

NAME: \_\_\_\_\_

## Dolphins

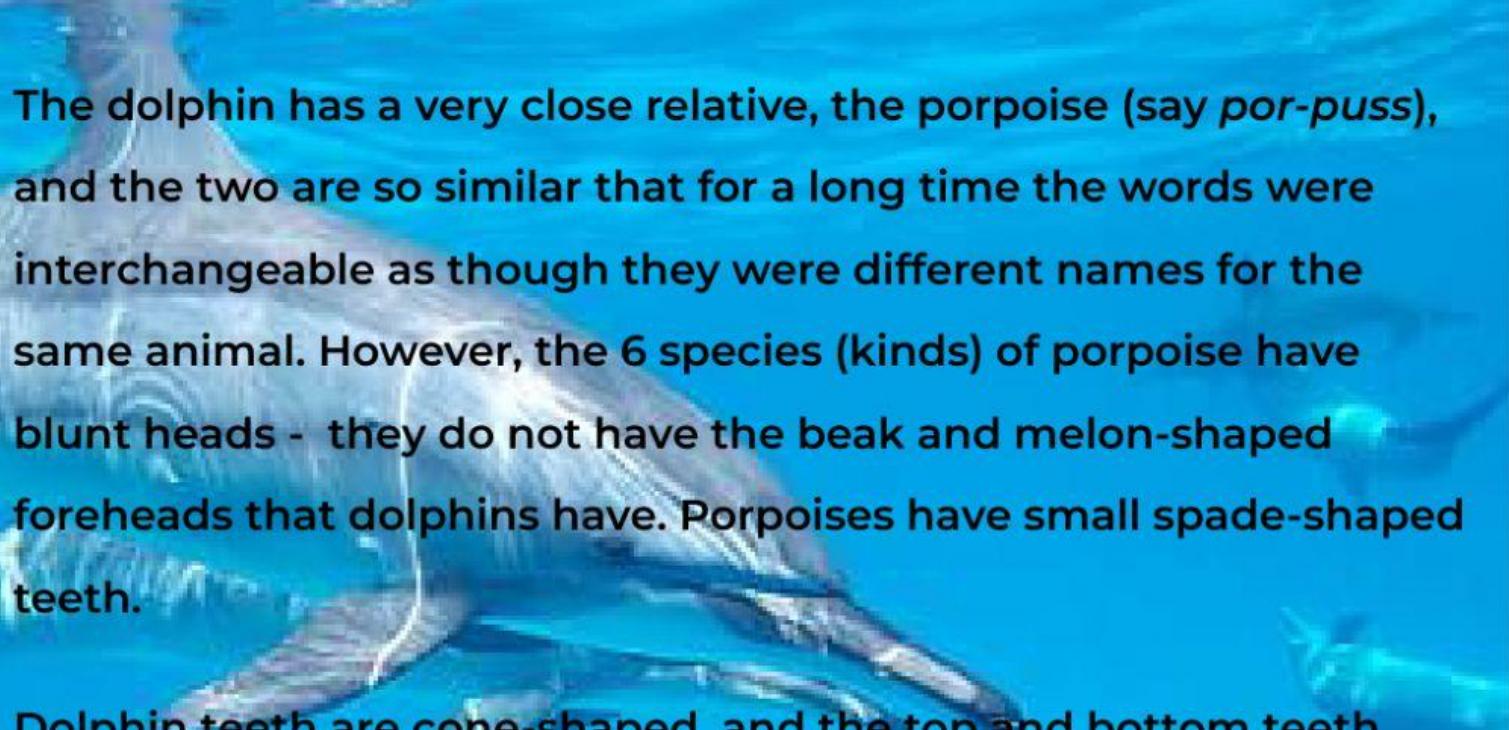
### Life Cycle

Female dolphins give birth to a single calf, very rarely twins, 9-17 months after mating with a male. The length of time depends on the species.

The calf is born tail first, and as soon as the head appears, the calf is guided to the surface to breathe. It suckles its mother's milk for about 1-2 years.

Dolphins are small whales. They are in the group of whales known as toothed whales, in the mammal group cetaceans (say see-tay-shun).

