

Mesoplodon carlhubbsi Moore, 1963

ZIPH Mes 5

BUW

FAO Names: En - Hubbs' beaked whale; Fr - Baleine à bec de Hubbs; Sp - Zifio de Hubbs.



Fig. 241 *Mesoplodon carlhubbsi*

Distinctive Characteristics: Adult males of this species are more readily identifiable than individuals of most other species of *Mesoplodon*. They have a white rostrum and white "cap" in front of the blowhole. Females and young are much more difficult to identify.

Males also have a massive flattened tusk in the middle of each side of the lower jaw, which protrudes above the level of the upper jaw.

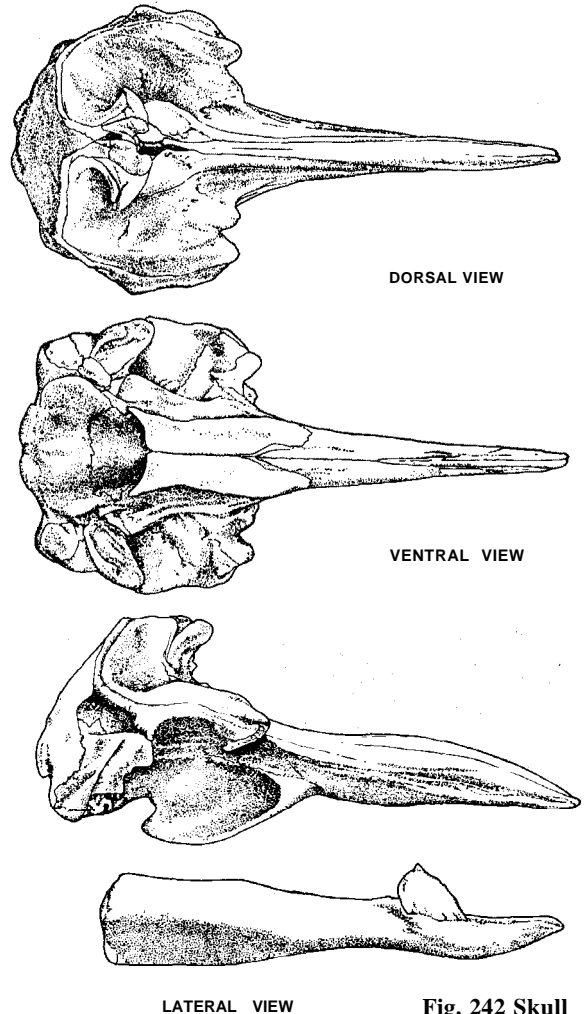


Fig. 242 Skull

Can be confused with: The white cap and beak tip, and large tusks may allow bulls of this species to be distinguished from other species of *Mesoplodon* (starting on p. 90).

Size: Maximum known size is 5.3 m for both sexes. Weights of over 1 400 kg are attained. Newborns are about 2.5 m long.

Geographical Distribution: Apparently limited to the North Pacific, Hubbs' beaked whale is known from central British Columbia to southern California in the east, and from Japan in the west. It is an oceanic species.

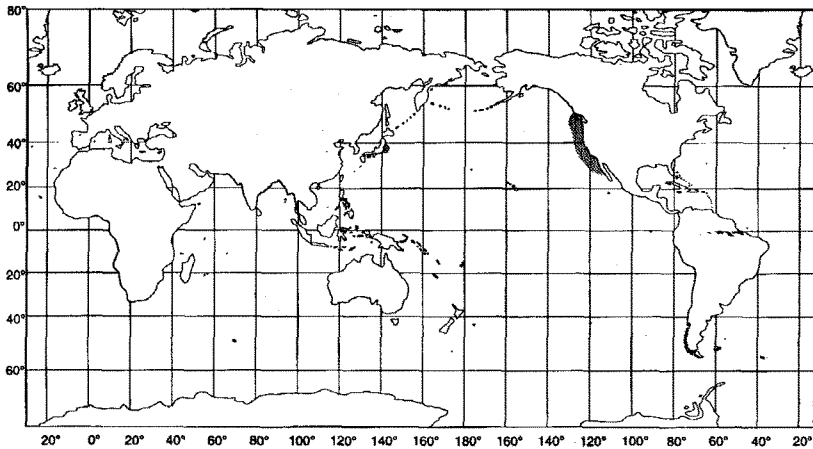


Fig. 243

Biology and Behaviour: Very little is known about the biology of this species. The long, white, parallel scratches on the bodies of males are thought to be caused by closed-mouth fighting in this and other species of *Mesoplodon*. Hubbs' beaked whales feed on squid and some deepwater fishes.

