

England's only coastal resident
bottlenose dolphins:
Introducing the southwest community

England's
only
resident
pod!

Using citizen science data to assess the abundance, residency and distribution of bottlenose dolphins in southwest England

Summary



Protected species requiring SACs



Last dedicated study in the 1990s



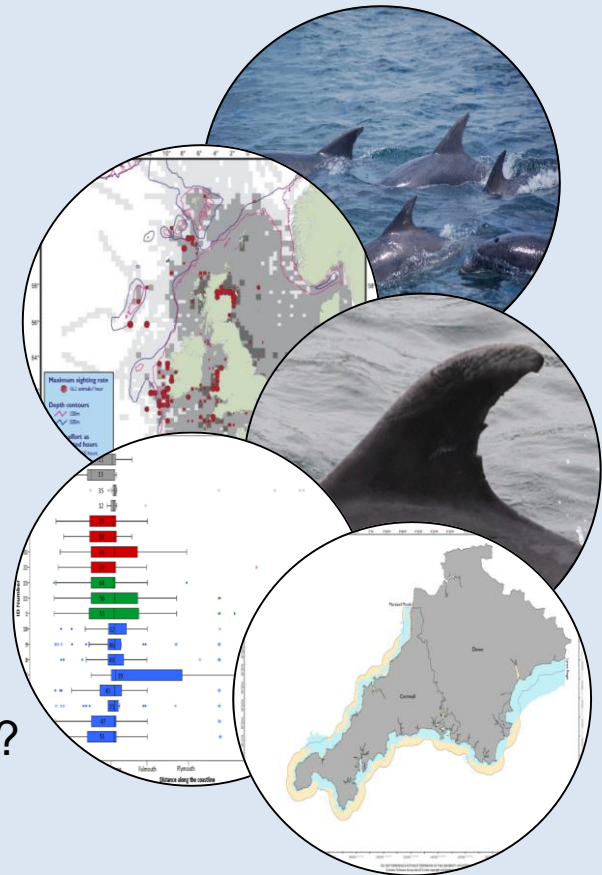
Concerns of a decline



Lack of robust scientific evidence



A suitable case for citizen science data ?



Citizen Science: Southwest Bottlenose Dolphin Consortium



A collaboration between various stakeholders within the region, led by the Cornwall Wildlife Trust (CWT)



Data were provided by various people and organisations to incorporate into a shared dataset

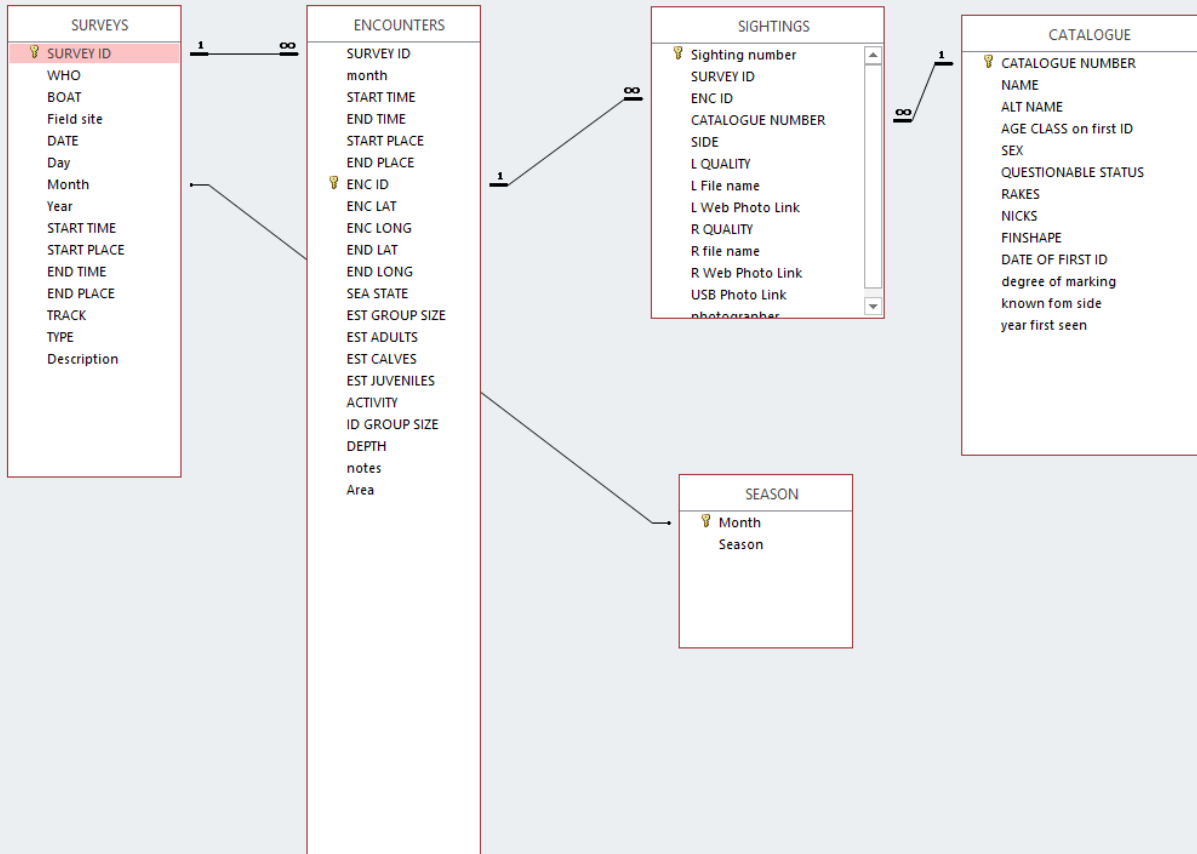
Data providers:



- Members of the public
- Ferry operators
- Marine Tour Operators
- Land-based observations
- Charitable organisations

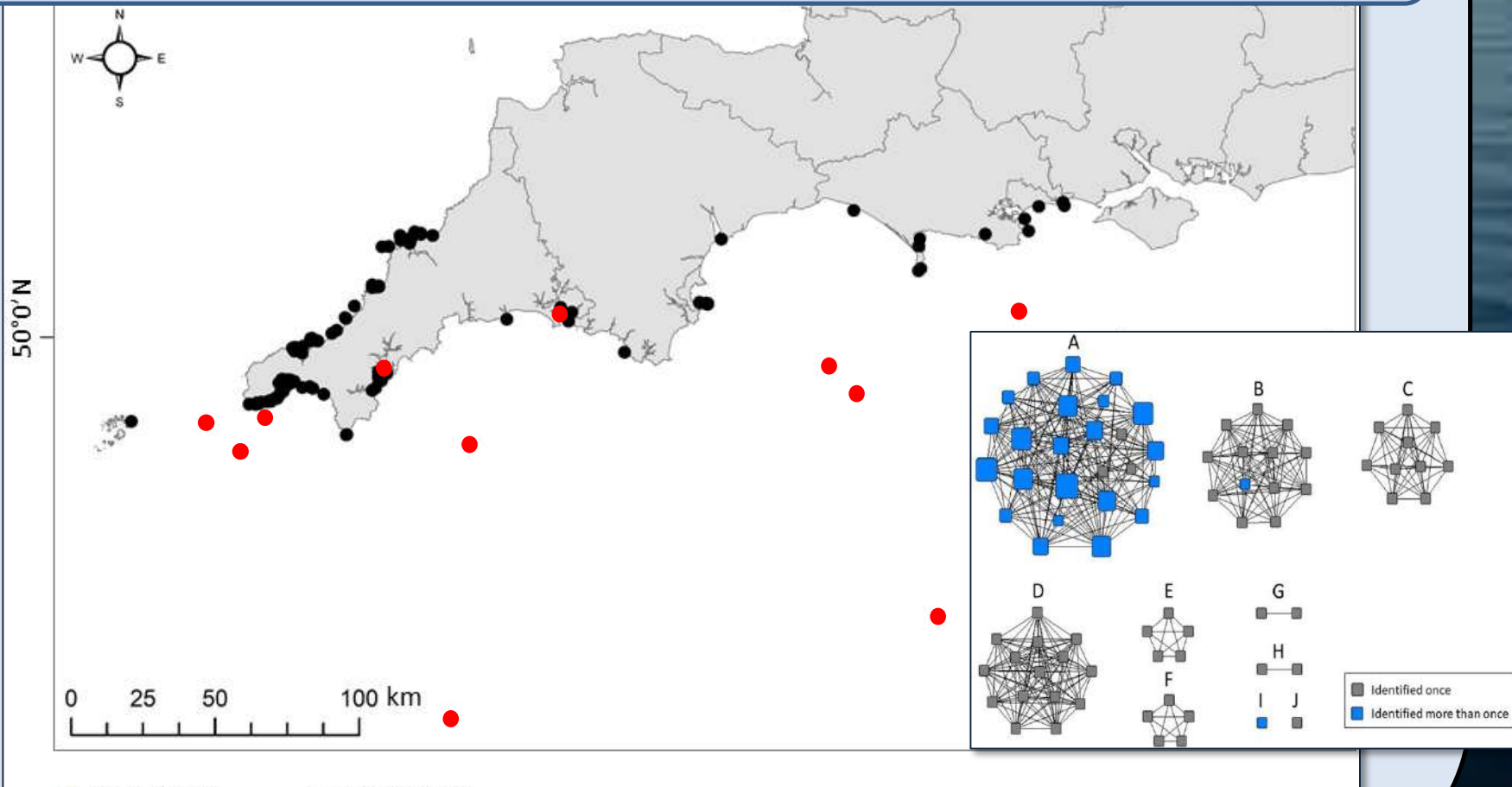


The Shared Database

