



# Chesapeake Dolphin Watch

## UMCES • Chesapeake Biological Laboratory



Members of the public inform bottlenose dolphin research in the Chesapeake Bay.

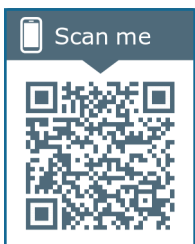
**Join us! [www.ChesapeakeDolphinWatch.org](http://www.ChesapeakeDolphinWatch.org)**

Little is known about how often bottlenose dolphins come into Chesapeake Bay, how long they spend here, what areas of the Bay they are using and why. In 2017, Dr. Helen Bailey and her team at Chesapeake Biological Laboratory (CBL) developed an app which engages the public to help answer these questions. Members of the public can report dolphin sightings in real time. This observation network provides information on dolphin distribution and local residents are encouraged to learn about these animals and their environment through participating in this research project.

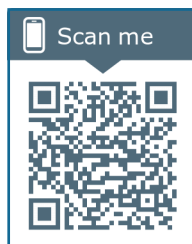
To join over 7,500 observers already reporting dolphins, set up a free account at: [chesapeakedolphinwatch.org](http://chesapeakedolphinwatch.org) or download the app on your mobile device. All you need to sign up is an email address.

### To report a dolphin sighting:

- click the map on the location you saw the dolphins
- enter your dolphin sighting date and time
- select the group size from the slider bar
- type a short description of what you saw, where you observed the dolphins, or other interesting details
- upload images (photos or video)

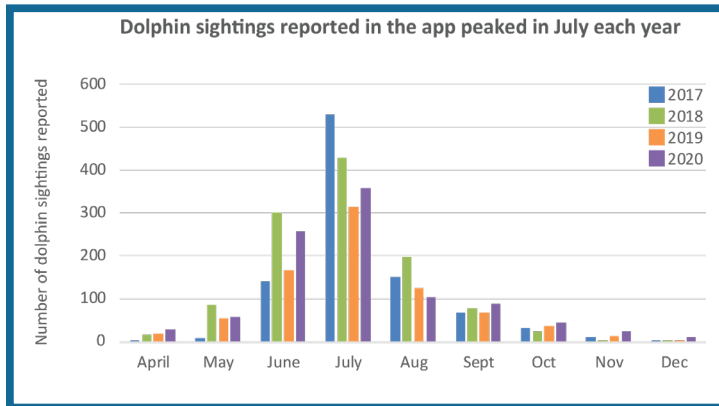


Scan one of these QR codes with your smart phone to download the app from Google Play (left) or Apple App Store (right).

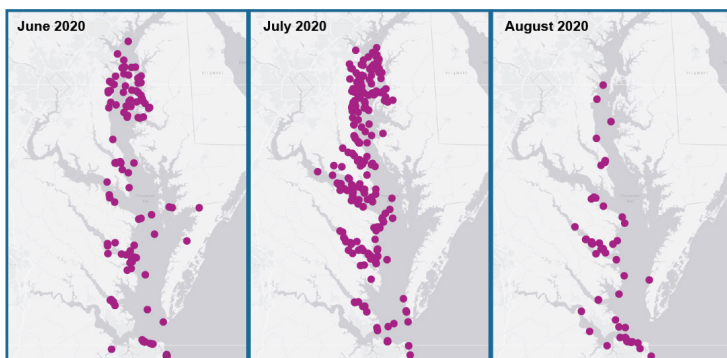


Visitors are welcome to use the app to browse dolphin sightings submitted by others, view photos and videos of dolphins, and listen to recordings of dolphin calls from our hydrophones (underwater microphones).

In 2020, 989 total sightings were reported of which 728 were confirmed (74%) in a quality check by a member of our UMCES team. This is similar to recent years.



Reported dolphin sightings were widespread throughout the Bay in 2020. Despite Covid-19 related closures of boating and travel restrictions, dolphin sightings increased from 2019 to 2020.



A scientific paper using DolphinWatcher's sighting data was completed in 2020 and will be published in Summer 2021! During 2020, Dr. Helen Bailey was supervising 3 graduate students and 3 research assistants studying underwater acoustics (sounds), dolphin movements, and dolphin foraging (hunting and feeding) behavior in Chesapeake Bay.

Master's degree student, Amber (right), is investigating whether dolphins at the same location have more similar whistles.



Part of Ben's PhD research (left) uses underwater recording devices and computer analysis to understand the wide range of underwater sounds present in Chesapeake Bay, including calls by fish, such as oyster toadfish.

Lauren (right) is studying the co-occurrence of bottlenose dolphins and their prey in the Chesapeake Bay using water samples to collect environmental DNA, also known as eDNA, for her Master's degree.



The DolphinWatch team would like to thank all of the people who have made this research project possible these past 4 years:

- **DolphinWatchers** who have reported sightings & submitted dolphin photos and videos
- Generous **donors** who keep the app & sightings analysis running
- **JES Avanti Foundation** for donations of acoustic recording equipment and student research funds
- **Divers & boaters** who have assisted with gear deployments & retrievals
- **Fred Jett** who assists with our acoustic recording devices in the Potomac River

Learn more about Chesapeake DolphinWatch: <http://www.umces.edu/dolphinwatch>



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