

Spinners

# Wild

# Dolphins of



Spinner dolphin



# Kona

SPINNERS

SPOTTED

BOTTLE NOSE

ROUGH-TOOTH

**Kona  
Dolphin  
Identification  
& Protection  
Information**



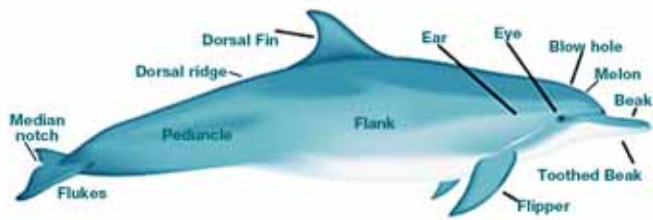
Spinner



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Part of our Dolphin Eco Adventure Information

## Anatomy



## Hawaiian Spinner Dolphin Natural History

- Females reach sexual maturity at 5-12 years of age.
- Gestation period is 10-12 months.
- Normally, adult females can give birth to a single calf every second or third year.
- Calves are weaned at 7 months of age or more.
- Maximum age is unknown, the spinner dolphin's lifespan is believed to be over 20 yrs.
- The largest population of Hawaii Spinners is along the Kona Coast estimating 2,334 in 1994.

Spinner dolphin

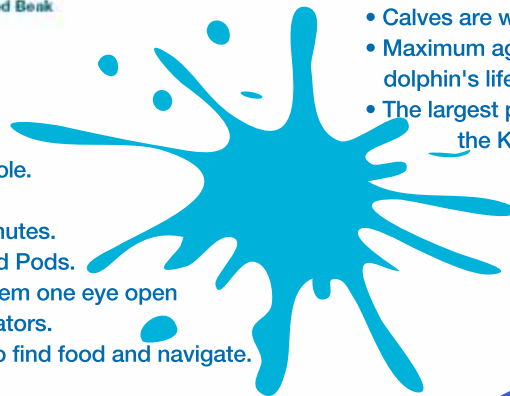


## Threats to Dolphins

- Acoustic disturbance.
- Collision with vessels.
- Entanglement in marine debris.
- Yellowfin Tuna fisheries.
- Habitat degradation.
- Human disturbance...though not apparent to the casual observer, spinner dolphins may be disturbed by close approaches by vessels and swimmers.

## Dolphin Facts

- Members of the aquatic mammal family Delphinidae
- Estimated 30 to 40 different species of dolphins worldwide.
- Dolphins are warm blooded mammals breathing air through their blowhole.
- Some types of dolphins must rise to the surface to breathe every 20 to 30 seconds while others can hold their breath as long as 30 minutes.
- Highly social, playful, curious and intelligent. They live in groups called Pods.
- Dolphins sleep by resting one half of their brain at a time, Allowing them one eye open to rise to the surface to breathe or to protect themselves from predators.
- Emit high intense echolocation clicks to create a "sonar" scan used to find food and navigate.
- Hearing extends about ten times the upper limit of human hearing.
- Capable of both reliable vocal and behavioral mimicry
- Capable of understanding visual imagery and instructions even from television.



## Wild dolphins

are protected under the Marine Mammal Protection Act. Under this Act, it is illegal to harass, hunt, capture, kill, feed or attempt any of these.

Wild dolphins have unpredictable, untrained behaviors. Dolphins and trainer seen at marine parks are not "friendly" wild dolphins. These animals are trained Atlantic bottlenose dolphins that were either born or raised in human care.

When people swim with resting wild spinner dolphins, the dolphins may be drawn out of their resting state to investigate the swimmers.

## Info

- Males are called bulls, females - cows, babies - calves
- Dolphin milk is extremely rich in fat, often up to 50%.
- Each has a signature whistle to identify itself.
- Excellent vision & well-developed eyes.
- Carnivores eating mostly fish, squid & sometimes crustaceans.
- Thick layer of fat under their skin called blubber, which helps them to keep warm.



