



est 2005

PMMSN **FIELD GUIDE**

to the Marine Mammals of the Philippines
2nd Edition

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2nd Edition

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Note: This field guide gives First Responders a quick reference in identifying stranded whales and dolphins, and is a supplementary material to the PMMSN Marine Mammal Stranding Response Manual.

Spinner dolphin

Stenella longirostris



Adult Size : 2.0 - 2.4 m

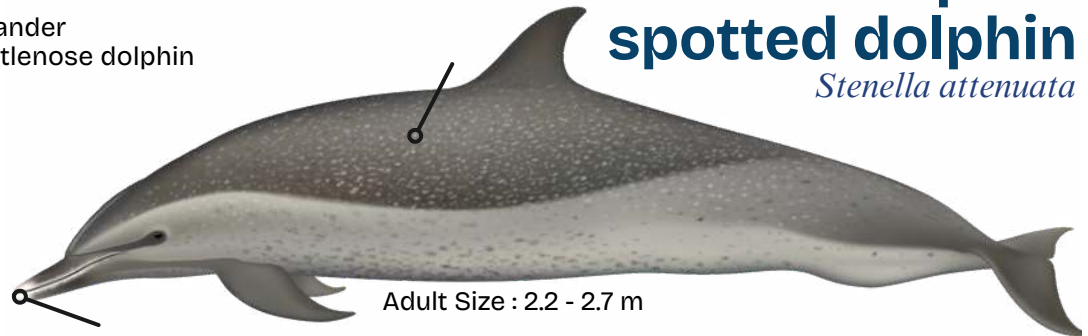
Key Features:

With dark band from eye to pectoral fin
Long, narrow rostrum with black tip

Note: ● Very frequent strander
Often misidentified as Bottlenose dolphin

Pantropical spotted dolphin

Stenella attenuata

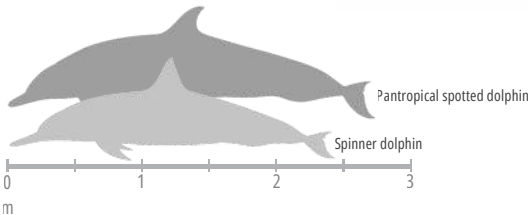


Adult Size : 2.2 - 2.7 m

Key Features:

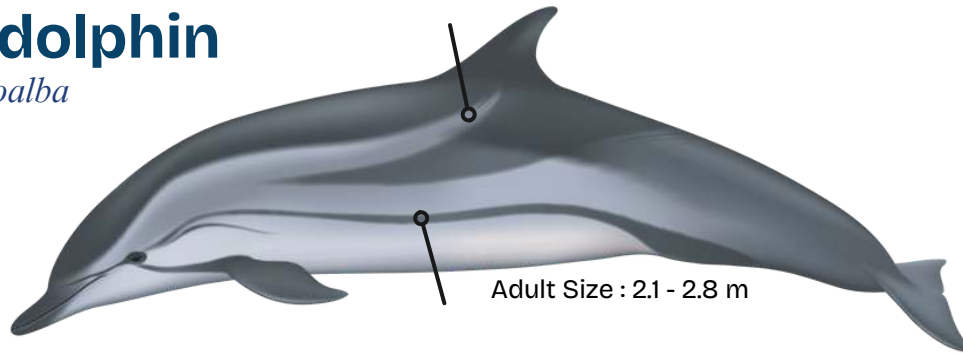
Rostrum with white tip
Only adults have white spots

Note: ● Moderate strander
Young may be mistaken as Spinner dolphin



Striped dolphin

Stenella coeruleoalba



Adult Size : 2.1 - 2.8 m

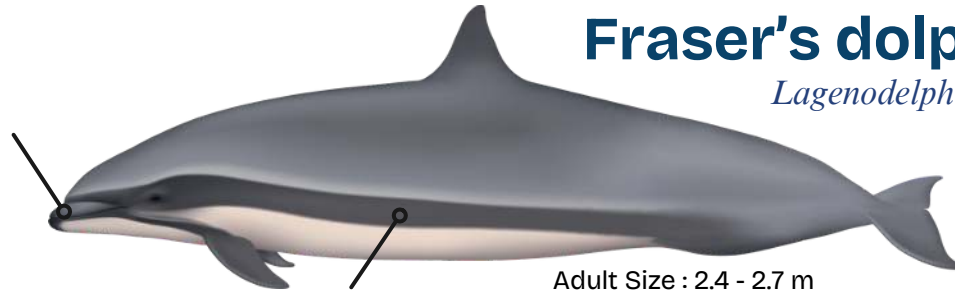
Key Features:

