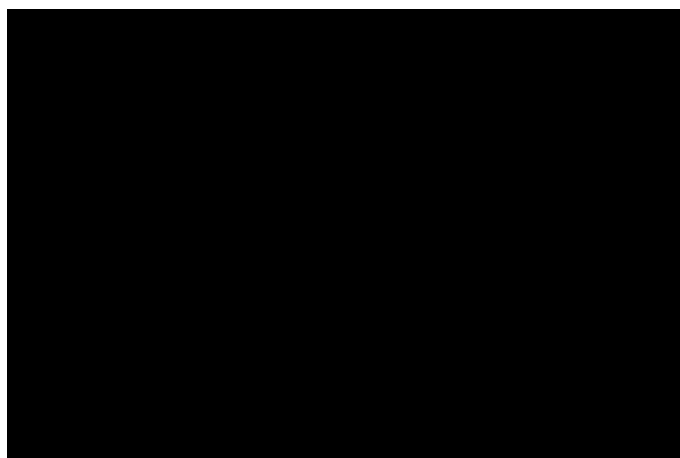


## 'Social-distancing' also for Commerson's dolphins

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During some fieldwork for the 'Fine Scaling the design of Falkland Islands Marine Management Areas' project, the SAERI team encountered a group of dolphins swimming along the coast in Port William. What's strange about it? You would say; Peale's dolphins are commonly spotted in the area that appears to be an important resting/socializing site for a group of at least 150 year-round resident individuals. Well, 'strange' or at least

atypical was that the group was formed by six Peale's and one Commerson's dolphins all swimming together. Interspecific group, meaning involving individuals of different species, are well known in the dolphin world being commonly used as anti-predation strategy. Interspecific mating has also been observed in the wild, in particular when only few individuals of one species remain. Luckily both dolphins appear to be still relatively abundant in the Falkland Islands waters and the reason of this mixed-species grouping must be looked somewhere else.

The team was able to follow the group for one hour before it was gone during which the Commerson's was observed to keep a steady distance from the other individuals, moving quickly away every time a physical contact was attempted.

In this difficult time it is a nice imagining that also Commerson's dolphins are practicing social distancing.

