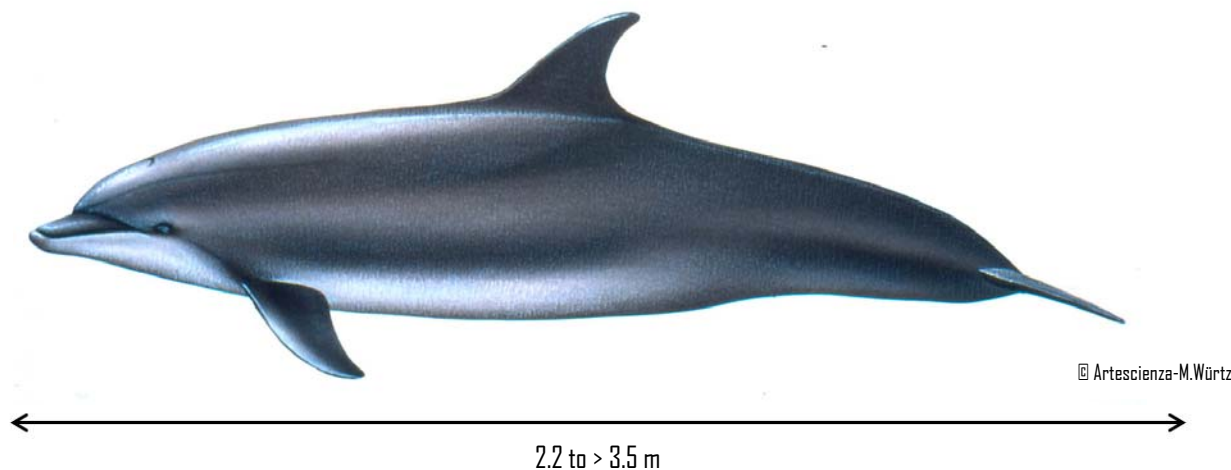


|  |   |                           |
|--|---|---------------------------|
| Class: <b>Mammalia</b><br>Order: <b>Cetacea</b><br>Sub-order: <b>Odontoceti</b><br>Family: <b>Delphinidae</b><br>Genus: <b><i>Tursiops</i></b> | IUCN global conservation status: <b>Minor preoccupation</b>   |                           |
|  | ACCOBAMS/IUCN global conservation status: <b>Vulnerable</b> (Mediterranean) and <b>Threatened</b> (Black Sea) |                           |
|  | Mediterranean: <b>Regular</b>   | Black Sea: <b>Regular</b> |
| <b>COMMON BOTTLENOSE DOLPHIN</b><br><i>Tursiops truncatus</i> (Montagu, 1821)  |   |                           |

English: Bottlenose dolphin



**Name:** ♦ Scientific: From Latin *Tursio* = sort of marine animal described by Pliny the Old, and the suffix *-ops* = having the appearance of a Tursio, and *truncatus* in reference to the truncate (in fact, more likely worn) aspect of the teeth of the first described specimen.

**DESCRIPTION** *Best known dolphin to the general public from films and aquaria*

**Size:**

|          |   |
|----------|---|
| Male:    | 2.5-3.5 m (max. 3.9 m) - 200-300 kg.        |
| Female:  | 2.2-3.2 m approximately 10% less than males |
| Newborn: | 1-1.2 m - 15-20 kg.                         |

**Head:** Snout rather short and thick, rounded melon.  
18-26 teeth; 1-3 cm long on either side of both jaws, often worn down in older individuals.

**Body:** Squat and massive. Anterior portion broad and well developed.  
Its powerful frame distinguishes it from other dolphins in the Mediterranean.  
Colouration: dark grey back, at times bluish or brownish grey, with lighter sides, the belly white, light grey or pinkish.  
Body size and colouration in bottlenose dolphins vary greatly amongst different populations.

