



2019 Port Stephens Bottlenose Dolphin Census
Sunday 16th June 2019
11:00am – 12:00pm

Please refer to attached map to find your site.

The Marine Parks Association would like to thank you for your interest in the 2019 Port Stephens Bottlenose Dolphin Census. The dolphin census is important because it gives us insight into the health of the population. It is intended to be fun for participants, who will also be collecting important information about our dolphins.

The following pages include information you will need in order to complete the census.

Included is:

- Information about how the census will run
- Map of Port Stephens with all viewing sites numbered
- Sighting Log sheets
- Safety awareness sheet

If you have any questions or concerns please give me a call on 0412 464 325.

Thank you for your participation in the 2019 Port Stephens Dolphin Census.
Happy counting!

Yours sincerely,


L. Skelton

Lisa Skelton
Education Coordinator- Marine Parks Association
Ph: 0412 464 325
Email: marineparksassociation@gmail.com

How the Census Will Work

During the census, volunteers will be distributed around Port Stephens and up and down the coast. Each volunteer will be between 1 and 2 kilometres apart. Additionally, we will be looking for boats to monitor areas within the Port. At each census site, observers will record information about the dolphins encountered during the census period and where possible, take Identification photos of individual dolphins (*Information on how to take identification photos can be found at www.marineparksassociation.org.au*).

Each Census site will require at least one observer for the duration of the census, from 11:00am-12:00pm. It is important that everyone participates at the same time so we know that dolphins have not been counted twice.

At the conclusion of the census, sightings can be logged at www.marineparksassociation.org.au/#!/submit-a-census-report/c114v

To help with recording information, sighting log sheets are included in this pack. It is important that you fill in the sighting form correctly so the official counters can analyse the data and reduce chances of errors. During that time, we ask that observers attempt to obtain Identification shots of the dolphins they encounter and log them with sightings reports.

What if there is bad weather on the day?

If it is raining and/or very windy making conditions for the census unsuitable, a representative from the Marine Parks Association will attempt to contact each group prior to the scheduled census time to cancel.

Before you start

Please take a pen or pencil with you to fill out the forms. Give yourself enough time to get to your site before 11:00am and be aware of potential dangers at your site (refer to safety awareness sheet).

At 11:00am

All eyes on the water! Any dolphins seen must be recorded on the sightings log sheets.

How to complete a Sightings Log Sheet

Sightings are logged according to 'pods'/groups. Dolphins seen by themselves can be logged as their own pod. For example, at 11:05am a single dolphin swims past towards the east and then at 11:15am a small pod of 3 dolphins swims by very slowly, also towards the east. For the purpose of the census, these are two different pods. The forms should be filled out as follows.

Sightings Log

Pod 1

Date of Sighting: 3/6/2019

Viewing Point: *L26*

Time first seen: *11:05am*

Time last seen: *11:08am*

Number of dolphins: *1*

Direction of travel: *East*

Additional Information (eg. If a calf was present and any observed behaviours): *Moving quickly, about 20m from shore.*

Pod 2

Date of Sighting: 3/6/2019

Viewing Point: *L26*

Time first seen: *11:15am*

Time last seen: *11:17am*

Number of dolphins: *3*

Direction of travel: *East*

Additional Information (eg. If a calf was present and any observed behaviours): *Calf present, regular surface times, splashing*

There will be lots of different scenarios. If you have any questions, please contact Lisa Skelton on 0412 464 325.

If on the day you are unsure, do the best you can but write on the form what you are unsure about. We fill factor that into the counting. The idea is to be as accurate as possible. For example, if you aren't sure whether there is three or four dolphins in a pod, write it down. The next census point around the corner may see the same pod.

Try and obtain Photo Identification shots for seen dolphins. This will help with eliminating double sightings.

What If I Don't See Any Dolphins?

There will be many Census Points that may not see any dolphins at all. This is OK! It is just as important to know that no dolphins were seen at your site and ten were seen elsewhere.

