



(C) Christopher Swann, Sea Watch Foundation

False Killer Whale

Pseudorca crassidens

Quick facts

Order Cetartiodactyla

Conservation status

Global *Near threatened*

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Global trend *Unknown*

Size Females 4.5 - 5.1 m,
males 5.4 - 6.1 m

Weight 1,200 - 2,000 kg

Life span 30 - 63 years

The false killer whale is a widely distributed species of dolphin. Records in the UK are largely confined to a few mass strandings and a handful of sightings from South West Approaches to the English Channel, west of Ireland, the Hebrides and east of Orkney.

Habitat

Distributed worldwide, but mainly in deep tropical and warm temperate offshore waters. They are not very common anywhere in their range, even in tropical areas.

Behaviour

Very social. May form large groups of up to 300 individuals, although 10 - 30 more common. Groups are of mixed age and sex. Very fast and manoeuvrable swimmer.

Diet & Feeding

Primarily on squid and large fish, also known to prey on dolphins and has been reported attacking sperm whales.

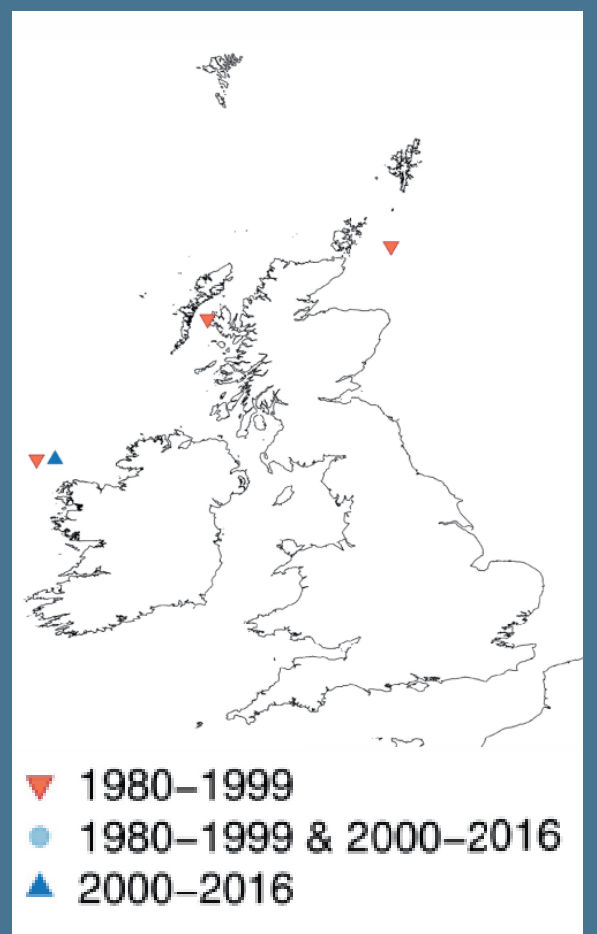
Reproduction

No obvious calving peak. Gestation period is 11 - 15.5 months. Lactation period up to 24 months. Calving interval up to 7 years. Hybrids with bottlenose dolphins have been reported.

Conservation & Threats

Most frequently recorded species of cetacean caught as bycatch in Hawaii deep-set longline fishery. Non-lethal injuries also likely to occur from interacting with fisheries. Hunting has reduced population in some areas. Overfishing of prey species may have an impact. May be at risk of death from plastic ingestion. Many have high levels of contaminants.

Range



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