



You'll be amazed what pops up in the Thames

The Zoological Society of London (ZSL) is collecting data on the dolphins, porpoises, and seals that visit the Thames to help develop our understanding of how these beautiful creatures use our estuary.

If you are lucky enough to see one, please help us with our survey by completing the sightings form on the back of this leaflet. Additional forms, sightings updates, photos, and further information can be found at our website: www.zsl.org

Bottlenose dolphins have been seen at Blackfriars and Wapping, and common seals at Richmond, Lambeth and Chelsea – so keep your eyes peeled!

Help us with our survey by looking out for:



Harbour porpoise (*Phocoena phocoena*)

- Small porpoise, up to 1.7 metres long.
- Distinctive small triangular dorsal fin with broad base.
- Dark grey upper, usually no markings or scars.
- White belly.
- Head tapers to a point, with no beak.
- Most frequently seen January – April.

Bottlenose dolphin (*Tursiops truncatus*)

- Large, stocky dolphin, up to 4 metres long.
- Fairly tall and slender dorsal fin, usually sickle-shaped.
- Grey rather uniform upper parts. Can appear black in dull light.
- Underside paler, but no flank markings.
- Short, stubby, but distinct beak.
- Most frequently seen July – October.



White-beaked dolphin (*Lagenorhynchus albirostris*)

- Dolphin up to 2.8 metres long.
- Large, often erect, sickle-shaped dorsal fin, centrally placed.
- Short white beak.
- Black back with a white or grey area behind the dorsal fin, forming a pale 'saddle'.
- Stout-looking animal with a large girth.
- Most frequently seen June – October.

Common seal (*Phoca vitulina*)

- Seal up to 1.5 metres long.
- Round face with narrow nostrils, dog-like features (see illustration at top).
- Grey back with dark brown or blackish spots.
- Belly lighter and without spots.
- Thick neck and quite elongated body.
- Pups born mainly June – July.



Grey seal (*Halichoerus grypus*)

- Seal up to 2.5 metres long.
- Prominent hooked-shaped nose with nostrils fairly wide apart.
- Males: dark with light patches and a wide, heavy muzzle. Females: smaller and light coloured with dark spots.
- Coat varies from grey and brown to silver, often blotchy.
- Pups born mainly August – November.

If you find a stranded marine mammal, please contact:

LIVE STRANDINGS: RSPCA 08705 555999

DEAD STRANDINGS: ZSL 020 7449 6672

The Zoological Society of London (ZSL) was founded in 1826, and is an international scientific, conservation and educational organisation. Our mission is to achieve and promote the worldwide conservation of animals and their habitats. ZSL runs London Zoo and Whipsnade Wild Animal Park, carries out scientific research through the Institute of Zoology, and is actively involved in national and international field conservation programmes.

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ZSL

LIVING CONSERVATION

ZSL marine mammal sightings form

Please complete the form as fully as you can, but even partially completed forms will provide valuable information.

Personal details

Name: _____ Email: _____
Address: _____
Postcode: _____ Telephone: _____

Your sighting

(Please tick where appropriate)

What did you see: Porpoise Dolphin Seal

Which species did you see: _____

How certain is your identification: Definite (100% sure) Probable (75% sure) Possible (50% sure)

Describe below what you saw of the animal/s: (e.g. shape of muzzle/beak/dorsal fin, flank markings, size or other distinguishing features)

How many individuals did you see: _____

No. of adults: _____ **No. of juveniles:** (75-100% adult size) _____ **No. of calves/pups:** (50-75% adult size) _____

What was/were the animal/s doing: Resting Feeding Breaching (jumping)

Swimming fast/medium/slow Which direction was/were the animal/s swimming in: _____

Interacting with people/vessels/fishing gear Stranded Not sure

Other (Please specify): _____

Date of sighting: _____ **Time of sighting:** _____ **Duration of sighting:** _____

Were you: On land On a vessel If on a vessel, what type was it: _____

Location: (e.g. landmark) _____

Latitude: _____ **Longitude:** _____

How far were you from the animal/s: 0-10m 11-50m 51-100m >100m

Environmental conditions

Was the weather: Sunny Overcast Rainy Foggy Windy Wind direction: _____

Water conditions: Mirror calm Rippled Few white horses Many white horses

Any further notes: _____

Photographs and videos are extremely useful. Please send us any images you have of the sighting.

Boat users encountering mammals should travel on a slow, steady course keeping a good distance. Use binoculars for close-up viewing and allow animals to continue their normal activities.

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BDMLR 01825 765546

DEAD STRANDINGS: ZSL 020 7449 6672

Please fax forms to 020 7483 4436 or send to:

Marine & Freshwater Conservation Programmes, ZSL, Regent's Park, London, NW1 4RY.

For more information, or to complete an online form, visit our website: www.zsl.org

Email: marineandfreshwater@zsl.org

