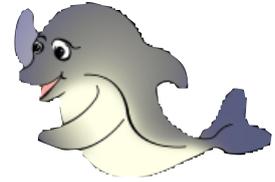


The Dolphin Diploma Quiz

Question 1 - Linked activity ideas for teachers and pupils



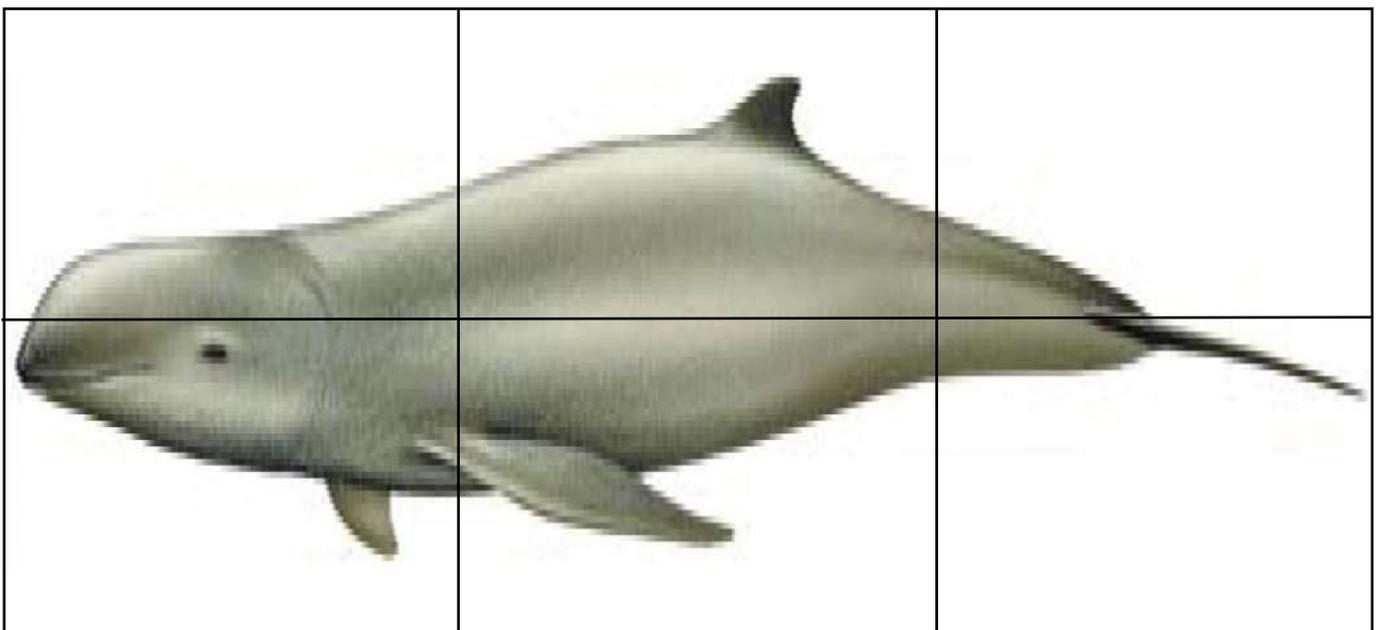
Comparing Dolphins

Task 1

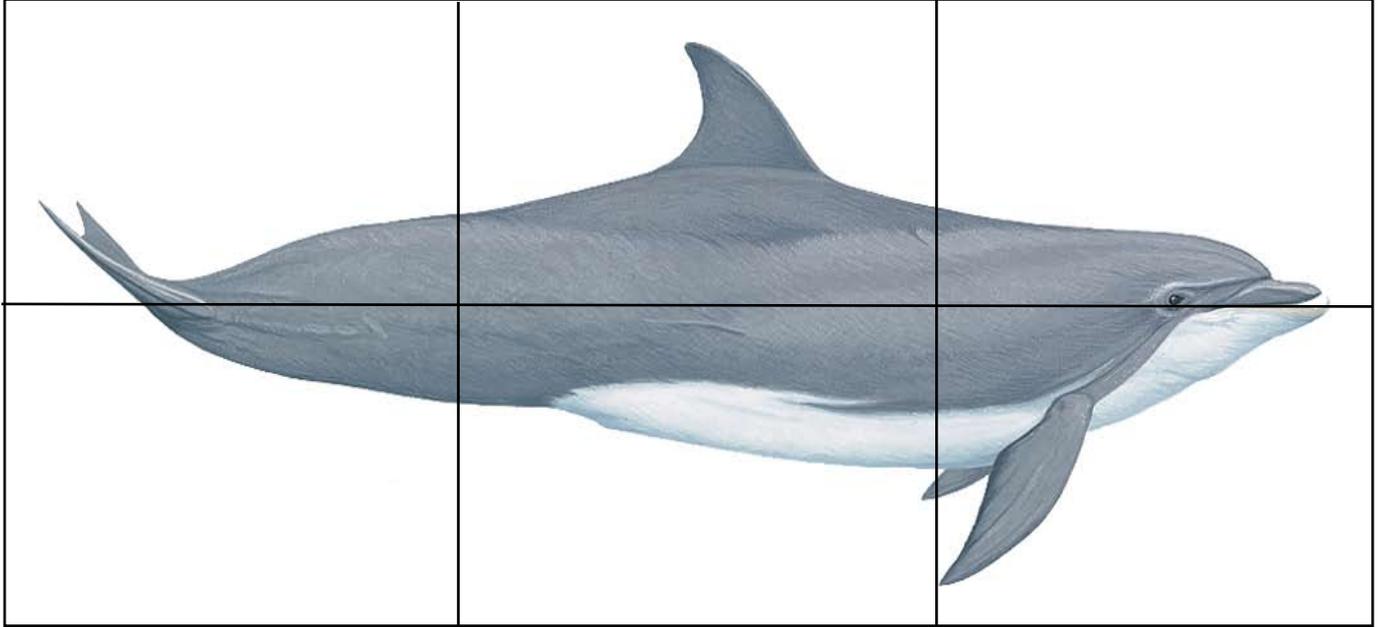
Enlarge these pictures of an Irrawaddy dolphin and a bottlenose dolphin by drawing your own 6 square grid and coping the contents of each square below into your corresponding larger square. Maybe you could split the squares into quarters to help you work it out.

Task 2

In pairs – read the information about Irrawaddy dolphin and the bottlenose dolphins found in the Moray Firth in Scotland, then quiz each other to see how much you know...



Maurizio Wurtz, Artescienza



Martin Camm

The Moray Firth Bottlenose Dolphin

Why the Moray Firth Dolphins are Special

The Moray Firth dolphins are special because they are the only population in the North Sea and the biggest bottlenose dolphins in the world - averaging about 4m in length. They are so large because they have adapted to the cold waters of the North Sea and need lots of blubber to keep them warm!

Population and Distribution

Using photographic ID research methods conducted by the University of Aberdeen and volunteers at the WDCS Wildlife Centre, we have been able to establish that there are around 130 bottlenose dolphins living in the Moray Firth. These animals live here all year round, making them one of only two residential populations in the UK (the other living in Cardigan Bay, Wales). The dolphins tend to move to the Outer Moray Firth during the winter and are often seen down the coast by Aberdeen and beyond when food is scarcer. However, they tend to come into the Inner Moray Firth during the summer, so this can be the best time to go dolphin spotting.

Behaviour

