

Shannon Dolphin Project

PHOTO ID AND PHOTOGRAPHY CHEAT SHEET

Help us identify and protect the bottlenose dolphins of the Shannon Estuary



ABOUT THE SHANNON DOLPHIN PROJECT

The Shannon Estuary is home to a resident population of bottlenose dolphins. The Shannon Dolphin Project, based at the Shannon Dolphin Centre in Kilrush, Co. Clare, is one of the longest-running dolphin monitoring programmes in Europe and is managed by the Irish Whale and Dolphin Group (IWDG). Through photo-identification of dorsal fins, we track individual dolphins to better understand their movements, survival, social relationships and the threats they face.

WHY YOUR PHOTOS MATTER

- Helps identify individual dolphins over time
- Tracks their movements and range
- Monitors population health and survival
- Informs conservation and management

BEST PRACTICE: YES PLEASE!



Focus on one dolphin

Make sure the dolphin is the main subject



Capture the dorsal fin from a perpendicular angle

Side-on images are best



Take close-up shots

Fill the frame with the dorsal fin



Consider the lighting conditions

Good light helps show detail on the fin



Try to photograph both sides of the dorsal fin

Images of both sides are very valuable



AVOID THESE



Avoid images from the back



Avoid images from above



Avoid images from front



Dorsal fin not visible



Photos like this are beautiful and perfect for your personal collection, but they are difficult to match as the dorsal fin is not visible.

CAMERA AND PHONE SETTINGS



USE FAST SHUTTER SPEED

To freeze movement and get sharp images. Aim for 1/1000s or faster.



USE A SUITABLE ISO

Start at 200-400 ISO in good light. Increase ISO to 600 or more in lower light.



SPORT/ACTION MODE

Use sport/action mode if available for the best results

VIDEO TIPS



TAKE A VIDEO OVER A PICTURE

You can review footage and extract the best image later.



USE LANDSCAPE ORIENTATION



FOCUS ON ONE DOLPHIN

Keep it in frame



EXAMPLE OF ISO



ISO 200



ISO 400



ISO 600

FIELD CHECKLIST

- | | |
|---|--|
| ☐ Dolphin side-on? | ☐ Both sides photographed (if possible) |
| ☐ Dorsal fin perpendicular to you? | ☐ Landscape orientation? |
| ☐ Close-up and in focus? | ☐ Location, time and date noted? |
| ☐ Good lighting? | |

SUBMIT YOUR PHOTOS

Please submit your photos to IWDG photo identification and validation via IWDG Reporting App.



FIND OUT HOW AT SHANNONDOLPHINS.IE
Every photo counts!



Scan for more info on the IWDG Reporting App



or visit:

REPORT.IWDG.IE