Narrow dark stripe from eye to anus & from eye to pectoral fin
Grey cape with a "break" before the dorsal fin

Note: ● Moderate strander

Fraser's dolphin

Lagenodelphis hosei

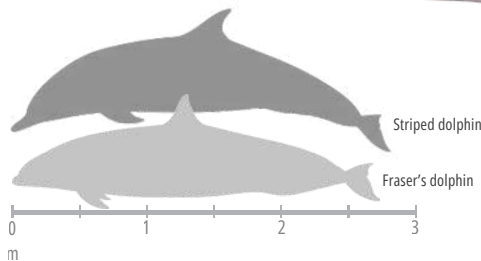


Adult Size : 2.4 - 2.7 m

Key Features:

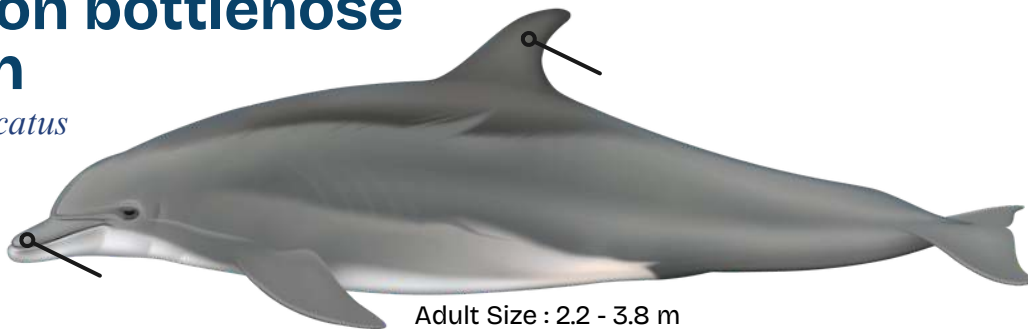
Broad dark stripe running from face to anus
Very short but pronounced rostrum
Small triangular dorsal fin

Note: ● Frequent strander



Common bottlenose dolphin

Tursiops truncatus



Adult Size : 2.2 - 3.8 m

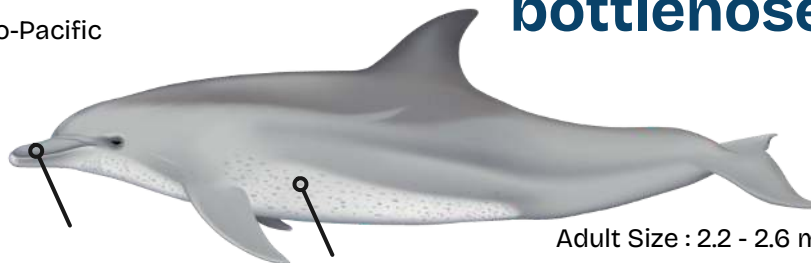
Key Features:

Large, falcate dorsal fin
Short rostrum

Note: ● Moderate strander
May be mistaken as an Indo-Pacific bottlenose dolphin

Indo-Pacific bottlenose dolphin

Tursiops aduncus

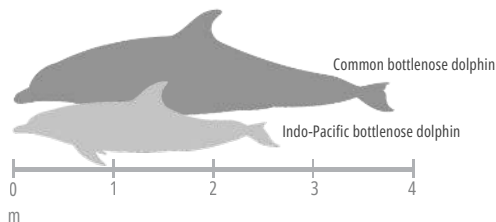


Adult Size : 2.2 - 2.6 m

Key Features:

Adults may have dark spots on its abdomen and sides
Elongated rostrum

Note: ● Moderate strander
Young may be mistaken as Common bottlenose dolphin
while Adults may be mistaken as Pantropical spotted dolphin



Risso's dolphin

Grampus griseus

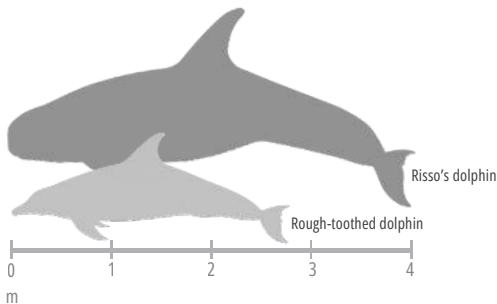


Adult Size : 3.0 - 4.0 m

Key Features:

