

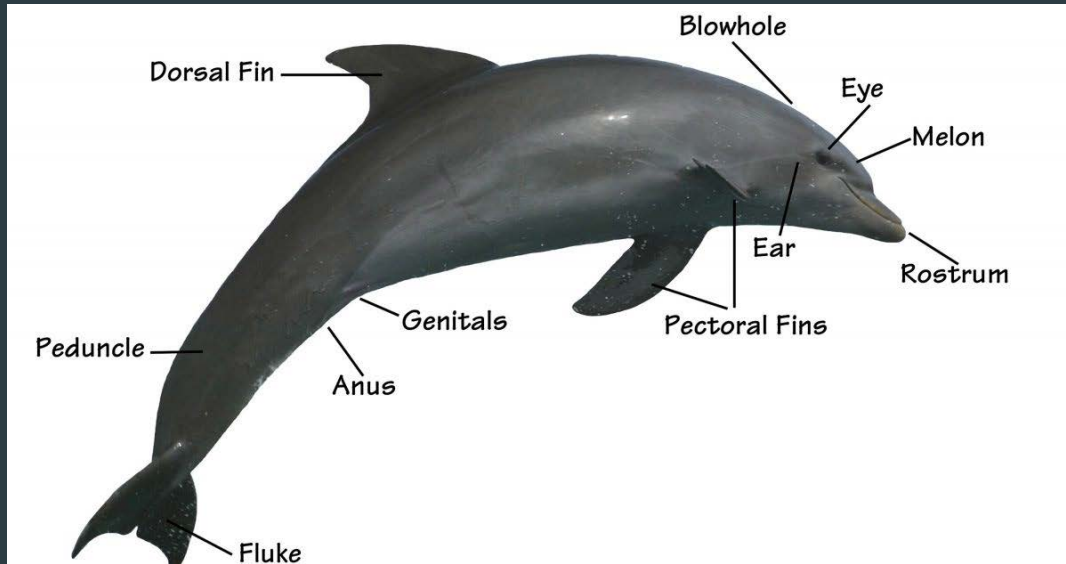
Dolphins



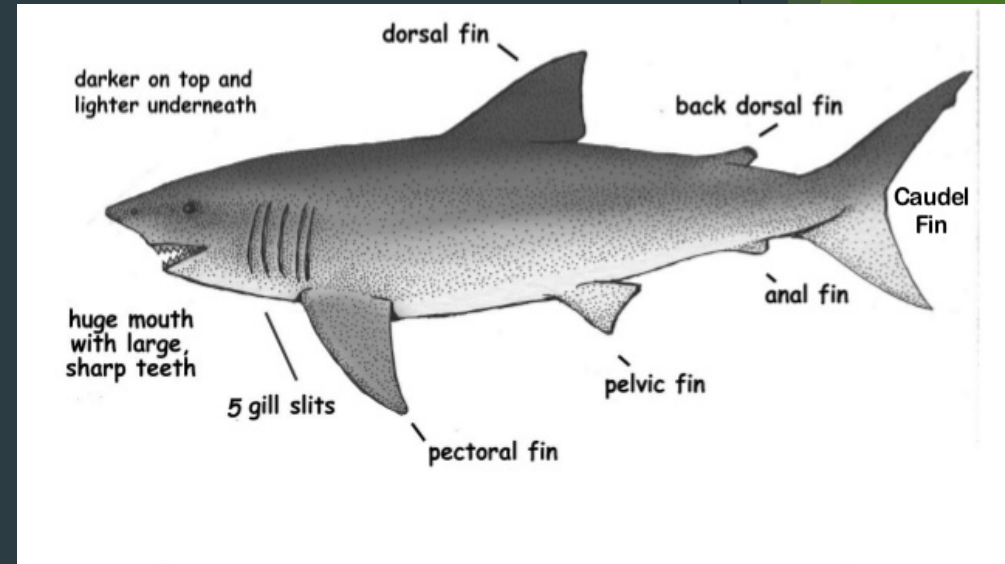
DESCRIPTION

Dolphins are sea mammals which can survive under water for a long period of time. For many people dolphins are the most friendly sea creatures. The pictures below compare a dolphin to a shark:

DOLPHIN



SHARK



DOLPHIN SPECIES

Dolphins have been classified into many different species:

1. Long-beaked common dolphin
2. Common bottlenose dolphin
3. Pacific white-sided dolphin
4. Australian snubfin dolphin



SPECIES

The largest dolphin species is the orca. A common mistake is to classify orcas into whale species. Orcas are big dolphins that can be found in colder waters than other dolphins, even in some parts of the Arctic Ocean.



