



Tenerife,

Whale and dolphin watching



BIOSPHERE
certified destination



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TENERIFE, AN EXCEPTIONAL PLACE

Tenerife has an endless array of natural treasures that combined with an ideal climate and excellent tourism infrastructure, makes this island a unique place for adventure breaks in a beautiful natural setting. The variety of landscapes and microclimates has generated an incredibly diverse flora and fauna, being Tenerife one of places with the richest biodiversity in Europe.

The southern coast of Tenerife is a privileged place for watching whales in the wild as there are permanent pods of dolphins in the surrounding waters year round. Bearing in

mind they live so close to the coast, Tenerife has become the top European destination in terms of the number of people that have seen whales in the wild.

We can find up to 21 different species in Tenerife's waters; from the colossal blue whale to the feared killer whale. An opportunity not to be missed, as there are very few places on this planet offering such a wide variety of species, at such a short distance from your hotel. It's no wonder why these fascinating creatures attract half a million visitors every year.



1

Why do they live here?

For various reasons pilot whales and bottlenose dolphins have settled off the south west coast of Tenerife and have become permanent inhabitants: the food supply, which is abundant; the tranquil waters, protected from the trade winds by the mountainous landscape of the island; as well as the good climate and quality of crystal-clear waters, have created a paradise and ideal setting for these marine mammals.

Although it is difficult to know the exact number of species that live here, we estimate that the population of pilot whales – between 500 and 600 – is twice the amount of bottlenose dolphins.

Did you know...?

Although similar in size, it is easy to differentiate a shark from a cetacean. Whilst sharks have a vertical-positioned tail, cetaceans have a horizontal-positioned tail.

2

Mammals that live in the sea

Cetaceans, which include whales, dolphins and porpoises, are marine mammals and are more similar to humans than fish, despite living in the sea. Just like humans, they are warm-blooded and breathe oxygen through their lungs, meaning they have to reach the surface for air, which consequently allows visitors to see them in their natural habitat.

Cetaceans are fascinating creatures. They are able to live in the sea, a hostile environment for humans, and are extremely mobile in water, an enviable asset. Whale watching offers the opportunity to see these species swim free in the wild, a special and memorable experience that shouldn't be missed in Tenerife.

3

The difference between whales and dolphins

Generally speaking, although scientifically incorrect, a cetacean is considered a whale if it is over four metres long, and any other cetaceans measuring less than 4 metres belong to the dolphin family. The order Cetacea comprises two groups: toothed cetaceans (odontoceti) and baleen cetaceans or whales (mysticeti). The first group, toothed cetaceans, include dolphins, beaked whales and sperm whales, all of which use their teeth to capture prey, which is then swallowed whole. The mysticeti order of cetaceans, associated with large whales, have plates hanging from the upper jaw, allowing them to filter sea water and capture food such as krill or small fish.

TYPES OF CETACEANS

- **Residents:**
Settled in the same place throughout the year
- **Occasional:**
irregularly present throughout the year
- **Seasonal-migratory:**
present during some parts of the year
- **Rarely seen**



○ Spotted Atlantic dolphin 2,5m



○ Rough-toothed dolphin 2,7m



○ Striped dolphin 2,7m



○ Bottlenose dolphins 2,7m



● Blainville's beaked whale 7m



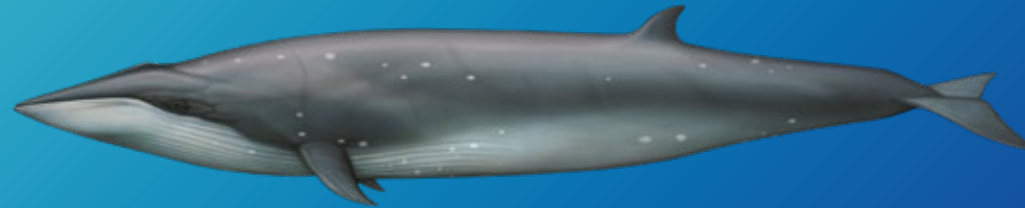
○ Short-finned pilot whale 5m



● Common dolphin 2,5m



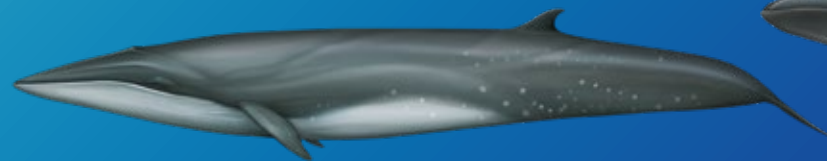
○ Risso's dolphin 3,5m



● Sei whale 17m



○ Sperm whale 18m



○ Eden's whale 14m



● Fin whale 25m



SHORT-FINNED PILOT WHALE

(Globicephala macrorhynchus)