Exploitation: Some Hubbs' beaked whales have been taken by harpoon off Japan.

IUCN Status: Insufficiently known.

Mesoplodon peruvianus Reyes, Mead, and Van Waerebeek, 1991

ZIPH Mes 6

BPW

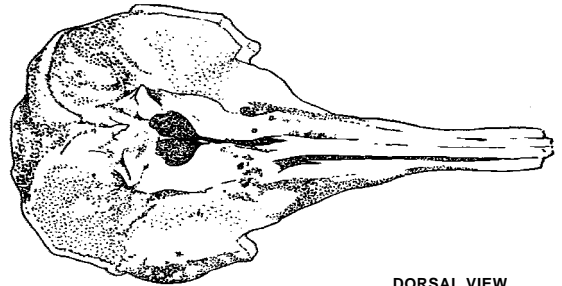
FAO Names: En - Pygmy beaked whale; Fr - Baleine à bec pygmée; Sp - Ballena picuda.



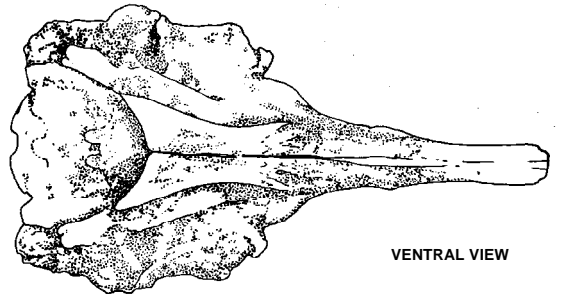
Fig. 244 *Mesoplodon peruvianus*

Distinctive Characteristics: The pygmy beaked whale is the most recently described member of the genus, and appears to be the smallest of the species of *Mesoplodon*. They tend to be dark grey above and lighter below, apparently with little scarring. They have small, triangular, wide-based dorsal fins that are shaped like those of harbour porpoises.

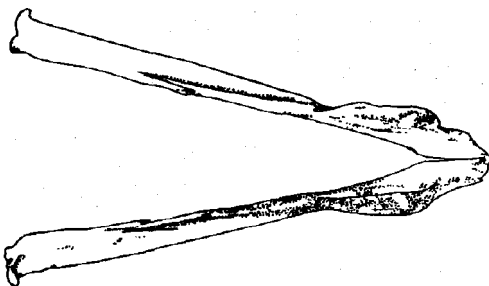
The most distinctive characteristic is the teeth, which are extremely small and egg-shaped in cross-section (although generally they are not visible in sightings at sea).



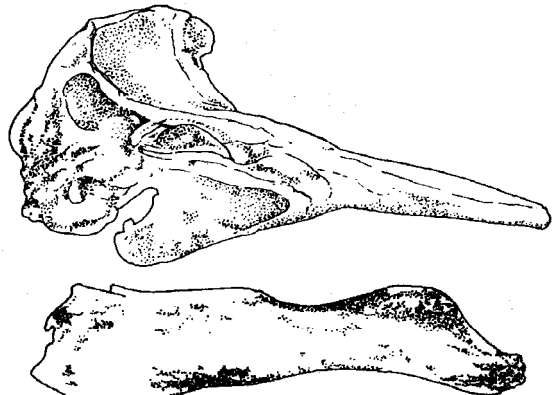
DORSAL VIEW



VENTRAL VIEW



DORSAL VIEW OF MANDIBLE



LATERAL VIEW

Fig. 245 Skull

Can be confused with: The small triangular dorsal fin is different from that of most other species of *Mesoplodon* (starting on p. 90), but using this character alone, it would be very difficult to dismiss the possibility of other species in sightings at sea.

