



TOPICAL TIDBITS

July – September 2015

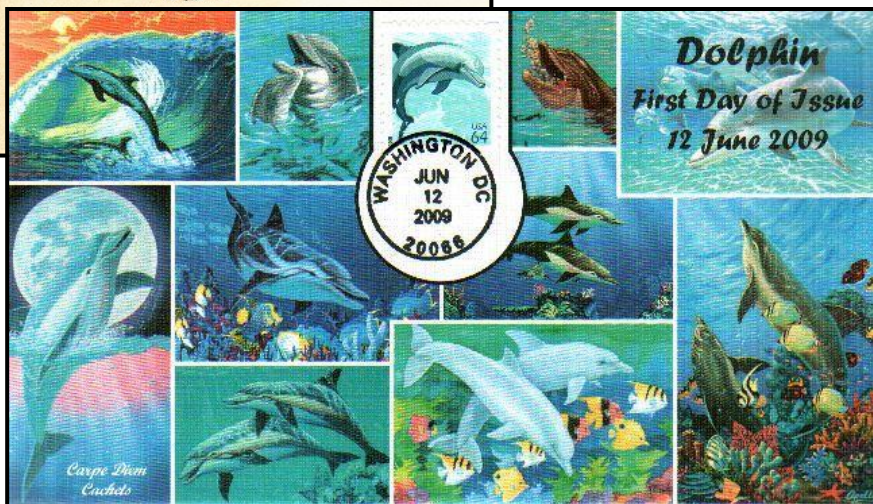
Volume 4 Issue 3

Dolphins

Dolphins are highly intelligent creatures that have fascinated man for many centuries. There are several references to them in Greek myths. Dolphins were the messengers of the god of the sea, Poseidon, and they rescued many men from drowning. A very famous dolphin named Peloris Jack also helped humans. His story, on page 2 of this issue, tells how he guided ships through a dangerous strait in New Zealand. Dolphins have often been used by the U.S. Navy. For example, in 1965, a bottlenose dolphin named Tuffy dove 200 feet to the Sea Lab II installation, carrying mail and tools to Navy personnel. He was also trained to guide lost divers to safety. There are so many other incredible and fascinating stories about dolphins. Be sure to visit your library to learn more. Meanwhile, enjoy this issue of *Topical Tidbits*!



This cover (at left) may look plain and boring, but it was delivered to Sea Lab II, at the bottom of the Pacific Ocean, by a dolphin. How would you like to have a dolphin for a mailman?!



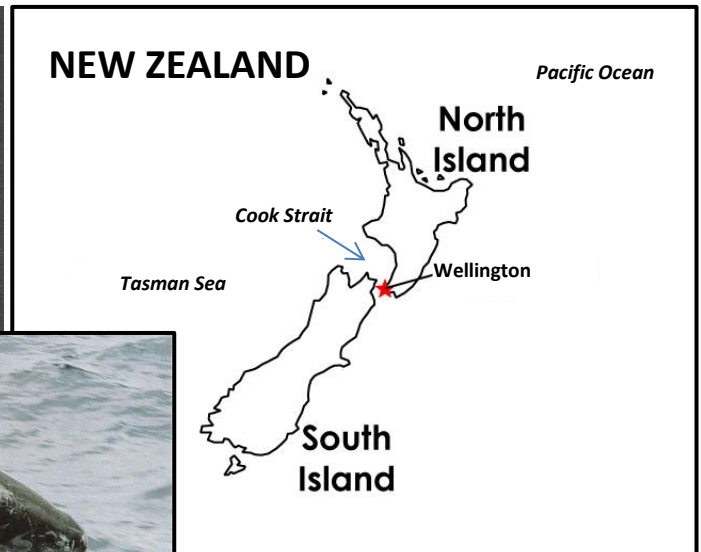
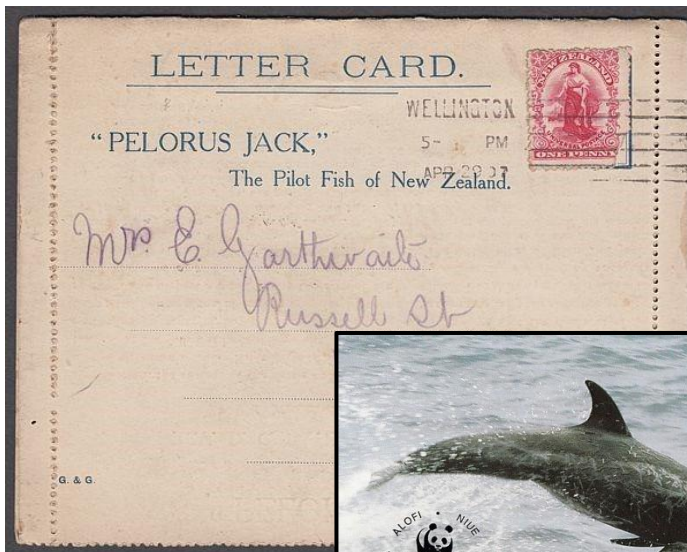
This first day of issue cover from Carpe Diem Cachets shows several varieties of dolphins. The stamp depicts a bottle nose dolphin.

