

Short ID sheet whales and dolphins Dutch Caribbean

Meike Scheidat en Steve C.V. Geelhoed

Report number C022/14



IMARES Wageningen UR

(IMARES - Institute for Marine Resources & Ecosystem Studies)

Client: Ministry of Economic Affairs (EZ)
Contact: Drs. H. Haanstra
P.O. Box 20401, 2500 EK The Hague

BO-11-011.05-005

Publication date: 30 November 2012

Short ID sheet whales and dolphins Dutch Caribbean

Most common species:

Humpback whale – *Megaptera novaeangliae* - bultrug
Fin whale – *Balaenoptera physalus* – gewone vinvis
Minke whale – *Balaenoptera acutorostrata* - dwergvinvis
Sperm whale – *Physeter macrocephalus* - potvis

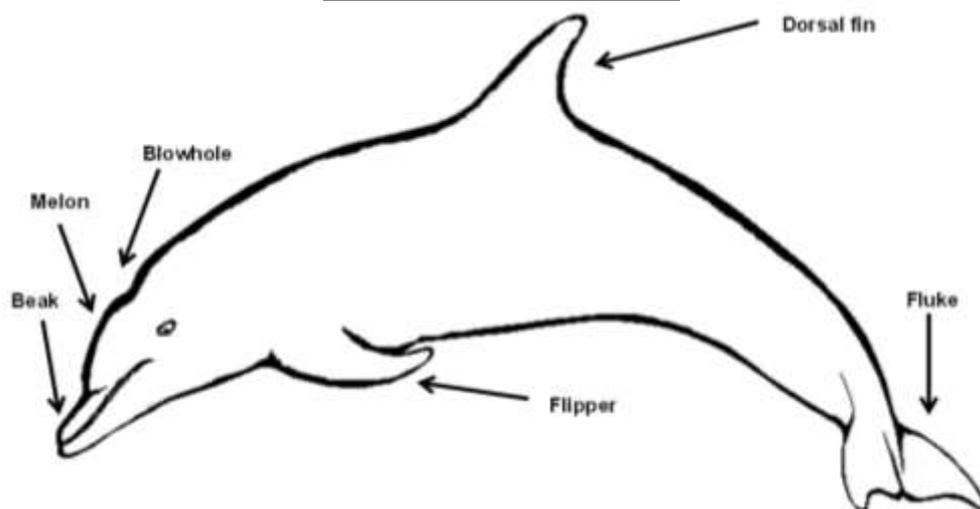
Short-finned pilot whale – *Globicephala macrorhynchus* – tropische griend

Bottlenose dolphin – *Tursiops truncatus* - tuimelaar
Spinner dolphin – *Stenella longirostris* – spinner dolfijn
Clymene dolphin – *Stenella clymene* – gehelmde dolfijn
Common dolphin – *Delphinus delphis* – gewone dolfijn
Atlantic spotted dolphin – *Stenella frontalis* – Atlantische gevlekte dolfijn
Pantropical spotted dolphin – *Stenella attenuata* – pan-tropische gevlekte dolfijn

What to note during a sighting:

- Position
- Species (if known)
 - Group size
 - Date and time

Topography of a dolphin:



More info: Meike Scheidat meike.scheidat@wur.nl; Steve Geelhoed steve.geelhoed@wur.nl

Pictures were kindly provided by Marijke de Boer, Xana Teixeira, Lonneke IJsseldijk & Caroline Weir. © 2012
The production of this ID sheet was funded by the Dutch Ministry of Economic Affairs (project BO-11-011.05-005)

Humpback Whale – *Megaptera novaeangliae*

large whale, mostly solitary or in pairs (mother-calf)

Length: ca. 16 m

- tail flukes serrated edge, varying black and white pattern on underside



- extremely long flippers (ca. 4m)



- blow rounded and bushy, still visible when dorsal fin emerges
 - small bump before the small dorsal fin
 - **tubercles on head** and lower jaw



Fin Whale *Balaenoptera physalus*

large whale; length : ~24m



- **right lower jaw white**, V-shaped pattern (chevron) behind head
- tall, columnar blow, blowhole surface briefly before dorsal fin emerges
 - rarely shows tail before diving
 - sharp dorsal fin, often pointed or falcate
- colouration: dark grey above, white/cream below