Bottlenose dolphin

## A DAY IN THE LIFE OF A WILD HAWAIIAN SPINNER DOLPHIN

### SOCIAL TRANSITION

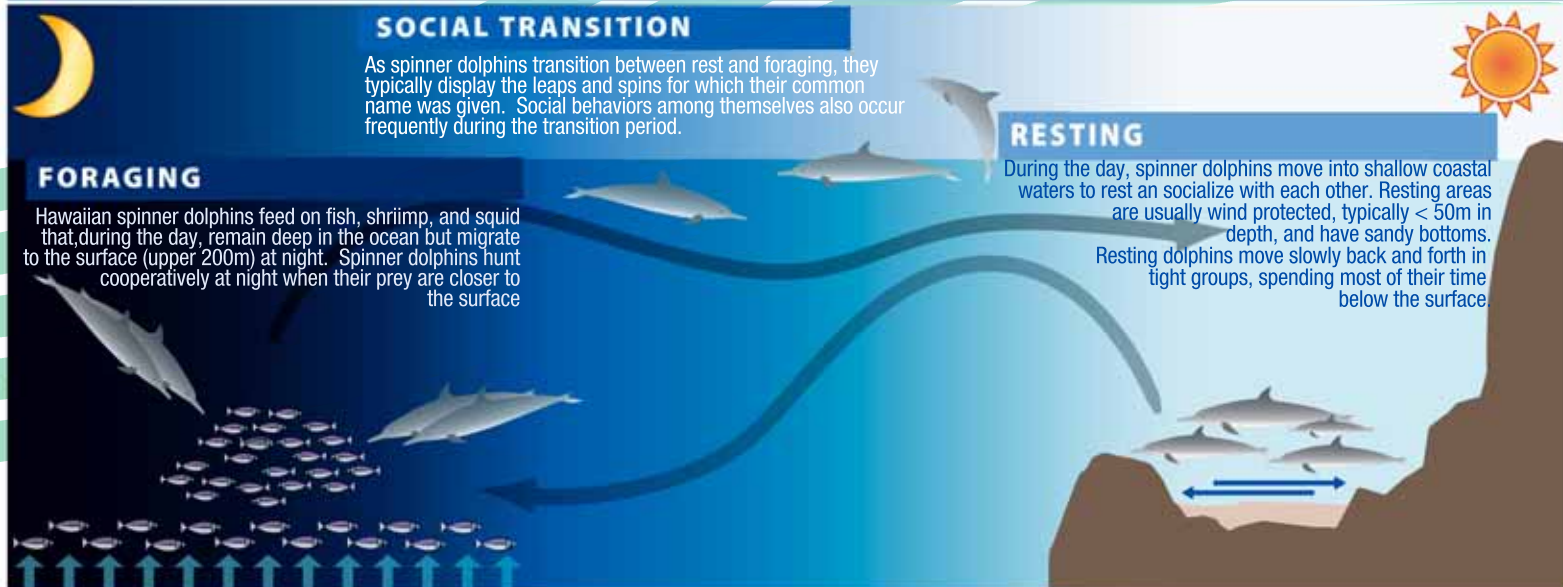
As spinner dolphins transition between rest and foraging, they typically display the leaps and spins for which their common name was given. Social behaviors among themselves also occur frequently during the transition period.

### FORAGING

Hawaiian spinner dolphins feed on fish, shrimp, and squid that, during the day, remain deep in the ocean but migrate to the surface (upper 200m) at night. Spinner dolphins hunt cooperatively at night when their prey are closer to the surface

### RESTING

During the day, spinner dolphins move into shallow coastal waters to rest and socialize with each other. Resting areas are usually wind protected, typically < 50m in depth, and have sandy bottoms. Resting dolphins move slowly back and forth in tight groups, spending most of their time below the surface



For more information call NOAA Fisheries Protected Resources Management Program at (808) 973-2987 Find out more about at the NOAA Fisheries website:

[www.nmfs.noaa.gov/prot\\_res/MMWatch/MMViewing.html](http://www.nmfs.noaa.gov/prot_res/MMWatch/MMViewing.html)

# ID species

## Spinner dolphin (*Stenella longirostris*)

Spinner dolphins are the smallest of Hawaii's common dolphins. They are generally between five and six feet in length and weigh 130 to 200 pounds. Hawaii has its own subspecies that is easy to recognize by its distinctive "three-tone" color pattern which consists of a sharply defined dark gray "cape" on their backs, a stripe of lighter gray on their sides and a white or pink belly.

This species gets its name from its spectacular habit of leaping high into the air and spinning several times on their tails before falling back into the water. Researchers are not sure why the dolphins spin, but most people who have had the opportunity to watch the dolphins don't seem to mind, and find it a real treat.

Individual spinner dolphins may be identified by the unique serration patterns on the trailing edge of their dorsal fins as well as by unique markings and pigmentation patterns on their bodies. Spinners often carry round scars inflicted by tiny 1-2' "cookiecutter" sharks while hunting at night.



## Spotted dolphin (*Stenella attenuata*)

Spotted dolphins are smaller than either bottlenose or rough-toothed dolphins measuring between six and seven feet in length, and weighing about 240 pounds with males being larger than females.

Their coloration is dark gray on the back and lighter gray below, with a characteristic dark "cape" extending from the forehead to the dorsal fin. Spotting, if present, consists of light spots on their darker areas or dark spots on their lighter areas, and is more prevalent in older individuals than in juveniles. This species can also be identified by the slender white-tipped snouts they possess.

Spotted dolphins are extremely social creatures and form herds of a few dozen to more than a thousand. Around Hawaii, they are commonly sighted in the channels between the islands.



## Pacific bottlenose dolphin (*Tursiops truncatus*)

Known for their inshore habits, playfulness around vessels and star performances at oceanariums, bottlenose dolphins are probably the most popular of all cetacean species.

Adults range in size from seven to eleven feet in length and weigh between 600 and 850 pounds. Their backs are medium gray, their sides are lighter gray and their bellies are white or pink. Off shore animals are darker in color than those found inshore and sometimes appear to be less interested in swimming along with boats.

A few thousand bottlenose dolphins are believed to inhabit the waters around Hawaii usually living in groups of two to fifteen individuals. Most of these groups are permanent residents of certain coastlines and harbors, and are therefore easy to spot.



## Rough-toothed dolphin (*Steno bredanensis*)

Rough-toothed dolphins get their name from the "wrinkled" surface of their teeth, which have many fine vertical grooves running from the gumline to the tip. It is difficult to identify this species from a boat on the basis of this characteristic, but there are several other external features that should prove helpful.

Rough-toothed dolphins are dark gray to purplish black in color with pink and white spots and streaks covering their bodies. This unusual speckling led early researchers to refer to it as the "polka dot" or "calico" dolphin. Although their body size and proportion is much like bottlenose dolphins, rough-toothed dolphins can easily be distinguished by their longer and more pointed snouts that are distinctly white underneath and at the tip.



Rough-toothed dolphins are fairly common in Hawaii, but they are found mostly in offshore waters of 6,000 feet or more, so they are usually only seen by deep-sea fishermen or pleasure boaters. They tend to travel in small groups comprised of three to four individuals, but there can be several groups in one area