A Dolphin Tale

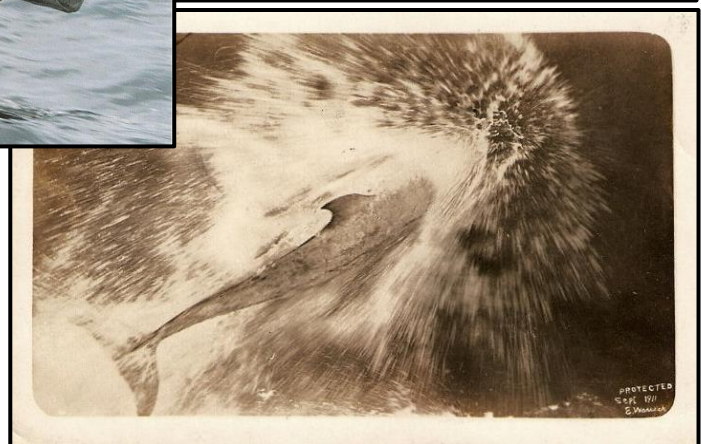
Cook Strait lies between the two main islands of New Zealand. It is a very dangerous spot for ships to navigate—the currents are very fast, the rocks are jagged, and there are many whirlpools. One day in 1888, a Risso's dolphin named Pelorus Jack suddenly appeared and started leading ships through the strait. He continued guiding ships on a daily basis for more than 20 years. He became so famous that he appeared in magazines and postcards, a candy was named after him, and people came from far away just to see him.

Sailors said that Jack brought them luck. One day, though, a sad thing happened. While Jack was escorting the *S.S. Penguin*, a young man tried to shoot him. Luckily the bullet missed Jack. After this, Jack would have nothing to do with the *Penguin*. Sailors began to say that the ship was bad luck and wouldn't sail on her. As one sailor said, "Jack won't have anything to do with her. Why should I?" In 1909, the *Penguin* shipwrecked in the strait, so maybe the sailors were right!

People began to worry that someone else might try to hurt Jack, so in 1904 a law was passed that forbid anyone from hurting him. This was the first time a law was written to protect a dolphin. In the summer of 1912, several Norwegian whaling ships appeared in the area. They were only supposed to hunt whales, but after not seeing Jack for many days, the local people began to suspect that maybe he had been killed by the whaling ships. Others thought that he had just died of old age. No one really knows for sure what happened to Jack, but he is still remembered fondly to this day—he is currently used as part of the logo of a ferry company that sails in Cook Strait.



Above: The inside of this 1907 letter card from New Zealand is printed with information about Pelorus Jack. It was mailed from Wellington, the capital of New Zealand. Do you think the sender actually saw Jack? If so, the view from the boat might have looked like the one in the black and white photo postcard at the right. That is a real picture of the famous dolphin from 1912. The maximum card in the middle is a nice photograph of a Risso's Dolphin, just like Jack.



Parts of a Dolphin

This beautiful cachet was hand painted by Fred Collins. It shows a bottlenose dolphin jumping out of the water. Listed below are some of the parts of a dolphin. See if you can name each part by putting the right letter in the box. Answers can be found on page 6.

