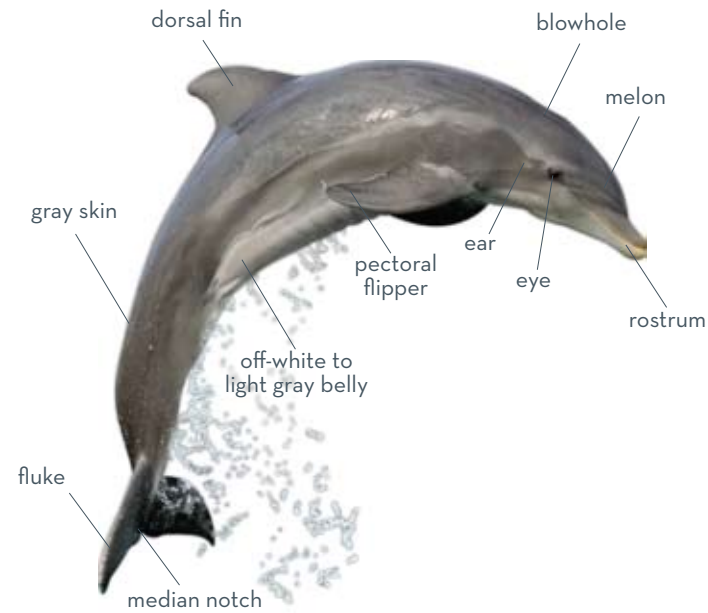


What are dolphins?

Dolphins belong to a group of marine mammals called toothed whales. The word dolphin comes from the Greek *delphis*, which means dolphin. The toothed whale group, or Odontoceti, includes not only dolphins but also porpoises, river dolphins, and even the sperm whale.

The dolphin family, Delphinidae, which is part of the toothed whale group, includes dolphins such as the bottlenose, spinner, and spotted dolphin, but also the killer whale, pilot whale, and false killer whale.



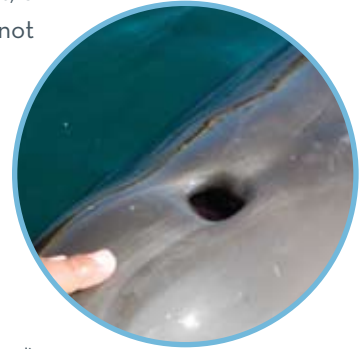
Teeth for tearing

Dolphins and other toothed whales don't chew their food. They use their teeth for grabbing and then either swallow their food whole or rip and tear it into pieces before they eat it. They primarily eat fish or squid. Dolphins will feed as a group using techniques such as encircling a school of fish and then taking turns feeding.



Bottlenose dolphins live at Atlantis

Bottlenose dolphins get their name from their snout, or rostrum, which looks like a bottle. But that snout is not their nose! Their nasal opening is on top of their head and it's called a blowhole. A muscular flap keeps the water out of its nose. And, yes, they have ears—they have just lost their external ear flaps, or pinnae. You'll have to look carefully to see the ear on the side of the head.



Dolphins are mammals

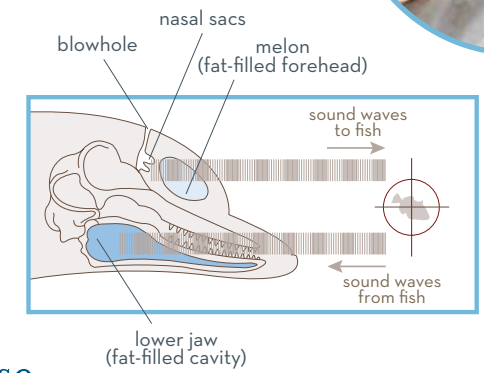
Dolphins are mammals just like humans and have the same basic mammal traits:

- 1) Warm-blooded: Dolphins maintain a constant body temperature.
- 2) Possess hair: Dolphins have a few hairs on their rostrum that they lose after birth.
- 3) Nurse their young: Dolphins have fat-rich milk, which helps the calf gain weight quickly.
- 4) Breathe air: Dolphins breathe through the blowhole on the top of their head.
- 5) Give live birth: Dolphin calves are born in the water.



Dolphin social life

Bottlenose dolphins live in fluid social groups and spend part of each day socializing. These social groups usually number 2 to 15. Individuals will hunt together and care for each other's young. Other types of dolphins live in family groups called pods.



A sixth sense

Dolphins have a sixth sense that we are missing: echolocation. They produce sounds in their nasal cavities that are sent out through the melon, their fat-filled forehead. These sounds bounce off an object and return as an echo to the animal through its fat-filled jaw. The sound then moves to the ear and on through the auditory nerve to the brain. With this sense dolphins can determine the size, shape, speed, and density of an object. With practice using this sense, they learn to identify certain species of fish by the echo that they receive.



Adapted for water

Dolphins have many adaptations that help them survive in the ocean. Their bodies have been streamlined and their limbs have been modified. The pectoral flippers on the sides of their body help the animal steer and stop. The powerful tail flukes help propel the animal and the dorsal fin provides stabilization while swimming. The pectoral flippers contain the dolphin's arm bones as well as the finger bones, which have been elongated. The dorsal fin is composed of cartilage. Feel the end of your nose: it is also composed of cartilage.



Dolphins

Dangers for dolphins

The bottlenose dolphins at Atlantis aren't endangered, but there are many whales and dolphins that are, including the Ganges River dolphin and blue whale. Whales and dolphins have many challenges that they face on a daily basis:

- Trash ingestion
- Entanglement in fishing nets and lines and other litter
- Pollution, including oil spills and agricultural and mining runoff
- Collisions with boats
- Bycatch as part of fishing operations
- Climate change

If you observe an ill or injured dolphin in The Bahamas, please call the Bahamas Marine Mammal Stranding Network at 242.544.5409.

Kerzner Marine Foundation

The focus of the nonprofit Kerzner Marine Foundation is protecting the integrity of tropical marine ecosystems, which are becoming increasingly threatened due to overpopulation and overexploitation. We place a priority on projects that include developing and managing Marine Protected Areas (MPAs), conserving coral reefs, as well as supporting dolphin and whale conservation and research on a global level. The Foundation is partially funded by YOU through your participation in Blue Adventures and Dolphin Cay programs.

www.kerznermarinefoundation.org



kerzner marine foundation
PARTNERS FOR THE OCEANS



Be Blue!

The most important thing you can do to help protect coral reefs is to invest in their future. Participate in activities at Atlantis, Paradise Island, such as the Blue Adventure tours, and learn more about the local reefs. A portion of each program sale goes to **the blue project**SM. You can also help protect reefs by reducing, reusing, and recycling; disposing of fishing line and pet waste properly; buying biodegradable detergents and soaps; purchasing seafood wisely; avoiding the purchase of items made of coral or shells; and picking up and properly disposing of litter from beaches.

www.blueproject.com



Dolphin Cay

At Dolphin Cay, swimming with dolphins at Atlantis has been redefined. An extraordinary, 14-acre dolphin habitat—one of the largest and most sophisticated of its kind in the world—allows you to share in the dolphins' playful shallow-water antics or experience their speed and agility firsthand in deeper waters. The dolphins of Atlantis welcome you to share in their fun! Call ext. 69500 at the Atlantis, 800-Atlantis, or book your reservation at www.dolphincayatatlantis.com. Your participation helps fund dolphin conservation work through the Kerzner Marine Foundation.

www.atlantis.com

