

Long-beaked common dolphin (*Delphinus* sp.)

Randall Reeves, 1 March 2012

The taxonomy of common dolphins (*Delphinus* spp.) remains in flux although provisionally for a number of years two species have been recognized, a short-beaked form (*D. delphis*) and a long-beaked form (*D. capensis*). Short-beaked common dolphins occur regularly along the east coast of the United States but generally not farther south than approximately Cape Hatteras, North Carolina, at ca. 35°N (Waring et al. 2009). It is well established that no common dolphins of either kind occur in the Gulf of Mexico (Jefferson and Schiro 1997).

However, long-beaked common dolphins are a regular and conspicuous part of the cetacean fauna of north-eastern Venezuela. Oviedo et al. (2010) describe them as follows: “Common dolphins (*Delphinus* spp.) are widely dispersed over the whole northeast basin, including waters off Araya and Paria Peninsula and around Margarita, Coche and Cubagua Islands. Areas of higher densities for *Delphinus* spp. coincide with the focal location of sardine fisheries and the most-active upwelling on the north-eastern coast.” An authoritative and up-to-date review of common dolphin records from this region was available (Jefferson et al. 2009) and we used it, along with Oviedo et al. (2010), as the basis for mapping the known distribution of this species.

Quality of outputs: ★★★★★

References

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