*For other uses, see* [*Dolphin (disambiguation)*](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Dolphin_(disambiguation))*.*

[Page semi-protected](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Wikipedia:Protection_policy#semi)

[](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/File:Bottlenose_Dolphin_KSC04pd0178.jpg)

[http://bits.wikimedia.org/skins-1.18/common/images/magnify-clip.png](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/File:Bottlenose_Dolphin_KSC04pd0178.jpg)

[Bottlenose dolphin](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Bottlenose_dolphin) breaching in the bow wave of a boat

**Dolphins** are [marine mammals](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Marine_mammal) that are closely related to [whales](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Whale) and [porpoises](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Porpoise). There are almost forty species of dolphin in 17 [genera](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Genus). They vary in size from 1.2 m (4 ft) and 40 kg (90 lb) ([Maui's dolphin](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Maui%27s_dolphin)), up to 9.5 m (30 ft) and 10 tonnes (9.8 long tons; 11 short tons) (the [orca](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Killer_whale) or killer whale). They are found worldwide, mostly in the shallower seas of the [continental shelves](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Continental_shelves), and are carnivores, mostly eating [fish](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Fish) and [squid](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Squid). The [family](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Family_(biology)) [Delphinidae](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Oceanic_dolphin) is the largest in the [Cetacean](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Cetacea) order, and evolved relatively recently, about ten million years ago, during the [Miocene](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Miocene). Dolphins are among the most intelligent animals, and their often friendly appearance and seemingly playful attitude have made them popular in [human culture](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Human_culture).