Also known as pilot whales, this species is part of the oceanic dolphin family, and therefore is odontocete (a toothed cetacean). They are considered whales because of their size, as adult males can exceed 5 metres in length. Calderón dolphins can weigh between 1 and 2 tonnes and they are easily identifiable.

The characteristic dorsal fin has a wide base and is set forward on the whale's back, curved towards the tail. The bulbous head is globe-shaped head and ends

in a very slight beak. The colour is very dark, nearly black. This species, resident in Tenerife, is the most frequently sighted during whale watching trips; in fact, they are considered the least migrant of marine species in the world.

Pilot whales are very sociable, with a strong sense of family or group. As they do not hide from humans, it has been possible to study them extensively.



5 metres in length. Calderón dolphins can weigh between 1 and 2 tonnes.

Did you know...?

Its scientific name "Globicephala" refers to its globe-shaped head.

They can swim down to a depth of 1,000 metres for over 20 minutes, allowing them to hunt giant squid.



Residents:
Settled in the same place throughout the year.



COMMON BOTTLENOSE DOLPHIN

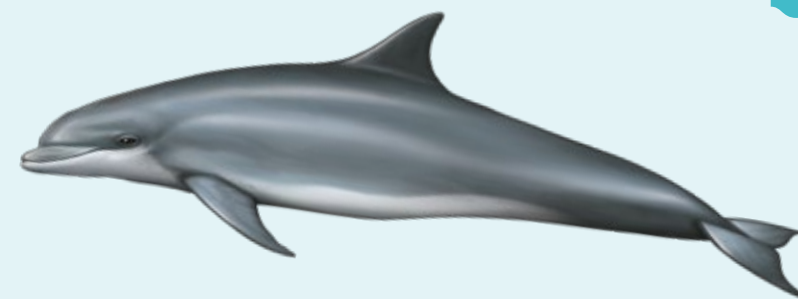
(*Tursiops truncatus*)

The bottlenose dolphin is the most widely-known type of dolphin as it is often present in marine parks and has been featured in films and TV series. In Tenerife, it is a resident species as we can find them quite easily throughout the year at a short distance from the coast.

The average size of the adult male is 2.7 metres, whereas adult females can measure up to 2.5 metres. The older members can exceed three metres, with the largest ever spotted in the Canary Islands, measuring 3.4 metres long.

Large and robust, bottlenose dolphins can live for more than 30 years and weigh over 500 kg. They live in groups of up to 10 -30 members, with males separated from the females and calves.

They are generally dark grey on the back and present lighter shades of grey fading to white on the lower jaw and belly. Some may have small patches on its skin. Seeing them jump and swim at the same speed as boats provides a wonderful and impressive experience.



2.5-3.7 metres in length. Bottlenose dolphins can weigh up to 500 kg.

Did you know...?

The south west coast of Tenerife is the largest breeding area of this species in Europe.

Residents :

Settled in the same place throughout the year.





SPOTTED ATLANTIC DOLPHIN

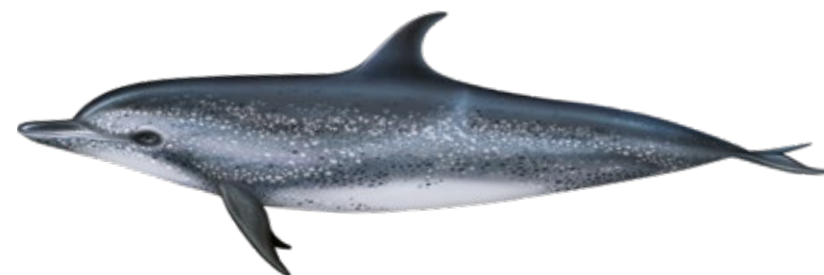


(*Stenella frontalis*)

This species can be confused with the bottlenose dolphin and particularly the differentiation of the calves is sometimes difficult, despite the spotted dolphin being smaller in size.

