# Tourists witness rare bottlenose dolphin attack on common dolphin calf in Cardigan Bay



Tourists on a dolphin-watching trip in Cardigan Bay, Wales, were unexpectedly confronted with a rare and distressing natural event when four adult bottlenose dolphins were observed pursuing and killing a common dolphin calf. The excursion, operated collaboratively by Dolphin Spotting Boat Trips and the Sea Watch Foundation (SWF), aimed to provide wildlife enthusiasts with an opportunity to observe cetaceans in their natural habitat while contributing to scientific data collection and conservation efforts.

Dylan Coundley-Hughes, an intern with SWF who was present during the trip, described the scene: “While conducting a boat survey on behalf of the Sea Watch Foundation aboard a dolphin spotting wildlife tour, we observed intense splashing and dolphin activity. At first, we saw something flung into the air and suspected a porpoise, but to our disbelief it was a common dolphin calf, making this encounter an interspecific infanticide.” He added that he was filming for a personal documentary at the time and captured the rare behaviour, which he described as “both remarkable and heartbreaking to witness.”

The Sea Watch Foundation’s experts have suggested that the aggressive behaviour could be related to competition for resources such as prey. To further understand the circumstances, a postmortem examination of the calf will be conducted by the UK Cetacean Strandings Investigation Programme.

Katrin Lohrengel, who manages the SWF’s Cardigan Bay monitoring project, provided additional context about bottlenose dolphin behaviour: “Bottlenose dolphins have a very wholesome reputation, but many people are not aware that male dolphins have been known to commit infanticide; they kill bottlenose dolphin calves. They have also been documented killing harbour porpoises and often show aggression to other cetacean species. Both infanticide and ‘porpicide’ are known to occur in Cardigan Bay, but we have never witnessed interspecific aggression towards common dolphins before. While it’s not surprising that this behaviour is taking place, it’s very rare to witness it and even rarer to catch it on film.”

Bottlenose dolphins are commonly found around the UK, including areas such as the Moray Firth and Cornwall’s coastline. Common dolphins, sometimes called short-nosed common dolphins, tend to be smaller and more social, usually travelling in groups. This incident marks a rare observation of violent interaction between these two species in the region.

Source: [Noah Wire Services](https://www.noahwire.com)

## References

* <https://www.itv.com/news/wales/2025-04-18/bottlenose-dolphins-observed-killing-dolphin-calf-in-cardigan-bay> - Corroborates the observation of four bottlenose dolphins attacking and killing a common dolphin juvenile in Cardigan Bay, matching the location and species involved in the event.
* <https://www.instagram.com/p/DImAazjtL29/> - Supports the claim about bottlenose dolphins targeting porpoises and bottlenose calves, while noting the unusual nature of attacking common dolphin calves, as described by Sea Watch Foundation.
* <https://truthlensai.com/news/bottlenose-dolphins-kill-dolphin-calf-off-welsh-coast-3a9aab0b> - Confirms the incident of bottlenose dolphins killing a common dolphin calf in Cardigan Bay, including details about the calf being thrown out of the water.
* <https://bsky.app/profile/theguardian.com/post/3ln453u26sc2h> - Documents rare footage of the interspecies infanticide witnessed during a dolphin-watching trip in Cardigan Bay, aligning with the eyewitness account provided in the article.
* <https://www.unexplained-mysteries.com/forum/topic/386607-bottlenose-dolphins-spotted-killing-dolphin-calf/> - Reiterates the incident involving bottlenose dolphins attacking a common dolphin calf in Cardigan Bay, reinforcing the rarity of interspecific aggression observed.