

A Checklist of Marine Mammals of India

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Online Version



A stranded Sperm Whale, *Physeter macrocephalus*
(Photo by Marine Biology Regional Centre, ZSI, Chennai)

Marine mammals are a diverse group of animals, globally accounting to 119 species (Jefferson *et al.*, 1993). They include cetaceans (whales, dolphins, and porpoises), sirenians (manatees and dugong), pinnipeds (true seals, eared seals and walrus), a few otters (the sea otter and marine otter) and the polar bear (usually grouped with the marine mammals). Marine mammals have become vulnerable or endangered due to the un-controlled commercial exploitation by man.

Marine mammals are known to have evolved from their land dwelling ancestors and have several adaptive features for life at sea, such as large size, hydrodynamic body shape, modified appendages and various thermoregulatory adaptations.

In India, 31 species of marine mammals (30 species of Cetacea and one species of Sirenia) are documented accounting to one fourths of the world's marine mammalian fauna and almost 8% of the total Indian mammalian fauna (George *et al.*, 2011). Marine mammals are a poorly studied group of animals in India and most of the works are limited to the reports of stranding along the coasts. The present checklist is prepared based on the works of Jefferson *et al.*, 1993; Agrawal and Alfred, 1999; Alfred *et al.*, 2002; Kumaran, 2002;

Sathasivam, 2003 & 2006; Perrin, 2009; George *et al.*, 2011 and the web pages of www.marinemammals.in, www.marinespecies.org.

Systematic list:

CLASS: Mammalia
ORDER: Cetacea
FAMILY: Balaenopteridae - Rorquals

Sl. No	Species	Common Name
1	<i>Balaenoptera acutorostrata</i> Lacepede, 1804	Minke Whale
2	<i>Balaenoptera borealis</i> Lesson, 1828	Sei Whale
3	<i>Balaenoptera edeni</i> Anderson, 1878	Bryde's Whale
4	<i>Balaenoptera musculus</i> (Linnaeus, 1758)	Blue Whale
5	<i>Balaenoptera physalus</i> (Linnaeus, 1758)	Fin Whale
6	<i>Megaptera novaeangliae</i> (Borowski, 1781)	Humpback Whale

FAMILY: Delphinidae - Dolphins

7	<i>Delphinus delphis</i> Linnaeus, 1758	Common Dolphin
8	<i>Feresa attenuata</i> Gray, 1875	Pygmy Killer Whale
9	<i>Globicephala macrorhynchus</i> Gary, 1846	Short-finned Pilot Whale
10	<i>Grampus griseus</i> (Cuvier, 1812)	Risso's Dolphin
11	<i>Lagenodelphis hosei</i> Fraser, 1956	Fraser's Dolphin
12	<i>Orcaella brevirostris</i> (Gray, 1866)	Irrawaddy Dolphin
13	<i>Orcinus orca</i> (Linnaeus, 1758)	Killer Whale
14	<i>Peponocephala electra</i> (Gray, 1846)	Melon-headed Whale
15	<i>Pseudorca crassidens</i> (Owen, 1846)	False Killer Whale
16	<i>Sousa chinensis</i> (Osbeck, 1765)	Indo-Pacific Hump-backed Dolphin
17	<i>Stenella attenuata</i> (Gray, 1846)	Pantropical Spotted Dolphin
18	<i>Stenella coeruleoalba</i> (Meyen, 1833)	Striped Dolphin
19	<i>Stenella longirostris</i> (Gray, 1828)	Long-snouted or Spinner Dolphin
20	<i>Steno bredanensis</i> (Lesson, 1828)	Rough-toothed Dolphin
21	<i>Tursiops truncatus</i> (Montagu, 1821)	Bottlenose Dolphin

FAMILY: Phocoenidae - Porpoises

22	<i>Neophocaena phocaenoides</i> (Cuvier, 1829)	Finless Porpoise
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FAMILY: Kogiidae - Small Sperm Whales

23	<i>Kogia breviceps</i> (Blainville, 1838)	Pygmy Sperm Whale
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24	<i>Kogia simus</i> Owen, 1866	Dwarf Sperm Whale
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FAMILY: Physeteridae - Sperm Whales

25	<i>Physeter macrocephalus</i> (Linnaeus, 1758)	Sperm Whale
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FAMILY: Ziphiidae - Beaked Whales

26	<i>Hyperoodon planifrons</i> (Flower, 1882)	Southern Bottlenose Whale
27	<i>Mesoplodon densirostris</i> Blainville, 1817	Blainville's Beaked Whale
28	<i>Mesoplodon ginkgodens</i> Nishiwaki and Kamiya, 1958	Ginkgo-toothed Beaked Whale
29	<i>Indopacetus pacificus</i> Longman, 1926	Longman's Beaked Whale
30	<i>Ziphius cavirostris</i> Cuvier, 1823	Cuvier's Beaked Whale