The most distinctive feature is the spotted skin, noticeable in adults. With an active behaviour, they

often approach boats, jump and surf the waves, producing a very spectacular sighting. Large groups, particularly of females and calves can be observed frequently in Tenerife from autumn to spring.



Size up to 2.3 metres. Its weight is between 60-80kg.

Did you know...?

Spotted dolphins can form pods of hundreds of individuals.

The younger individuals can be confused with bottlenose dolphins.



Occasional

Irregularly present throughout the year.



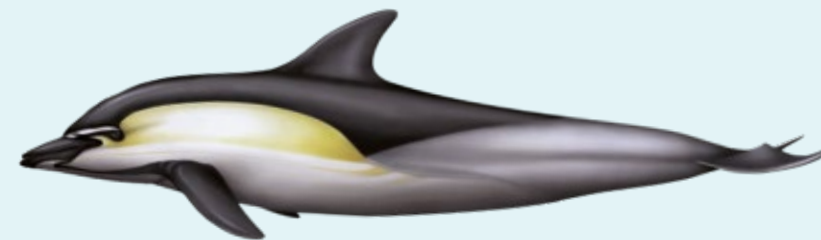
COMMON DOLPHIN

(Delphinus delphis)

This oceanic species is distributed across most of the seas on our planet, which is why it is called common dolphin. It is easily identifiable thanks to a pale yellow strip on each of its sides.

In Tenerife it is possible to see this type of dolphin throughout the year, but mostly in the winter season.

Their behaviour among boats is active and playful, as they enjoy bow-riding boats (swimming in front of boats) to surf and leap.



Its size is up to 2.5 metres. Common Dolphins weight is between 80-130kg.

Did you know...?

They are the fastest swimmers among cetaceans, being able to swim at a speed of nearly 45Km/h.

Seasonal migratory
Present during some parts of the year.





STRIPED DOLPHIN

(*Stenella coeruleoalba*)

This small dolphin is easy to distinguish at sea, with stripes running from its eyes to the beginning of its tail and a blue-coloured body.

It sometimes avoids close proximity to boats, despite travelling in very large groups. Striped dolphins are fast swimmers and especially the younger individuals like to jump out of the water.



Its size is up to 2.7 metres. Striped Dolphins weight is between 100 - 130kg.

Did you know...?

They are the fastest swimmers among cetaceans, being able to swim at a speed of nearly 45Km/h.



Occasional

Irregularly present throughout the year.



ROUGH-TOOTHED DOLPHIN

(*Steno bredanensis*)

Its name comes from the characteristic thin lines on its teeth, although the most distinctive feature that enables its identification at sea is an elongated head, with a conical beak.

Its colour is darker than bottlenose dolphins and it has lighter patches.

It forms large pods which are distributed into smaller groups of between 6 and 10 individuals.



Its size's up to 2.7 metres. Its weight is up to 150kg.

Did you know...?

The members of a pod surface for air at the same time.



Occasional

Irregularly present throughout the year.



SPERM WHALE

(*Physeter macrocephalus*)

It is the largest of toothed cetaceans and can be easily mistaken for a Great Whale as it is similar in size. Highlights of its anatomy are its gigantic head, which covers a third of its body, dark knobby skin and a small hump, similar to a dorsal fin. It feeds on giant squid found 2,000

metres below sea level, which means it sometimes has to hold its breath for over an hour to hunt its prey.

Sperm whales are more frequently spotted in spring, in groups of 4 to 6 females with their calves.



Its size is up to 18 metres. Striped Dolphins weight is between 15-16 tonnes.



Occasional

Irregularly present throughout the year.



ORCA

(*Orcinus orca*)

The largest predator in the marine environment has also been sighted in Tenerife on a few occasions, following schools of tuna on their migration routes.

Identifiable features are its dark skin, white patches and the dorsal fin on the male individuals

It can measure up to 1.8 metres.
Weight between 2-9 tonnes.
Size 7-9 metres.



FALSE ORCA

(*Pseudorca crassidens*)

This species' appearance resembles a combination of a dolphin and a killer whale, with a dark skin.

