

The Cetacean Monitoring Unit

# Sea Watch foundation



*Bottlenose dolphin off St Cyrus, Kevin Hepworth, South Grampian regional group*

## NATIONAL WHALE AND DOLPHIN WATCH - AUGUST 13-21 2005

Do you fancy spending a day or two at the coast helping Sea Watch to gather vital data about UK cetaceans? Then why not join in this year's National Whale and Dolphin Watch? Anyone can take part and you can report sightings from anywhere along the coast or in British waters.

For more information including details of regional groups and approved boat operators, visit our website at [www.seawatchfoundation.org.uk](http://www.seawatchfoundation.org.uk) where you can also download forms to report sightings and species guides to help you with identification. Alternatively you can call us on 01865 717276 for more information.

## Editorial

Welcome to the April 2005 edition of the Sea Watch news sheet! This issue we are just reporting on sightings from March to April as we still have some catching up to do. From the next issue though we will start to produce the news sheet quarterly - hence the next one will cover May - July 2005. If you would like to contribute to future issues, please contact me at [lorihandley@mac.com](mailto:lorihandley@mac.com) and I would be very grateful for your input or feedback. Don't forget that it is nearly time for the next National Whale and Dolphin Watch and you can still sign up for one of the Sea Watch training courses running this summer - see below for more details.

Best wishes, Lori.  
Lori Handley, editor



## SEA WATCH TRAINING COURSES 2005

If you would like to learn more about whales, dolphins and porpoises and how to identify them, there are still places available on the training courses run by the Sea Watch Foundation in conjunction with the Mammal Society. The courses are held at New Quay in Ceredigion, West Wales where there are resident bottlenose dolphins and harbour porpoises. This year's dates are July 16-17 and August 20-21 for the weekend courses, and September 3-6 for the extended course. There may also be local training opportunities available in the south Moray Firth/Grampian region of Scotland. Further details can be found on the Sea Watch website (address above) or by calling Sea Watch on 01865 717276. Bookings for the training courses are being taken by the Mammal Society (Tel: 020 7350 2200).

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## Regional Roundup March to April 2005

### Shetland Islands

#### From the Shetland Sea Mammal Group

- 8 Orca passing Fetlar at 12:00 on 01 March
- 8 Orca off Urafirth at 12:00 on 02 March
- 5 Harbour Porpoise, Quendale Bay at 12:30 on 22 April

### Orkney Islands

#### From Chris Booth, regional coordinator for Orkney and North Scotland

- 2 harbour porpoise off Rackwick, Hoy on 25th March
- 7-10 Risso's dolphins off Herston, South Ronaldsay on 28th March
- 1 minke whale off Burwick, South Ronaldsay on 22nd April

Perhaps also of interest, a bearded seal was seen off Finstown (mainland) for about three weeks from 29th March

### North East Scotland

#### From Iain Macdonald, regional co-ordinator for North-East Scotland

(Cromarty Firth- Duncansby Head)

With longer days and better weather, at least for part of the time, cetaceans started to be seen more regularly than in previous months. Twenty five bottlenose dolphins were seen on 13<sup>th</sup> March by Sally and Robin Ward off Tarbat Ness, Ross-shire. Not long after the excitement of seeing a large group of dolphins, Sally recognised a familiar smell which she knew to be from either a dead cetacean or seal. Walking up wind, Sally and Robin found the corpse of a Risso's dolphin. This was the second dead Risso's dolphin to be found in the Dornoch Firth area in less than six months and only the fourth recent record of a dead Risso's dolphin from the Moray Firth.

Further north in Caithness, Colin Bird saw two killer whales on 14<sup>th</sup> March which were between 2.5 km and 1 km off Lybster and he was lucky enough to see at least one of the animals breaching. Last year killer whales made several appearances round the Caithness coast where they were seen hunting both seals and cetaceans. On this occasion Colin suspected that they might have been showing an interest in two Risso's dolphins, which he spotted only about 300 m off-shore. After about 4 hours the killer whales were last seen heading north east, about 1.5 km off-shore. Once they had come ashore, Colin discussed the sighting with fishermen who had been at sea off Lybster at the same time. The fishermen said that there had been a third Risso's dolphin, a juvenile, but they had not seen the killer whales. The fishermen said that they had driven the dolphins away from their boat when the dolphins came too close. It is tempting to presume that the dolphins were aware of the killer whales and were trying to take evasive action by going very close to a boat. Two adult Risso's dolphins and a single calf were subsequently reported off the Caithness coast on 18th March.