Minke Whale *Balaenoptera acutorostrata*

small size whale; length: 9-11m



- **sharply pointed snout**; sharp ridge on the snout
 - V shaped head when seen from above
- falcate dorsal fin, appears simultaneously with the blowholes during surfacing
 - inconspicuous or no blow
 - **white band** on flippers
- no fluke up when diving, often arches the back
- colouration: black/dark grey above; grey chevron behind head; white underside



Sperm Whale *Physeter macrocephalus*

large whale; **length: 18m (male); 11m (female)**

- typically solitary or small groups; **normally in offshore deep water**



- **single blowhole on left side of head, bushy blow angles forward and left from front of head**
 - huge bumpy head; **low dorsal fin without bump in front**
 - **wrinkled skin (like a plum), ridge on back with bumps**
 - triangular flukes lifted high at start of dive



Short-finned pilot whale *Globicephala macrorhynchus*

small sized whale, length: 7m (male), 5m (female)

- typically in groups of more than 10; normally in deep water



- exaggerated and **bulbous melon head**, with beak barely discernible or non-existent; robust body, with a deep tail stock.
- **dorsal fin is wide**, broad-based, falcate and set well forward on the body
 - the **flippers are long**, slender, and sickle-shaped
 - overall coloration dark (grey)
 - but a faint **grey “saddle patch”** may be visible behind the dorsal fin

Bottlenose dolphin *Tursiops truncatus*

medium-sized to large dolphin, length: 2.5 to 4m

- typically groups: 10 or more (also bow riding but less often than spinner)



- **robust body**
- short to medium-length “**stubby**” beak
 - **distinct forehead above beak**
 - large falcate dorsal fin



Spinner dolphin *Stenella longirostris*

small to medium sized dolphin, length: 1.30m to 2.30m

- typically groups of 10 or more (also bow riding)
- they can be seen **spinning** high in the air



- **slender body** with an extremely **long and thin beak**
 - on top **dark grey cape**, light grey on the sides and white on the belly
- a dark band runs from the eye to the flipper, bordered above by a thin light line
 - the beak is tipped with black or grey
- the dorsal fin is basically triangular, slightly falcate to erect or canted forward

Clymene dolphin (*Stenella clymene*)

small dolphin, length: 1.70 to 2m



- small but **rather stocky** and has a moderately long beak.
- dorsal fin is tall and nearly triangular to slightly falcate
 - white belly, light grey flanks and dark grey cape
- **black "moustache"** marking of variable extent at the top of the beak.
- colouration similar to spinner dolphin, looks vaguely like a grey Common dolphin

Common dolphin (*Delphinus delphis*)

small dolphin, length 1.60m to 2m



- slender body with a **long beak** sharply demarcated from the melon
- the dorsal fin is high and moderately curved backwards, often with pale centre
 - unique (hourglass) pattern with a **pale yellow patch** on the side

Atlantic spotted dolphin (*Stenella frontalis*)

small dolphin, length: 1.7 to 2.3m

- often in groups of animals with different ages



- overall impression of a small (spotted) Bottlenose dolphin
- moderately long, **stocky beak**, with a distinctive forehead above the beak
- the **dorsal fin is tall and falcate** and the flippers are curved backwards
 - juveniles are unspotted, older individuals acquire spots
 - very similar to the other dolphins occurring here
- **colouration three-toned**: dark upperside, lighter grey middle part and whitish underparts

Pantropical spotted dolphin (*Stenella attenuata*)

small dolphin, length: 1.6 to 2.6m



- **long beak** sharply demarcated from the melon, slender body, strongly backward curved fin and spotted body
 - the ventral spots fuse and fade to a medium grey
 - tip of the beak is white
 - details of coloration and spot intensity vary regionally
 - juveniles are unspotted, older individuals acquire spots
- very similar to the Atlantic spotted dolphin and other dolphins occurring here
 - **colouration two-toned**: dark upperside, light underside
 - **black** moustache