Size: This is the smallest known species of *Mesoplodon*; maximum known length is 3.7 m, apparently with males larger than females. At birth, these animals are about 1.6 m long.

Geographical Distribution: The pygmy beaked whale is known only from 10 specimens and a few possible sightings off Peru, all south of 8°S and in the eastern tropical Pacific. Recently, there have been 2 strandings of pygmy beaked whales near La Paz, Baja California, Mexico.

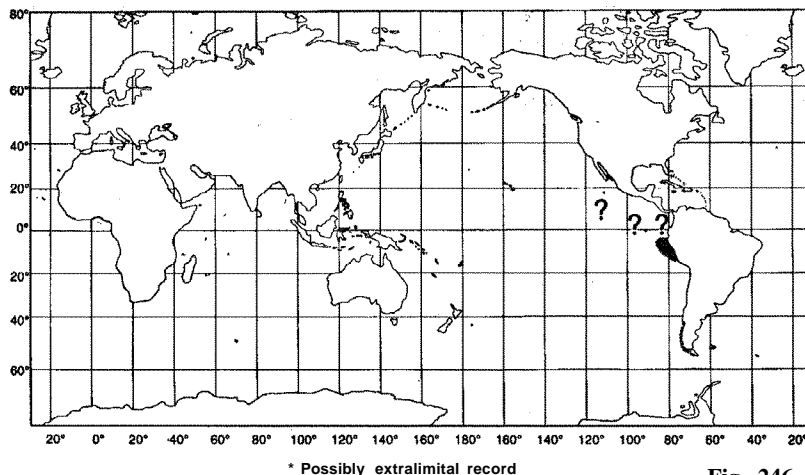


Fig. 246

Biology and Behaviour: The diet consists of small mid-water fishes, oceanic squid, and shrimps. Groups of 2 or 3 animals have been observed.

Exploitation: Pygmy beaked whales are taken in the driftnet fishery for sharks off the coast of Peru.

IUCN Status: Insufficiently known.

Mesoplodon bidens (Sowerby, 1804)

ZIPH Mes 7

BWW

FAO Names: **En** - Sowerby's beaked whale; **Fr** - Baleine à bec de Sowerby; **Sp** - Zifio de Sowerby.



Fig. 247 *Mesoplodon bidens*

Distinctive Characteristics: Sowerby's beaked whales have the typical *Mesoplodon* body shape, but tend to have a very long (for *Mesoplodon*) beak and a bulge on the forehead. The 2 teeth of adult males erupt from the middle of the lower jaw, and are visible outside the closed mouth, although they are not particularly large.

Coloration is not well known, but generally appears charcoal grey, with a lighter belly. White or light grey spots are common on the body of adults; however, young animals have less spotting.