Caithness continued to produce reports of less frequently reported species, with 4 probable white-sided dolphins seen off Lybster on 19<sup>th</sup> March. Of the more "usual" species, a scattering of porpoise records were made in March and April, but bottlenose dolphin records were sparse with only a single report. Four adult bottlenose dolphins and a calf were seen heading west off Balintore on 10<sup>th</sup> April.

### Minke whales galore

On 23<sup>rd</sup> April five minke whales were seen feeding about 3.5 km south-west of Stoer Head lighthouse. The whales were very close together and at least one whale seemed to be at the surface every minute for about quarter of an hour, surfacing in all directions, but concentrating on one spot. At one time at least four of the whales were only a few "whale lengths" apart. After a quarter of an hour of watching the whales, which were probably feeding, they separated in several directions and could not be relocated. It is amazing how quickly such large animals can disappear and it is even more amazing how they manage to be in the same place at the same time when there is something to feed on.

About an hour later while eating my lunch in the car I spotted porpoises breaching less than 100 m off-shore. When I looked through my binoculars I saw a very large dark shape moving slowly north under the water. There were flashes of white and the porpoises seemed to be interacting with it. After a couple of seconds thinking that it was a large whale, it became apparent that the shape was a tight shoal of several tons of fish and that the white flashes were not whale fins, but the pale flanks of porpoises which were rushing into the shoal and turning onto their sides. The porpoises were moving so fast through the water that on a couple of occasions when they reached the surface their whole bodies became airborne and it was this which drew my attention to the shoal in the first instance. A greater black-backed gull feeding at the surface was able to catch one of the fish which appeared to be about 20 cm long. It is possible that the minke whales had been feeding on a similar shoal of fish. The size of the shoal could easily have fed several whales.

**Grampian****From Peter MacDonald regional co-ordinator for North Grampian**

*March* - As last year March was a bit of a hit and miss month for weather and encounters along the southern side of the Moray Firth. First sightings recorded were of 4-5 bottlenose dolphins off Findochty on the 9<sup>th</sup> but the following day a group of 20+ were seen at Spey Bay. In the third week a group of 6+ were seen again off Findochty. We had good sightings of dolphins from the 25<sup>th</sup> until the 28<sup>th</sup>, recorded at Buckie, Cullen and Spey Bay. During the month I attended a few school workshops and also took part in the east coast forum at Aberdeen. It is hoped that we will take part in watches at the end of each month tying up with the Sea Watch group at Aberdeen. Maybe this would be a good thing for all Sea Watch groups to do a watch from 2-4 last Sunday of the month.

*April* - This month we started a harbour porpoise watch, due to the fact that numbers of harbour porpoise sightings have dropped in our area. In 2003 numbers were in the hundreds but the last few years have produced only a handful of sightings. There are several possible reasons for this. The increase in squid boats might not have helped, and as in other areas the sand eels have not been found in large shoals so maybe a lack of food is to blame. Of course the dolphins themselves may be pushing porpoise out of this area (I look forward to some debate on this). Sightings were slow to start with but picked up around the 10<sup>th</sup> with dolphins at Lossiemouth, Cullen bay and Sandend. Harbour porpoise sightings were also good around this time. One particularly nice sighting was of 7+ dolphins at Fort George, where one was seen to leap out of the water covered in sea weed, sea monster like!

Various schools and groups were visited around the Moray area. The roadshows with life sized models of harbour porpoise and bottlenose dolphins and information regarding the work of the Sea Watch, the Marine Connection and the Friends of the Moray Firth Dolphins have been very well received.

