

Participant Information



University of
St Andrews

Citizen-science photo-identification data on bottlenose dolphins

Lead researchers: Philip Hammond and Mònica Arso Civil

What is the study about?

We invite you to submit photographs showing the dorsal fin of bottlenose dolphins taken from land or from dolphin-watching boats off the East coast of the UK. The Sea Mammal Research Unit (University of St Andrews), in collaboration with the University of Aberdeen Lighthouse Field Station, has been monitoring the population of bottlenose dolphins off the East coast of Scotland since 1989. In recent years, sightings of individuals from this population have become more frequent to the south of the Firth of Tay, in the Firth of Forth, south-east Scotland and further south into north-east England. Photographs taken in these areas that we cannot monitor regularly will help us better understand the movement of animals and can improve our estimates of birth and mortality rates.

Do I have to take part?

This information sheet has been written to help you decide if you would like to take part. It is up to you and you alone whether you wish to take part. If you do decide to take part you will be free to withdraw in the subsequent 24 hours, without providing a reason, and with no negative consequences.

What would I be required to do?

You will be asked to submit photographs and to answer questions about the location, date, time and other observations you may want to provide about your sighting (optional). You will be asked to provide your name and contact email to follow up on any questions regarding the photographs and sighting information.

Are there any risks associated with taking part?

Your participation is voluntary and any sightings are made entirely at your own risk.

Informed consent

It is important that you are able to give your informed consent before taking part in this study and you will have the opportunity to ask any questions in relation to the research before you provide your consent.

Who is funding the research?

This research is being funded by Scottish Natural Heritage and the Firth of Tay and Forth windfarm developers.

What information about me or recordings of me ('my data') will you be collecting?

We will collect your name and email address so that we can provide you with information about the individual bottlenose dolphins you have photographed, and for communication (and associated accreditation purposes) regarding the potential for use of your media files in SMRU publications. The University of St Andrews will not use your contact details for any other purpose than the above.

How will my data be securely stored, who will have access to it?

- Your data (name and email address) will be stored in a **FULLY IDENTIFIABLE** form, which means that your data will be identifiable as yours. Your data will be stored on a University server and dedicated email account, and only people directly involved with the project will be able to access it.
- The sightings data associated to the submitted photographs will be stored in a **PSEUDONYMISED** form within the project's database, which means that only your initials will be included, and the source of the data will be set as "PUBLIC". The database will not be made publicly available and will only be accessed by the project's team. Your email address or full name will NOT be included in the database.
- This is an ongoing, long-term study with no planned end date.

How will my data be used, and in what form will it be shared further?

The sighting and photographic data you provide will be incorporated into the ongoing, long-term study database used to monitor bottlenose dolphins off the east coast. None of your personal data will be included in such database.

Your original photographs will be shared with our colleagues at the University of Aberdeen Lighthouse Field Station in order to identify the photographed animals. It is highly unlikely that any original raw photographs will be published, but if that was required, you will be first contacted and asked for agreement, and you will be credited if you wish so.

This project is an ongoing, long term study with no planned end date.

When will my data be destroyed?

In order to contact you for the use of the photographs for SMRU publications, your name, email address, media and sighting information will be held indefinitely.

Will my participation be confidential?

Yes, your participation will only be known to the project team, and if agreed by yourself (via email), one or more of your photographs may be made publicly available and accredited to you.

Use of your personal data and data protection rights

The University of St Andrews (the 'Data Controller') is bound by the UK 2018 Data Protection Act and the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR), which require a lawful basis for all processing of personal data (in this case it is the 'performance of a task carried out in the public interest' – namely, for research purposes) and an additional lawful basis for processing personal data containing special characteristics (in this case it is 'public interest research'). You have a range of rights under data protection legislation. For more information on data protection legislation and your rights visit <https://www.st-andrews.ac.uk/terms/data-protection/rights/>. For any queries, email dataprot@st-andrews.ac.uk.

After 24 hours, you will be unable to withdraw your sightings data as after this period an anonymised version may have been catalogued and have been shared with our collaborators within the project.

Ethical Approvals

This research proposal has been scrutinised and subsequently granted ethical approval by the University of St Andrews Teaching and Research Ethics Committee.

What should I do if I have concerns about this study?

In the first instance, you are encouraged to raise your concerns with the researcher. However, if you do not feel comfortable doing so, then you should contact the School Ethics Contact (contact details below). A full outline of the procedures governed by the University Teaching and Research Ethics Committee is available at <https://www.st-andrews.ac.uk/research/integrity-ethics/humans/ethical-guidance/complaints/>.

Contact details

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