Bottlenose dolphins are very active and can often be seen bow-riding, tail slapping, spy-hopping and breaching - leaping several metres out of the water. They can also sometimes be seen "playing games" with objects such as seaweed and fish they have caught. Bottlenose dolphins are highly social animals and, although they can be found on their own, they tend to live in collaborative groups called 'schools'.

Life Expectancy

Female bottlenose dolphins generally live longer than the males and can live to over 50 years of age. The lifespan of bottlenose dolphins is usually greatly reduced when in captivity.

Watching the Dolphins

Bottlenose dolphins are often found in coastal areas so they are one of the best species to watch from land. One of the best places to watch for the dolphins is Chanonry Point on the Black Isle. At Chanonry, the land extends out into the sea, forming a great vantage point from which to see the dolphins close up. The best time to go is two to three hours before high tide. All along the Moray coast there are various hot spots for dolphin watching including Spey Bay. When watching for dolphins, good indicators are splashes in the water and large groups of birds feeding.

Another way is to take a trip on one of the wildlife watching boat trips. There are around 11 boat operators in the area that belong to the Dolphin Space Program (DSP). This is an accreditation scheme for wildlife tour operators in the Moray Firth. DSP accredited operators follow a code of conduct which helps to ensure that interactions with dolphins and other wildlife do not cause disturbance. For further information visit the DSP website at www.dolphinspace.org.

Adopt a Dolphin

You could help to protect the dolphins of the Moray Firth by adopting a dolphin. The money from this helps to fund many conservation projects all over the world, including research in order to learn more about the dolphins so we can help protect them and conserve their environment.

