

PRESS RELEASE

General

WHALE AND DOLPHIN SIGHTINGS SUCCESS

Sightings of large groups of whales and dolphins were among the highlights recorded from around the UK during a one-week special event organised by the marine conservation charity, the Sea Watch Foundation.

National Whale and Dolphin Watch Week, which finished on August 21, invited members of the public to look out for marine mammals near the UK coastline and send in their reports to Sea Watch. So far more than 400 sightings have been sent in, and the numbers are rising.

The species recorded included killer and Minke whales, white-beaked dolphins, bottlenose dolphins and harbour porpoises. The most unusual sighting of the week was a group of six fin whales observed off the coast of Pembrokeshire. The group is the largest ever recorded in UK coastal waters.

Dr Peter Evans, Sea Watch's scientific director, said: "Most sightings of this rare species come from the deep waters of the Bay of Biscay or close to the continental shelf edge in Southern Ireland and the Northern Isles of Scotland. In Welsh waters, there are rarely more than a couple of sightings of fin whales a year and these are generally just solitary animals."

The fin whale is second in size to the Blue Whale, making it the second largest mammal on earth. They usually grow to 19-22.3 metres long and weigh between 45-75 tonnes.

Other notable sightings included:

- A group of 20 white-beaked dolphins seen from Stonehaven golf course, near Aberdeen
- Several large groups of up to 300 common dolphins seen from Wales, south Devon and the Channel Islands
- A group of 40 bottlenose dolphins, including calves, spotted in Cullen Bay, north-east Scotland
- Harbour porpoises and bottlenose dolphins seen off the Kent and Sussex coasts

Dr Evans said: *(Peter can you add in a quote here about the significance of seeing such large groups of dolphins together and of the white beaked dolphins)*

All sightings are recorded on the Sea Watch Foundation website

www.seawatchfoundation.org.uk which also contains species identification guides and report forms.

National Whale and Dolphin Watch week has taken place every year since 2002. It aims to make the public aware of the 28 species of whales, dolphins and porpoises that occur in British waters. The information gathered is used by Sea Watch to support research into the status and distribution of whales, dolphins and porpoises around the UK, and the conservation threats they face.

This year's event was sponsored by British Gas, the Department of Food and Rural Affairs (Defra) and the Heritage Lottery Fund.

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PRESS RELEASE

Scotland

WHALE AND DOLPHIN SIGHTINGS SUCCESS

Over 400 sightings of whales and dolphins were recorded from around the UK during a one week special event organised by the marine conservation charity, the Sea Watch Foundation. National Whale and Dolphin Watch Week, which finished on August 21, invited members of the public to look out for marine mammals near the UK coastline and send in their reports to Sea Watch.

The species recorded included killer and Minke whales, white-beaked dolphins, bottlenose dolphins and harbour porpoises. In Scotland, notable sightings included:

- A group of 20 white-beaked dolphins seen from Stonehaven golf course, near Aberdeen
- A group of 40 bottlenose dolphins, including calves, spotted in Cullen Bay
- Four killer whales seen from Whaligoe Steps, near Ulbster

The highlight of the week was a group of six fin whales observed off the coast of Pembrokeshire. The group is the largest ever recorded in UK coastal waters.

Dr Peter Evans, Sea Watch's scientific director, said: "Most sightings of this rare species come from the deep waters of the Bay of Biscay or close to the continental shelf edge in Southern Ireland and the Northern Isles of Scotland. In Welsh waters, there are rarely more than a couple of sightings of fin whales a year and these are generally just solitary animals."

The fin whale is second in size to the Blue Whale, making it the second largest mammal on earth. They usually grow to 19-22.3 metres long and weigh between 45-75 tonnes.

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Wales

WHALE AND DOLPHIN SIGHTINGS SUCCESS

Over 400 sightings of whales and dolphins were recorded from around the UK during a one week special event organised by the marine conservation charity, the Sea Watch Foundation. National Whale and Dolphin Watch Week, which finished on August 21, invited members of the public to look out for marine mammals near the UK coastline and send in their reports to Sea Watch.

The species recorded included killer and Minke whales, white-beaked dolphins, bottlenose dolphins and harbour porpoises. In Wales, the highlight of the week was a group of six fin whales observed off the coast of Pembrokeshire. The group is the largest ever recorded in UK coastal waters.

Dr Peter Evans, Sea Watch's scientific director, said: "Most sightings of this rare species come from the deep waters of the Bay of Biscay or close to the continental shelf edge in Southern Ireland and the Northern Isles of Scotland. In Welsh waters, there are rarely more than a couple of sightings of fin whales a year and these are generally just solitary animals."

The fin whale is second in size to the Blue Whale, making it the second largest mammal on earth. They usually grow to 19-22.3 metres long and weigh between 45-75 tonnes.

Other notable sightings included:

- Six Risso's dolphins spotted close to the Gower peninsula
- Nine bottlenose dolphins in Conwy Bay

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PRESS RELEASE

South West WHALE AND DOLPHIN SIGHTINGS SUCCESS

Over 400 sightings of whales and dolphins were recorded from around the UK during a one week special event organised by the marine conservation charity, the Sea Watch Foundation. National Whale and Dolphin Watch Week, which finished on August 21, invited members of the public to look out for marine mammals near the UK coastline and send in their reports to Sea Watch.

The species recorded included killer and Minke whales, white-beaked dolphins, bottlenose dolphins and harbour porpoises. In the south-west, notable sightings included:

- Two Minke whales seen off the Cornish coast
- A group of 50 common dolphins near Berry Head in south Devon
- Pods of bottlenose dolphins spotted from Cornwall, Devon and Dorset

The highlight of the week was a group of six fin whales observed off the coast of Pembrokeshire. The group is the largest ever recorded in UK coastal waters.

Dr Peter Evans, Sea Watch's scientific director, said: "Most sightings of this rare species come from the deep waters of the Bay of Biscay or close to the continental shelf edge in Southern Ireland and the Northern Isles of Scotland. In Welsh waters, there are rarely more than a couple of sightings of fin whales a year and these are generally just solitary animals."

The fin whale is second in size to the Blue Whale, making it the second largest mammal on earth. They usually grow to 19-22.3 metres long and weigh between 45-75 tonnes.

All sightings are recorded on the Sea Watch Foundation website

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