

# Shorewatch News

Watch out for whales and dolphins from your local shore

Issue 24 - Spring 2017



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## Contents

A Lucky Winter- Update from the last few months  
2016 Data review  
Shorewatch Hello  
Where are all the dolphins?  
WDC 2016 successes  
Save the date  
Pick of the pics

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Scottish Natural Heritage  
Dualchas Nàdair na h-Alba  
All of nature for all of Scotland  
Nàdair air fad airson Alba air fad

A world where every whale and dolphin is safe and free

WHALE AND  
DOLPHIN  
CONSERVATION  
WDC

# We couldn't do it without your help!



©LucyMolleson/WDC

Whales and dolphins are amazing: they pass on knowledge from one generation to the next; they play games just for fun; they have strong social bonds and they look after ill family members. But sadly, they still face so many threats and need our help to protect them against hunting, captivity, injury in nets, pollution, the dangers of boat traffic.



©CharliePhilips/WDC

WDC want to achieve 5 things for whales and dolphins:

1.

## STOP THE KILLING OF WHALES AND DOLPHINS

We work internationally to stop the killing of thousands of whales and dolphins every year despite a ban on commercial whaling

2.

## FREE WHALES AND DOLPHINS FROM A LIFE IN TANKS

We want an end to captivity and we work to end captive shows around the globe

3.

## PROTECT THE HOMES OF WHALES AND DOLPHINS

We work with governments and provide the scientific evidence for creating protected areas where whales and dolphins live

4.

## PREVENT DEATHS IN NETS

We work with communities and industries to prevent whales and dolphins dying in nets or fishing gear

5.

## PROMOTE THE RIGHTS OF WHALES AND DOLPHINS

We believe whales and dolphins have the rights to live as nature intended – not as humans decide

t: 01343 820 339  
e: [shorewatch@whales.org](mailto:shorewatch@whales.org)  
[whales.org/shorewatch](http://whales.org/shorewatch)

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# Shorewatch Update

## A lucky winter

2017 has gotten off to a great start. Most regions have experienced unseasonably calm weather and calm seas which has been perfect for Shorewatching. Together Shorewatch volunteers have conducted more than 600 watches from January - March, which is a great effort for the winter months and has led to a number of exciting sightings. We have had multiple recordings of humpback whales from west, east and north coasts. You have also spotted Risso's, orca, porpoise, white-beaked dolphins and the odd surprising minke whale from the west coast. Torry Battery has been seeing bottlenose dolphin all winter but in the last few weeks, we have been recording more frequent sightings across all of our east coast sites. Let's hope all this excitement will continue throughout 2017. I look forward to catching up with you all soon, as I make my way across the country this spring.

Happy watching! *Katie*

## Shorewatch reminders:

1. Please ensure to take care of yourself when carrying out a Shorewatch. Always put your safety first! Take care when walking to and from Shorewatch sites. Always wear appropriate foot ware and clothing and let somebody know where you are.
2. You can now record Seals in the same way you would a cetacean, so please don't forget to log a seal sighting on the sighting side of your Shorewatch data sheet with all the relevant details.



The Scottish Dolphin Centre welcomes our new recruits for 2017.

This year we are lucky enough to have Emma, Anna, Emily, Sadie and Alex as our residential interns. Our interns are vital to help us run the dolphin centre and assist on our conservation projects. I hope you will all get the opportunity to meet them.

Did you know? Only minke whales in the northern hemisphere have white bands on their pectoral fins.

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e: shorewatch@whales.org  
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# Shorewatch Science - 2016 in review

## The Numbers

6928  
Shorewatches  
in 2016  
(2173 positive)



That brings us to:  
43,767  
Shorewatches total!!  
2005-2016



2814  
Sightings



15 species  
of cetaceans

All sighting records are uploaded onto NBN Gateway. On April 1<sup>st</sup>, this will be turned off and the Atlas of Living Scotland will turn on!

