

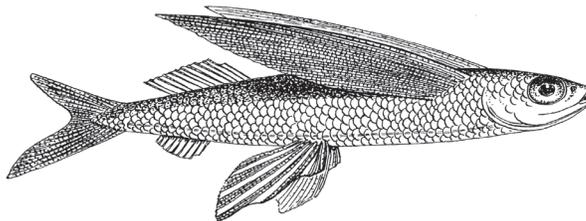
# PALM BEACH DOLPHIN PROJECT FACT SHEET



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## FLYING FISH

CLASS: Actinopterygii  
ORDER: Beloniformes  
FAMILY: Exocoetidae  
GENUS:  
SPECIES:



**IDENTIFICATION:** There are over a dozen species of flying fish in the waters off Florida. All are oceanic and difficult to distinguish. Ray-finned fish with highly modified pectoral fins. Flying fish aren't capable of powered flight. Instead, they propel themselves out of the water at speeds in excess of 35 miles per hour. Once in the air, their rigid "wings" allow them to glide for up to 200 meters. The wing-like pectoral fins are primarily for gliding—they hold the fins flat at their sides when swimming. Their streamlined bodies reduce drag when the fish are "flying."

**SIZE AND AGE:** Up to 18 inches long, average 3 to 12 inches. Average lifespan of flying fish is around 5 years in the wild.

**HABITAT AND RANGE:** Open ocean provides habitat for most flying fish, but some are found on the outskirts of coral reefs. Flying fish are tropical and temperate marine species that can be seen off of both U.S. coasts.

**FEEDING:** Plankton, bacteria and other tiny marine creatures

**REPRODUCTION:** Spawning takes place in the open ocean, and eggs are attached to seaweed and floating debris by sticky filaments.

**PREDATION:** It is thought that flying fish evolved a flying mechanism to escape from their many oceanic predators. Once in the air, though, they sometimes become food for birds. Can travel distances of more than 1,300 feet without rest.

**CONSERVATION STATUS:** Stable. Flying fish are commercially fished in some places. They are relatively easy to catch because of their tendency to leap into small, well-lit boats.

**ACKNOWLEDGMENTS:** The information contained in this document was gathered from various sources, including Florida Ray Identification Guide.

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THE TARAS OCEANOGRAPHIC FOUNDATION - PALM BEACH DOLPHIN PROJECT

*There is no seam between the doings of wild animals and human affairs.  
We can't go on losing them and not loose part of ourselves.*

Kenneth S. Norris