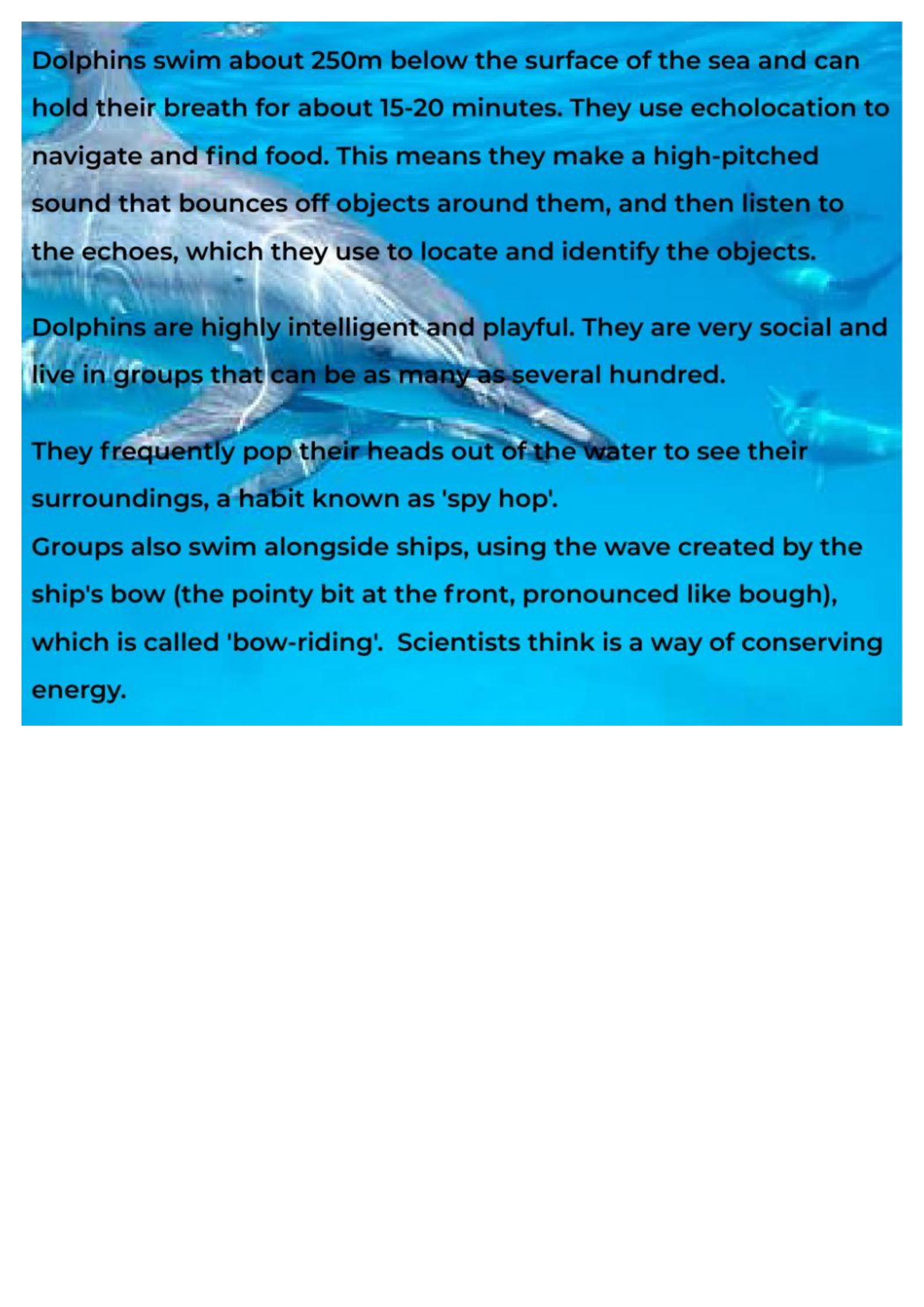
They are mammals, which means they breathe air, give birth to live young that drink milk from their mother's body.



The dolphin has a very close relative, the porpoise (say *por-puss*), and the two are so similar that for a long time the words were interchangeable as though they were different names for the same animal. However, the 6 species (kinds) of porpoise have blunt heads - they do not have the beak and melon-shaped foreheads that dolphins have. Porpoises have small spade-shaped teeth.

Dolphin teeth are cone-shaped, and the top and bottom teeth interlock. They have a melon-shaped head, most have a beak, and many small pointed teeth. They have a dorsal fin, which stands up on their back.

Most dolphins live in shallower parts of oceans in warm and temperate areas of the world.



Dolphins swim about 250m below the surface of the sea and can hold their breath for about 15-20 minutes. They use echolocation to navigate and find food. This means they make a high-pitched sound that bounces off objects around them, and then listen to the echoes, which they use to locate and identify the objects.

Dolphins are highly intelligent and playful. They are very social and live in groups that can be as many as several hundred.

They frequently pop their heads out of the water to see their surroundings, a habit known as 'spy hop'.

Groups also swim alongside ships, using the wave created by the ship's bow (the pointy bit at the front, pronounced like bough), which is called 'bow-riding'. Scientists think is a way of conserving energy.

## Diet

Dolphins eat a variety of prey such as fish, squid, and crustaceans. Groups hunt together, surrounding a school of fish and taking turns to swim through the fish and catching some. They also follow fishing boats to feed on fish that may be thrown overboard or drop from the nets.

**Directions.** Answer the following questions.

1. In which mammal group do dolphins belong to?

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2. What does echolocation mean?

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3. How long does a dolphin can hold its breath?

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4. How are dolphins similar to people?

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**Directions.** After reading about dolphins. Decide whether or not the statement is true or false.

Dolphins can have one or two calves.	true	false
They are small whales.	true	false
Dolphins are a kind of fish.	true	false
They are not very intelligent animals.	true	false
They are animals that live in the sea.	true	false
They breathe air as we do.	true	false
They are born from an egg.	true	false
Dolphins eat small sharks and shrimps.	true	false
They have skin, not scales.	true	false
They follow boats because they like people.	true	false