

Dolphins

Gestation

Gestation is when the mother carries the child in their womb. It takes about 12 months for the baby dolphin to be ready to be born.

Birth

Adult dolphins give birth to live young and suckle (feed their babies using breasts or a teat) them. When born, they come out tail-first and are immediately strong swimmers, then they have to go to the surface to breathe air. They are nursed for 1 and a half to 2 years long.

Childhood

Once weaned, the young dolphin stays in the care of their mother for 3-8 more years. When they are 6 months old they can eat seafood, which consists of mainly fish and crustaceans.

Puberty

When the dolphin reaches the age of puberty, from 3-8 years of age, they start trying to find a mate. The mating period is in spring and autumn, and lasts about 12 months (1 year). When they have found a mate they have a baby together and continue doing so, having a calf every 1 and a half years (on average). They live for about 30 years on average, but are being hurt by humans and numbers are dwindling.

Family Life

Dolphins have a very sociable life and are very intelligent. They live in pods of up to 40 members and even some larger pods like schools or herds. Most groups are split into subgroups. Some of the main ones are the nuclear group - for one male and one female, the nursery group - for young dolphins and the bachelor group - for young male dolphins. They have learnt the art of hunting in packs together, often attacking large schools of small fish. Some people say that dolphins are more intelligent than humans.