It is a fast and active swimmer and sometimes interacts with dolphins.

It can measure up to 6 metres.
Weight up to 2 tonnes.

Did you know...? Killer whales, also known as orcas, receive their name because they feed on other cetaceans.



BEAKED WHALES

(Ziphiidae)

Beaked whales are one of the least understood of all whales. Despite being large in size, they are rarely seen as they spend 90% of their lives underwater.

In fact, there are no photos of some of the living species, although beached whales have proved their existence.



Its size is up to 7 metres. Beaked whales weight is between 2 - 3 tonnes.



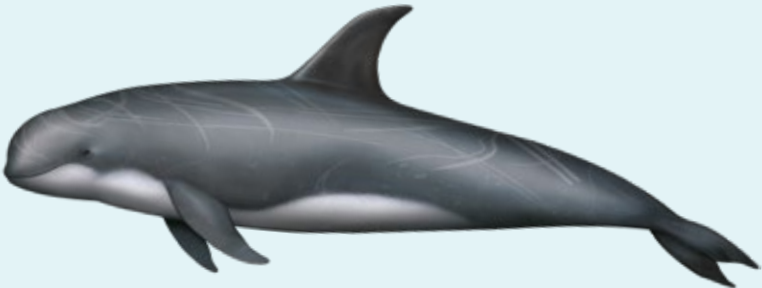
Rarely seen

RISSE'S DOLPHIN

(Grampus griseus)

The risso's dolphin, also known as "Grey dolphin" or grampus, bears great morphological resemblance to the pilot whale.

Its grey skin, which is almost white in some adult species, together with the contrast of its dark dorsal fin is a clear distinction that allows us to identify this type of mammal.



Its size's up to 3.5 metres. Its weight is between 300 - 600kg.



Occasional
Irregularly present
throughout the year.



RORQUALS

(Balaenoptera)

The world's largest animals travel through Tenerife's waters during their migration, except for the Bryde's whale, which can be seen here throughout the year. Despite their size, which can vary between 10 and 29 metres, Rorquals feed on small fish and plankton.

In the borough of Los Silos, there are skeletal remains of a 16 metre-long Sei Whale.

Did you know...?

Did you know that one Blue whale, the largest ever on the planet, measure 33 metres long?



Eden's whale



Occasional

Irregularly present throughout the year.

Fin whale



Sei whale

Did you know...?

Blue whales digest from 6 to 8 tonnes of food every day, whilst their babies need 100 litres of milk per day.



Seasonal migratory

Present during some parts of the year.

WHALE WATCHING TOURS



There are trips tailor-made to every person. Many companies specialise in whale watching tours, offering an ample range of prices and times:

Trips of up to five hours on large boats, which travel along the south coast of Tenerife, stopping once or twice by the shore for a swim and lunch on board.

Trips of between 2 to 3 hours on medium-sized boats, followed by a swim and lunch on board, before returning to the port.

Trips of up to 2 hours on small, fast boats, designed for the sole purpose of whale watching.

EQUIPMENT

To ensure an unforgettable and successful experience, we recommend the following:

Check the weather forecast and wear appropriate clothing.

Please bear in mind temperatures are lower at sea.

Sun protection cream is highly recommended, as well as a cap or hat and sun glasses.

Binoculars are useful, but recommended only for those who do not experience sea sickness.



TIPS ON HOW TO TAKE THE BEST PHOTOS

- Wait until the boat stops or slows down to avoid blurred pictures.
- It may be difficult to freeze fast moving subjects when using compact cameras.
- The use of the zoom control combined with boat movement may produce unpredictable results.

