



## Dolphins

Dolphins are mammals although they live in the sea. They are members of a group of mammals called cetaceans or whales. Whales are divided into 2 groups. One group lacks teeth. Most large whales belong to this first group. Dolphins belong to the second group which has teeth.

Dolphins live mainly in warm, tropical seas in the open ocean, bays, and coral reefs. They join together in herds or groups. Sometimes as many as one million live together but they usually live in smaller herds. River dolphins can be seen in groups of only three or four.

Dolphins range in size from five feet to thirteen feet. They have black and white backs to help them blend into colorless deep seas. Their bellies are light-colored and help them avoid being seen by the sharks below. The light color blends with the sky-bright seas as the sharks look up at them.

The dolphin has a torpedo shape, long and thin. It can move quickly through the water as the flippers help it steer. The dolphin doesn't have bones. The fins keep the dolphin going in a straight line. Both the fin and flippers sense objects that may be in the way.

Strong muscles along the side of a dolphin move the tail up and down. Their skin is smooth and has no scales. A thick layer of blubber is under their skin. This layer keeps them warm. A dolphin's eyes move independently. One is located on each side of the head. They can see all around and straight ahead. They do not have a sense of smell.

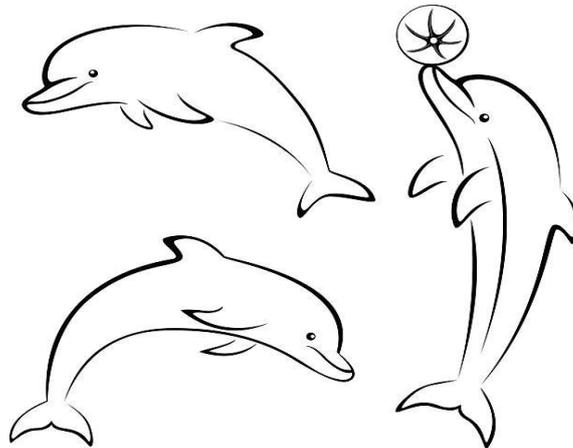
Dolphins communicate with their voices and have good hearing. With these abilities they can catch food and speak with other dolphins. To find prey they make a clicking sound. The sound of this clicking bounces off anything in its path. The dolphins hear the echo of the clicking and know where prey is located. This method of finding prey is called echolocation.

Dolphins can also communicate with their friends by sounds. Certain sounds send different messages. Dolphins will go to help another dolphin if they hear a cry for aid. Each dolphin has its own specific sound. It can be identified by other dolphins. Being able to communicate well with others is a sign of great intelligence.

Dolphins swim between three and seven miles an hour. They can go as fast as twenty-two miles per hour. They usually dive from ten to one-hundred fifty feet to find food. A dive could last up to fifteen minutes.

The most common type of dolphin near the shore is the bottlenose dolphin. Their backs are grey and their underbellies white or pink. They grow to about eight feet. They weigh about two hundred pounds.

In summary, dolphins are mammals although they live in the sea. They are one of two groups of whales. Many larger whales belong to the group which has no teeth. Dolphins belong to the second group of whales and have teeth.





## Herbivores, Carnivores, Omnivores

Every animal in the world has at least one thing in common: They must eat. Animals have a wide variety of foods to choose from, but some animals will eat only other animals or animal flesh, and some animals eat only plant-based foods, and then there are some that will eat just about anything.

The diet of each animal species determines whether they are herbivores, carnivores, or omnivores. Animals that eat only plants are called herbivores, animals that eat animal flesh or meat are called carnivores, and animals that eat both plants and animals are omnivores. Most human beings are omnivores. In addition, scientists can study an animal's teeth or eye position to determine if it eats meat only, plants only, or both.

For example, by studying the teeth of a mammal, it can be determined whether the animal is an herbivore, carnivore, or carnivore. A canine tooth is a pointed, cone-shaped tooth used for biting and chewing.

Herbivores are animals with dull or no canine teeth, and with big flat side and back teeth. Their teeth, called molars, are used for crushing and grinding plants. Examples of herbivores include sheep, cow, deer, squirrels, elephants, parrots, giraffes, caterpillars, kangaroo rats and mice and insects such as grasshoppers. Herbivores also have eyes usually located more on the side of their heads, which give them a wider view of the surrounding area and can flee when they in danger of being eaten.

Not all herbivores are the same, some will eat only grasses while others may eat other types of plants. For example, birds, bees, and butterflies eat nectar from flowers to get the nutrients they need to survive, and other herbivores may just eat seeds or fruits. Vegetarians are people in the world who eat mainly plants and do not eat meat and are more like herbivores, though most people are omnivores.

Carnivores are animals with long, sharp canine teeth next to their front (incisor) teeth and sharp cheek teeth called carnassials, used to help cut up meat in the mouth. The canines are for seizing and stabbing prey. Examples of carnivores include lions, tigers,

spiders, owls, eagles, sharks, crocodiles, praying mantis, Venus fly-trap, toads, snakes, wolves, and insects such as beetles, dragonflies, and others.

Meat is a high energy food source for carnivores. They find their food by hunting down prey or scavenging dead animal tissue. In other words, some will eat live animals and others only eat dead animal flesh. Many carnivorous mammals have big claws, sharp teeth or beaks, and quick speed and live on land, in the sea, or soar through the sky.

Omnivores are animals with a variety of all kinds of teeth such as canines, incisors, flat teeth, and molars. They eat a variety of foods, both meat, and plants. Examples of omnivores include chickens, crow, bears, raccoons, skunks, pigs, rats, humans, crows, robins, lizards, turtles, badgers, ostriches, ducks, some monkeys and apes, flies, and catfish. As with other animals, omnivores may limit the types of plants or animals they eat. For example, some humans will eat only plants and fish, but no other animal products. Overall, omnivores have a wide variety of food options because they will eat almost anything.

Finally, omnivorous and carnivorous mammals have eyes in front to help them spot and determine the distance of their prey. In summary, herbivores eat plants, carnivores eat meat, and omnivores eat both.

