



## NEWS RELEASE - June 2006

### HELP DEVON'S DOLPHIN-WATCHERS SCAN THE SEAS

Seasoned dolphin-spotters in Devon are hoping that 2006 will prove a bumper year for sightings of these spectacular marine mammals.

Over the next few weeks they will be scanning the seas from coastal paths, beaches and headlands – and asking members of the public to do the same.

The Sea Watch Foundation, a dedicated marine conservation charity and research organisation, is urging people to join its National Whale and Dolphin Watch which takes place every year in August. Anyone can take part by sending in their reports or joining experienced observers at key look-out points around the British coast.

During last year's watch, pods of up to 50 common dolphins were seen from Berry Head in North Devon. Bottlenose dolphins, harbour porpoises, fin whales and minke whales have also been seen locally.

The Sea Watch co-ordinator in South Devon, Gavin Black, says: "Sixteen different species of whales, dolphins and porpoises have been recorded in Devon's waters. With only 84 species in the world, that's an impressive proportion."

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.

The 2006 Watch will take place from August 12-20. Manned watches will be held during the week at Hartland Point Car Park, Baggy Point, Bull Point, Ilfracombe and Berry Head. 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.

National Whale and Dolphin Watch is sponsored by British Gas, the Heritage Lottery Fund and the Department of the Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (DEFRA).

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

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