

# Bottlenose friend forever



nswnationalparks.com.au

The young and wild Bottlenose Dolphin that has been frequenting the Sydney beaches over the last few months has gained a lot of attention. We want to ensure you remain safe and more importantly to ensure that the actions of enthusiastic onlookers are not a detriment to the dolphin. We want her to be your new BFF (Best Friend Forever) not just for now!

## TRAVELS OF A DOLPHIN

The wild young Bottlenose Dolphin is believed to have become separated from its group around September 2012.

This dolphin is considered a 'Solitary' dolphin that prefers to seek out human interaction rather than other pod members. This behaviour may be hazardous to both the dolphin and humans. Experts have observed she has increasingly sought human interaction and is spending less time with her own species.

## BEHAVIOURS TO WATCH

Nudging, nipping and pushing swimmers in the water

Isolating children from parental protection

Tail slapping (kerplunking), pectoral slapping

## RISKY BEHAVIOURS

Occasionally dolphins can become separated from other group members. This can occur for many natural reasons and often leaves the isolated animal in a vulnerable situation.

Wild dolphins are unpredictable, very strong and have the potential to injure people.

Risky behaviours are those that increase the potential injury or harm to the dolphin and to people. Potentially risky behaviours of the dolphin include:

- Nudging, nipping and pushing swimmers in the water.
- Tail slapping (kerplunking), jaw popping, pectoral slapping, chasing, and squawking can also be signs.
- Approaching boats at the stern and following boats close to the propeller.
- Nudging or playing with the engine of propeller when the vessel is stationary.
- Approaching kayaks and nudging the stern, keel and paddles.
- Playing with the anchor chain and rope when the boat is at anchor.
- Approaching boats and attempting to encourage interaction with people onboard.

We all have a responsibility to care for our wildlife and ensure the wellbeing of the animal. The National Parks and expert groups such as ORRCA who have followed the animals movements for some time would love to see her rejoin other wild dolphins. We ask you - please don't encourage human interaction.

## WHAT YOU CAN DO

You can be dolphin friendly and reduce the risk of harm to the dolphin and people by:

- Do not approach the dolphin within 50m for boats and 30m for swimmers, (this is in accordance with the NSW Dolphin Watching Regulations).
- If the dolphin approaches you when swimming, please refrain from touching her and encouraging her.
- Move to knee deep water, with your hands behind your back, this will give you a better viewing experience and reduce potential harm to you and the dolphin.
- Avoid touching the animal, no objects down the blowhole as this will cause immense harm to the animal
- Do not attempt to hold the dorsal fin and ride the dolphin, this is very stressful to the animal.
- Prevent entanglement and reel in your fishing line when the animal is near, pull anchor in slowly is the animal is playing with it.
- Keep the dolphin wild - like a new BFF. If you work with us and ensure the safety of the animal, she will be kept in the wild forever.
- Please do not feed the animal, its harmful and illegal. Don't encourage the dolphin to play with foreign objects such as balls.

Be a BFF and don't put her in a situation where she might unknowingly injure someone and authorities then have to take action.



## BOTTLENOSE DOLPHINS

Dolphins are remarkable animals. They live in highly complex societies, have developed an incredible communication system and the ability to use sonar. It is often thought that dolphins are always happy as they appear to have an impenetrable smile on their face (Dolphin Research Australia Inc.).

The Indo-Pacific Bottlenose Dolphin (*Tursiops aduncus*) lives in sexually-segregated fission fusion societies. They live along the Australian coastline and frequently use estuaries and embayments to feed and rest.

### Fast facts:

- Bottlenose Dolphins can hold their breath for up to 15 minutes.
- Dolphins are carnivorous and feed on a variety of sea life including fish and squid.
- A layer of fatty tissue under the skin, called blubber, maintains the dolphin's body heat. This layer of fat also provides an important energy source.
- Dolphins have very good eyesight both above and below the water.
- Following a gestation period of 12 months, dolphins give birth to live young.
- A bottlenose dolphin calf will drink milk for at least 6 months and remain with its mother for up to 4 years.
- Bottlenose Dolphins can live for over 50 years.



The dorsal fins of Bottlenose Dolphins are used to identify individuals. Each dorsal fin has a unique shape, arrangement of notches and scars.

A team of people including NSW National Parks and Wildlife Service, ORRCA and Dolphin Research Australia have been watching this little dolphin for some time. The distinctive markings this dolphin has include a medium sized nick in the trailing edge of the dorsal fin and you will also notice some light scarring (see image above). The dolphin also has cuts to the left side of the head and slight to medium rakes across the body.

The dolphin is estimated to be around 3 to 4 years old.

## WHAT IF I SEE A DOLPHIN?

### Report details:

Please contact ORRCA with any details of sightings on 9415 3333 or e-mail them on [orrca@orrca.org.au](mailto:orrca@orrca.org.au).

Please note the following details in your report:

- The date, time and location that you see the dolphin
- The dolphins behaviour, condition and any human activities

### Stay updated

You can stay updated on dolphin activity through [www.wildaboutwhales.com.au](http://www.wildaboutwhales.com.au) or [www.orrca.org.au](http://www.orrca.org.au)

### More information about dolphins

Dolphin Research Australia Inc has a wealth of information and activities about dolphins, please check their website and 'Adopt-a-Dolphin'.

A team of Australian dolphin experts, ORRCA and National Parks and Wildlife Service are working together to protect this dolphin and keep her in the wild, where she belongs.



### GENERAL INQUIRIES:

43 BRIDGE STREET  
HURSTVILLE NSW 2220

T: 1300 36 1967 OR 02 95856444

F: 02 9585 6555

