

The environment

You are going to read five paragraphs from the website of a wildlife conservation organisation. For questions 1–10 choose from the paragraphs (A–E). The paragraphs may be chosen more than once.

Which paragraph

- points out that some aspects of the volunteers' work is surprisingly challenging?

1	
---	--
- includes a promise about the excellence of some services it offers?

2	
---	--
- says that the organisation is keen to recruit people who have a certain hobby?

3	
---	--
- lists a number of threats to animals that live in the sea?

4	
---	--
- mentions the length of time that the organisation has existed?

5	
---	--
- outlines the characteristics that are useful for volunteers to have?

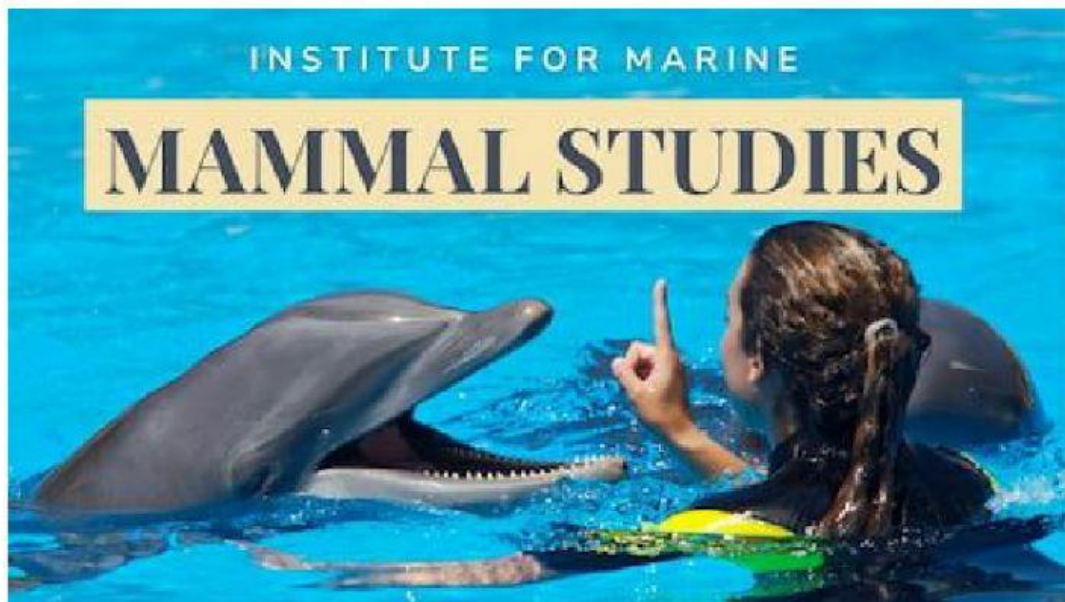
6	
---	--
- warns that the measures taken to protect one species are not enough?

7	
---	--
- mentions features which can help distinguish one animal from another of the same species?

8	
---	--
- mentions how the organisation informs the public about its research findings?

9	
---	--
- describes the process involved in one kind of information-gathering session?

10	
----	--



The Sea Mammal Institute

A The Sea Mammal Institute is a wildlife conservation organisation set up to protect whales, dolphins and porpoises. Our team of professional researchers work together with volunteers to identify and monitor the numbers and locations of these creatures in order to gain valuable knowledge of the state of our ocean environment, and the impact of climate change, noise disturbance, chemical pollution and overfishing in our seas. We are also proud of the educational role we perform, increasing public knowledge and understanding of sea mammals, and passing on what our data has taught us through community group talks and school visits.

B Our organisation relies heavily on volunteers, who help collect data and then input, organise and analyse it. Volunteers interested in photography are always very welcome to help update our photo-identification catalogue – a collection of pictures of all the different species we monitor – and organise our ever-growing image library. If you would like to be a volunteer, the most straightforward way to get involved is to contact the organisation’s co-ordinator in your area, and join him or her for a sea watch. Anyone with enthusiasm and a pair of binoculars can take part – and, as you’ll learn if you join us, patience is pretty essential too!

C Although we are pleased to receive any information on public sightings of whales, dolphins and porpoises, it is also important for us to have ‘effort-related’ data collected by trained volunteers. ‘Effort-related’ data is that recorded by observers who time their watch and note down specific environmental data every 15 minutes. It doesn’t matter how long each watch is, provided that its date and location are carefully noted down along with any details about sightings of sea creatures. We emphasise the need to do some basic training in observation before taking part in a watch because it’s not as

simple as it sounds. For example, despite the bottlenose dolphin being the probably the best-known type of dolphin, it is in fact rather tricky to identify with any confidence, since it has no clear pattern markings. The upper part of its body is plain dark brown and the underside is a paler brown or grey. So volunteers need plenty of guidance regarding how exactly to recognise it.

D The Sea Mammal Institute has been running courses for over twenty years, making it the most experienced organisation for training observers and students interested in sea animals in the country. It provides staff training for leading conservation organisations, and guarantees a very high quality of training from expert course leaders. The two-day introductory course recommended for new volunteer observers teaches participants the basics of how to identify different species, estimate group size, distinguish between calves, juveniles and adults and to assess the state of the sea. Plenty of practice conducting both land and boat-based surveys is given. Also included are sessions on basic photographic techniques to enable observers to identify an individual animal through distinctive markings, body size or injury scars.

E One of the strengths of our organisation is that we do long-term, continuous research. Over the 25 years since Sea Watch was set up, some significant insights have resulted from this research. For example, our monitoring of bottlenose dolphins shows that even in locations that are already controlled conservation areas, large numbers of motorised boats may be causing changes in their behaviour. Although strict codes of conduct stop boats approaching dolphins too closely or too fast, it is believed that the creatures’ social structures are being affected by the presence of so many boats in these areas.