

Common Bottlenose Dolphins of O'ahu



HITt0220 sighted 2003-2023



HITt0228 sighted 2003-2020



HITt0524 sighted 2007-2016



HITt0773 sighted 2007-2024



HITt1086 sighted 2013-2023



HITt1087 sighted 2016-2023



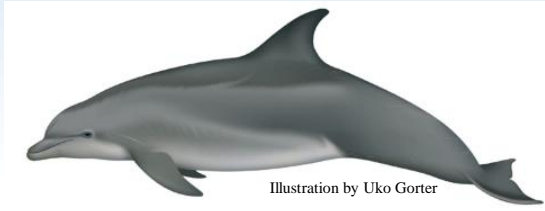
HITt1091 sighted 2011-2024



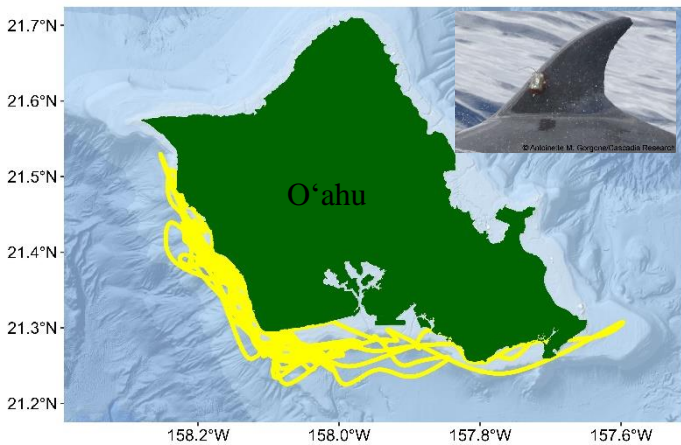
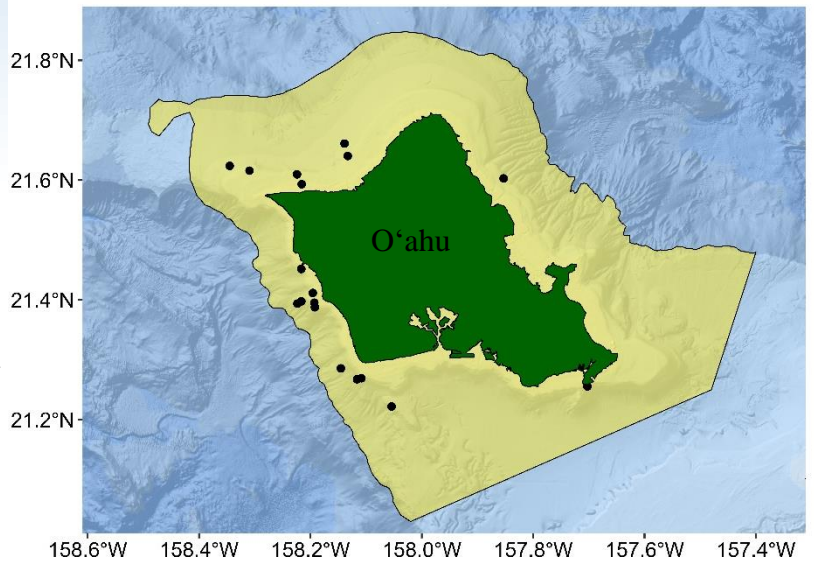
HITt1108 sighted 2007-2024

Common Bottlenose Dolphins of O'ahu

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 off O'ahu in waters less than 500 m (~1,650 ft) deep. Here, you can see the recognized boundary (yellow) for the O'ahu population, along with the locations (black dots) where we've sighted groups of bottlenose dolphins during our field work from 2002-2023. Recently though, we've discovered that some bottlenose dolphins from O'ahu occasionally travel as far east as Lāna'i and Moloka'i!



We are currently using satellite tags that track both locations and dive behavior to study where and how bottlenose dolphins spend their time. On the left you can see a satellite tag trackline from an individual tagged off O'ahu in 2016, along with an image of the tag attached to the fin.

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



In June 2018, a bottlenose dolphin calf (HITt1093 in the CRC catalog) was documented by citizen scientists with a gunshot wound to the melon, but appeared to make a full recovery. In July 2019, the same individual was photographed with a fishing line caught in its mouth and wrapped around one of its flippers. This individual has since been resighted several more times, and appeared to be in good body condition the last time it was seen in 2024. These incidents illustrate just some of the threats that these animals face off O'ahu.