**South West Scotland and Inner Hebrides****From Sarah Barry, Hebridean Whale and Dolphin Trust**

*March*

**Bottlenose dolphins**

- 12 06/03/05 just North of Craignure Bay.
- 4 24/03/05 Sound of Gigha
- 4 27/03/05 Sound of Gigha
- 30 27/03/05 Sound of Gigha

It appears the same group of up to 30 individuals from previous months have stayed in the same area around Gigha.

**Minke whale**

- 27/03/04 1 Ardnamurchan Point

Although minke whales are occasionally sighted in winter months, this appeared to be the first of the year's regular sightings.

**Orca**

- 20/03/05 2 East coast of Lewis
- 08/03/05 4-6 South West coast of Mull. Individuals unknown. This sighting was too distant to be able to distinguish the individuals

**Harbour Porpoise**

4 individual sightings were reported from a fish farm in Loch Linnhe. Although this was the only data we have so far received for this month, I am sure the porpoises have still been in the area, as they always are. Sightings we usually receive of porpoises are generally from tourists (which are thin on the ground throughout March and April). Local people are aware porpoises are in these waters and hence generally do not see it necessary to report their sightings of them.

*April*

**Bottlenose dolphins**

- 2 near Duart Castle SE end of Mull.
- 7 to the West of Mull "playing" with fishing boat.
- Solitary individual curious and playing round boat at the Cairns of Coll. (The NE end of Coll) on 16/04/05. This is possibly the same individual that was around last summer in Gunna Sound (Between Coll and Tiree).
- Once again we received a sighting of the large group of 30 dolphins in the Sound of Gigha

**Minke whales**

Throughout April we were seeing minkes in the usual areas, although not in large numbers, between Mallaig, Ardnamurchan out to Eigg and Canna but these animals were all seen fleetingly and did not appear to be actively feeding.

- 1 Off Canna 24/04/05

- 1 West Coast Skye
- 1 South of Monarch Isles (West coast of North Uist)
- 3 Between Mallaig and Eigg 30/04/05

### Orca

15/04/05 6 individuals (3 males and 3 females) were seen west of Ardnamurchan Point. Floppy Fin and Kinky (both adult males) and Lulu and Nicola (both adult females) were positively identified. They played around boats for an hour and a half! These identified individuals have been known in Hebridean waters for several years now but sightings of them are not common.

### Harbour Porpoises

- 13 individual sightings of 1-3 animals off Mallaig and in the mouth of Loch Nevis
- 2 separate individuals between Mallaig and Eigg
- 2 between Mallaig and Eigg

### North-west Scotland

#### From Ian Birks, regional co-ordinator for NW Scotland

March to April was an improved sightings period in north-west Scotland with a very unusual sighting of a sperm whale in Loch Ewe from 10th to 13th April. Judged to be 15 m in length by Colin Bell, who operates a moorings support vessel of some considerable size, he was quite surprised when the whale blew right alongside his bridge giving him an excellent view and ability to judge size.

The weather began to ease in late April and we began to pick up sightings of harbour porpoise close inshore and had unconfirmed reports of three minke whales in the vicinity of Ru'Re' lighthouse over the Easter weekend period.

### West Sutherland

#### From Andy Summers

The last couple of weeks in April the sea seems to have been alive with plankton and copepods in particular.

- 5<sup>th</sup> April 1 unidentified whale at Handa Island
- 23 April 5 Minke Whales at Stoer Lighthouse (report from Iain MacDonald)
- 24<sup>th</sup> April 2 Minke Whales at Handa Island
- 25<sup>th</sup> April 3 Minke whales at Oldany
- 26<sup>th</sup> April 1 Minke whale at Oldany
- 26<sup>th</sup> April 1 basking shark at Oldany

### South east Scotland

#### From Kevin Hepworth, regional co-ordinator for South Grampian, R. Mennie, Northlink Ferry Cetacean Society, Keith Ringland, Brian Bartlett and Karen Dear.