## The people

50 site visits and socials over 250 cups of tea



154  
Volunteers contributed data this year

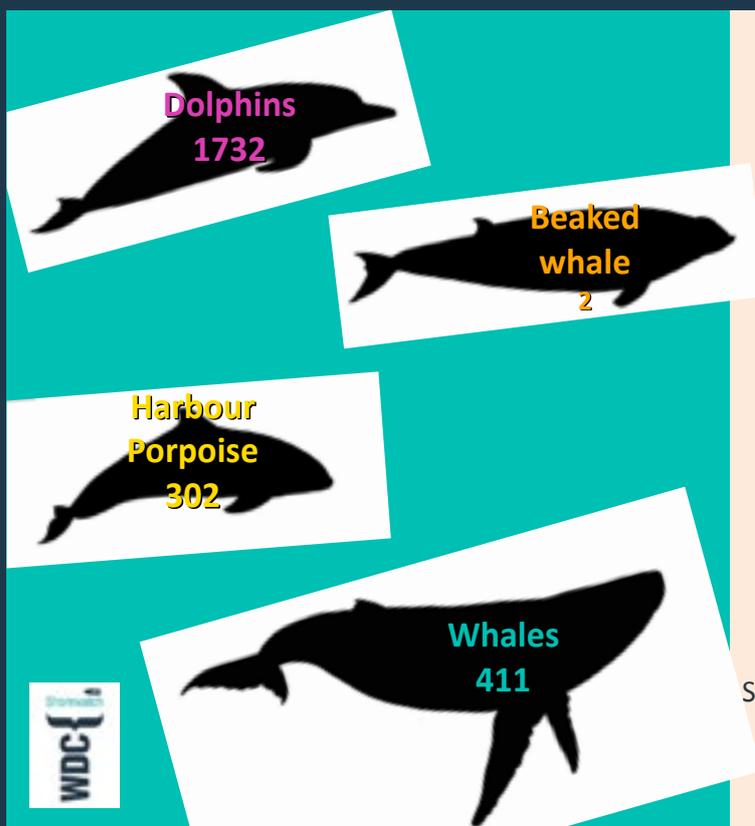
Shorewatchers have engaged with 7927 members of the public

Over 25 examples of volunteers going further

20 community events

45 trainings and workshops (141 people trained)

Volunteers raised £ 507



2016  
Shorewatch  
Species review  
Total sightings:  
2814

Wow, you saw that?!

Bottlenose dolphin (831)  
Harbour porpoise (302)  
Risso's dolphin (228)  
Minke (256)  
Humpback whale (84)  
Striped dolphin (1)  
Sowerby's beaked whale (1)  
Fin / Sei whale (7)  
Seals (300)

# Shorewatch Science

## 2016 data review sessions

Let's get together to take a look at what we all recorded during 2016. We will also have a wee refresh on Shorewatch protocol and health and safety so you are all on top form while at your Shorewatch site.

### Join us in March

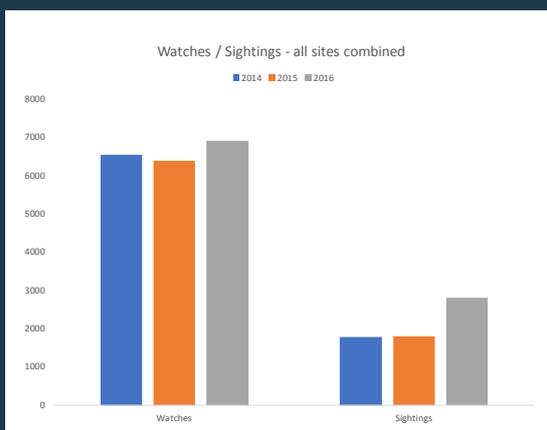
Sunday the 19th from 5 - 7pm  
at the Park Inn, Thurso

