**HAWAIIAN SPINNER DOLPHIN**

**Distribution & Movement Patterns**

Unlike oceanic spinner dolphins, Hawaiian spinners are found close to shore in shallow coves and bays during the day. In these important nearshore habitats, Hawaiian spinner dolphins rest, care for their young, avoid predators and engage in reproductive activities vital to their survival.

**Feeding Patterns**

Hawai‘i’s spinner dolphins feed at night in the open ocean, usually along and across the slope in the 100 to 1,000 fathom escarpment (600 to 6,000 foot depth). 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 that 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, feed or attempt any of these activities.

Report any suspected violations to the NOAA Fisheries Enforcement Hotline at 1-800-853-1964.

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

**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. Although the maximum age is unknown, the spinner dolphin’s lifespan is believed to be over 20 years. Exact population numbers are not known.

**Threats**

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

**Research**

Documenting social behavior, vocalizations and population structure. Documenting the impacts of human interaction on spinners.

**Other dolphins and small whales commonly seen in Hawai‘i include:**

Bottlenose dolphins, spotted dolphins, false killer whales, pilot whales and Risso’s dolphins.

**For more information**

Call NOAA Fisheries Protected Resources Management Program at (808) 973-2987, or the sanctuary headquarters below. For more information, visit the NOAA Fisheries website:


_Sponsored by the Hawaiian Islands Humpback Whale National Marine Sanctuary with assistance from the NOAA Fisheries Office of Enforcement and the NOAA Fisheries Pacific Islands Regional Office
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**Did you know...**

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

...spinners feed at night, and rest during the daytime.

...the scientific name for spinner dolphins is *Stenella longirostris*.

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