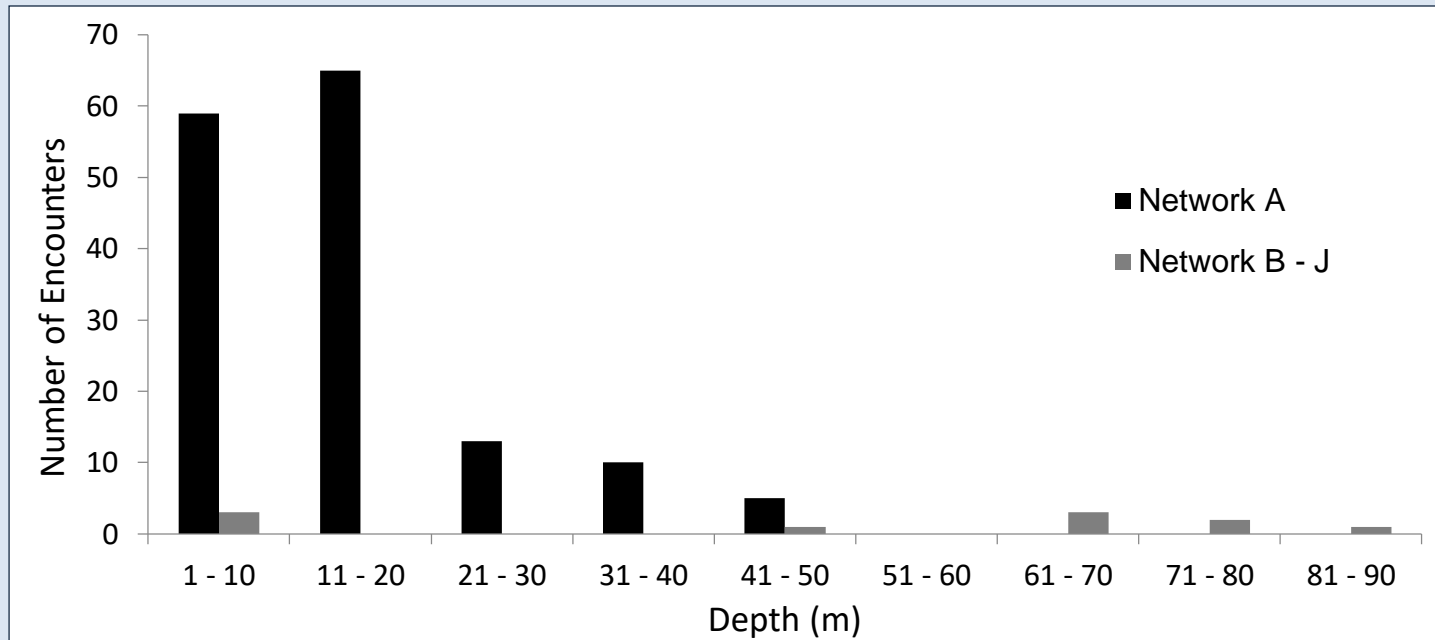


Results of citizen science data sharing

3843 records of bottlenose dolphins were entered into the shared database
Photos of 192 encounters from 2007-2016