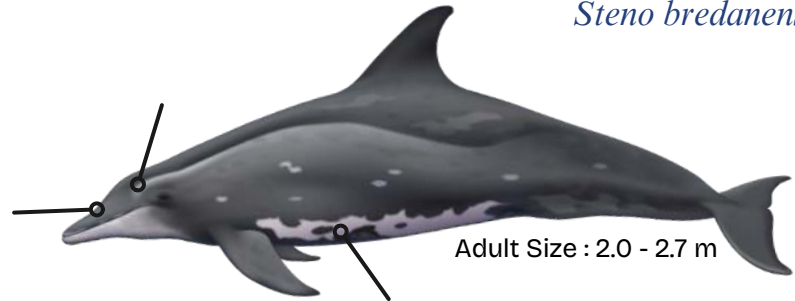
- Extensive linear scars throughout body
- Young may have little or no scars
- Broad head with no rostrum
- Long pectoral and dorsal fins

Note: ● Frequent strander
Young may be mistaken for a
Pygmy killer whale or False killer whale



Rough-toothed dolphin

Steno bredanensis



Adult Size : 2.0 - 2.7 m

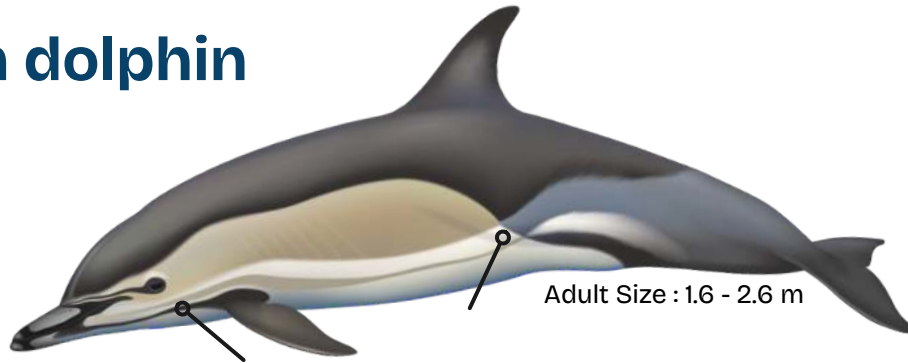
Key Features:

- Long rostrum with smooth slope (no crease)
- Irregular white coloration on abdomen
- Conical head

Note: ● Moderate strander

Common dolphin

Delphinus delphis



Adult Size : 1.6 - 2.6 m

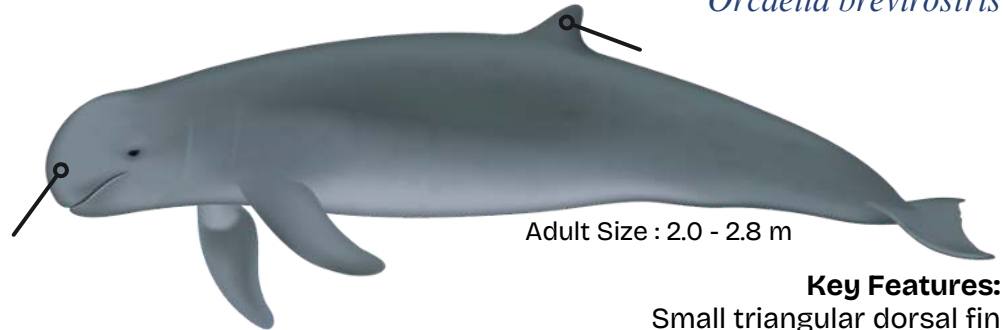
Key Features:

Dark patch around the eyes
Stipe running from rostrum to pectoral fin
Crisscross/hourglass pattern

Note: ● Very rare strander

Irrawaddy dolphin

Orcaella brevirostris



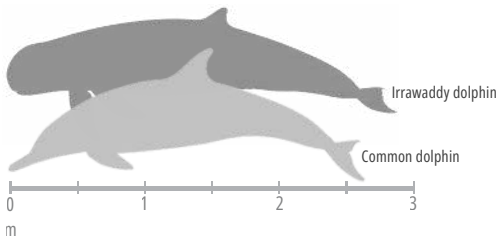
Adult Size : 2.0 - 2.8 m

Key Features:

Small triangular dorsal fin
Rounded head with no rostrum

Note: ● Rare strander

Known distribution so far are in Malampaya Sound in Palawan, Panay, Guimaras and Negros Occidental



Pygmy killer whale

Feresa attenuata



Adult Size : 2.0 - 2.6 m

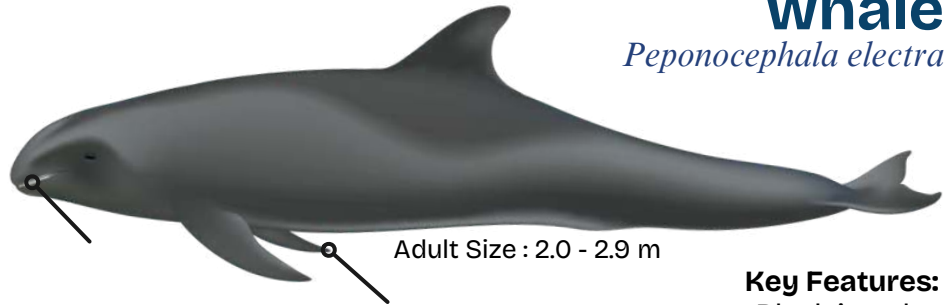
Key Features:

