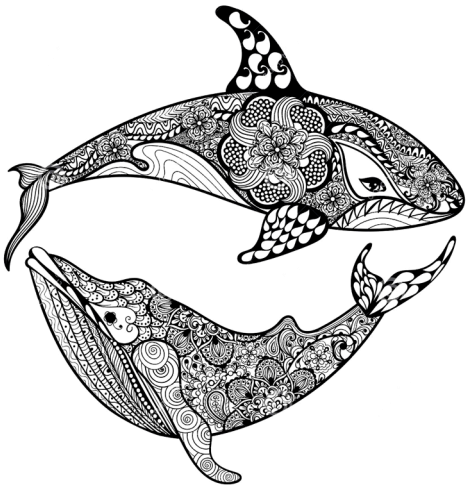
Marine Education Poster Contest 2018

Sponsored by Blue Lagoon Island & Dolphin Encounters

Dolphin Encounters-Project BEACH **CONTEST DEADLINE: MARCH 23RD,2018**

A Whale of a Choice!

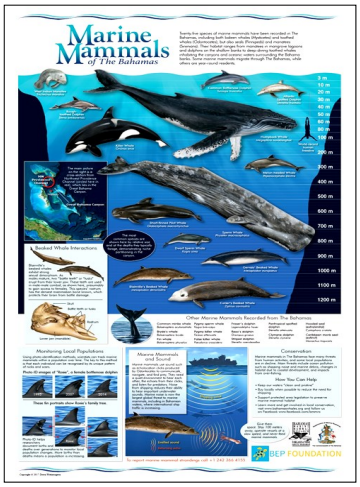


The Bahamas shares its waters with a diverse number of marine mammal species that enjoy our beautiful seas. However, these incredible animals face daily challenges that make life in the ocean much harder and often dangerous.

Pollution from human-caused noise and marine debris are just a few problems that we need to understand and prevent.

Studies of marine mammals in the wild and under human care provide valuable research to understand these animals as well as provide emergency stranding and rescue response.

Learn more about the unique challenges the marine mammals face and inspire Bahamians to make a whale of a choice through your ocean art!



Coming soon from BMMRO to local schools!

Wow... We Have How Many Kinds of Marine Mammals Here?!!

Scientists from the **Bahamas Marine Mammal Research Organisation** (BMMRO) have discovered that there are over two dozen species of marine mammals in The Bahamas, including:

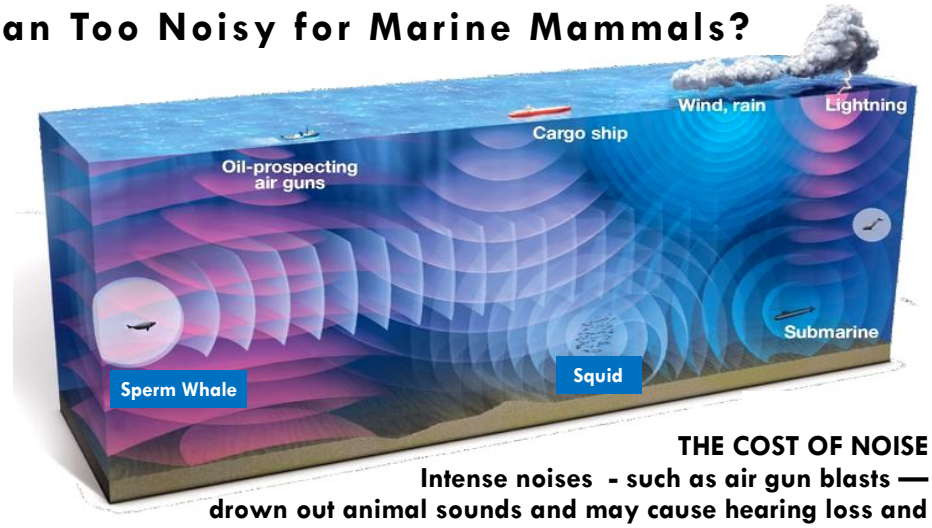
- Humpback Whale
- Sperm Whale
- Dwarf Sperm Whale
- Pygmy Sperm Whale
- Fin Whale
- Bryde's Whale
- Melon-Headed Whale
- Minke Whale
- Short-Finned Pilot Whale
- Blainville's Beaked Whale
- Cuvier's Beaked Whale
- Gervais' Beaked Whale
- Pygmy Killer Whale
- False Killer Whale
- Orca
- Rough-Toothed Dolphin
- Atlantic Spotted Dolphin
- Pan-Tropical Spotted Dolphin
- Atlantic Bottlenose Dolphin
- Frazer's Dolphin
- Striped Dolphin
- Risso's Dolphin
- West Indian Manatee
- Hooded Seal
- Caribbean Monk Seal (extinct)

Are We Making the Ocean Too Noisy for Marine Mammals?

Our oceans are very noisy places. Sounds in the ocean come from the animals that live there, natural sounds that come from weather, for example wind and lightning, and sounds that are manmade, such as **ship noise**.