- 3 Bottlenose Dolphins - headland (Torry Battery) at 12:10 on 13 March
- 1 Harbour Porpoise - headland (Nigg Bay) at 12:00 on 13 March
- 21 Bottlenose Dolphins - headland (Doonies Point, Muchalls) at 11:30 on 13 March
- 5 Bottlenose Dolphins - headland (Muchalls) at 10:45 on 13 March
- 28 Bottlenose Dolphins - headland (Findon Ness) at 10:00 on 13 March
- 5 Bottlenose Dolphins - sea (Tranquility) at 12:59 on 19 March
- 15 Bottlenose Dolphin - sea (Tranquility) at 12:45 on 19 March
- 1 Harbour Porpoise - sea (Tranquility) at 12:32 on 19 March
- 6 Bottlenose Dolphins - sea (Tranquillity) at 12:04 on 19 March
- 25 Bottlenose Dolphin (x25) - sea (Tranquility) at 11:25 on 19 March
- 1 Harbour Porpoise - sea (Tranquility) at 09:40 on 19 March
- 1 Harbour Porpoise - sea (Tranquility) at 09:33 on 19 March
- 1 Bottlenose Dolphin - land (In Channel, Aberdeen Harbour) at 10:30 on 01 April
- 3 Bottlenose Dolphins - pier (Aberdeen Harbour) at 13:00 on 02 April
- 7 Bottlenose Dolphins - ferry at 12:53 on 03 April
- 7 Bottlenose Dolphins - beach (7 animals off harbour) at 16:00 on 05 April
- 15 Bottlenose Dolphins - pier (15+ at Aberdeen Harbour) at 15:00 on 05 April
- 6 Bottlenose Dolphins - land (In Channel, Aberdeen Harbour) at 06:50 on 06 April
- 18 Bottlenose Dolphins - ferry (Aberdeen) at 13:05 on 09 April
- 5 Bottlenose Dolphins - pier (Aberdeen Harbour entrance) at 12:30 on 09 April
- 4 Bottlenose Dolphins - land (In Channel, Aberdeen Harbour) at 14:00 on 11 April

- 6 Bottlenose Dolphins - beach (Aberdeen Harbour) at 14:00 on 12 April
- 3 Bottlenose Dolphins - beach (Aberdeen Harbour) at 14:00 on 13 April
- 2 Bottlenose Dolphins - land (In Channel, Aberdeen Harbour) at 14:00 on 14 April
- 2 Harbour Porpoise - ferry (MV Hascosay) at 20:50 on 21 April
- 3 Harbour Porpoise - ferry (MV Hascosay) at 20:40 on 21 April
- 1 Minke Whale - ferry (MV Hascosay) at 20:40 on 21 April
- 1 Harbour Porpoise - ferry (MV Hascosay) at 19:59 on 21 April
- 15 Bottlenose Dolphins - ferry (MV Hascosay) at 18:58 on 21 April
- 5 Bottlenose Dolphins - ferry (MV Hascosay) at 18:00 on 21 April
- 5 Harbour Porpoise - land (Quendale Bay) at 12:00 on 22 April
- 3 Bottlenose Dolphin - land (At Entrance, Aberdeen Harbour) at 10:00 on 22 April
- 18 Bottlenose Dolphins - headland (North Pier, Aberdeen) at 12:30 on 24 April
- 3 Bottlenose Dolphins - land (At Entrance, Aberdeen Harbour) at 09:00 on 24 April
- 2 Bottlenose Dolphins - beach (Aberdeen Harbour) at 11:00 on 26 April
- 3 Bottlenose Dolphins - pier (End of North Pier, Aberdeen Harbour) at 14:00 on 30 April

