

# Southern Right Whale Dolphin

## *Lissodelphis peronii*

(Greek *lissos*= smooth; *delphis*=dolphin; *peronii* recognizes the French naturalist Francois Peron who in 1802 observed and described Southern Right Whale Dolphins south of Tasmania)



This beautifully streamlined dolphin shares its name with the Right Whale because both are lacking a dorsal fin.

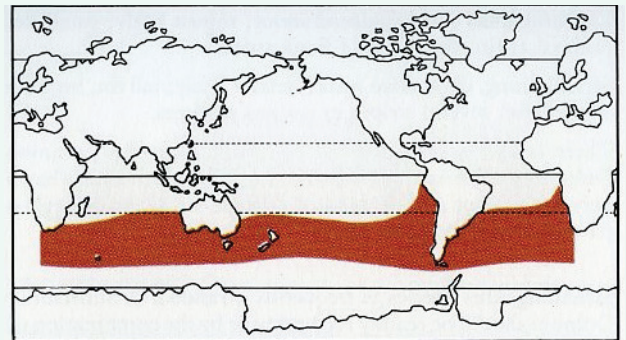
It is the only dolphin in Australasian waters which has no dorsal fin, yet despite this easily recognisable character it has only rarely been seen at sea, and only some 12+ stranded specimens have been reported from the region.

They seem to live well offshore, feeding on both fish and squid. Most groups number from 30-100, but much larger groups have been reported and in 1964 herds of up to 1,000 were seen east of the South Island in New Zealand.

As a species they were once thought to be rare but is probably fairly common in low latitudes.

Their length varies between 2.9 m for males and 2.3 m for females and have a lifespan of some 40 years.

A related species *lissodelphis borealis* occurs in the northern Pacific Ocean.



ABOVE: This map shows the waters where the Southern Right Whale dolphins are found.

BELOW: A stranded Southern Right Whale dolphin being examined on Farewell Spit. Photo K. Owen



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