What effect does all this noise have on marine mammals? Each of these sound types can have various effects on marine mammals, ranging from advantageous to benign to harmful.

Some of the ways **marine mammals** use sound are to find food, find and attract mates, avoid predators, navigate, and communicate with members of their own species.



THE COST OF NOISE

Intense noises - such as air gun blasts — drown out animal sounds and may cause hearing loss and other damage to marine mammals. Sounds close in frequency, such as a ship's propeller miles away, can mask a whale's call.

Noise Pollution Continued...

Sounds caused by **human activities** contribute to the underwater acoustic environment in which marine mammals live. Although some sounds can be benign, certain noises can harm marine mammals.

Some man-made sound may not cause any observable responses from marine mammals, while other sounds may cause subtle changes in diving, surfacing, or vocalization patterns.

Changes in behavior as a result of increasing ocean noise can have serious consequences for marine mammal populations if it causes significant disruption of feeding, breeding, or other critical activities.

Depending on how loud a sound is, how close the source is, and its frequency range, sounds can have short- or long-term impacts on the animal's ability to hear.

Some very loud noises can cause **physical damage** to the anatomy of marine animals, including in tissues other than hearing organs.

How can we help to reduce noise in the ocean?

Since we live on islands, all our supplies arrive by ship, so by shopping we directly contribute to the increase in noise in the sea. Therefore, the single most important thing we all can do is to make more responsible purchases and stop buying items we do not need. You can also help by making responsible purchases in bulk.

To learn more or **listen to actual ocean sounds,** go to Discovery of Sound in the Sea at **www.dosits.org**!

Marine Debris: Fight for A Trash-Free Sea!

Ocean trash affects the health of wildlife, people and local economies. Trash in the water and on the shore can be **mistaken as food** by wildlife, or **entangle** animals with lethal consequences.

Plastic also attracts and concentrates other pollutants from surrounding seawater, posing a **contamination risk** to those species that then eat it. This risk accumulates for top predators like whales, dolphins and us.

From plankton to whales, animals across ocean ecosystems have been contaminated by plastic. Plastic has been found in 59% of sea birds like albatross and pelicans, in 100% of sea turtle species, and more than 25% of fish sampled from seafood markets around the world. If you were a whale, would you want to have fishing line wrapped around your tail? No way!

Marine debris isn't an ocean problem—it's a people problem. That means people are the solution. Every day, all over the world, concerned people take the problem into their own hands by cleaning up their local waterways and beaches.

Tackling the problem of marine debris in the ocean begins on land. You can help in many ways. Your first step is finding ways to reduce the trash you create:

- Skip the straw
- Bring reusable bags when shopping
- Go digital if printing isn't needed
- Reuse plastic containers

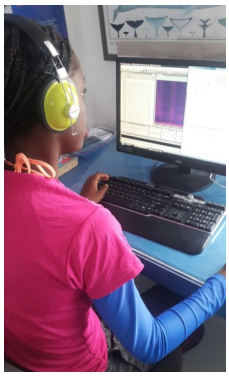
Once trash is made, you can still prevent it from becoming marine debris by:

- Put trash into a proper trash can
- Participate in beach or park clean-up
- Recycle items locally
- Help prevent illegal trash dumping
- Take the **Six-Week Trash Fee Sea Challenge** from the Ocean Conservancy

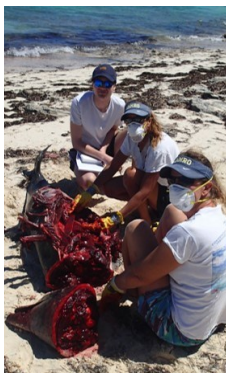
Stranding, Research & Rescue: Bahamas Marine Mammal Research Organisation

Based in Sandy Point, Abaco The **Bahamas Marine Mammal Research Organisation** (BMMRO) is a Bahamian organisation whose mission is to promote **conservation** of marine mammals and their habitats through **scientific research** and **educational outreach**.

BMMRO scientists conduct field studies of wild, free ranging marine mammals in The Bahamas to learn about their biology and conservation needs in our waters. This work includes **tagging** animals to learn about their movement patterns, collecting **biopsy samples** (skin and blubber) for genetic and contaminant studies, and taking **photographs** of individuals to monitor how local populations are faring in an ever-changing environment.



Student listening to boat and animal noise recordings



BMMRO performs a necropsy on a deceased beached dolphin

You can join BMMRO's science team by signing up for **Whale Camp** or **Whale Internship,** free summer programs for Bahamian students who want to discover the wonderful world of whales and dolphins.

BMMRO leads the response to **strandings** of whales and dolphins – alive, injured or deceased — all over the country. Understanding why marine mammals are dying is critical to their conservation. It can be a messy job, but someone has got to do it! To learn more about BMMRO's work, go to **www.bahamaswhales.org** and follow BMMRO on .