### Join us in April

Thursday the 20th,  
time and Stornoway venue TBC

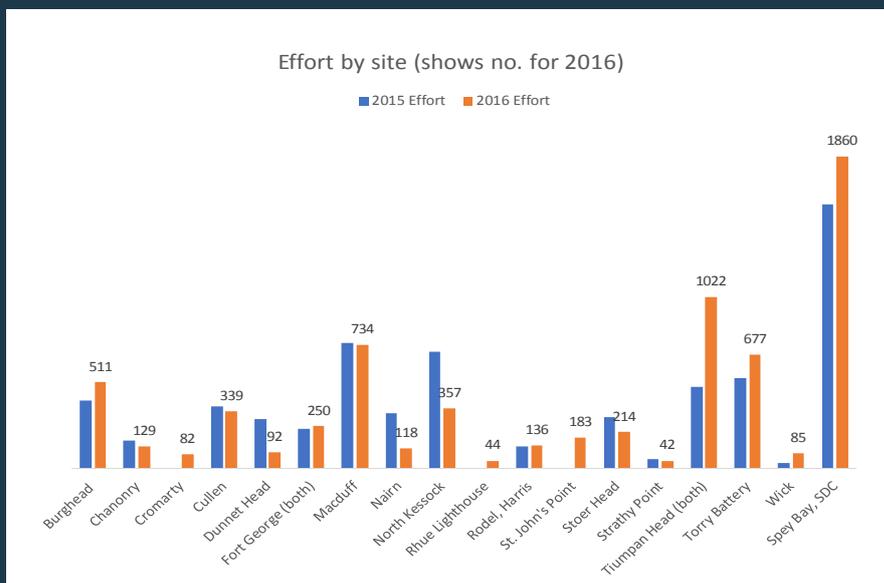
Sunday the 23rd,

time and Rodel venue TBC



Shorewatch effort  
across all sites

**6,928**  
Shorewatches in 2016  
(up from 6,254 in 2015)  
Great effort, thank you!



## Individual achievements:

### 500+ watches in 2016!

Ian Williams 734  
Steve Dodd 506

### 300+ watches in 2016

Simon Henwood 396  
Liz Brooker 357  
David Shaw 326

### 200+ watches in 2016

Monika Carrie 286  
Harris Brooker 269  
Janet Marshall 259  
Colin Graham 248  
Karen Langley 241  
Walter Innes 230  
Graham Kidd 228  
David Haines 215  
Carol Shaw 209  
Heather Bodie 207  
Charlie McNish 207



©KatieDyke/WDC

Did you know? Indo-Pacific bottlenose dolphins in Shark Bay, Western Australia have been seen carrying sponges on their jaws which they use to protect them whilst they forage for food on the sea floor. This is known as 'sponging'.

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e: shorewatch@whales.org  
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# Shorewatch News

## Shorewatch Introductions

It's that time of year again and we say hello to our new residential interns at the SDC. I am looking forward to getting to know them all and I am sure that Emma and Anna will be brilliant additions to Team Shorewatch.



### Emma says hello:

"Hi everyone, I am Emma, one of the new Shorewatch interns at WDC. I studied Zoology and a masters in Environmental Science at Aberdeen University. I volunteered for RSPB dolphinwatch in Aberdeen last year, so I have a little bit of WDC Shorewatch experience! I am really looking forward to this year and hopefully we'll have a great summer of sightings!"

### Anna says hello:

"Hi, I am Anna. I am really excited about getting out Shorewatching with you all. I have always had an interest in cetaceans and the marine environment. I studied Marine biology and Marine Systems and policies. I have also worked as an intern on a dolphin research project in Sardinia and spent time on the isle of Mull collecting data for my dissertation on Marine wildlife watching. I am looking forward to exploring the Moray Firth coast and hopefully seeing lots of marine wildlife"



The new interns are spending March brushing up on WDC policy, how to run the Scottish Dolphin Centre, how to do a Shorewatch and, of course, the realities of Scottish weather!



Looking for your own exciting opportunity?

Join the Hebridean Whale and Dolphin Trust (HWDT) on board research vessel, Silurian, to participate in a live-aboard survey to monitor potential impacts of the NATO Joint Warrior military exercise on cetacean populations in the Hebrides.

The dates for the survey are 1st – 7th April, 2017 and the cost per person is £700 (a discounted rate for Shorewatchers).

If you are interested in participating, please contact Morven Russell on [volunteercoordinator@hwdt.org](mailto:volunteercoordinator@hwdt.org) or 01688 302620.

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## Where are all the dolphins?

Two of our most adored Adopt-a-Dolphins, "Mischief" and "Kesslet," who are regularly seen in the inner Moray Firth have gone on holiday!

After not seeing any dolphin activity around the Inverness / Chanonry Point area for quite a while, our field officer, Charlie, was getting a bit down in the dumps. Charlie's last sighting of one of his favourite dolphins, Kesslet, was late January. In mid-February, Charlie received a message from a photographer friend and whale and dolphin enthusiast who regularly watches out for whales and dolphins away up from the north coast near John O'Groats. Karen was very excited as she had spotted bottlenose dolphins swimming past near where she lives at Thurso. This was a first for her; she has seen other species there but never bottlenose dolphins. Upon looking at the photos, Charlie immediately realised that the pictures were of Kesslet and her baby! Kesslet had been seen and photographed further than we have ever known her to travel from her home area. Happily for Charlie, Kesslet has now been seen back in her usual stomping grounds in the inner Moray Firth.