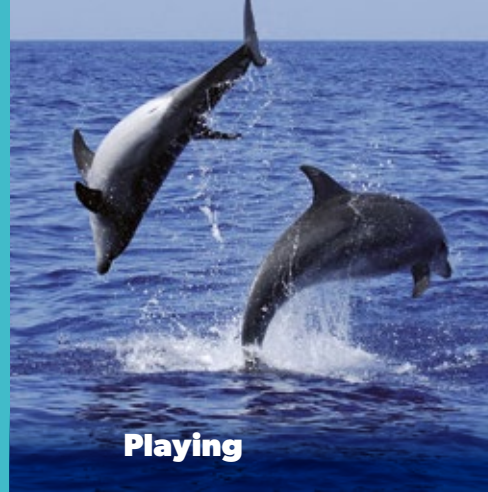




Spyhopping



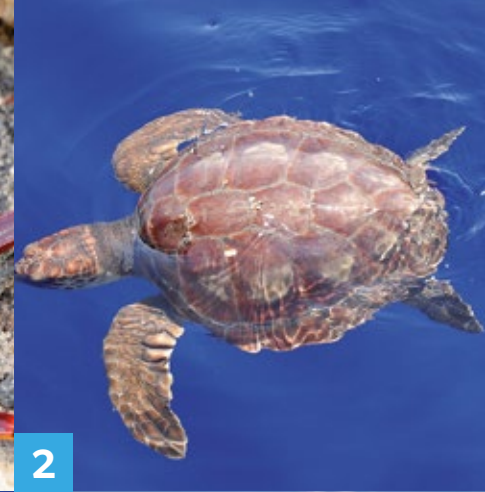
Bubbles



Playing



1



2



3

OBSERVABLE BEHAVIOUR OF CETACEANS

Every tour is different. We will never see the same thing no matter how many whale watching trips we join. The behaviour varies from one species to another and also depends on the moment of the day, the conditions of the sea, available food, etc.

A long list of factors that are beyond the spectators' control.

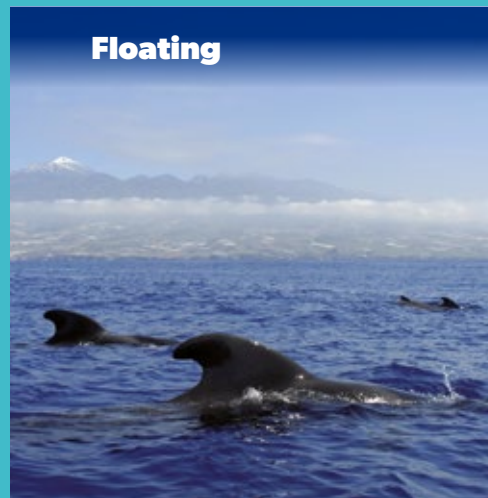
The following types of behaviour can be enjoyed.



Surfing



Lobtailing



Floating



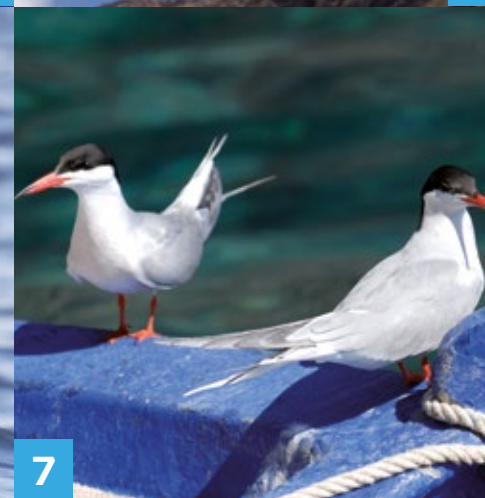
4



5



6



7

OTHER OBSERVABLE FAUNA

1. Stone crab
2. Turtle
3. Portuguese man of war
4. Great hammerhead
5. Yellow legged gull
6. Cory's shearwater
7. Common tern

CODE OF CONDUCT



International laws and regulations, which aim to control any human activity that may have an impact on these marine mammals. Whale watching is subject to control and must be carried out in the appropriate conditions, by combining the respect for these species with an enjoyable experience for the island's visitors.

Boats that run whale watching trips have expert staff on board, with ample knowledge on whale and dolphin behaviour, enabling visitors to understand these fascinating creatures. In presence of cetaceans, the following code of conduct must be applied:

COMPULSORY

- To keep within a minimum distance of 60 metres.
- Whale watching sessions must not exceed 30 minutes at a time.
- To sail at a low speed.
- To avoid the concentration of boats at a time.
- To abandon the area if the cetaceans are inconvenienced.

PROHIBITED

- To swim with cetaceans.
- To feed them.
- To touch them.
- To throw scraps or items into the water.
- To produce noise that may disturb them.

