coastal areas, estuaries and bays through the temperate, subtropical and tropical regions of Australia and the greater Indo-Pacific region.



Communication

- Bottlenose dolphins produce a diverse range of sounds that include echolocation or sonar clicks, whistles, and burst pulse sounds such as 'squawks' and 'squeaks'.
- Whistles are used to maintain contact, identify, and to locate other dolphins. Indo-Pacific bottlenose dolphins have 'signature whistles' which are similar to a name and are unique to individuals.
- Clicks are used for echolocation, assisting in navigation and feeding.



Reproduction & Breeding

- Female bottlenose dolphins give birth after a gestation period of around 12 months.
- A bottlenose dolphin calf will remain dependent on its mother for 2-4 years.
- Female bottlenose dolphins reach sexual maturity between 8 to 10 years and males between 10 to 12 years of age.
- Bottlenose dolphins can live for over 50 years.



Diet

- Dolphins are carnivorous and feed on a variety of fish, squid, octopus and occasionally even crayfish.



Threats to Bottlenose Dolphins

- Indo-Pacific bottlenose dolphins are protected in Australian waters, however, their future remains uncertain.
- In Australia, pollution from marine debris, litter, run-off, noise, habitat degradation, interactions with fisheries, overfishing, coastal development and vessel activities threaten the survival of Indo-Pacific bottlenose dolphins.



Protect the Marine Environment

