

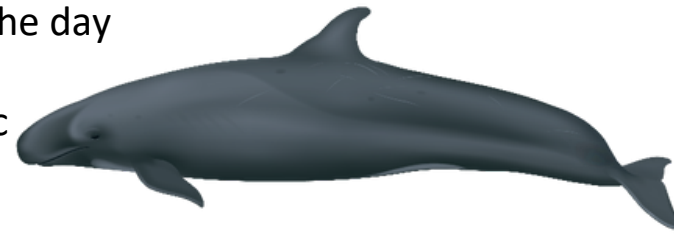
How to tell the difference between resident whales in Hawai'i

There are four species of small black whales found **year-round** in Hawaiian waters

- Two relatively large - False killer whales & Short-finned pilot whales
- Two relatively small - Pygmy killer whales & Melon-headed whales

1. False killer whales (*Pseudorca crassidens*)

Hunts during the day
Fastest
Most acrobatic



2. Short-finned pilot whales (*Globicephala macrorhynchus*)

Dorsal fin is much larger and further forward on the back than other species.



3. Pygmy killer whales (*Feresa attenuata*)

Rounded tips to the flippers
Rounded head when viewed from above
Clear boundary to the cape and more white linear scars than melon-headed whales.



4. Melon-headed whales (*Peponocephala electra*)

Pointed flippers
They have a very diffuse boundary between the dark dorsal cape
Pointed head when viewed from above



The four look similar but can be identified based on their dorsal fin size, position, head shape, and flipper shape. As well as other characteristics (summarized in table at the bottom).



Photos are not to scale.
Illustrations are to scale & by Uko Gorter

Species	Group Range	Body Size	Boat behavior	Day behavior	Typical depths fathoms	Group spread	Frequency seen
False Killer	1-41 Average (18)	5'-17'	Often bowrides	Actively foraging, leaping regularly	25-2700	Often over many miles	Rare
Pilot	1-195 Average (18)	4'7 -18'	Indifferent	Usually resting at surface or travel	270-1640	1-2 subgroups	Common
Pygmy-Killer	1-33 Average (11)	2'7"-8'6"	Avoids boats	Usually resting at surface	270-1640	Typically 1 group	Rare
Melon-headed	1-800 Average (245)	3'5"-9'	Often bowrides	Usually resting at surface or travel	110-2700	Clustered but very large numbers	Uncommon

Prepared by Cascadia Research Collective, Olympia, WA. For more information see www.cascadiaresearch.org/

hawaii.htm Please send photos and contact Robin Baird: hawaii@cascadiaresearch.org