A. Beak

B. Flipper

C. Flukes

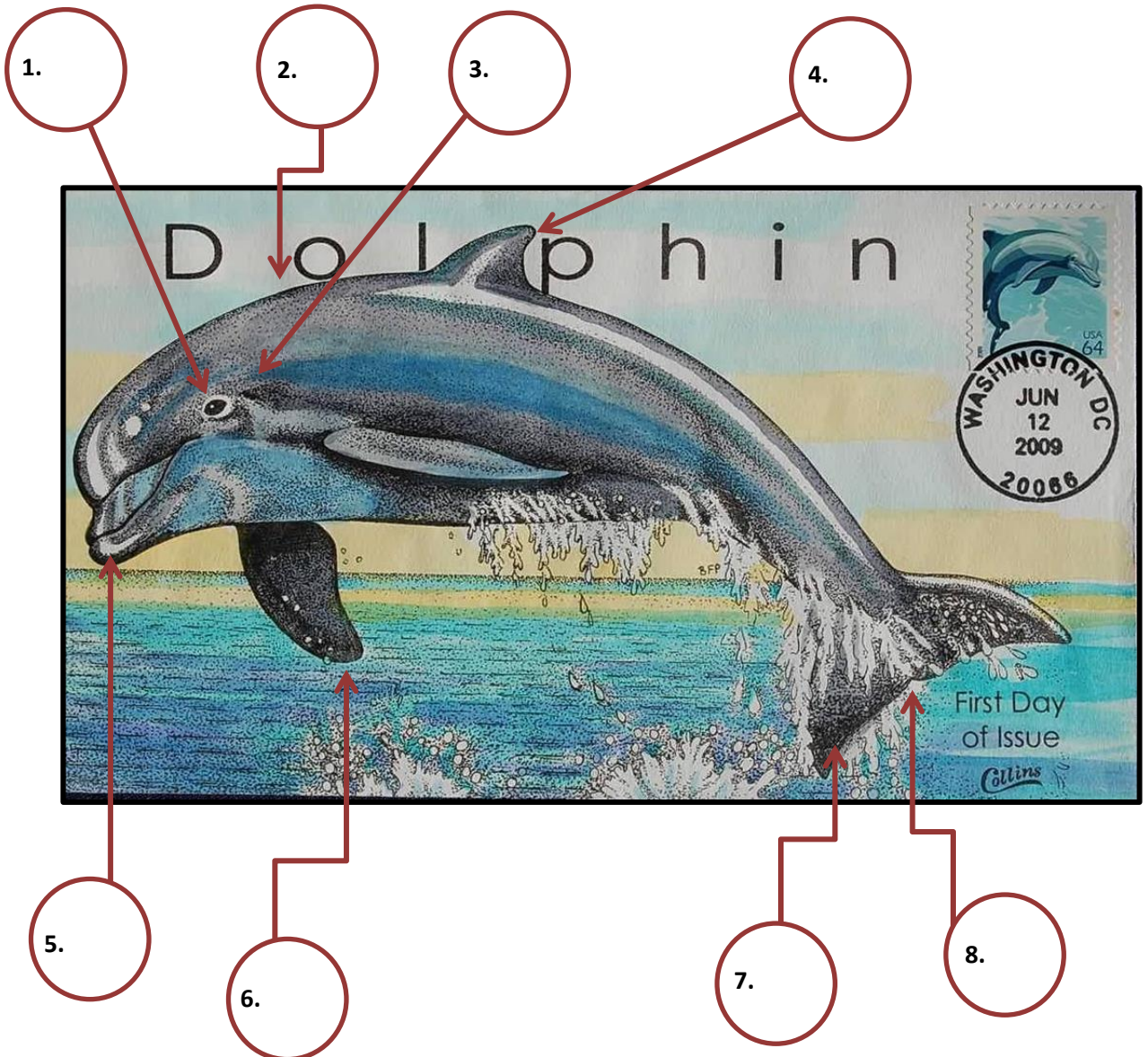
D. Eye

E. Dorsal Fin

F. Blowhole

G. Median notch

H. Ear



Dolphin Research

From the list below, pick a dolphin species that you would like to learn more about. Using books from the library or the internet, fill in the boxes below with the information you find.

