



Marine Mammals of Hawai'i

Over 20 cetaceans (dolphins and whales) and one phocid (seal) have been observed in Hawaiian waters.

Spinner dolphin
(*Stenella longirostris*)



Coastal species that feeds at night and rests during the day. Often found in large groups of 100+ individuals. Well known for their acrobatic aerial behaviors. 6-7 feet in length.

Pantropical Spotted dolphin
(*Stenella attenuata*)



Coastal species that feeds at night. Born without spots, but gain spots with age. Found inshore more in fall and offshore more in spring. 6-7 feet in length.

Bottlenose dolphin
(*Tursiops truncatus*)



Inshore and offshore stock. Inshore smaller and more gray in color. Commonly seen in groups of 2-15 animals, offshore in groups of several hundred. Up to 12 feet in length.

False Killer whale
(*Pseudorca crasidens*)



Several stocks in Hawaii. Insular population candidate to be listed endangered under ESA. Found in groups of 10-20, up to 40 individuals. Prefer deep waters. 15-20 feet in length. Insular population listed as endangered under ESA.

Short-finned pilot whale
(*Globicephala macrorhynchus*)



Second largest delphinid. Bulbous melon head with no discernable beak. Found in groups of 25-50 animals. Form ranks that can be ½ mile in length. 12-18 feet in length, max length = 24 feet.

Melon-headed whale
(*Peponocephala electra*)



Prefers deeper waters. Often found in very large groups, commonly with over 1000 individuals. Make fast, low leaps as they swim. Approximately 9 feet in length.



Hawai'i's State Marine Mammal

Humpback whale (*Megaptera novaeangliae*)



****Federal law prohibits approaching humpback whales within 100 meters**

Seasonal species that migrates from Alaskan feeding grounds to Hawaii in the winter months to breed and give birth; 3000 mile journey. Known for acrobatic aerial behaviors and complex songs. Up to 60 feet in length.

Hawai'i's State Mammal

Hawaiian Monk seal (*Monachus schauinslandi*)



One of the rarest marine mammals in the world. After birth, mom fasts for ~39 days while feeding pup, then abandons pup. Adults generally nocturnal feeders on benthic prey. Up to 7.5 feet in length.

Rough-toothed dolphin (*Steno bredanensis*)



Off shore species found in tight-knit groups of 10-20 individuals. Can remain submerged for up to 15 minutes. Up to 8.5 feet in length.

Risso's dolphin (*Grampus griseus*)



Born black in color and lighten with age until almost white. Heavily scarred from tooth rake marks from conspecifics and predators. No teeth in upper jaw. Found in groups of 5-50 individuals. Found in deeper waters. 8.5-13 feet in length.

Killer whale/ Orca (*Orcinus orca*)



Southern resident population in the Pacific Northwest is endangered. Largest delphinid. Highly social species. Transient population in HI mainly feed on marine mammals. 28-32 feet in length.

Other Marine Mammal Species periodically seen in Hawai'i

Pygmy killer whale (*Feresa attenuata*)

Sperm whale (*Physeter macrocephalus*) **E**

Pygmy Sperm whale (*Kogia breviceps*)

Dwarf sperm whales (*Kogia sima*)

Blainville's Beaked whale (*Mesoplodon densirostris*)

Cuvier's Beaked whale (*Ziphius cavirostris*)

Longman's Beaked whale (*Indopacetus pacificus*)

Striped dolphin (*Stenella coeruleoalba*)

Fraser's dolphin (*Lagenodelphis hosei*)

Blue Whale (*Balaenoptera musculus*) **E**

Fin whale (*Balaenoptera physalus*) **E**

Sei whale (*Balaenoptera borealis*) **E**

Bryde's whale (*Balaenoptera edeni*)

Minke whale (*Balaenoptera bonaerensis*)

E = Endangered

REMEMBER, IT IS AGAINST FEDERAL LAW TO FEED OR HARASS WILD MARINE MAMMALS