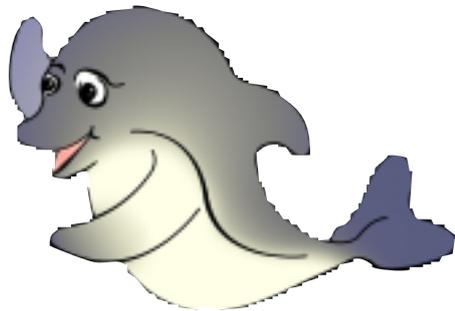
For further information visit the adopt a dolphin website: www.adoptadolphin.com

Threats

Major threats include habitat loss, human disturbance, boat strikes, pollution (including noise pollution) and entanglement in fishing nets. All these things combined could seriously threaten the future of Moray Firth bottlenose dolphin population.

To get involved or for further information, visit the WDCS website:

www.wdcs.org/protectourdolphins



The Irrawaddy Dolphin

Irrawaddy Dolphin Fascinating Facts

When scared, the Irrawaddy dolphins can dive underwater for up to 12 minutes!

The Irrawaddy dolphin is seen to be a sacred animal by fishermen in Vietnam. If they catch a dolphin in their nets, they will free it, and in areas along the Mekong river, a dead dolphin will be cremated and given a religious ceremony in respect! In at least one river village the dolphins help fishermen by rounding up fish and driving them into the nets.

Description

The Irrawaddy dolphin has a rounded head with no beak, and a flexible neck. They can vary in colour from dark and light blue- grey, to pale blue. It is grouped as an oceanic dolphin, although some dolphins may live in the freshwater of rivers all their life (such as the Ganges in India). This species of dolphin has a small triangular shaped dorsal fin with a rounded tip, below the centre of the back , and is a slow swimmer - usually moving in small groups. Irrawaddy dolphins are very similar to the shape of the Beluga (toothed whale), and to the shape of the Finless Porpoise with its blunt round head, so they are sometimes difficult to tell apart. They can have up to 40 teeth on their upper jaw, and 36 teeth on the lower jaw. They are shy by nature.

Length (metres):

Adult Irrawaddy dolphins can grow between 2.1 and 2.6 metres long. New-born babies are about 1m in length.

Weight:

A fully grown Irrawaddy dolphin can weigh between 90 and 150 kg. Birth weight is about 12kg.

Diet

Fish, crustaceans and squid.

Behaviour

The Irrawaddy dolphins usually swim in groups of six, or less. They rarely show themselves above the surface of the water, but sometimes may make low horizontal leaps. They may also do something called 'spyhopping', which is the name given to the activity of poking their heads out of the water - perhaps to have a good look around! They have also been seen to spit out water from their mouths whilst spy-hopping! The Irrawaddy dolphin species do not ride the waters in front of the bows of boats, but they do have a special relationship with fisherman on the Irrawaddy and Mekong rivers, by driving fish into their nets.

Distribution

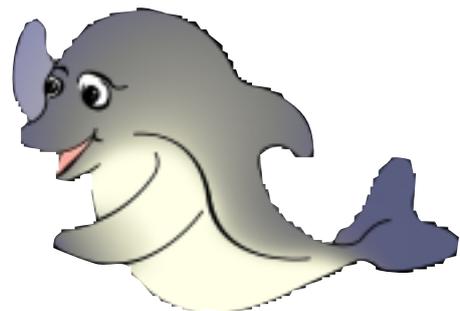
This species of dolphin lives in the shallow, tropical, and sub tropical waters of the Indian and Pacific Oceans, around Indonesia, northern Australia, and southeast Asia. It prefers to live near to the coast and at the mouth of rivers. It also lives upstream in some tropical rivers, such as the river Irrawaddy in Burma - where the species gets its name from. It is unusual for an Irrawaddy dolphin to swim further than two kilometres away from the shore, because they prefer sheltered areas, and cloudy waters.

Population Size

The population size of Irrawaddy dolphins is not known, mainly because they do not tend to show themselves above the surface of the water. They are also difficult to identify, because of their similarities to other whale and dolphin species.

Threats

Hunting, Habitat loss, Human disturbance, Entanglement in fishing nets, and capture for aquarium trade.





Teacher's Notes

Resources Required:

A4 or A3 paper with 2x3 grid drawn on (or if the children are able, they could draw the grid themselves, measuring carefully).

Demonstrate to the children how to enlarge the drawing by using the squares. Show them how they can split the squares into smaller sections to help.

Ask the children to compare their drawings of the two dolphins to help them answer question one of the Dolphin Diploma quiz.