Black in color
Rounded head with "white lips" and no rostrum
With less than 15 pairs of teeth
Tapered pectoral fins

Note: ● Moderate strander
Often mistaken as Melon-headed whale or False killer whale

Melon-headed whale

Peponocephala electra

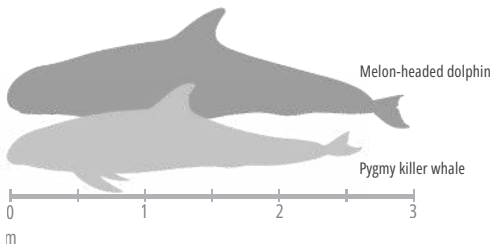


Adult Size : 2.0 - 2.9 m

Key Features:

Black in color
Small, rounded head with "white lips" and slender rostrum
With 20-26 pairs of teeth
Pointed pectoral fins

Note: ● Frequent strander
Often mistaken as Pygmy killer whale or False killer whale



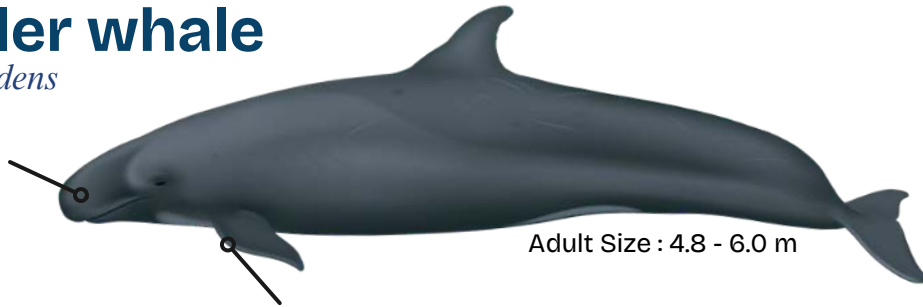
Melon-headed dolphin

Pygmy killer whale



False killer whale

Pseudorca crassidens



Adult Size : 4.8 - 6.0 m

Key Features:

Black in color

Rounded head with no rostrum

With 7-12 pairs of teeth

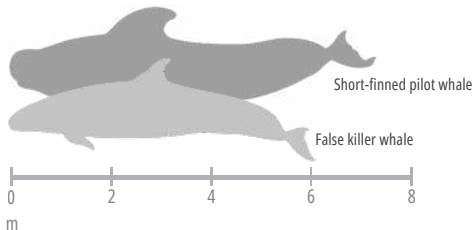
"Hump" on the leading edge of pectoral fins

Note: ● Moderate strander

Young is often mistaken as

Pygmy killer whale or

Melon-headed whale



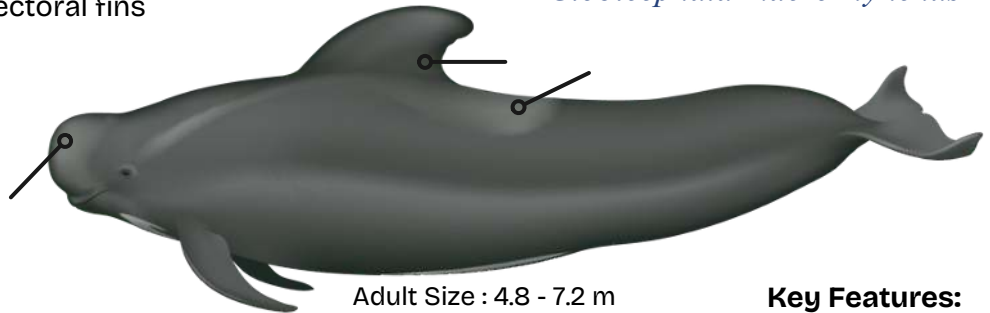
Short-finned pilot whale

False killer whale



Short-finned pilot whale

Globicephala macrorhynchus



Adult Size : 4.8 - 7.2 m

Key Features:

Black in color

Bulbous head with no noticeable rostrum in adults

Broad base, sickle-shape dorsal fin

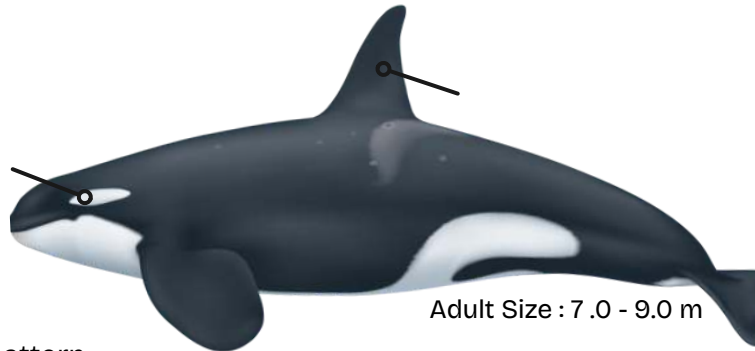
Light grey "saddle-shaped" patch behind its dorsal fin

Streak behind its eye

Note: ● Frequent strander

Killer whale

Orcinus orca



Adult Size : 7.0 - 9.0 m

Key Features:

- Black and white color pattern
- With distinct white oval patch behind the eyes
- With whitish saddle patch
- Males with very tall and erect dorsal fin

Note: ● Very rare strander



Giant sperm whale

Physeter macrocephalus

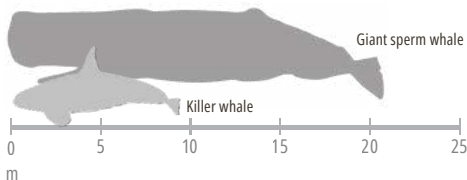


Adult Size : up to 21.0 m

Key Features:

- Large blunt and squarish head with long and slender lower jaw
- Short, wide, paddle-shaped pectoral fin
- Small hump-like dorsal fin

Note: ● Frequent strander



Pygmy sperm whale

Kogia breviceps



Key Features:

- Blunt snout with small mouth
- With false gill between eye and pectoral fin
- Small, falcate dorsal fin located towards the tail
- With 12-16 pairs of sharp and translucent teeth
- Releases reddish, brown fluid from anus when stressed

Note: ● Moderate strander
Often mistaken as Dwarf sperm whale

Adult Size : 2.0 - 3.5 m

Dwarf sperm whale

Kogia sima

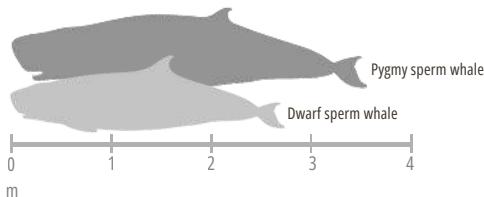


Adult Size : 2.0 - 2.7 m

Key Features:

- Blunt snout with a small mouth
- With false gill between eye and pectoral fin
- Tall falcate dorsal fin located in the middle section
- With short, longitudinal grooves on the throat
- With 3 (upper jaw) and 7-13 (lower jaw) pairs of white teeth
- Releases reddish, brown fluid from anus when stressed

Note: ● Frequent strander



Blainville's beaked whale

Mesoplodon densirostris



Adult Size : 3.3 - 4.6 m

Key Features:

Distinct rostrum in adults males (bulging jaw line)

Flattened head in front of blowhole

Linear, oval, and punctate body scarring

Note: ● Moderate strander

May be mistaken as Ginkgo-toothed whale

Cuvier's beaked whale

Ziphius cavirostris



Adult Size : 5.0 - 7.0m

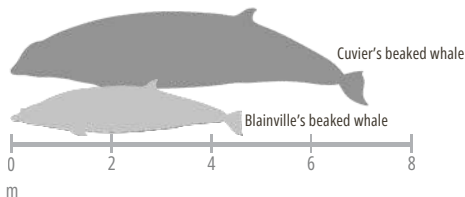
Key Features:

Rostrum with goose-like profile (no distinct beak)

With a pair of conical teeth at the end of lower jaw in adult males

Small and falcate dorsal fin

Note: ● Moderate strander



Deraniyagala's beaked whale

Mesoplodon hotaula



Adult Size : 4.0 - 5.0 m

Key Features:

White lower lip

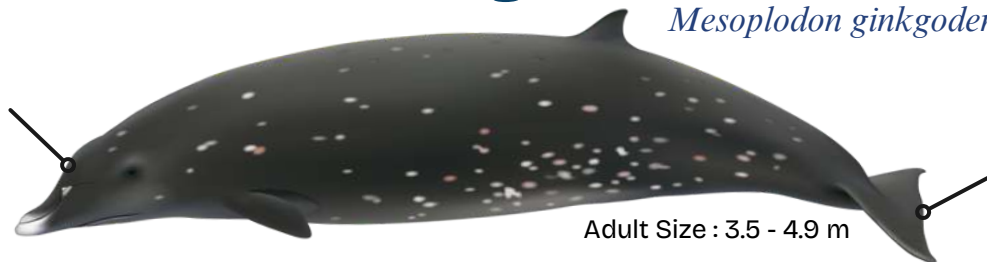
Pale mottled cheek

Small, curved dorsal fin

Note: ● Rare strander

Ginkgo-toothed whale

Mesoplodon ginkgodens



Adult Size : 3.5 - 4.9 m

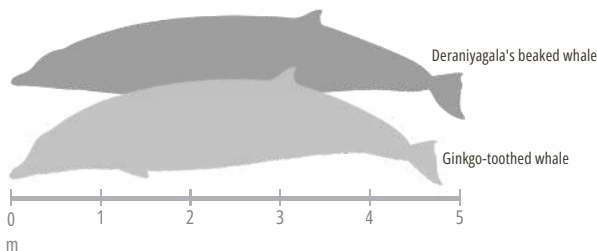
Key Features:

Broad, flattened head (U-shaped)

Adult males with a pair of teeth about two-thirds towards the front of the lower jaw

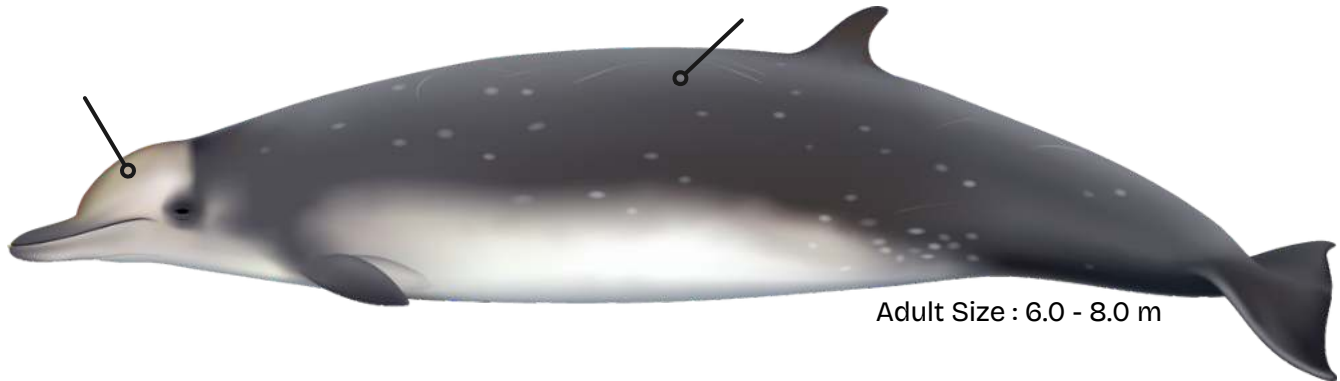
Tail fluke with no notch

Note: ● Very rare strander
May be mistaken as Blainville's beaked whale

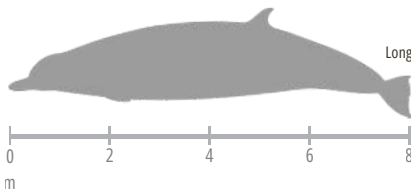


Longman's beaked whale

Indopacetus pacificus



Adult Size : 6.0 - 8.0 m



Longman's beaked whale

Key Features:

Pronounced melon

Dark brown in color with small white spots

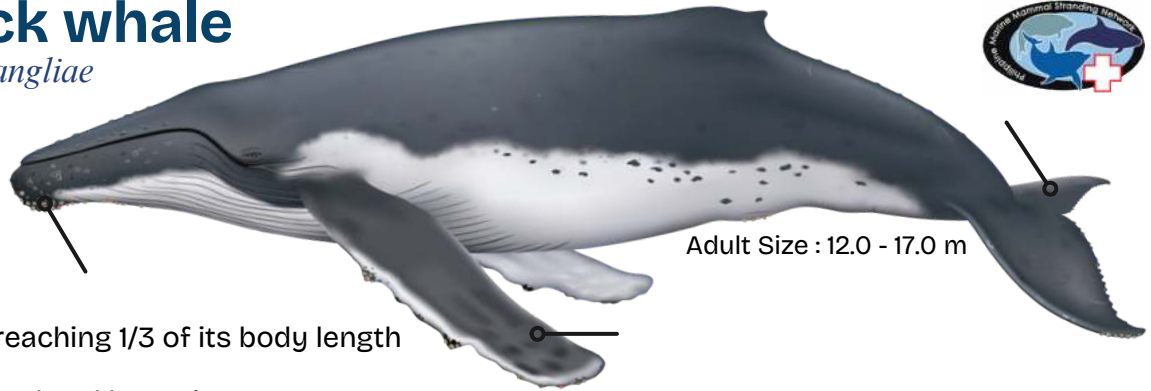
With a pair of small teeth at the tip of lower jaw

