

# Harbour Porpoise

*Phocoena phocoena*



## Species Description

The Harbour Porpoise is mottled greyish black with light undersides, with small pointed flippers and a round head. Some have darker coloured areas along the back and by the eyes and mouth. It is the smallest cetacean in this region, reaching lengths up to 1.7 m. It is a porpoise and not a dolphin because of its triangular dorsal fin, blunt snout and round-flattened teeth. Its dorsal fin has small growths (tubercles) along its edge.



**Key ID Features:** \*blunt snout \*triangular dorsal fin \*small size

## STATUS



Special Concern COSEWIC

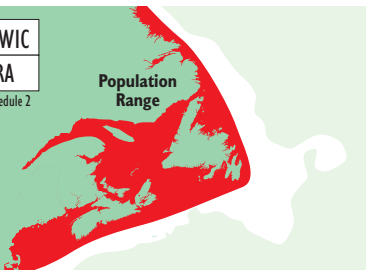
Threatened\*

SARA

\*on Schedule 2

Distributed throughout oceans in the northern hemisphere. In the western North Atlantic, typically found in the waters off Nova Scotia from July until September, although some may remain over the winter. Concentration in the Bay of Fundy.

Population Range



## Interesting Points

- Its echolocation clicks are so high in frequency that humans cannot hear them.
- Short-lived (up to 20) with many individuals not reaching age 10.

## Threats

- Incidental mortality in fisheries including bottom-set gill nets.
  - Habitat degradation.
  - Loss of habitat (avoidance of areas with acoustic harassment devices like salmon aquaculture locations).
  - Chemical pollutants.
  - Subsistence harvests.
- Learn how you can help on page 136.



The Grand Manan Whale and Seabird Research Station has worked with fishermen to release over 750 Harbour Porpoises from herring weirs.

## Contacts, Information, Sighting Reports & Stewardship Opportunities

**Contact:** DFO Species at Risk 1-866-891-0771 or [xmarsara@mar.dfo-mpo.gc.ca](mailto:xmarsara@mar.dfo-mpo.gc.ca)

**Info:** [www.dfo-mpo.gc.ca/species-especes](http://www.dfo-mpo.gc.ca/species-especes), [www.sararegistry.gc.ca](http://www.sararegistry.gc.ca)

**Sighting Reports:** [xmarwhalesightings@dfo-mpo.gc.ca](mailto:xmarwhalesightings@dfo-mpo.gc.ca)

**Stewardship:** GMWSRS: [www.gmwsrs.info](http://www.gmwsrs.info) MARS: 1-866-567-6277