One of WDC's intrepid Shorewatchers, Monika Carrie, has been sending Charlie Phillips dorsal fin photos of some of the many bottlenose dolphins that her and fellow Shorewatcher, Walter Innes, have been seeing and photographing recently hunting around the Aberdeen Harbour area. Along with some other well-known dolphins that Charlie has seen over time in the inner Moray Firth (some 200 kilometres away), the photos show the unmistakable fin of Adopt-a-Dolphin character "Mischief" (ID#23). We hope that Mischief is enjoying the early salmon down at Aberdeen and that it won't be too long before Charlie sees him back up here around the Black Isle area.

Did you know? Fin whales produce about 970 litres of urine every day, enough to fill up more than three bath tubs! That's a nice little thought next time you're swimming in the sea!

## A white porpoise spotted in the Minch

JOIN THE CAMPAIGN  
TO STOP PORPOISES  
DYING IN FISHING  
GEAR IN UK WATERS

Thousands of  
dolphins, porpoises  
and whales die in  
fishing gear every  
year in UK seas. You  
can help.

Keep up to date  
with our new  
campaign on our  
website:  
[whales.org](http://whales.org)

Along with observing our well-known Adopt-a-Dolphin individuals and monitoring regularly observed species, we love to hear about your more unusual sightings. During early March, Steve Dodd, a Shorewatcher from Tiump Head, spotted a white porpoise. A few weeks earlier, a fisherman in the Minch had also seen a white porpoise. We don't know whether these were two sightings of the same individual but they are certainly a rarity with less than ten sightings of white porpoise ever recorded in UK waters!

Although at first glance, this porpoise appeared all white, on closer inspection it had black dorsal and pectoral fins (see example images below); it appears that Steve was watching a leucistic porpoise. Leucism is the loss of pigmentation resulting in white, pale or patchy colouration with some dark patches, usually observed at the dorsal and pectoral fins, the eyes, the blowhole and/or the melon. In comparison, albinism is the complete lack of melanin which results in an entirely white body and pink colouration around the eyes.

The adult status of these individuals is also of interest because abnormally pigmented animals in the wild are often at a disadvantage compared to regularly coloured individuals. Most of the white porpoises sighted in UK waters have been adults which indicates that these rather conspicuous individuals can survive for long period of time despite a potential natural disadvantage.



©SWF



©CharliePhillips

Did you know? Humpback whales can talk to each other across a distance of more than 2,500 km from the waters of Puerto Rico to the shores of Newfoundland

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e: [shorewatch@whales.org](mailto:shorewatch@whales.org)  
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# Shorewatch News



©WalterInnes

With the help from WDC's many supporters, we stand up for the protection of whales and dolphins globally. Here are some of our successes from 2016:

For many years WDC have campaigned to end captivity and it's paying off: finally Seaworld announced an end to Orca shows and breeding programs.

Governments from around the world met in Slovenia to discuss Japan's flouting of international law regarding whale hunting. Days before, WDC had exposed the open and illegal selling of whale meat.

Our campaign to protect the last 500 northern right whales is getting results. We pressured the government and they responded by protecting 39,000 square miles of ocean for these whales.

Protection of whales and dolphins was under threat at 2016 CITES; we lobbied hard at the meeting and the proposal to remove this protection was defeated, whales are now safer.

The southern community of orca is critically endangered with only 78 individuals left. Dams have dramatically reduced their main source of food, the chinook salmon. After a decade of work, an agreement was reached to remove four dams by 2020.

9,000 people signed our petition asking the UK to protect harbour porpoises in waters around the UK. The Scottish government reacted and the largest marine protected area for harbour porpoises in Europe was created.

Our Scottish Dolphin Centre picked up three more awards and our global education work was awarded by international governments.

The Ross Sea in Antarctica is one of the last untouched marine ecosystems in the world, home to minke and a unique type of orca. We have been working to protect their home; in 2016 the government listened and created the world's largest MPA.

We cannot achieve this without help from our supporters

So keep protesting

Keep campaigning

Keep Shorewatching

For whales and dolphin

We won't give up on them

Did you know? Antarctica is home to approximately half of the world's orca population.

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# Don't miss out

## Keep up to date with all Shorewatch activities



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Help us recruit more  
volunteers for your area by  
spreading the word about  
Shorewatch Trainings

And why not come along  
to refresh your own skills?