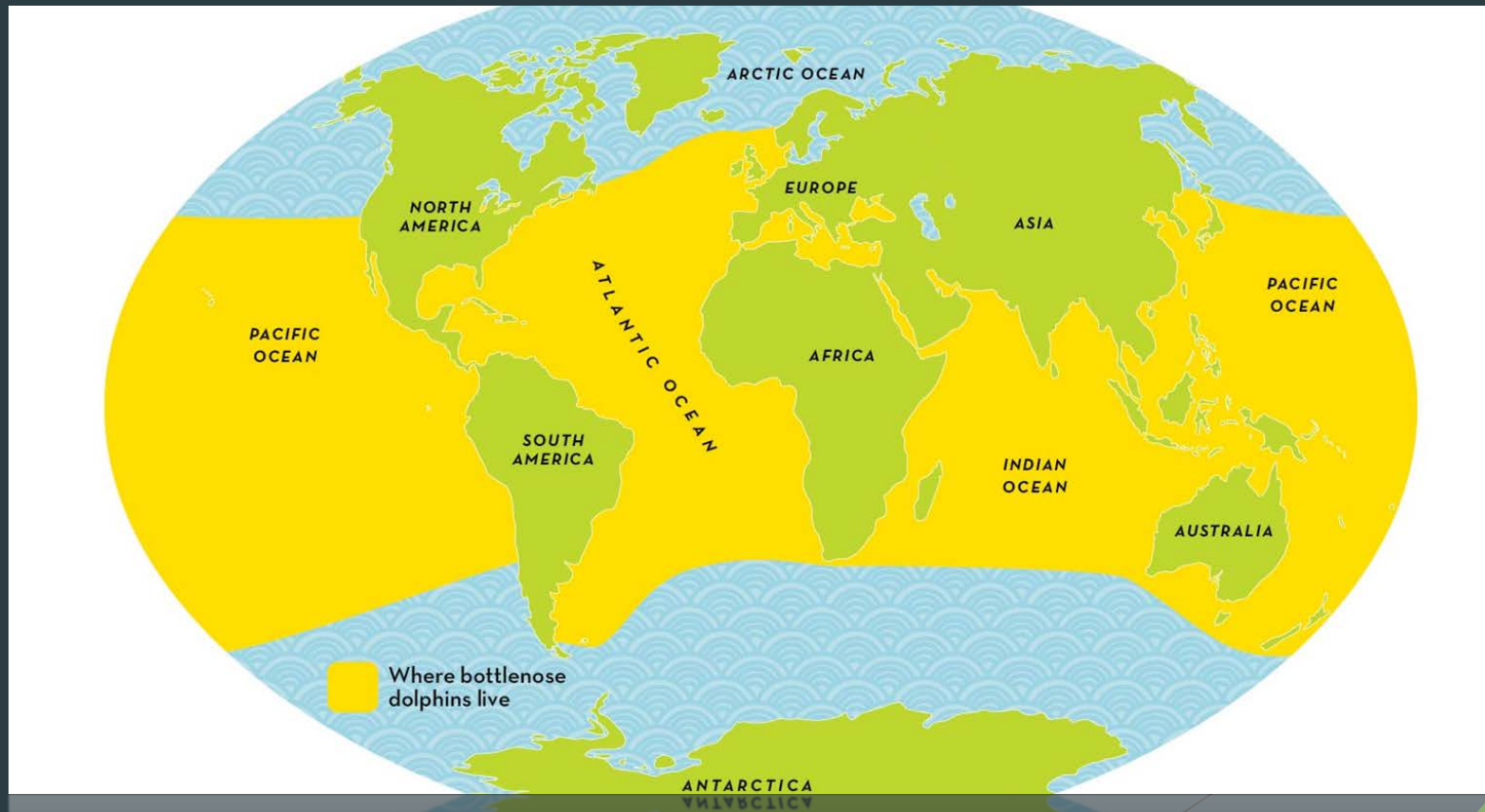
RELATIONSHIP WITH OTHERS

- ▶ Dolphins may be the second-most intelligent mammal after humans, judging by brain-to-body size.
- ▶ They can recognize themselves in a mirror!
- ▶ They are social animals, living in groups called pods and taking loving care of their babies.
- ▶ They are also known to be very friendly to humans.



