

Lots to learn

But experts are a long way off being able to speak 'dolphin' themselves. When you wave your hand in the air you could either be saying 'hello' to someone or 'goodbye'. In a similar way, dolphins' actions and vocalisations are dependent on what they're doing — from fighting or playing to chasing a tasty fish.

Kathleen Dudzinski, Director of the Dolphin Communication Project, has been studying dolphin behaviour and communication for the last 23 years and she admits that deciphering the marine mammals' 'language' is far from easy.

"The study of dolphin communication is a bit like doing a giant jigsaw puzzle," Kathleen explains. "It's continually on-going, but it's like you've lost the jigsaw's box, so you don't know what the final picture will look like. Dolphins don't really have a language like English, Japanese or Spanish, but they do have a vocabulary that includes gestures, postures and sounds. So if you like mysteries and detective work, studying dolphins is the job for you!"

DID YOU KNOW...?

Many of the sounds dolphins make can be imitated by holding a balloon tightly by the neck, then letting the air out faster and slower!



'SEEING' THROUGH SOUND

Bottlenose dolphins track their prey through echolocation. Making up to 1,000 clicking noises per second, these sounds travel underwater until they encounter objects. The sound then bounces back to their dolphin senders, revealing the location, size and even shape of their target.

Find out more about the language of dolphins at dolphincommunicationproject.org and wilddolphinproject.org