



NEWS RELEASE – June 2006

HAVE YOU SEEN DORSET'S DOLPHINS?

You don't have to fly to Florida to watch dolphins at play – just keep a look-out next time you are sailing or walking near the Dorset coast.

Bottlenose dolphins have been reported already this year, with pods of up to 12 animals recorded during April from Durlston Head.

And it isn't just experienced observers who see these fascinating marine mammals. Members of the public are also being urged to send in their sightings of dolphins, whales and porpoises to the Sea Watch Foundation, a dedicated marine conservation charity and research organisation.

Sea Watch wants as many people as possible to join its National Whale and Dolphin Watch which is held every year in August. Anyone can take part by sending in their reports or visiting manned watches at key look-out points around the British coast.

During last year's watch, 576 sightings were sent to the charity, providing vital data for its research into the numbers of marine mammals in British waters 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 the Durlston Country Park, Swanage, where the local co-ordinator is Jo Wharam from the Durlston Marine Project.

She said: "I think many people are under the impression that you have to go to travel across the world to see dolphins, but that is not the case.

"This latest pod of eight bottlenose dolphins first arrived here in 2001 with a calf, and in 2004 they returned with another calf, which means they are a successful breeding group."



Times and dates of events during National Whale and Dolphin Watch will be published shortly on the Sea Watch website 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).

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