COMMON NAME:

SCIENTIFIC NAME:

SIZE:

WEIGHT:

LIFE SPAN:

COLOR:

DIET:



HABITAT:

INTERESTING FACT:

INTERESTING FACT:

SPECIES:

- | | |
|------------------------------|------------------------------|
| Bottlenose Dolphin | Rough-Toothed Dolphin |
| Killer Whale | Spinner Dolphin |
| Common Dolphin | Risso's Dolphin |
| False Killer Whale | Clymene Dolphin |
| Hector's Dolphin | Fraser's Dolphin |
| Commerson's Dolphin | White-Beaked Dolphin |
| Black Dolphin | Peale's Dolphin |
| Atlantic Humpbacked Dolphin | Atlantic White-Sided Dolphin |
| Haeviside's Dolphin | Hourglass Dolphin |
| Southern Right Whale Dolphin | Pacific White-Sided Dolphin |
| Northern Right Dolphin | Dusky Dolphin. |
| Spotted Dolphin | Amazon River Dolphin |
| Atlantic Spotted Dolphin | Chinese River Dolphin |
| Irrawaddy Dolphin | Ganges River Dolphin |
| Striped Dolphin | |

Dolphin Fun

True or False?

1. True or False: Dolphins live in groups of up to 12 called pods.
2. True or False: Dolphins are mammals.
3. True or False: Dolphins can stay up to 15 minutes under water, but they cannot breathe under the water.
4. True or False: There are 32 different kinds of ocean dolphins and 4 species of river dolphins.
5. True or False: Dolphins communicate through sounds and whistles.
6. True or False: Dolphins use a technique called echolocation to find food and navigate. They can detect underwater sounds from 15 miles away.
7. True or False: Dolphins range in size from 4 ft. long (Maui's dolphin) all the way up to 30 ft. long (killer whale) and weigh anywhere from less than 100 pounds to as much as 22,000 pounds.
8. True or False: Female dolphins are called cows, males are called bulls and young dolphins are called calves.
9. True or False: Dolphins use a blowhole on top of their heads to breathe.
10. True or False: A baby dolphin is born with whiskers on its upper jaw which fall out soon after birth.

Answers on page 6.

Dolphin Cancels



Keep your eyes open for stamps with a dolphin cancel on them. They are easy to find in older mixtures of stamps. Below are a few that a 10 year old boy found for his collection.



Dolphin Jokes

Q: What did Cinderella Dolphin wear to the ball?

A: Glass flippers.

Q: How does a group of dolphins make a decision?

A: Flipper coin!

Q: Do dolphins ever do something by accident?

A: No, they do everything on porpoise!