Note: ● Rare strander

Only 10 known specimens worldwide

Humpback whale

Megaptera novaeangliae



Adult Size : 12.0 - 17.0 m

Key Features:

Long pectoral fins reaching 1/3 of its body length

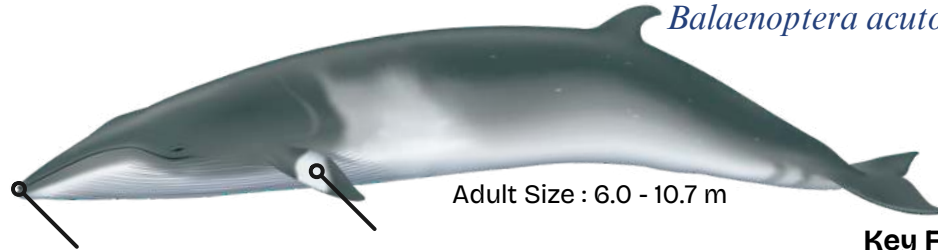
V-shaped tail fluke

Tubercles on the head and lower jaw

Note: ● Rare strander

Minke whale

Balaenoptera acutorostrata



Adult Size : 6.0 - 10.7 m

Key Features:

Pale chevron pattern down its back

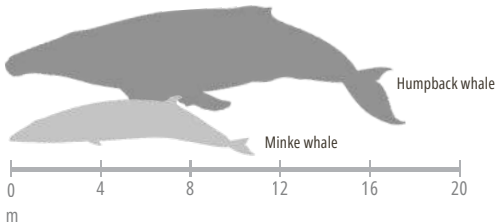
White band across its pectoral fins

Pointed snout

With 50-70 throat grooves

Sickle-shaped dorsal fin

Note: One stranding confirmed in 1925



Omura's whale

Balaenoptera omurai



Adult Size : 11.0 - 12.0 m

Key Features:

With one prominent rostral ridge

Asymmetrical coloration of lower jaw with 80-90 throat grooves

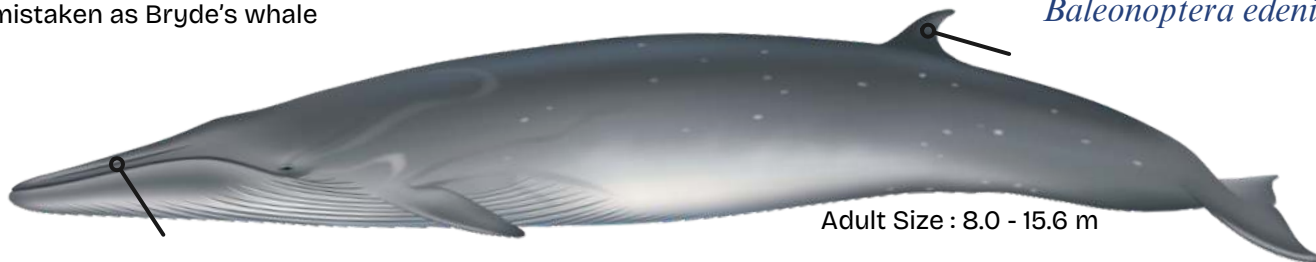
Blaze anterior to the eye

Note: ● Rare strander

Often mistaken as Bryde's whale

Bryde's whale

Baleonoptera edeni



Adult Size : 8.0 - 15.6 m

Key Features:

Three rostral ridge (some individuals have indistinct ridges)

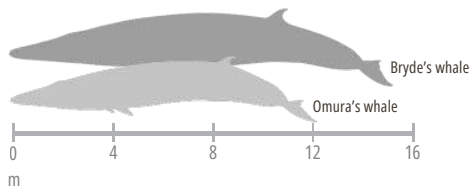
With 40-70 throat grooves

Gray body with a pale underside

Deeply curved dorsal fin

Small, pointed, slender flippers

Note: ● Moderate strander



Fin whale

Balaenoptera physalus



Adult Size : up to 27.0 m

Key Features:

Lower jaw color is asymmetrical (black on the left, white on the right)

With 50-70 throat grooves

Hook-like dorsal fin

Note: ● Rare strander



Blue whale

Balaenoptera musculus



Adult Size : up to 33.0 m

Key Features:

Broad, flattened, U-shaped head

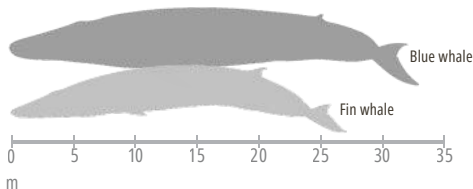
With pronounced rain splash guard in front of blowhole

Has 55-88 throat grooves

Small, stub-like dorsal fin

Note: No stranding record

Largest animal on earth!