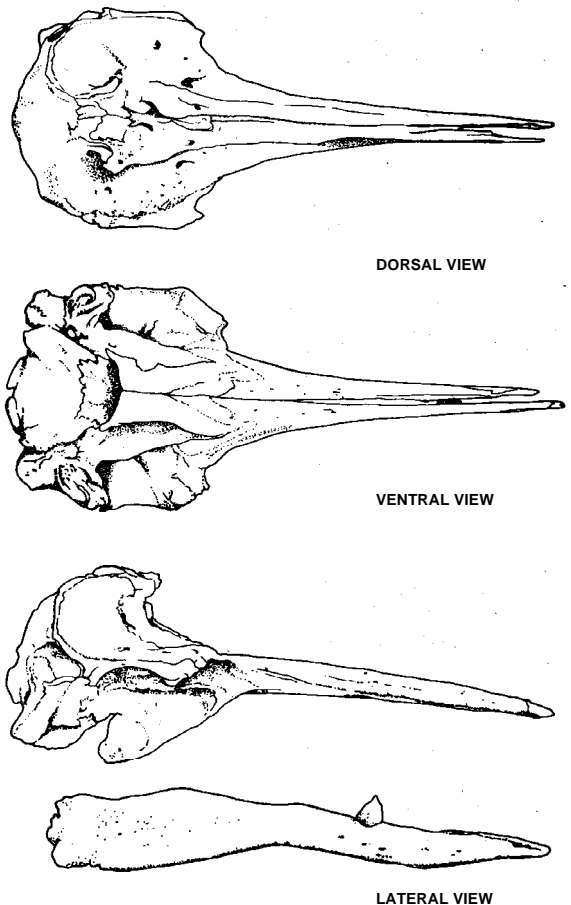


Fig. 248 Skull

Can be confused with: Sowerby's beaked whales might be confused with other species of *Mesoplodon* (starting on p. 90) and even bulls would be nearly impossible to distinguish at sea from related species. The limited distribution will help narrow the choices,

Size: Males reach lengths of at least 5.5 m and females, 5.1 m. Newborns average 2.4 m.

Geographical Distribution: These beaked whales are known only from the colder waters of the North Atlantic, from at least Massachusetts to Labrador in the west, and from Iceland to Norway in the east. The range is known to include the Baltic Sea, but not the Mediterranean. The North Sea appears to be the centre of abundance. There is a single record from the Gulf of Mexico, but this may represent an extralimital occurrence.

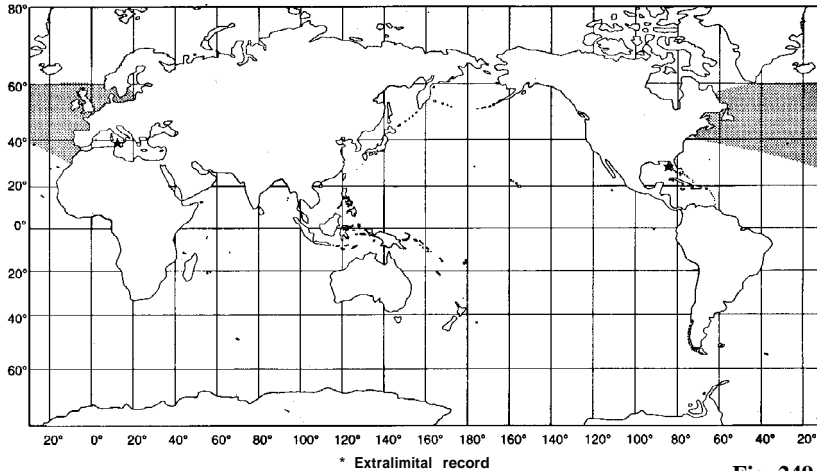


Fig. 249

Biology and Behaviour: Almost nothing is known of the natural history of this species beyond what has been learned from strandings, which have involved singles and pairs. Sowerby's beaked whales feed on squid and small fish. The breeding season appears to be late winter to spring.

Exploitation: Some are known to have been taken in Newfoundland in a small-scale fishery.

IUCN Status: Insufficiently known.

Mesoplodon europaeus Gervais, 1855

ZIPH Mes 8

BGW

FAO Names: En - Gervais' beaked whale; Fr - Baleine à bec de Gervais; Sp - Zifio de Gervais.

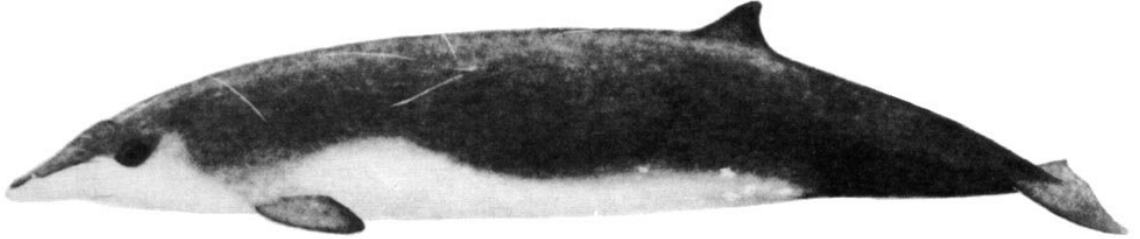
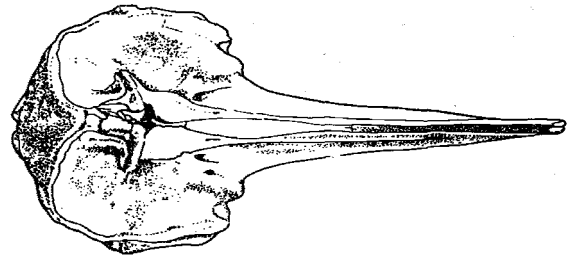


