

Bottlenose Dolphins

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Chapter 1: Characteristics

What are Bottle Nose Dolphins?

Bottlenose dolphins are large, slender, animals that live in the ocean. Although they look like fish, dolphins are actually considered to be **mammals!** They are very, very smart and can be trained to do tricks. Because of this, you can normally find them in captivity at zoos and aquariums.



Dolphins playing in the wild

Characteristics

What do they look like?

Bottlenose Dolphins are normally around 10 feet long and can weigh up to 1,100 pounds! Boy dolphins, which are called bulls, are typically bigger than the girl dolphins, which are called cows. Baby dolphins are called calves. Bottlenose Dolphins are light gray. In the water this helps **camouflage** them from **predators**. They have very thick skin that is smooth and rubbery. Their skin protects them if they get bitten and helps to keep them warm.



A dolphin in captivity

Chapter 2: Behaviors

How do dolphins travel?

Dolphins are very social animals and like to travel in groups called pods. They talk to each other using clicks and squeaks. If a dolphin in their pod is injured, dolphins will swim back to help their friend get to the surface.



A cow with her calf

Behaviors

How do dolphins breathe?

Dolphins can't breathe under water, and have to get oxygen from above water. They can breathe from a blowhole at the top of their head and have to come up to the surface of the water 2-3 times a minute to breathe. They can hold their breath for as long as 8 minutes if they have to though!



Dolphins jumping out of the water

Chapter 3- Habitat and Diet

What do dolphins eat?

Bottlenose dolphins live all over the world in warm, tropical waters. They spend most of their time close to the top of the water so that they can come up to breathe, but will dive deep when they go hunting. Dolphins are **carnivores** which means they eat meat. They eat fish, squid and shrimp.

Things Dolphins Eat

Food	Yes	No
Seaweed		X
Fish	X	
Trash		X
Squid/ Shrimp	X	
Ocean Plants		X
Jellyfish	X	

Habitat and Diet

How do dolphins hunt?

Dolphins track their prey using something called **echolocation**. They make clicks and squeaks that send out sound waves into the ocean, and when the sound waves encounter something they bounce back to the dolphin and the dolphin can swim to their prey.



A dolphin in an aquarium

Chapter 4- Threats and Conservation

What threatens dolphins?

In the ocean sharks sometimes attack dolphins. Sharks are scary, but the dolphin's biggest threat is humans. Dolphins used to be hunted for their meat and oil. Although we are not allowed to hunt them today, many are killed every year in fishing nets. **Pollution** is also deadly to dolphins. It can make them very sick and can even kill them.



Dolphins enjoying unpolluted water

Threats and Conservation

What can you do to make sure dolphins stay around for a long time?

It is important to not litter, and when you buy fish from the store it's good to look for a label that says "dolphin-safe" Dolphins may be fun to look at in zoos and aquariums, but it's important to remember they are usually happiest swimming in the wild!



A diver swimming with dolphins

Chapter 5- Fun Facts



- Because they have to come up to the surface to breathe, Dolphins never actually really sleep!
- Dolphins can't smell, but they have a 360-degree field of vision.
- Dolphins make sounds humans can't hear.
- Dolphins eat 30 pounds of food every day!
- A baby dolphin (a calf) will live with its mom for two years.
- Dolphins have over 100 teeth but don't chew their prey! They swallow it whole!

Quick Quiz!

- Dolphins have thick grey skin. How does this help keep them safe?
- Can dolphins communicate with each other? How do they talk to other dolphins?
- Why do dolphins stay near the top of the water?
- How do dolphins hunt? What do they eat?
- What can you do to make sure dolphins are around for a long time?
- What's your favorite "Fun Fact" about bottlenose dolphins?

Glossary

Carnivores: Meat-Eater

Conservation: Protecting something so that it doesn't disappear

Echolocation: Use of sound waves to find something

Habitat: The home of an animal or plant

Mammal: A warm-blooded animal with a backbone, has hair or fur, feeds it's baby milk, and gives birth to live young.

Pollution: Something that is poisonous to an environment, plant, or animal.

Predators: An animal that kills another animal

Works Referenced

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Common Core State Standards

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RI.1.5

Know and use various text features (e.g., headings, tables of contents, glossaries, electronic menus, icons) to locate key facts or information in a text.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RI.1.2

Identify the main topic and retell key details of a text.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RI.1.10

With prompting and support, read informational texts appropriately complex for grade 1.

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