ORDER: Sirenia

FAMILY: Dugongidae - Dugongs

31	<i>Dugong dugon</i> (Muller, 1776)	Dugong or Sea Cow
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DOLPHINS OF INDIA



Bottlenose Dolphin
Tursiops truncatus (Montagu, 1821)



Striped Dolphin
Stenella coerulescens (Meyan, 1833)



Spinner Dolphin
Stenella longirostris (Gray, 1828)



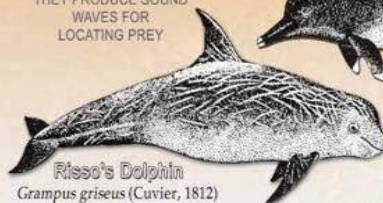
Common Dolphin
Delphinus delphis Linnaeus, 1758



Rough Toothed Dolphin
Steno bredanensis (Lesson, 1828)



Pantropical Spotted Dolphin
Stenella attenuata (Gray, 1846)



Risso's Dolphin
Grampus griseus (Cuvier, 1812)



Hump-Backed Dolphin
Sousa chinensis (Osbeck, 1765)



Fraser's Dolphin
Lagenodelphis hosei Fraser, 1957

DOLPHINS ARE GOOD DIVERS

They are intelligent
and
can be trained

Life span
is around
20 years

DOLPHINS ARE FRIENDLY WITH HUMANS

WHALES OF INDIA



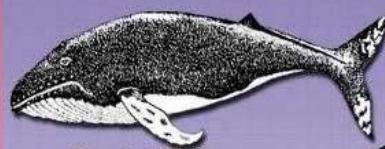
Pygmy Sperm Whale
Kogia breviceps (Blainville, 1838)



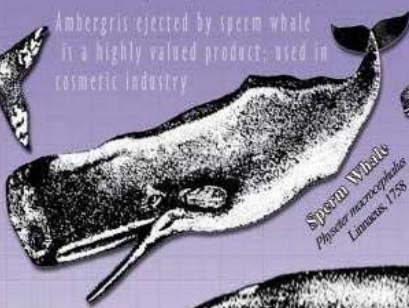
Melon-Headed Whale
Peponocephala electra (Gray, 1846)



False Killer Whale
Pseudorca crassidens (Owen, 1846)



Humpback Whale
Megaptera novaeangliae (Borowski, 1781)



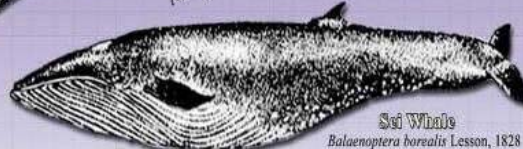
Sperm Whale
Physeter macrocephalus Linnaeus, 1758



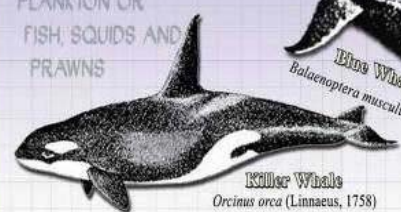
Short-Finned Pilot Whale
Globicephala macrorhynchus Gray, 1846



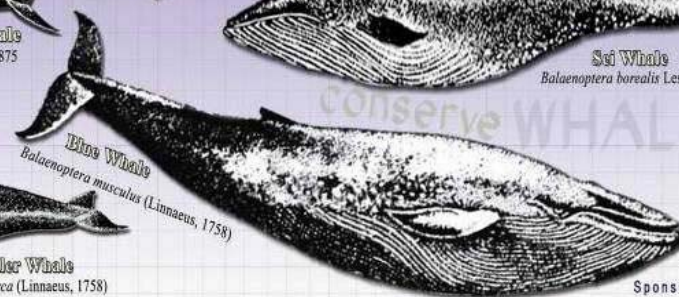
Pigmy Killer Whale
Feresa attenuata Gray, 1875



Sei Whale
Balaenoptera borealis Lesson, 1828



Killer Whale
Orcinus orca (Linnaeus, 1758)



Blue Whale
Balaenoptera musculus (Linnaeus, 1758)

IT FEEDS
PLANKTON OR
FISH, SQUIDS AND
PRAWNS

Ambergris ejected by sperm whale
is a highly valued product: used in
cosmetic industry

CONSERVE WHALES

BLUE WHALE IS THE LARGEST ANIMAL

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