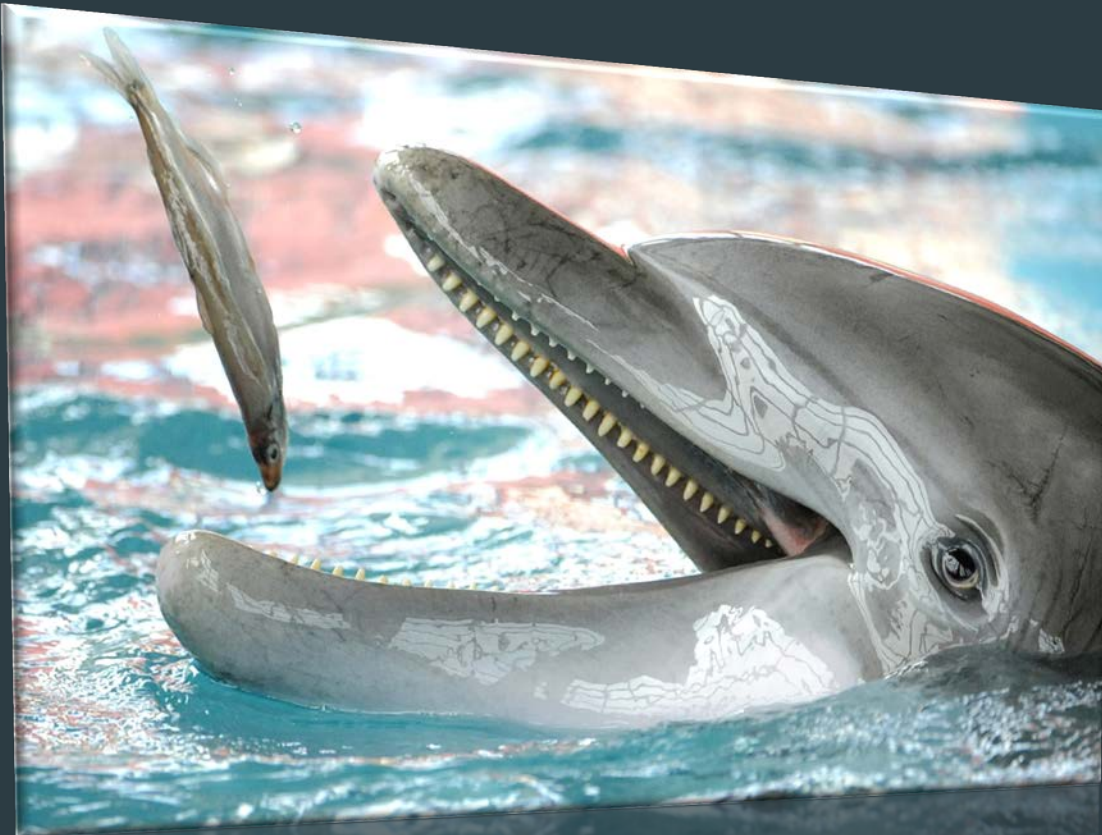
HABITAT

While not all species of dolphins live everywhere, there is a species for each environment. Specifically, the bottlenose dolphin lives in every ocean of the world except the Arctic and the Antarctic oceans. Only orcas can be found in such waters. They live even in the most cold and unfriendly environments of our world.



DIET

Dolphins are active predators and eat a wide variety of fish, squids, and crustaceans such as shrimps. However, orcas are an exception. Because of their large size, they can even eat penguins and seals.



LIFE CYCLE- GESTATION

Gestation is when the mother carries the child in their womb. It takes about 12 months for the baby dolphin to be ready to be born. Some species carry their babies even for 18 months.



LIFE CYCLE-CHILDHOOD

The young dolphins stay in the care of their mother for 3-8 years. When they are 6 months old they can eat seafood.



