



## NOAA FISHERIES SERVICE



NOAA/NEFSC, Allison Henry



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Family: Delphinidae  
Population: > 2 million  
Status: Least Concern  
Length: 7 — 9 feet  
Weight: 330 — 350 lbs

## Striped Dolphin (*Stenella coeruleoalba*)

### Description

Striped dolphins have a distinct and striking color pattern with a complex of bold and thin stripes that extend from the eye to the flipper, and down the sides of the body. The beak, flippers, tail, and cape are a dark bluish gray; the sides and shoulder just above the stripe are a light bluish gray; the belly is white or pinkish and much lighter than the rest of the body. They are fairly robust in size with a long, well-defined beak, short tapered flippers, and a prominent falcate dorsal fin.

### Habitat and Distribution

Striped dolphins occur in deep tropical and warm temperate waters, and are some of the most abundant and widespread dolphins in the world.

### Sounds

Striped dolphins make many different vocalizations while socializing and playing. They also use echolocation clicks to locate prey while foraging.

### Feeding

Striped dolphins feed on a diverse array of schooling fish and cephalopods.

### Threats

Striped dolphins have been accidentally injured or killed by pelagic trawls, gillnets, driftnets, and purse seine nets. They have been targeted by drive hunts in Japan, and hunted in the Caribbean and Sri Lanka. More than 1,000 individuals died in the early 1990s due to a morbillivirus epizootic.

### Fun Fact

Striped dolphins leap high out of the water and vigorously rotate their tails while airborne, a behavior known as “roto-tailing”!