### North-east England

**From Andy Tait regional co-ordinator for Northumberland, Tyne and Wear, Peter Collins, Sherrie McKean and P. Dagg**

- 6 Harbour Porpoise - headland (milling 50m of Lizard Point) at 11:50 on 01 March
- 4 Harbour Porpoise - headland (off Souter Light) at 08:39 on 01 March
- 1 Harbour Porpoise - headland (logging off Souter Light) at 08:07 on 01 March
- 1 Harbour Porpoise - headland (milling 200m of Lizard Point) at 10:42 on 02 March
- 1 Harbour Porpoise - headland (milling 500m of Lizard Point) at 10:42 on 02 March
- 2 Harbour Porpoise - headland (milling 50m of Lizard Point) at 10:42 on 02 March
- 1 Harbour Porpoise - headland (foraging 700m off Lizard Point) at 12:35 on 07 March
- 1 Harbour Porpoise - headland (swimming NE. 300m SE of Lizard Point) at 14:03 on 08 March
- 1 Harbour Porpoise - headland (swimming SW. 200m SE of Lizard Point) at 13:55 on 08 March
- 1 Harbour Porpoise - headland (swimming E 100m NE of Lizard Point) at 13:30 on 08 March
- 5 Harbour Porpoise - headland (off pier at South Shields) at 11:33 on 09 March
- 3 Harbour Porpoise - headland (milling 200m E of Lizard Point) at 13:29 on 10 March
- 4 Harbour Porpoise - headland (foraging 200m E of Lizard Point) at 13:29 on 10 March
- 1 Harbour Porpoise - headland (milling 50m E of Lizard Point) at 12:45 on 10 March
- 1 Harbour Porpoise - headland (swimming south 100m E off Souter Light) at 09:20 on 10 March
- 3 Harbour Porpoise - headland (feeding 400m offshore In King Edward Bay) at 06:45 on 10 March
- 1 Harbour Porpoise - headland (splashing chasing fish off Lizard Point) at 12:40 on 11 March
- 1 Harbour Porpoise - headland (fast swim N.600m E of Lizard Point) at 12:45 on 14 March
- 1 Harbour Porpoise - headland (fast swim N.400m E of Lizard Point) at 12:45 on 14 March
- 1 Harbour Porpoise - headland (fast swim S.200m E of Lizard Point) at 12:40 on 14 March
- 2 Harbour Porpoise - headland (fast swim S.50m E of Lizard Point) at 12:12 on 14 March
- 1 Harbour Porpoise - headland (milling 100m E of Marsden Rock) at 12:01 on 14 March
- 1 Harbour Porpoise - headland (milling 200m E of Lizard Point) at 12:00 on 14 March
- 1 Harbour Porpoise - headland (milling 100m NE of Lizard Point) at 12:00 on 14 March
- 1 Harbour Porpoise - headland (foraging 300m E of Lizard Point) at 10:37 on 15 March
- 1 Harbour Porpoise - headland (foraging 100m E of Lizard Point) at 10:37 on 15 March
- 1 Harbour Porpoise - headland (foraging 50m E of Lizard Point) at 10:37 on 15 March
- 2 Harbour Porpoise - headland (milling 50mts E of Souter Light) at 12:46 on 17 March
- 2 Harbour Porpoise - pier (foraging 300mts E of Tynemouth Pier) at 11:03 on 19 March
- 3 Harbour Porpoise - headland (foraging off Whitburn Observatory) at 10:20 on 19 March
- 7 Harbour Porpoise - headland (foraging off Souter Light) at 10:15 on 19 March
- 2 Harbour Porpoise - headland (foraging very close together off Lizard Point) at 08:01 on 20 March
- 8 Harbour Porpoise - headland (foraging 50m off Lizard Point) at 07:40 on 20 March
- 1 Harbour Porpoise - headland (foraging 200m off Lizard Point) at 09:13 on 28 March
- 3 Harbour Porpoise - headland (foraging 200m off Marsden Rock) at 11:51 on 29 March
- 3 Harbour Porpoise - headland (foraging 200m off Lizard Point) at 14:05 on 30 March
- 1 Harbour Porpoise - headland (foraging 100m NE. off Lizard Point) at 09:41 on 19 April

- 1 Harbour Porpoise - headland (foraging 50m E. off Lizard Point) at 09:40 on 19 April
- 1 Harbour Porpoise - headland (foraging 200m E. off Lizard Point) at 09:44 on 21 April
- 1 Harbour Porpoise - headland (foraging 100m E. of Lizard Point) at 12:09 on 22 April
- 1 Harbour Porpoise - headland (foraging 400m N E. of Lizard Point) at 12:25 on 25 April
- 7 Harbour Porpoise - headland (foraging 500m E. of Lizard Point) at 07:05 on 30 April