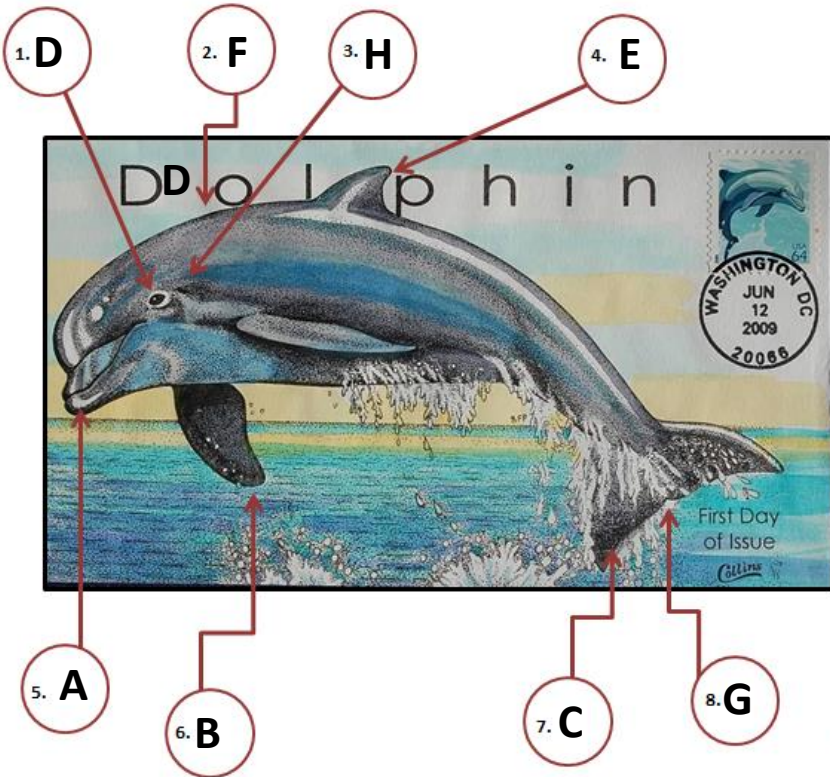
Dolphin Covers



Another way to collect dolphins is to look for them on covers. The cover with the green dolphin is from the U.S.S. Dolphin, a Naval submarine. The cover in back is from a company called "Dolphin Jute Mills" that made twine and rope. The cover in front is from the football team, the Miami Dolphins.

Answers

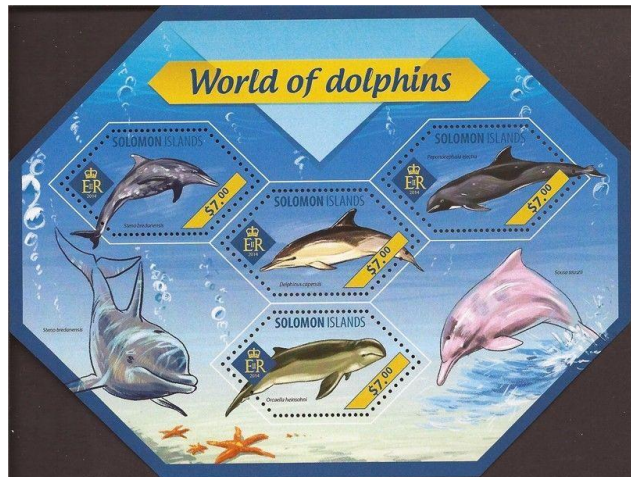
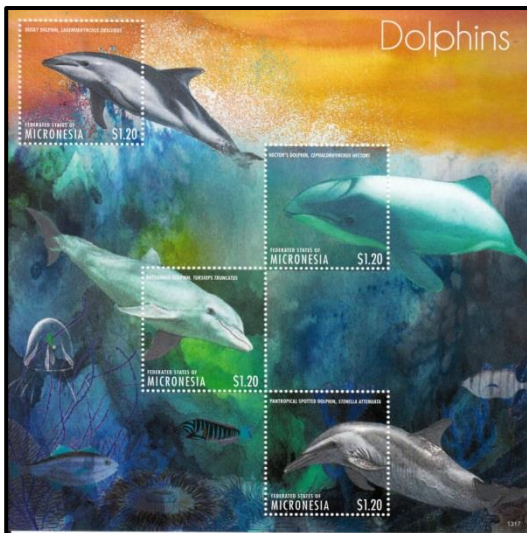
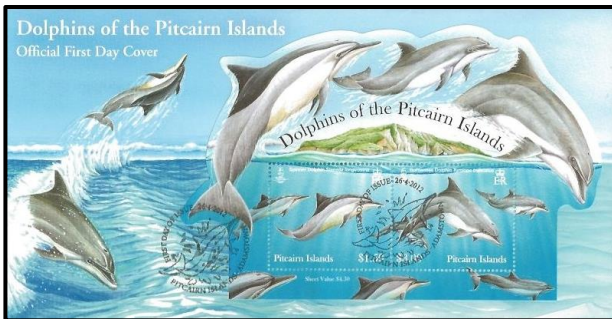
Parts of a Dolphin, page 3



Dolphin Fun- True or False, page 5.
The answers are all true.

Souvenir Sheets

A souvenir sheet or miniature sheet is a small group of postage stamps still attached to the sheet on which they were printed. Which of the souvenir sheets below is your favorite?



Dolphins

