

Study: Industrial noise may harm Dolphins

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British scientists say pile driving and industrial noise may be adversely affecting dolphin behavior, communication and breeding.

Researchers say the frequency range of pile driving noise could interfere with the dolphins' ability to communicate, find food and avoid predators. That has the potential to affect their behavior, health and their ability to breed successfully; lactating females and young calves might be particularly vulnerable.

The author of the study, environmentalist Jonathan David, suggests mitigation measures be put in place to help prevent adverse impacts upon dolphin populations. He suggests industrial operations be restricted to low tide and suspended during calving season, an exclusion zone should be monitored before any activity starts, and marine work should cease if a dolphin enters the work area.

David also calls for further research into the reactions of marine mammals to industrial noise to help mitigate future effects, such as produced by the construction of offshore wind farms.

The study appears in The Water and Environment Journal published by the London-based Chartered Institution of Water and Environmental Management.

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