### **Eastern England and East Anglia**

#### **From Dai Hall and Geof Lee**

- 7 Harbour Porpoise - from land (Wash off Hunstanton) at 12:00 on 23 April
- 1 Harbour Porpoise - from sea (Thames Estuary, near Dartford,) at 11:30 on 30 April

### **Southern England**

#### **From Stephen Savage, regional coordinator for Sussex**

For the second year running we organised and ran a Cetacean ID training day for the west Sussex Volunteer Beach Wardens training programme. About 16 people took part. Each person was responsible for biological recording and raising awareness along a particular stretch of beach. 11 participants signed up for membership of the (private) Sussex Cetacean Recording e-group

- 21st March, an old common dolphin, with only a few teeth, stranded on Lancing beach, attended by British Divers and Sussex Wildlife Ambulance.
- 29th March, bottlenose dolphin reported by Ian Standivan via the new Hastings watchsite established earlier this year.
- 2nd April 2 sightings of bottlenose dolphins in the Looe Channel. One dolphin near the boat, 2 swimming a little way off, reported by Sue Bewsey.
- 3rd April one dolphin near the boat, one swimming a little way off. (50°41.60N 000°48.92N)
- 13 April, A young, healthy female harbour porpoise weighing 18.5 kg was caught in fishing nets a little over 10km off Hastings.

### **South West England - Dorset**

#### **From Jo Wharam, Project Officer, Durlston Marine Project, Elena Judd and Roger Morley.**

- 4 Bottlenose Dolphins - land (Chapel, St.Ives) at 14:00 on 03 March
- 3 Bottlenose Dolphins - land (Anvil Point Lighthouse) at 15:00 on 08 March
- 9 Bottlenose Dolphins - land (off coast path, Durlston) at 15:50 on 09 March
- 9 Bottlenose Dolphins - sea at 15:50 on 09 March
- 9 Bottlenose Dolphins - land (St. Aldhelms Head) at 14:00 on 09 March
- 9 Bottlenose Dolphins - land (150m off coast path, Durlston) at 10:45 on 09 March
- 9 Bottlenose Dolphins - land (150 yards off Observation Point, Durlston) at 10:15 on 09 March
- 2 Harbour Porpoise - pier (Ilfracombe Pier) at 15:00 on 23 March
- 2 Bottlenose Dolphins - headland (Anvil Point Lighthouse) at 12:45 on 09 April
- 60 Common Dolphins - land (3/4 mile off Durlston head) at 17:55 on 15 April
- 2 Bottlenose Dolphins - land (Durlston Bay) at 08:45 on 17 April
- 2 Bottlenose Dolphins - headland (200m off Durlston Head) at 16:25 on 19 April

### **South West England - Devon**

#### **From Gavin Black, Dolphin protection project officer, Devon Wildlife Trust**

In contrast to the few sporadic sightings of winter, April saw a flurry of sightings reported to the Devon Biodiversity Records Centre. All the sightings occurred between the end of March and the end of April. Bottlenose dolphins were seen on both coasts, although on the south coast we received no records west of Salcombe. Eight sightings of groups of bottlenose dolphins were made over 3 weeks (27/03 to 17/04), with group sizes usually somewhere between 8 and 12 individuals. However, on 2<sup>nd</sup> April, a family sailing from Dartmouth to Portland were joined midway by a group of approximately 30 bottlenose dolphins.

There were two sightings of common dolphins, again in Lyme Bay. One sighting, of a pair of adults, was from the middle of Lyme Bay and the other, of a group of 25, was close to Berry Head. Harbour porpoises continue to be seen regularly off north Devon whilst only one record was reported from the south coast (Berry Head).

A number of unusual sightings during this period include a possible minke or northern bottlenose whale seen quite close inshore near Prawle Point (I.D. suggested by Sea Watch Foundation after description from observer). Approximately 100 unidentified animals were seen from Capstone Point (possibly the same pilot whales

seen off Swansea during the same period), and another group of circa 50 large unidentified dolphins at the mouth of the Taw-Torridge estuary accompanied by a larger, again unidentified, cetacean all seen in the first half of April.