After the Census

We ask that all reports be logged through the Marine Parks Association Website:

www.marineparksassociation.org.au/#!submit-a-census-report/c114v

The online form will resemble the 'Sightings Log' form used during the census. Please submit one form for every pod encountered during the census, with Identification photos where possible.

For sightings logs which are accompanied by more than 5 photos, please email the details of the sighting, along with the photos to marineparksassociation@gmail.com

If you have any questions regarding submission, please contact Lisa Skelton on 0412 464 325.

Thank you very much for volunteering your time for the 2019 Port Stephens Dolphin Census.

Good luck, we hope you enjoy your time and see lots of dolphins!

Sightings Log

Pod 1

Date of Sighting: 3/6/2019

Viewing Point:

Time first seen:

Time last seen:

Number of dolphins:

Direction of travel:

Additional Information (eg. If a calf was present and any observed behaviours):

Pod 2

Date of Sighting: 3/6/2019

Viewing Point:

Time first seen:

Time last seen:

Number of dolphins:

Direction of travel:

Additional Information (eg. If a calf was present and any observed behaviours):

There will be lots of different scenarios. If you have any questions, please contact Lisa Skelton on 0412 464 325.

Sightings Log

Pod 3

Date of Sighting: 3/6/2019

Viewing Point:

Time first seen:

Time last seen:

Number of dolphins:

Direction of travel:

Additional Information (eg. If a calf was present and any observed behaviours):

Pod 4

Date of Sighting: 3/6/2019

Viewing Point:

Time first seen:

Time last seen:

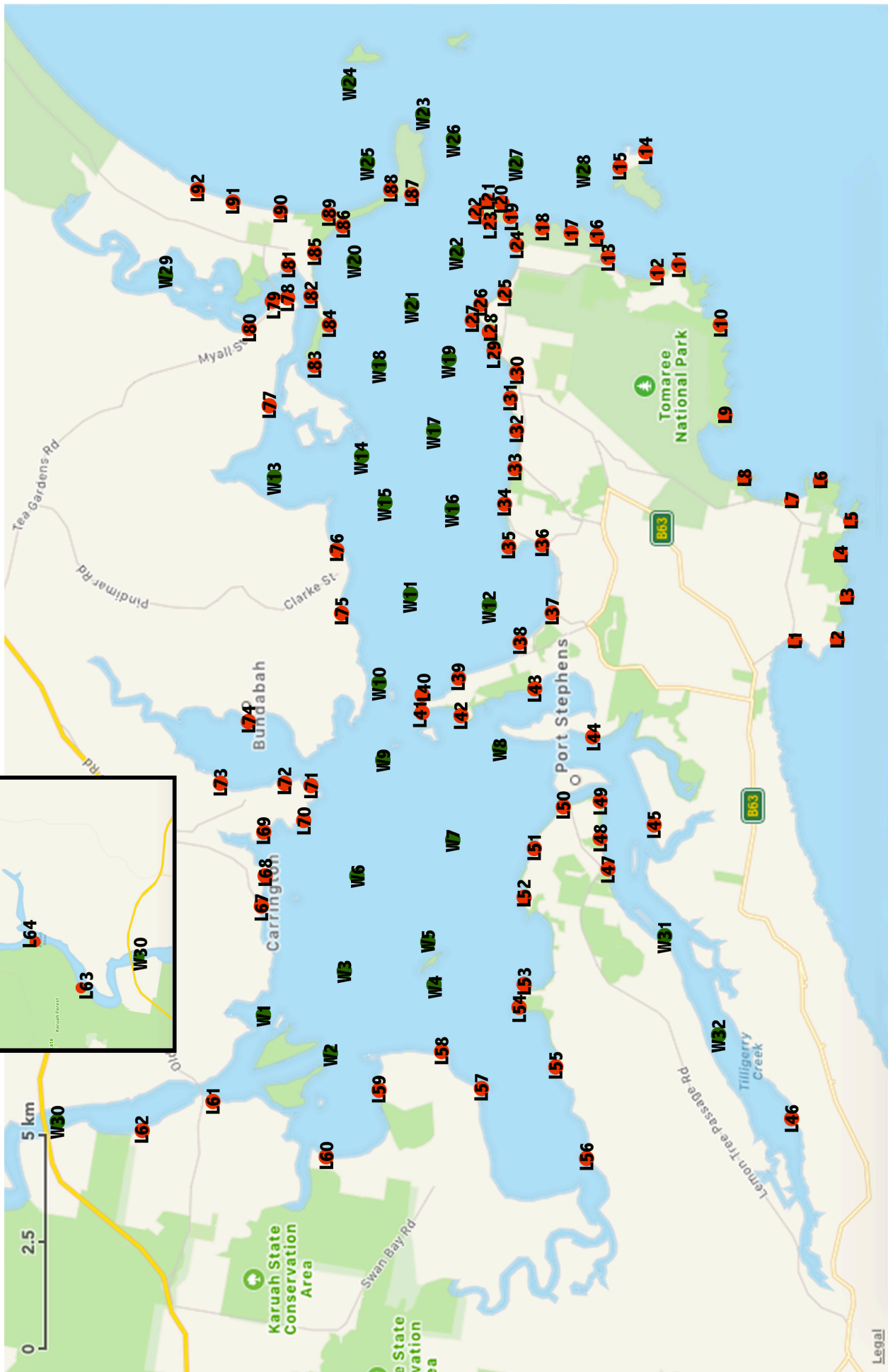
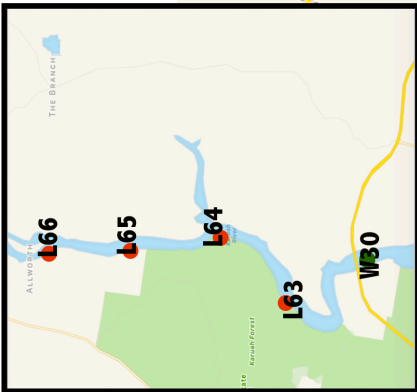
Number of dolphins:

Direction of travel:

Additional Information (eg. If a calf was present and any observed behaviours):

There will be lots of different scenarios. If you have any questions, please contact Lisa Skelton on 0412 464 325.

Port Stephens Dolphin Census





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Safety During the Census

The Marine Parks Association would like to ensure that a great day is had by all. This means that while enjoying the sights of our amazing dolphins, that everyone stays safe.

Some participants will have never been to their designated census point before. Some of the sites are near urban areas where there is traffic with relatively easy access, while other sites are quite remote where there are no tracks or facilities and may require a walk up to one kilometre.

Below is a generic hazard identification check list for your site. The purpose of the list is to assist volunteers participating in the census to identify and be prepared for hazards that may be associated with your site.

Potential Hazard:

Adjacent to Water
Rocky
Sunburn
Ocean Swell
Long walk

Non Formed Tracks
Snakes
Windy
High cliff or ledge
Vehicular traffic

To prepare yourself, or group for these potential hazards, please ensure the following:

- 1) Wear appropriate footwear
- 2) Wear a hat and sunscreen. Protect your skin from the sun.
- 3) When not on a formed track please be careful where you step.
- 4) Keep an eye out for and avoid snakes.
- 5) Ensure children are supervised at all times.
- 6) Take drinking water.
- 7) Be careful of traffic.
- 8) If on a boat, ensure your boat is seaworthy and fitted with the appropriate safety equipment. Ensure your crew are prepared for the conditions. If you are concerned about the seas conditions, i.e. if they are too rough, stay home or contact Lisa Skelton on 0412 464 325 and an appropriate land based viewing point can be arranged.

Please note that if it is raining and/or very windy, making conditions for the census unsuitable, a representative of the Marine Parks Association will attempt to contact each group prior to the census time to cancel.