©CharliePhilips/WDC

## Shorewatch Training Sessions 2017

### Torry Battery

16th March, 11am - 3pm

24th June, 10.30am - 1pm  
Nigg Bay Golf Club

### Cullen

2nd June, 10am - 1pm  
Cullen Community rooms

### Spey Bay

2nd March, 10.30-2.30pm  
5th April, 10.30am-2.30pm  
7th May, 11am - 3pm  
15th August, 11am-3pm  
Scottish Dolphin Centre

### Burghead

7th June, 6 -9pm

12th August, 11am-3pm  
Harbour Master's Office

### Nairn/FortGeorge

8th June, 11am - 2pm  
Nairn Sailing Club

### Chanonry Point/Cromarty

28th May, 11am - 3pm  
Fortrose Community Centre

9th July, 11am - 3pm  
Inverness, venue TBC

### Wick/Thurso/Strathy/ Dunnet head/St John's Point

19th March, 11am - 3pm  
Pultney Peoples Centre

8th July, 10.30am-1.30pm  
Sea Drift Centre

### Tiumpnan Head

20th April, 11am-3pm  
Lews Castle College

19th July, 6-9pm  
Arts Centre, Stornoway

### Rodel/Scalpay

22nd April, 11am - 2pm  
West Harris Trust  
Community Hall

24th July, 11am - 2pm  
West Harris Trust  
Community Hall

### Ullapool

17th June 11am - 3pm  
Macphail Community Centre

### Orkney

25th March, 10.30am-2.30pm  
Sanday School

If you can help advertise  
these trainings please let us  
know.

t: 01343 820 339  
e: shorewatch@whales.org  
whales.org/shorewatch



# Catch up with the team

Pop along to your Shorewatch site the next time the Shorewatch team are in your area. Enjoy watching with others that love whales and dolphins as much as you. Plus, the team will always have tea and biscuits with them!

The following dates are when the Shorewatch team will be in your area:

## Torry Battery

16th March, 3pm  
17th May, 12pm  
24th June, 1pm

## Cullen

11th May, 1pm  
2nd June, 2pm  
3rd July, 11am

## Stoer

11th June, 1pm  
9th August, 10am

## Burghead

1st March, 2pm  
26th April, 10am

## Nairn

11th April, 10.30  
8th June, 2pm  
20th June, 12pm

## Chanonry Point/Cromarty

4th May, 11am @ Chanonry  
2pm @ Cromarty  
22nd June, 11am

## Wick

19th March, 3pm  
6th July, 4pm

## Dunnet

20th March, 10am  
8th July, 3pm

## Thurso

20th March, 1pm  
7th July, 11am

## Strathy

20th March, 4pm  
7th July, 3pm

## Rodel/Scalpay

21st, 22nd, 23rd April  
23rd, 24th, 25th July

## Tiree

27th, 28th, 29th June

## Ullapool

29th April, 1pm  
17th June, 3pm

## Fort George

14th February, 1.30pm  
11th April, 1.30pm  
20th June, 3pm

## Tiumpan Head

19th, 20th, 21st April  
18th, 19th, 20th July

# Community events: Support the Shorewatch team at events near you

## March

18th, Caithness Science Fair, Wick.

## April

15th-16th, Easter at Fort George.

## May

1st, Really Wild Festival Scottish Dolphin Centre

13th, Nairn Harbour open day

21th - 27th, Orca Week at Duncasby head and various locations along the north coast

## July

20th -21st, HebCelt Festival, Stornoway

22nd, Ullapool Harbour Day

## August

8th, Clatcholl Sand Sculpture event

12th - 13th, Amazing Ages at Fort George

## September

11th, Mountain Festival, Rodel TBC.

Come help us, join in the fun and spend a few hours manning the stall.



©CharliePhilips/WDC

Attending community events can help us

- Raise awareness about WDC
- Raise awareness about the amazing creatures that can be seen from the shore
- Recruit more Shorewatch volunteers.

Do you know of an event happening in your area?  
Contact [shorewatch@whales.org](mailto:shorewatch@whales.org)

Perhaps you could volunteer to man the stall.  
We run events training workshop to help you prepare for volunteering at an event.

Email [shorewatch@whales.org](mailto:shorewatch@whales.org) to find out how to get involved and to sign up.



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# Pick of the pics

We won't give  
up on them

©NationalGeographic

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