12 dead cetaceans were stranded in the March-April period this year. As per usual the majority were common dolphins (4) and harbour porpoises (5), while two pilot whales, washed up near Teignmouth, and an unidentified animal accounted for the rest.

### **South West England - Cornwall**

#### **From David Ball, Silver Dolphin Centre, Porthleven**

Even though we have had some very stormy weather, things have started to get busy, and there have been more sightings coming in over the past three months. Lots more bottlenose dolphin sightings were reported, with activity along both the south coast and the north coast. There were a couple of possible Risso's dolphin sightings near Lamorna and a confirmed sighting of white beaked dolphins off Falmouth. Two possible minke whale sightings were reported off Porthkerris on the Lizard peninsula. Two reports of Orcas came in at the end of May. One just off Porthleven was seen following a basking shark, and there were also 6 bottlenose dolphins in the same area. A solitary common dolphin was seen in the mouth of the Helford River on the 19<sup>th</sup> May, no reports of a stranding have come in yet.

Here at the centre we have been out visiting some of the National Coastwatch Institution stations and have been building up a good sightings system. We have found that people report sightings but don't give enough details, so we are putting out a poster asking for more information.

We are now co-ordinating the new Cornish Marine Life Rescue group. We organised two training days on Saturday 4<sup>th</sup> June and 25<sup>th</sup> June, which were fully booked, and we have been asked to fix other dates for training days during the summer. This illustrates the level of interest in cetacean conservation in Cornwall. We are also planning a mass stranding exercise for the end of July.

We ran an introduction to whale and dolphin identification as a one day course on Friday 24<sup>th</sup> of June and are holding a cetacean day on Penzance promenade on the 19<sup>th</sup> of July to raise awareness. For more information please contact the Silver Dolphin centre (01326 572002, email [conservation@silverdolphin.freemove.co.uk](mailto:conservation@silverdolphin.freemove.co.uk)).

### **Wales**

#### **From Helen Bates, Education Officer & Kosmas Chatzivasiloglou, Sightings volunteer Sea Watch Foundation Cymru, New Quay, West Wales**

The presence of numbers of bottlenose dolphins and harbour porpoises within sight of land has provided satisfying sightings during March and April. Although observations were often limited due to wind and rain, sightings were reported from both New Quay Pier and the boat surveys carried out in the Cardigan Bay SAC and between Tywyn and Aberystwyth.

**Harbour porpoises:** Groups of harbour porpoise were seen from New Quay Pier, foraging inshore during March. An individual was observed on April 19 off New Quay. Two Boat Surveys in the Cardigan Bay SAC have produced noteworthy sightings of harbour porpoise during April: ten harbour porpoise were recorded on April 20<sup>th</sup> and 3 individuals on April 29<sup>th</sup>.

**Bottlenose dolphins** were seen offshore of Mwnt, New Quay and Aberystwyth in March. The land survey from New Quay Pier recorded 3 sightings during the last few days of April. Several groups of bottlenose dolphins were recorded during four boat surveys that took place in April: a group of 30 was recorded on April 20<sup>th</sup>, ten individuals were seen on April 21<sup>st</sup> and four on April 25<sup>th</sup> and 29<sup>th</sup>.

**Other Species:** Grey Seals were observed on the boat surveys in April in the Cardigan Bay SAC: three individuals were spotted on April 25<sup>th</sup> and another two on April 29<sup>th</sup>.

### **Isle of Man**

#### **From John Galpin, regional coordinator for the Isle of Man**

Wind and more wind, mainly in the North and North West, dominated our weather throughout March and April. These cold, strong northerlies limiting watches to just 11 occasions.

6<sup>th</sup>. March 3 Harbour Porpoises. Swimming as a pair and a single, they remained foraging for about 1 hour approximately 1250 m from shore.

14<sup>th</sup>. April. 1 Harbour Porpoise. It appeared to be foraging, 1000 m from shore.