Depth of habitat

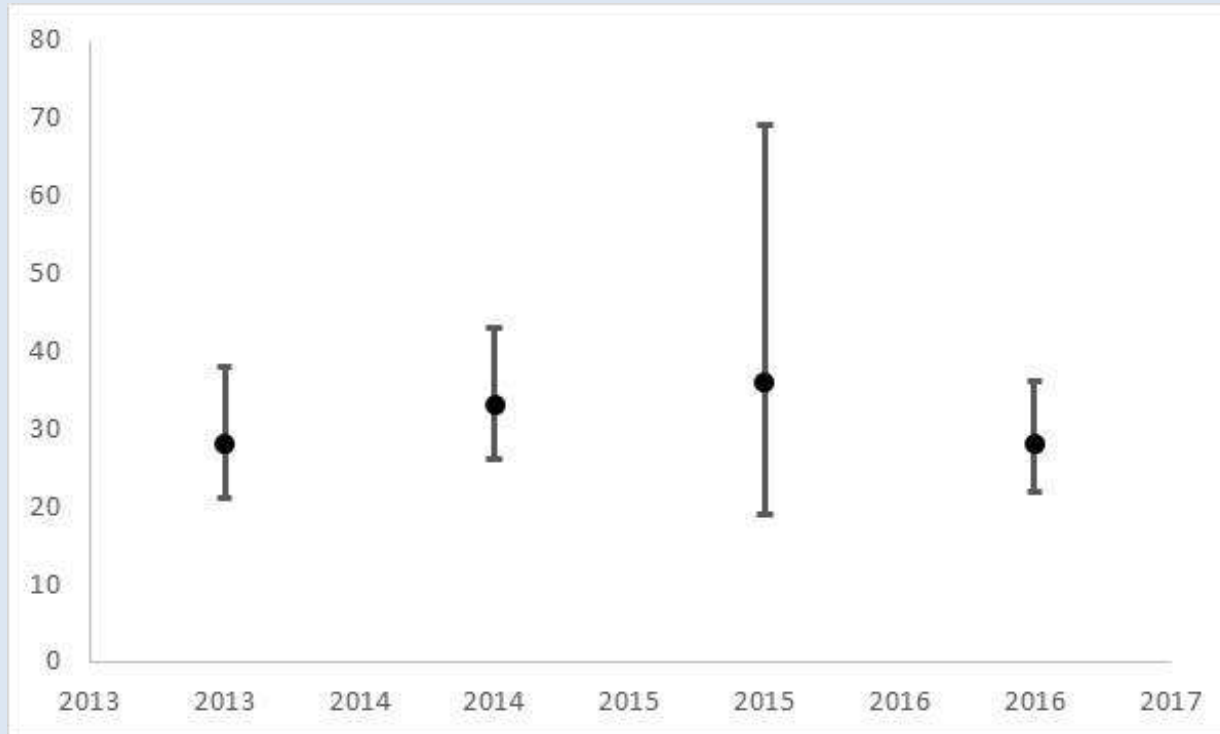


- The coastal community (network A) were encountered at a mean depth of 15 m and never below 50 m
- Non residents (networks B-J) were encountered at a mean depth of 50 m

(Non residents (network B-J) had just 3 encounters shallower than 40 m, two of which included lone individuals)

Abundance

Estimates

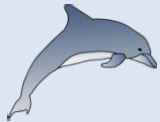


For all years where there were sufficient data estimates of between **28** and **36** animals in the **coastal** waters of SW England

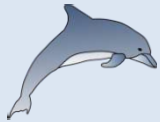
Main Findings from photo-id data



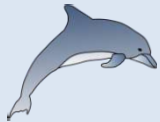
Bottlenose dolphins in SW **coastal** waters belong to a single resident 'population'



The same animals range between St Ives and Dorset



The resident animals are seen throughout the year



Abundance estimates show there are only about 30 animals in the region

So what happens next?

- Some measure of protection needed (designation of SAC or MCZ?)
- Funding for dedicated scientific surveys
- Continue citizen science scheme:
 - increase the quality of the data provided
 - Expand the spatial coverage
 - Develop standard protocol for data collection
 - Increase public awareness