



## NEWS RELEASE – June 2006

### SOUTH COAST ON WHALE AND DOLPHIN ALERT

Whale and dolphin-watchers on the south coast will be scanning the seas this summer for marine mammals – and they are looking for members of the public to help them.

Reports of dolphins in Brighton Marina and Portsmouth Harbour have already been logged by the Sea Watch Foundation, a marine conservation charity and research organisation based in Oxford.

They are hoping for more sightings during their annual National Whale and Dolphin Watch, which takes place this year from August 12-20.

Anyone who is near the coast that week can take part in the Watch. They can join experienced observers at key look-out points on cliff-tops and harbours, or make their own observations and send them to Sea Watch.

Dr Peter Evans, Sea Watch's research director, has studied whales and dolphins for 30 years and advises the government on their conservation. He said: "Many people will remember the northern bottlenose whale that swam up the Thames in January this year. That was unusual, but we do see whales and dolphins regularly in the south, particularly bottlenose dolphins."

Sea Watch uses the information gathered during the National Whale and Dolphin Watch to aid its research into marine mammal numbers and the effects of rising sea temperatures, fishing activities and pollution. Last year's event produced 576 sightings, including a group of six fin whales – the largest group ever seen in British waters.

Times, dates and details of local co-ordinators will be published shortly on the Sea Watch website [www.seawatchfoundation.org.uk](http://www.seawatchfoundation.org.uk) where you can also find a guide to identifying whale and dolphin species.



Sea Watch is also running a series of training workshops for people interested in learning how to identify whale and dolphin species. These take place in June, July, August and September with support from the Countryside Council for Wales – details from Sea Watch Cymru on 01545 561227 or e-mail [info@seawatchfoundation.org.uk](mailto:info@seawatchfoundation.org.uk)

Note to editors: An adult minke whale grows to around 28 feet long and weighs 7.5 tons. Minkes are the prime target of the Norwegian whaling industry, which is expected to kill around 1,000 of the animals in 2006. The International Whaling Commission banned commercial whaling in 1986 but Norway does not accept the ban and recently expanded its whaling grounds, allowing fisheries to kill an increased number of minkes - 1,052 - in 2006.

**FOR FURTHER INFORMATION OR PICTURES PLEASE CONTACT:**

Clare Dickins  
[Clare.dickins1@btopenworld.com](mailto:Clare.dickins1@btopenworld.com)  
0121 444 8468  
07766 587240

Wendy Nekar  
[w.nekar@ntlworld.com](mailto:w.nekar@ntlworld.com)  
01926 421679

**[www.seawatchfoundation.org.uk](http://www.seawatchfoundation.org.uk)**

Sea Watch Foundation, 11 Jersey Road, Oxford OX4 4RT and Paragon House,  
Wellington Place, New Quay, Ceredigion SA45 9NR