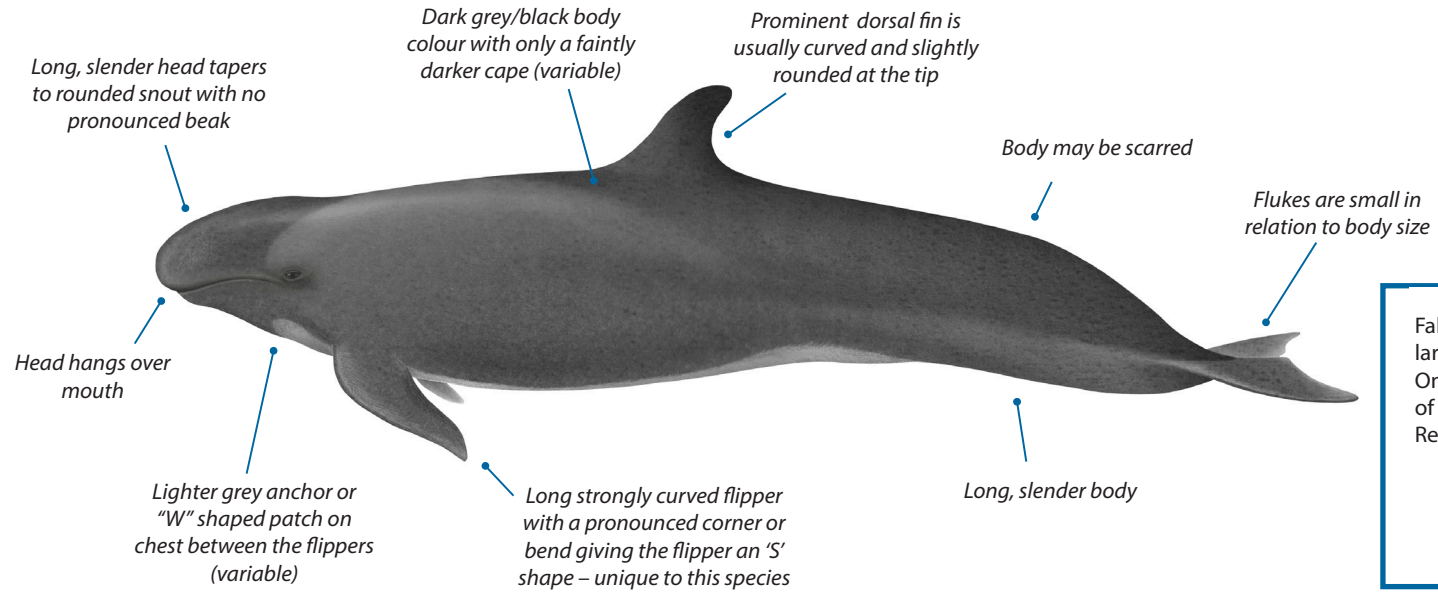


False Killer whale (*Pseudorca crassidens*)

Distribution: coastal and primarily offshore waters in tropical and temperate regions (see map below and full list of countries in the detailed species account online at: <https://www.handbook.iwc.int/en/species/false-killer-whale>)

Adult length: Up to 6m (male)/5m (female)
 Adult weight: up to 2,000kg (m)
 Newborn: 1.6-1.9m /Unknown




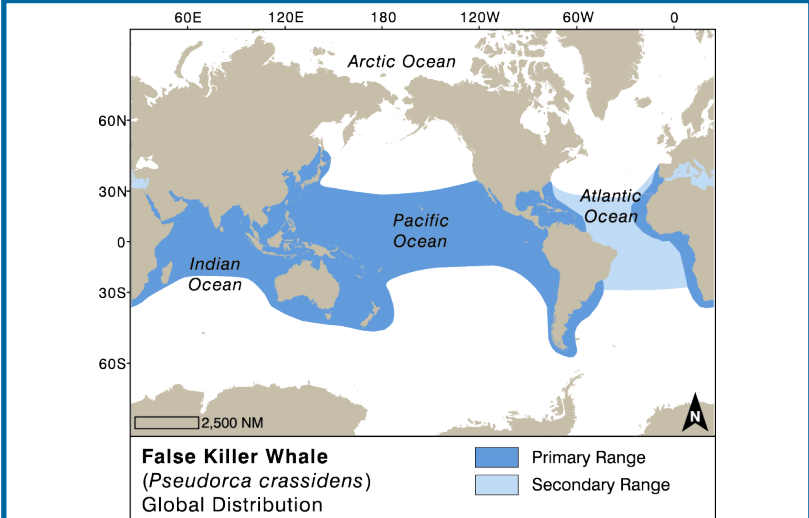
Threats: entanglement, contaminants
 Habitat: offshore
 Diet: squid, fish
 IUCN Conservation status: **Data deficient**



Fun Facts

- False killer whales are so named because the shape of their skulls, not their external appearance, is similar to that of killer whales.
- Like killer whales and sperm whales, false killer whales form stable family groups, and females who no longer produce calves themselves probably help to look after the young of other females
- False killer whales participate in prey-sharing; a behaviour thought to reinforce social bonds

This photo illustrates the bullet-shaped head and typically 'S' shaped flippers that help observers to distinguish false killer whales from pilot whales. Photo courtesy of Paula Olson/SEFSC/NOAA.

False Killer whale distribution. Adapted by Nina Lisowski from Würsig, B., Thewissen, J.G.M. and Kovacs, K.M. Editors (2018) "Encyclopedia of Marine Mammals", 3rd ed. Academic Press, Elsevier: San Diego, CA. Copyright Elsevier: <http://www.elsevier.com>



False killer whales often behave like big dolphins, bow-riding with vessels and sometimes leaping clear of the water. They have some of the closest and longest lasting family bonds of any marine mammal species. Photos courtesy of Robin Baird



False killer whales are found in tropical and temperate waters between latitudes of 50° S and 50° N. They are generally uncommon and poorly studied in most regions. They appear to occur more frequently in deeper open ocean waters, but can occasionally move into nearshore areas.