



Scientific Name:

Tursiops truncatus

English:

Bottlenose Dolphin

Maltese:

id-denfil geddumu qasir

Native to the Mediterranean and Black Sea, the Bottlenose Dolphin is found in most coastal waters of the basin. It dwells in a wide variety of habitats but it is often associated with coastal or inshore waters. Males are slightly larger than females, and can reach a maximum length of 4 m. Bottlenose Dolphins have a dark grey back and a light grey underside. Their snout is short, with the upper jaw shorter than the lower.

Bottlenose Dolphins are highly social and intelligent mammals with longevity of more than 50 years. The population of this dolphin around the Maltese Islands is of about 80 individuals, which are generally encountered in mean groups of 15 individuals. To communicate with one another and to detect objects in the water, they produce a series of clicks and whistles. During feeding sessions, this echolocation is primarily used to target demersal prey species such as the Striped Red Mullet, the Common Cuttlefish and a variety of other bony fishes and molluscs.

Cetaceans have very few predators; mainly sharks, orcas and false killer whales. In the Mediterranean Sea however, these are rare, and in Malta, cetaceans are more likely exposed to pressures from fishing and environmental degradation. Lastly, the Bottlenose Dolphin in the Mediterranean region is represented by a 'sub-population' which is genetically differentiated from that of the Atlantic Ocean.



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