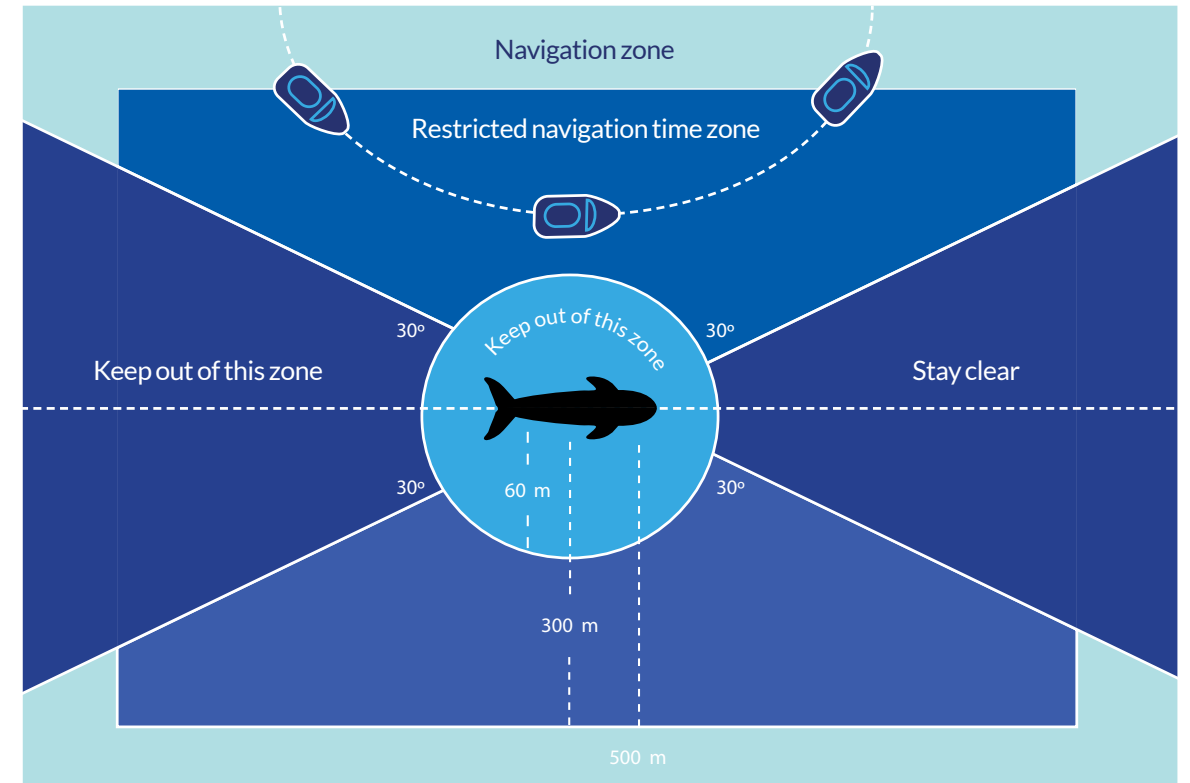


Table of distance restrictions

In the event of seeing a harmed or beached animal, please call urgently the emergency services number (112), who will carry out the rescue protocol.

TOURIST INFORMATION OFFICES

Arona - Playa de las Vistas

Paseo Playa de Las Vistas, 1
38650 Los Cristianos- Arona
info-vistas@aronatourism.com
www.aronatourism.com
922 787 011

Monday to Friday
09.30 am - 04.30 pm.

Arona - Playa de las Galletas

Rambla Dionisio González, 1
38631 Las Galletas- Arona
info-galletas@aronatourism.com
www.aronatourism.com
922 730 133

Monday to Friday
09.00 am - 04.00 am.

Costa Adeje - Playa Fañabé

Avda. Litoral, s/n. Playa de Fañabé
38660 Adeje
turismo@adejetourism.com
www.costa-adejetourism.com
922 71 65 39

Monday to Friday
10.00 am - 05.00 pm.

July and august
Monday to Friday
09.00 am - 04.00 am.

Whale Watching companies

In order to ensure the very highest standards for this whale and dolphin watching service, the companies involved have signed a Sustainability Charter whereby they commit to upholding certain rules aimed at safeguarding users and respecting all species which have made their home in the southern waters of Tenerife.



Member of Sustainability
Charter for Whale watching

tenerife!
awakens emotions.



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