**Dorsal fin:** Prominent and sickle-shaped, wide at the base, the tip occasionally claw-shaped. Located mid-body.

**Pectoral fins:** Medium-sized, dark and slim, wide at the base, pointed tips.

**Tail:** Concave with a well-marked median notch.

## DISTRIBUTION

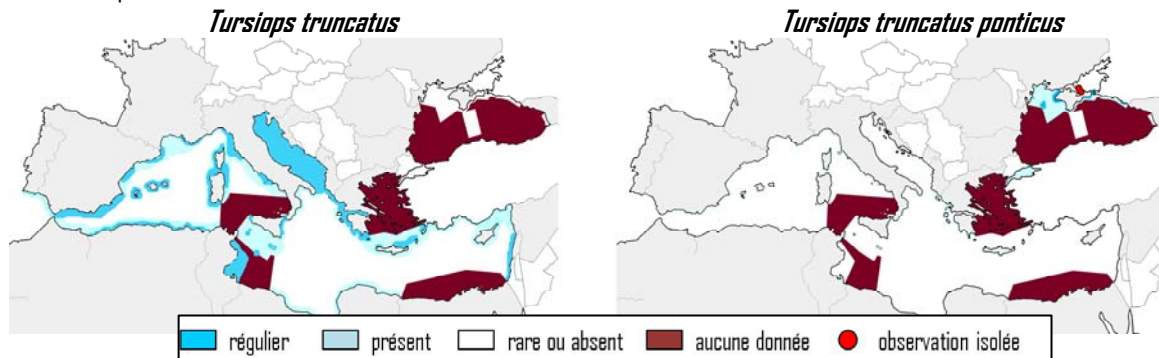
Cosmopolitan, widely distributed in all oceans. Can be found from cold temperate to tropical waters and in semi-enclosed seas, such as the Gulf of Mexico, the Gulf of California, the Mediterranean Sea, the Black Sea and the Red Sea. Two ecotypes exist, one coastal and the other oceanic, with different morphological and ecological characteristics.

### MEDITERRANEAN AND BLACK SEAS

Common on the continental shelf of the Mediterranean where its distribution now seems scattered and fragmented into smaller units, probably due to anthropogenic degradation of their habitats. Found mostly inland, coastal waters and offshore near the continental slope.

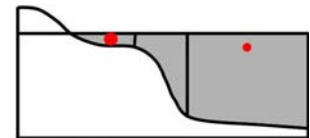
The species is also regular in the Marmara Sea and the North Sea.

In the Black Sea, the bottlenose dolphin is represented by a different subspecies, *T. truncatus ponticus* (Barabasch 1940).



### HABITAT AND ECOLOGY

Although in the Agreement area, they are considered essentially coastal (including lagoons, semi-enclosed bays and estuaries), these species can be regularly found in deeper waters.



### BEHAVIOUR

Behaviour varies considerably amongst populations. In the Mediterranean, it lives in groups usually smaller than 20 individuals, although greater aggregations have been observed. Studies performed in non-Mediterranean populations indicate that females remain in their birth group throughout their life, whereas males create smaller, life-long groups of two or three.

Social interactions are numerous and animals frequently perform acrobatics, play on the bow waves of boats, etc. Solitary dolphins called "Dolphin ambassadors" are often *Tursiops*.

**Longevity:** 50-55 years in females, 40-45 in males

**Swimming speed:** -

**Dives:** Generally short, 3-6 min, and shallow, but may last 10 min and reach several hundred metres.

### REPRODUCTION

**Sexual maturity:** Female: around 10-12 years; males: around 10-15 years.

**Breeding season:** Year-round; in the Mediterranean mostly in summer.

**Gestation:** About 12 months.

**Nursing:** About 18 months.

### FOOD

Very varied and opportunistic: fish and cephalopods with a preference for demersal prey (Blanco et al., 2001), but also epipelagic fish according to their location and circumstances.

### THREATS

Prey depletion, accidental captures in fishing gear, direct human disturbance, pollution and habitat loss.