

Whales around St Helena

Humpback whale

(*Megaptera novaeangliae*)



Adult length: 11.5–15 meters

Adult Weight: 25–30 tonnes

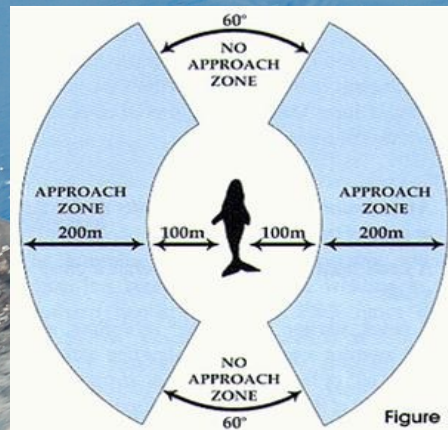
- Humpback whales are annual visitors around St Helena in the winter months usually from June to December.
- One of the most energetic of the large whales well known for spectacular breaching, lobtailing and flipper-slapping.
- At close range its knobby head and long flippers are unmistakable.
- Humpbacks come to St Helena to give birth to their calves. Quite often mother and calf can be seen passing James Bay throughout the period of time that they are here.
- Bottlenose dolphins are occasionally seen accompanying a Humpback whale and its calf.

How to approach a whale

A vessel must not cause a whale to change direction or the speed of its travel.

A vessel must not disperse a group of whales.

If a vessel comes closer than 100m to a whale, it must place its motor in neutral or move the vessel, at less than 5 knots away from the whale until the vessel is outside the contact zone.



How you can help

There is an on going **Marine Sightings Scheme** in place on St Helena and you can help!!

Whenever you see a whale or dolphin, just give us a call.

Tel: 22270

or email: marine@enrd.gov.sh

Just remember the following details:

Time, Location, Number, Type/Species,

Date, any other information.

Remember a good picture can help with

Whales & Dolphins St Helena

Guidelines & Information

St Helena has resident populations of dolphins; experience their acrobatic displays and marvel at our seasonal visitors the humpback whales

EMD

"Our Island. Our Environment. Our Responsibility."



Cetaceans

Whales, dolphins and porpoises are marine mammals collectively known as cetaceans.

There are 80 species recognised worldwide. They range in size from tiny dolphins just over a metre in length to the blue whale which are typically 25m long.

Feeding and breathing

Cetaceans have two classifications which are toothed and baleens. Toothed cetaceans have teeth for catching marine life. They do not chew, but swallow prey whole. Baleen cetaceans filter small animals such as krill. Both dolphins and whales come to the surface to inhale oxygen.

St Helena have resident populations of pantropical spotted, bottlenose and rough-toothed dolphins. Humpback Whales are seen seasonally. These species are all IUCN red-listed and are protected under CITIES.

Both dolphins and whales are seen from high vantage points along the coast of the island. Most frequently seen outside of James Bay and Lemon Valley.

In recent times there are also records of other cetaceans which include: dwarf or pygmy sperm whales, Blainville's beaked whales, sperm whales, Brydes and/or Sei whales.

Enjoy St Helena's charismatic mega-fauna.

Dolphins around St Helena

Pantropical spotted dolphin (*Stenella attenuate*)

- A small dolphin with a white tipped beak. It's body is dark grey on top and lighter underneath.
- Locally this is called a "porpoise" and is the most commonly seen dolphin around the island.
- They are common in the Long Ledge area in the morning where a group of around 200-300 (including calves) can be observed.
- Pantropical spotted dolphins are very athletic cetaceans, doing spectacular aerial displays when observed from boat or land.
- Even though they are called pantropical spotted dolphins St Helena's population are not as spotted as other places around the world.



Adult length: 1.7–2.4 meters
Adult weight: 90–115 Kg



Adult length: 1.9–3.9 meters
Adult weight: 150–650 Kg

Bottlenose dolphin (*Tursiops truncates*)

- Locally this is called "angerline" or "cow porpoise".
- These are large grey dolphins with a robust body and a short to medium length beak that resembles a bottle, hence the naming of the species.
- Bottlenose dolphins around St Helena are most often seen in small groups of 15-20 but can be encountered in larger pods of 30-40.
- They are often seen in amongst the rough-toothed dolphins as a mixed pod.
- Throughout the winter months (July-September), the bottlenose dolphins are commonly seen in James Bay chasing flying fish into the Front Steps.

Rough-toothed dolphin (*Steno bredanensis*)

- First recorded around St Helena in June 2003.
- This dolphin has a very distinctive sloped head with white "lips" and yellowish white or pinkish white blotches on its body.
- Usually found in small pods of 10-20, but can be encountered in larger pods of 30-40.
- They are sometimes encountered amongst the bottlenose dolphins.



Adult length: 2.1–2.6 meters
Adult weight: 100-150 Kg