

HAWAIIAN SPINNER DOLPHIN

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Did you know...

...the spinner dolphin is named for its magnificent midair spins.

...spinner dolphins feed at night, and rest during the daytime.



Photo courtesy Lori Mazziuca ©1997

Distribution & Movement Patterns

Unlike oceanic spinner dolphins, Hawaiian spinners are found near the ocean's shore during the day. In these important nearshore habitats, Hawaiian spinner dolphins engage in resting and reproductive activities vital to their survival.

Exact population numbers are not known.

Feeding patterns

Hawaii's spinner dolphins feed at night in the open ocean, usually along and across the slope in the 100 to 1000 fathom escarpment. They feed on organisms that rise toward the surface at night, such as small squid, lantern fish, and small hake.

Dolphins have a reputation for being friendly and playful... but they are wild animals who should be treated with caution and respect.

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

Report any suspected violations to the NOAA Fisheries Enforcement Hotline at (800) 853-1964.

We encourage you to observe dolphins in the wild from at least 50 yards.

Reproduction

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

Although the maximum age is unknown, the spinner dolphin's lifespan is believed to be over 20 years.

Threats

Acoustic disturbance

Collisions with ships

Entanglement in marine debris

Habitat degradation

Human disturbance

Research

Current research includes:

documenting abundance around Lanai

impacts on spinners of interactions with humans

Other dolphins in Hawaii

Other dolphins commonly seen in Hawaii's waters

include bottlenose dolphins and spotted dolphins.

For more information

Call NOAA Fisheries Protected Species Management Program at (808) 973-2987, or the Maui Sanctuary office at (800) 831-4888, or visit the Whale Sanctuary's Web site at <http://www.t-link.net/~whale/>

Sponsored by the Hawaiian Islands Humpback Whale National Marine Sanctuary and the NOAA Fisheries Office of Enforcement



HAWAIIAN ISLANDS HUMPBACK WHALE

NATIONAL MARINE SANCTUARY

726 S. Kihel Road, Kihel, Maui, HI 96753

1-800-831-4888

<http://www.t-link.net/~whale/>

