



MarLIN

Marine Information Network

Information on the species and habitats around the coasts and sea of the British Isles

White-beaked dolphin (*Lagenorhynchus albirostris*)

MarLIN – Marine Life Information Network
Marine Evidence-based Sensitivity Assessment (MarESA) Review

Morvan Barnes

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A report from:

The Marine Life Information Network, Marine Biological Association of the United Kingdom.

Please note. This MarESA report is a dated version of the online review. Please refer to the website for the most up-to-date version [<https://www.marlin.ac.uk/species/detail/117>]. All terms and the MarESA methodology are outlined on the website (<https://www.marlin.ac.uk>)

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A white beaked dolphin breaking the surface.
 Photographer: Andrew Pearson
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See online review for
 distribution map

Distribution data supplied by the Ocean
 Biogeographic Information System (OBIS). To
 interrogate UK data visit the NBN Atlas.

| | | | |
|---------------------------|---------------|--------------------|-------|
| Researched by | Morvan Barnes | Refereed by | Admin |
| Authority | (Gray, 1846) | Synonyms | - |
| Other common names | - | | |

Summary

Description

Lagenorhynchus albirostris is a toothed whale and can be recognised as such by the single blowhole and the presence of teeth. It is a member of the dolphin family with a characteristic prominent median notch in the flukes, a smooth crease-less throat and sharply pointed teeth. The white-beaked dolphin reaches up to 3.2 m in length. It has moderately long and slender flippers and small tail flukes. The dorsal fin is tall, large and located on the middle of the back. The head is smoothly sloping with a distinct but small snout. It has a complex, gradually changing colour pattern. The dorsal and lateral colouration is dark grey and the belly and beak are white. Wisp-like light grey colouration on the flanks with a light grey saddle.

Recorded distribution in Britain and Ireland

Found all around the British Isles, particularly off the coasts of Scotland and in the North Sea but also south-west Britain and western Ireland.

Global distribution

-

Habitat

The white-beaked dolphin is an offshore species and prefers waters less than 200 m deep.

↓ Depth range

-

Q Identifying features

- Slender body up to 3.2 m in length.
- Tall, large dorsal fin located on the middle of the back.
- Very deepened tail stock.
- Gradually changing, wispy colouration dark grey above, white below with a light grey saddle area and lateral wisp.
- No distinct black lines.
- Beak is usually white.
- Short slender flippers.
- Gently sloping head with a short, thick beak.
- Straight mouthline.

🏛️ Additional information

White-beaked dolphins are usually found in large pods of up to several thousand individuals. Mixed schools with other species including Atlantic white-sided dolphins, *Lagenorhynchus acutus*, have been recorded. Their surface behaviour is typical of dolphins with acrobatic leaps and bow-riding are not uncommon. Dive duration is unknown (Kinze, 2002).

✓ Listed by



🔗 Further information sources

Search on:



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