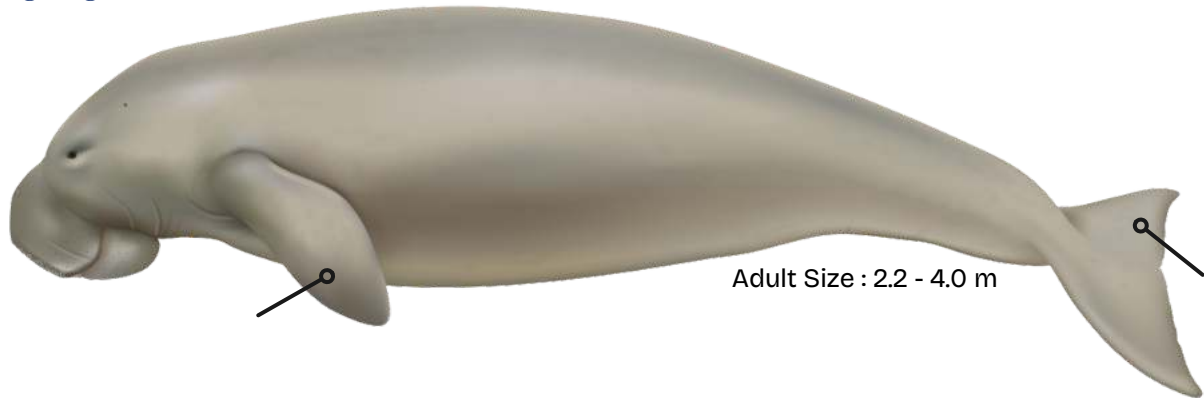


Other Marine Mammals That Strand in the Philippines

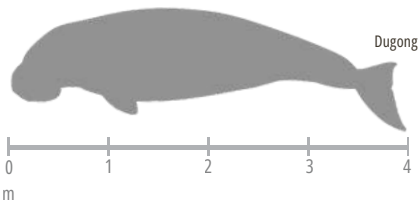


Dugong

Dugong dugon



Adult Size : 2.2 - 4.0 m



Key Features:

Large, fusiform body

No dorsal fin

Brownish to dark gray skin, sparsely covered with hair

With paddle-like pectoral fins

Fluked tail similar to dolphins

Note: ● Frequent strander

Photodocumentation Guidelines



Photos are extremely important in documentation and necessary for species identification.

Follow these guidelines when taking photos, but exercise care when handling live stranders:

- Take a photo of the whole body length of the animal, from head to tail.
- Take the photo as level as possible to its side (lateral).
- For live stranders of small size individuals, gently lift the body slightly above the water surface or gently tilt the body to expose the side, but be careful to protect the eyes and blowhole.
- To give an impression of size, place a familiar object next to the body, ie. a meter stick or person.



© Theody Soria



Include other photos taken from the following perspectives:

- Close-up, side view of the head from the mouth or rostrum to the eyes.
- Front, top view of the animal from head to tail.
- Back, top view of the animal from tail to head.
- For carcass only, and if manageable, the underside (ventral) of the animal.

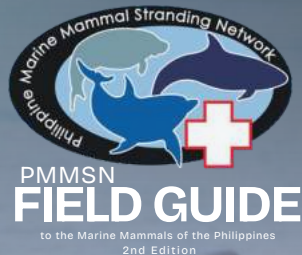


For **help with identification**, send photos to:

- Lemnuel Aragon, PhD
 - (laragones@iesm.upd.edu.ph)
 - (+63) 928-5018226
- Bianca Espinos
 - bgespinos@pmmsn.org



For documentation purposes, submit photos together with the **Stranding Report Form** to your **regional DA-BFAR office** and to the moderator of the PMMSN database, **Lemnuel Aragon, PhD** (laragones@iesm.upd.edu.ph).



PMMSN is the official marine mammal stranding response network in the Philippines.
Report stranding events to the following contact details for advice and assistance.

PMMSN Hotline

Email: laragones@iesm.upd.edu.ph

Contact No: +63 928 501 8226

DA-BFAR

Fisheries Resources Management Division

Email:

Contact Number:

frmd@bfar.da.gov.ph

(02) 8539 5671

bfar_frmd@yahoo.com

(+63) 920 982 4635

Please note that Regional DA-BFAR Offices may have
different contact information.

WWW.PMMSN.ORG