That is why

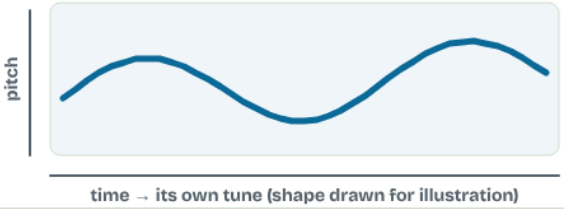
# Do dolphins have names?

Each bottlenose dolphin develops its own signature whistle; others copy it to call that dolphin, and it calls back.

## A Every dolphin has a whistle



Bottlenose dolphin




### A name in the tune, not the voice

Each calf develops its own signature whistle. Some sound like their mother's; many don't. Once set, it stays highly stable for life, especially for females.

**About 50% of its whistles are its name.**

## B Calling by name

**Scotland, 2013: wild dolphins hear a copy**
made by computer, voice features removed

**Its own whistle** — reply!



it calls back within seconds, sometimes more than once

**Another dolphin's whistle**



hardly any response

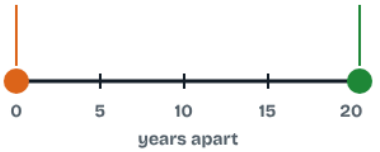
### 1 A whistle used as a name

The group has been studied since 1994. A copy of a dolphin's own whistle works like calling its name across the water. The researchers called it the first case of naming in mammals.

## C A name never forgotten

**Bailey and Allie**
53 dolphins, six facilities (2013)

Last together: Allie 2, Bailey 4 — Still knew her whistle




**20 years 6 months**
longest social memory recorded in any non-human species

### Why names help at sea

Murky water, where vision is limited: whistles keep contact.




of whistles are names when held apart for a check

+ at least 20 shared whistles

**Like a friend shouting back on a crowded beach: hear your name, answer with it.**

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