24<sup>th</sup>. April. 1 Harbour Porpoise. This singleton in a similar location as on the 14<sup>th</sup>, an area of sea fairly close by, which we refer to as 'Shark Alley' as it appears to be a popular location for basking sharks through the summer season, providing regular sightings.

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28<sup>th</sup>. April. In a rough and rising sea, force 4, an opportunistic sighting for 7 minutes of 3 small fast and agile dolphins. They were seen swimming together, heading north, about 700 m from shore. Sea conditions made identification difficult although the lighter colouration on their flanks, black dorsal surface and centrally placed sickle shaped dorsal fin, suggested they were common dolphins.

For more information on the Isle of Man Basking Shark survey, check out their excellent new website at [www.isleofman.com](http://www.isleofman.com) and click on the basking shark headline banner.

### North West England

#### From Solway Shark Watch and Sea Mammal Survey and Simon Rhodes

- 2 Harbour Porpoise - beach (River Lune estuary) at 11:03 on 04 March
- 10 Harbour Porpoise - land (Silloth Bay) at 11:12 on 07 March
- 10 Harbour Porpoise - land (Silloth Bay) at 12:18 on 08 March
- 6 Harbour Porpoise - land (Silloth Bay) at 14:30 on 13 March
- 15 Harbour Porpoise - land (Silloth Bay) at 14:10 on 19 March
- 24 Harbour Porpoise - land (Silloth Bay) at 13:40 on 20 March
- 6 Harbour Porpoise - land (Oldside) at 08:17 on 20 March
- 4 Harbour Porpoise - land (Annaside) at 09:21 on 22 March
- 8 Bottlenose Dolphin - land (Braystone Bank) at 12:37 on 26 March
- 8 Bottlenose Dolphin - headland (Cunning Point, Cumbria) at 14:17 on 27 March
- 6 Bottlenose Dolphin - land (Drigg, Kokoarrah Isle) at 12:47 on 27 March
- 4 Bottlenose Dolphin - land (Sellafeld Spit) at 12:32 on 27 March
- 2 Bottlenose Dolphin - land (Rossall School) at 12:31 on 27 March
- 10 Bottlenose Dolphin - land (Walney Island, Thorney Nook) at 08:00 on 27 March
- 6 Harbour Porpoise - land (Lancaster Sound, Morecambe Bay) at 09:10 on 01 April
- 4 Harbour Porpoise - land (Skinburness) at 08:36 on 01 April
- 4 Harbour Porpoise - land (Rossall School) at 15:18 on 02 April
- 2 Harbour Porpoise - fishing boat (Irish Sea) at 14:56 on 02 April
- 6 Harbour Porpoise - land (Culderton Bank.) at 18:11 on 03 April
- 2 Harbour Porpoise - land (New Brighton, Perch Rock) at 05:38 on 04 April
- 12 Harbour Porpoise - ferry (Irish Sea) at 12:18 on 06 April
- 2 Harbour Porpoise - ferry (Liverpool Bay) at 11:06 on 07 April
- 4 Bottlenose Dolphin - ferry (Gut Channel) at 12:32 on 08 April
- 4 Harbour Porpoise - headland (Workington, The Howe) at 14:18 on 10 April
- 2 Harbour Porpoise - land (Morecambe, Sandylands) at 20:06 on 13 April
- 4 Bottlenose Dolphins - fishing boat (Off Clevelleys) at 08:10 on 13 April
- 2 Bottlenose Dolphins - beach (Walney, Cross Dyke Scar) at 10:04 on 21 April
- 4 Bottlenose Dolphins - ferry (Irish Sea) at 11:44 on 22 April
- 4 Harbour Porpoise - ferry (Queens Channel) at 12:18 on 23 April

### Republic of Ireland

March and April were quieter for cetaceans than November to February, with only one definite ID of a large whale (a sperm whale on March 7<sup>th</sup> from a naval vessel off the north west coast) and fewer dolphin and porpoise sightings. However highlights include three sightings of pilot whales in early March and a pod of 3 orcas seen off Cork on March 6<sup>th</sup>. For more information on Irish sightings, see the homepage of the Irish Whale and Dolphin Group at [www.iwdg.ie](http://www.iwdg.ie).