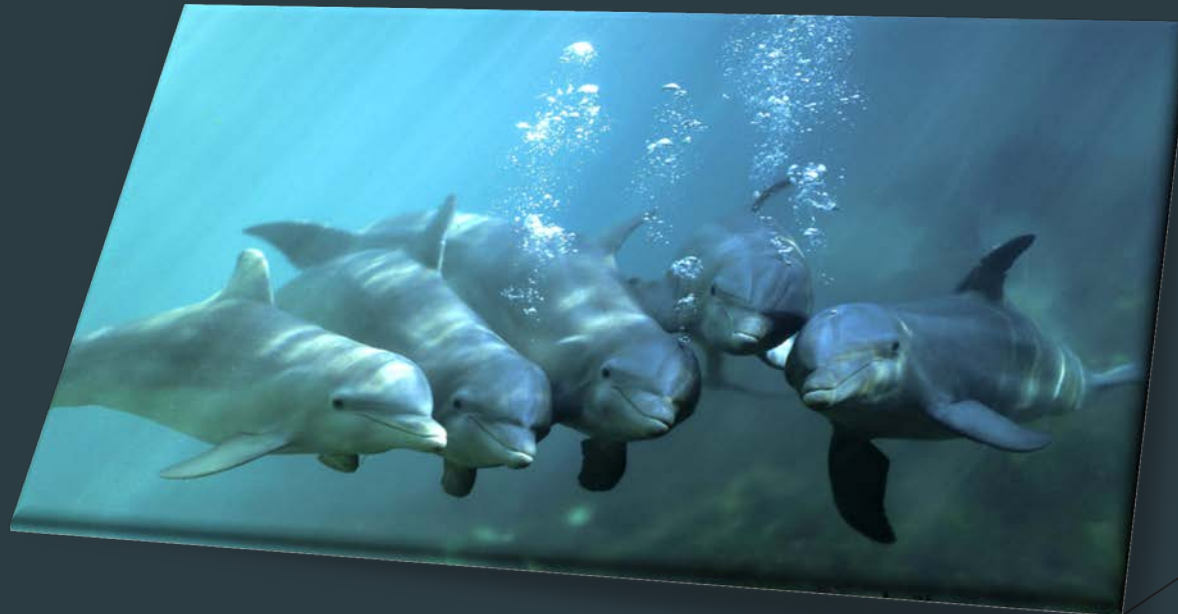
LIFE CYCLE- PUBERTY

When dolphins reach the age of puberty, they start trying to find a mate. The mating period is in spring and autumn and lasts about 12 months. They live for about 30 years on average, but are hurt by humans and their numbers are dwindling.



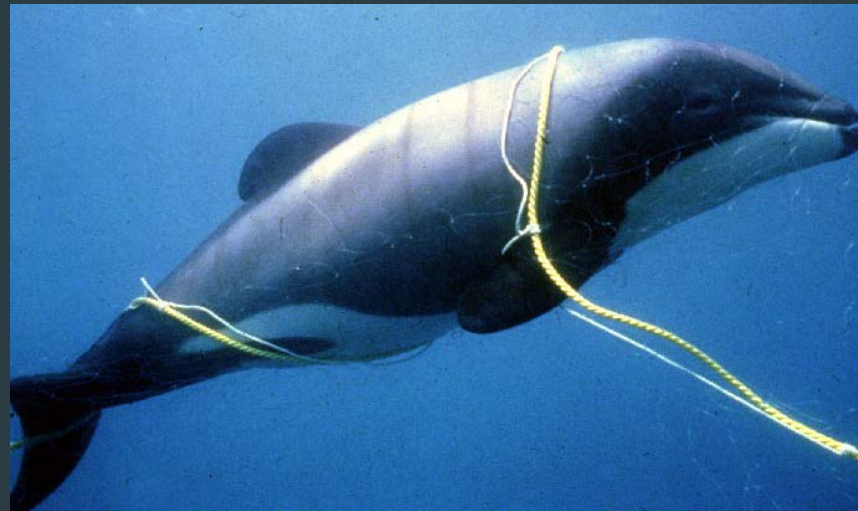
LIFE CYCLE- FAMILY LIFE

Dolphins have a very sociable life and are very intelligent. They live in groups of up to 40 members and even larger. Most groups are split into subgroups such as the nuclear group - for one male and one female, the nursery group - for young dolphins and the bachelor group - for young male dolphins.



IMPORTANCE TO ECOSYSTEMS AND THREATS

Luckily for dolphins they are at the top of the food chain, so they only have very few predators such as the great white sharks, orcas and humans. Dolphins are really fast swimmers and sometimes they are hard to catch.



IMPORTANCE TO ECOSYSTEMS AND THREATS

Worldwide, dolphins are under threat mainly as a result of human activities. In recent history, the Baiji, also known as the Yangtze river dolphin, was declared extinct as its river habitat had been seriously impacted by the construction of dams and boat traffic. Dolphins are also faced with other threats such as pollution of the environment, climate change, and commercial harvest.

Dolphins have lived on earth even before us, so we must respect and protect those beautiful, ancient creatures.

