

MARINE MAMMAL REPORT 2004

Mike Cahill

There were a good number of sightings round the Island this year, but very many more off the Dorset coast between Swanage and Portland, where their sightings have increased.

We had two reports of dead whales. A Fin Whale, *Balaenoptera physalus*, was seen floating in the Solent in August. This animal was towed and beached at Lee-on Solent by Coastguards. More Fin Whales have been reported in the English Channel in recent years and it has been suggested, that some may now be using this route during migration to or from their summer feeding grounds off the Norwegian coast.

The other was stranded at Steephill Cove, Ventnor, in December, very decomposed and thought to be a Minke Whale, *Balaenoptera acutorostrata*.

Other sightings included: Grey Seal, *Halichoerus grypus*, Common Seal, *Phoca vitulina*, Bottlenose Dolphin, *Tursiops truncatus* and Harbour Porpoise, *Phocoena phocoena*.

A full list of sightings is attached in Table 1.

Acknowledgments Our thanks to all who have submitted sightings for this year's report.

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26-Jun	SCHEDULE 1			TOTAL	D	Ds	LOCATION	NOTES	Obs/Recorded
DATE	SPECIES	TIME							
Feb	Harbour Porpoise		1			Chilton Chine	"Stranded, dead, 200m W of steps, 1.4m long"	Obs-H. Underwood, Rec- A. Butler	
Feb	Seal		1			Ventnor Bay	"Stranded, dead"	"Obs-M.Green, Rec-J.Winclt"	
04-Feb	Harbour Porpoise		1			Sudmore Point	"Feeding on Bass, caught 3."	"Obs-C.Burland, Rec-C.Pope"	
10-Feb	Common Seal		1			Western Yar	"Stranded, dead, decomposing"	S. Young via W.W.	
12-Feb	Harbour Porpoise		1			Chilton Chine	"Stranded, dead, decomposing"	Coastguard via W.W.	
19-Feb	Harbour Porpoise		1			"Woody Bay, St Lawrence"	Heading SW	G.Blake	
6-Mar	Harbour Porpoise		2	1.5km		SE Dinnose Pt	SZ366854 Tail/Fluke/L.Flipper/Fnt of Head missing	M.Cotterill	
16-Mar	Cetacean		1			Compton Chine	Hauled out onto sand bank	M.Horefield	
11-Apr	Seal	eve	1			W.Yar	Swimming	I.Watkins via W.W.	
May	Seal		1			Alum Bay	"Leaping & breaching, seabirds o/head, 300 of Hurst"	Dorset Marine Conservation Officer	
1-May	Bottlenose Dolphin		7	1.5km		NW. of Collwell Bay		I.Watkins via W.W.	
17-May	Cetacean	1500	9	3km		off Totland Bay	Swimming	Island Sailing Club via W.W.	
18-May	Seal		1			off Fort Victoria	Swimming	Mrs Blake (snr)	
25-May	Porpoise		1			off Ventnor	Swimming	M.Green	
June	Bottlenose Dolphin		2	1.5km		off Sudmore Pt	Playing round yacht and moving slowly west.	Anon via W.W.	
23-Jun	Bottlenose Dolphin		1	1.5km		East of Cowes	fin seen	Phone call to Wight Wildlife	
26-Jun	Dolphin	1230	1			Eastern Solent	Accompanied Yacht	A.Hawkins via W.W.	
27-Jun	Bottlenose Dolphin	1200	1	W		North West of Cowes	off Lee-on-Solent near Windsurfers	Dorset Marine Conservation Officer	
10-Jul	Seal		1			Solent NE.Cowes	seen from boat	M.Green	
12-Jul	Dolphin		8+			N of Yarmouth	Swimming South	Mate of Red Funnel Ferry via W.W.	
12-Jul	Dolphin	1430	1	2km		North of Cowes	seen from yacht by Northern Channel Buoy	Dorset Marine Conservation Officer	
14-Jul	Bottlenose Dolphin		4			Entrance to Solent	seen off Lifeboat Stn	M.Whitaker	
26-Jul	Dolphin	am	5+	E		off Bembridge	"Fin, dead, landed later by Coastguards at Lee on Solent"	V.Gwynn	
2-Aug	Whale	1600	1	1.5km		NW of Gurnard Bay	Approaching Solent from West	V.Gwynn	
2-Aug	Whales		2+			Solent	swimming	Mr Webb via W W	
1-Sep	Grey Seal	1200	1			off Yarmouth	Swimming and fishing off beach	Phone call to Wight Wildlife	
2-Sep	Seal	1630	3			off Grange Chine	"Seen from yacht, swimming and fishing"	Phone call to Wight Wildlife	
16-Nov	Grey Seal	1600	1			Newtown Creek	seen by fishermen	IOW County Press	
Dec	Bottlenose Dolphin		6			off Culver	seen by fishermen	IOW County Press	
Dec	Bottlenose Dolphin		2			Osborne Bay	SZ52531950 hauled out on rocks at low tide	D.Biggs	
7-Dec	Common Seal		1			off Barton Hard	SZ52535948	D.Biggs	
9-Dec	Common Seal		1			Steeptill Cove	"Stranded, dead, partly decomposed"	C.Blake	
18-Dec	Whale		1			Osborne Bay	"inc 1 juvenile, swimming and hauling out"	T.Redfern via W.W.	
26-Dec	Common Seal	1630	4			off St Catherine's Point	Swimming	Mr White via W.W.	
2004	Seal		2						

Notes

D = direction animals heading

Ds = distance from shore in metres