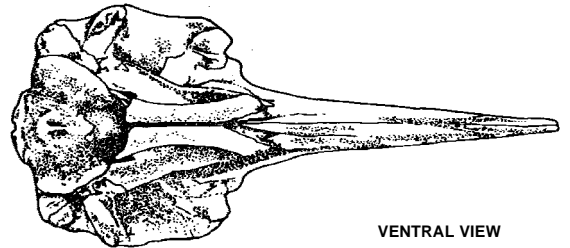
Fig. 250 *Mesoplodon europaeus*

Distinctive Characteristics: Gervais' beaked whales are dark grey above and lighter grey below. In young animals, the belly is white.

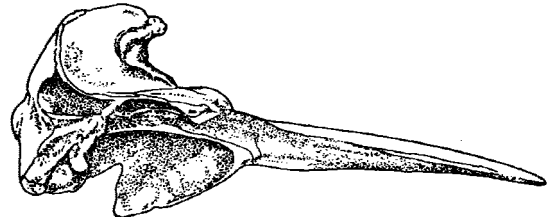
The teeth of adult males are found one-third of the distance from the snout tip to the gape. They are visible outside the closed mouth. The mouthline is relatively straight.



DORSAL VIEW



VENTRAL VIEW



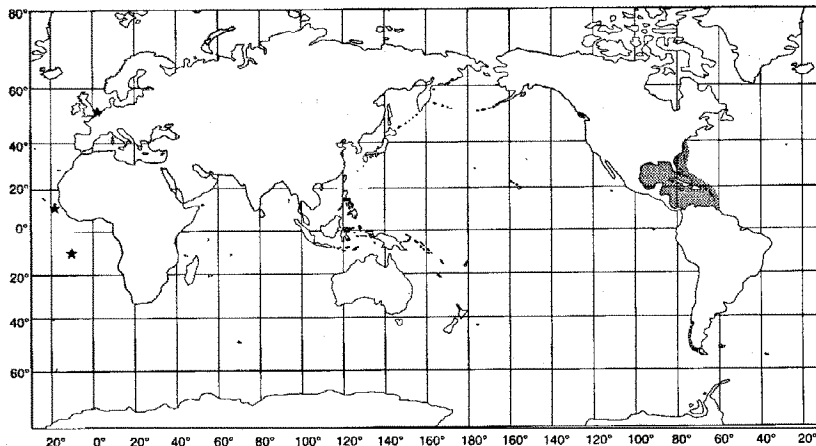
LATERAL VIEW

Fig. 251 Skull

Can be confused with: Gervais' beaked whales are nearly impossible to distinguish at sea from other species of *Mesoplodon* (starting on p. 90).

Size: Males attain lengths of at least 4.5 m, and adult females reach at least 5.2 m. Weights of at least 1 200 kg are attained. Newborns are about 2.1 m in length.

Geographical Distribution: Most records are from the east and Gulf coasts of North America, from New York to Texas, but Gervais' beaked whales are also known from several of the Caribbean islands. In the eastern Atlantic, they are known from the English Channel to Guinea-Bissau in West Africa. There is also a stranding at Ascension Island, in the central South Atlantic.



* Possibly extralimital record

Fig. 252

Biology and Behaviour: The favoured habitat of Gervais' beaked whales appears to be warm temperate and tropical waters. Like other members of the genus, they are known to feed on squid.

Exploitation: There is a record of 1 being taken in a net off New Jersey, and others may have been taken in Caribbean small cetacean fisheries.

IUCN Status: Insufficiently known.