Common Bottlenose Dolphins of Maui Nui

HITt0006 sighted 1997-2025

HITt0064 sighted 2012-2024

HITt0100 sighted 2000-2025

HITt0437 sighted 2004-2024

HITt0588 sighted 2008-2025

HITt0609 sighted 2010-2025

HITt1268 sighted 2013-2024

HITt1447 sighted 2016-2024

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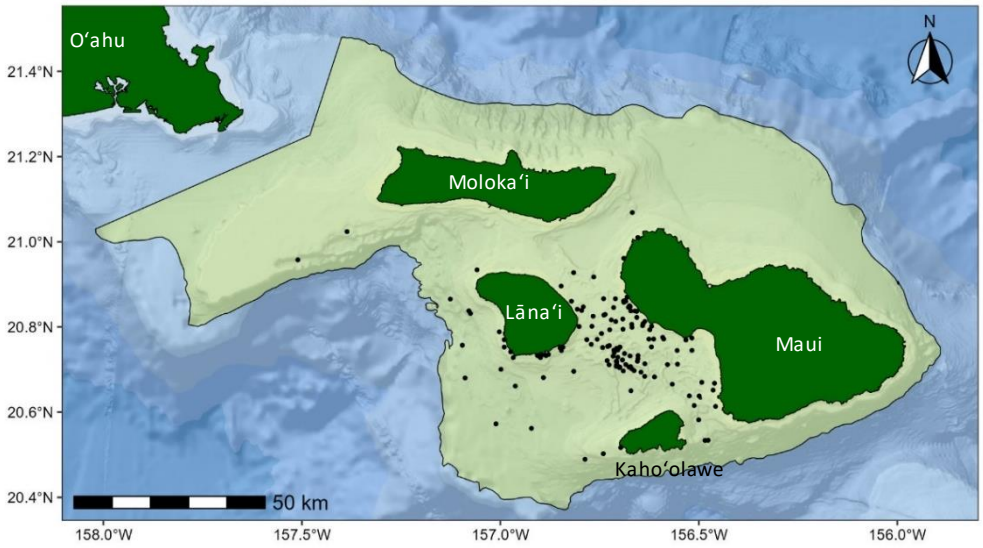
The Hawaiian Islands are home to five genetically differentiated populations of common bottlenose dolphins (*Tursiops truncatus*), including four island-associated resident populations centered around Kaua‘i and Ni‘ihau, O‘ahu, Maui Nui, and Hawai‘i Island, and a rarely seen offshore population that lives in deeper waters. With the exception of the Hawai‘i Island population, there is evidence that bottlenose dolphin populations in Hawai‘i have declined over the last 25 years.

Island-associated bottlenose dolphins are a shallow-water species, and are most frequently seen in waters less than 500 m (~1,650 ft) deep. On the right, you can see the recognized boundary (yellow) for the Maui Nui population, along with the locations (black dots) where we've sighted groups of bottlenose dolphins during our field work from 1999-2024.

Illustration by Uko Gorter



To contribute your photos of whales and dolphins to our research, scan the QR code below, or email Hawaii@cascadiaresearch.org

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Bottlenose dolphins are a highly social species, and live in a "fission-fusion" society, where groups of individuals constantly mix and reform throughout the day, sometimes based on age or sex.

Bottlenose dolphins off Maui face a variety of threats, including interactions with nearshore fisheries, exposure to vessel traffic, and habitat degradation. One of the main tools that we're using to study how these threats impact bottlenose dolphins (and other cetaceans) off Maui Nui is photo-identification. We can use photos to estimate population size, study movements over time, learn about social behavior, determine the age and sex of individuals, and even look for scarring caused by interactions with sharks, other dolphins, or fisheries. You can support our work by contributing your photos to our research using the QR code above!

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