

SOME COMMON SPECIES AROUND MAURITIUS



Spinner Dolphin - *Stenella longirostris*
Adult: 2.3m long, 78kg. Life span: 20-25 yrs. Lives in pods of 25 to hundreds of individuals; has teeth & eats small fishes and squid; can leap out of the water & make several spectacular spins in the air.



Bottlenose Dolphin - *Tursiops truncatus*
Adult: 3.5m long, 500 Kg. Life span: 40-45 yrs. Pods of <20 individuals live near shore & pods of several hundreds are found offshore. Has teeth & eats fishes, squids & crustacean.



Sperm Whale - *Physeter macrocephalus*
Adult: 18m, 57 000kg. Life span: 60-70 yrs. Females lives in pods of 10-20 ind. with their young. Males join these pods for breeding only. Has teeth & eats squids and big fishes. Dives up to 2000m & can stay under water > 1 hr.

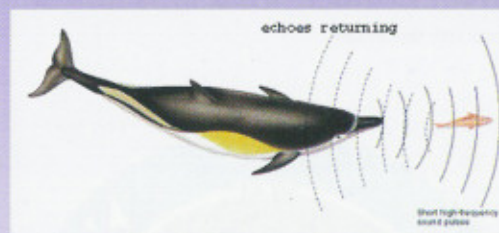


Humpback Whale - *Megaptera novaeangliae*
Adult: 15m, 40 000kg. Life span: at least 50 yrs. Pods of 2-3 ind. No teeth but baleen plates, a sieve like structure that filters sea water & traps krill, plankton & various small fishes. Has ventral pleats on belly to allow distention of throat during feeding.

Diagrams from FAO website & not to scale

How do dolphins & Whales communicate?

Whales and dolphins communicate primarily by sound, which travels 5 times faster in water than in air. Some of them use "echolocation" - they emit clicking sounds that bounce off objects in order to locate and identify these objects e.g friends, prey, predators & other obstacles. Some great whales sing long complex songs, so loud that they can sometimes be heard above water.



Reproduction

Dolphins have a gestation period of 11-12 months. The calf is delivered normally tail first and the newborn is capable of swimming & breathing within the first minutes. The calf will follow its mother closely and nursing will continue for 12-18 months after birth.

Whales have a gestation period which varies between 12-16 months. Each female bears one calf every 2 to 3 years. Nursing time varies a lot between 7-12 months to 2yrs.

Underwater Noise Pollution Harms Marine Mammals!

There is growing evidence that human-caused noise in the oceans i.e. military sonar & commercial activities, ships, motor boats and water skis are disrupting and/or killing marine mammals. Therefore, care should be taken to minimize noise pollution when viewing whales and dolphins.

Courtesy of Reef Conservation Mauritius

Guidelines on Dolphin and Whale Watching

Tourism Authority



« To regulate the tourism industry with a view to promoting its sustainable development »