

Globicephala macrorhynchus Gray, 1846

DELPH Glob 2

SHW

FAO Names: **En** - Short-finned pilot whale; **Fr** - Globicephale tropical; **Sp** - Calderón de aletas cortas.

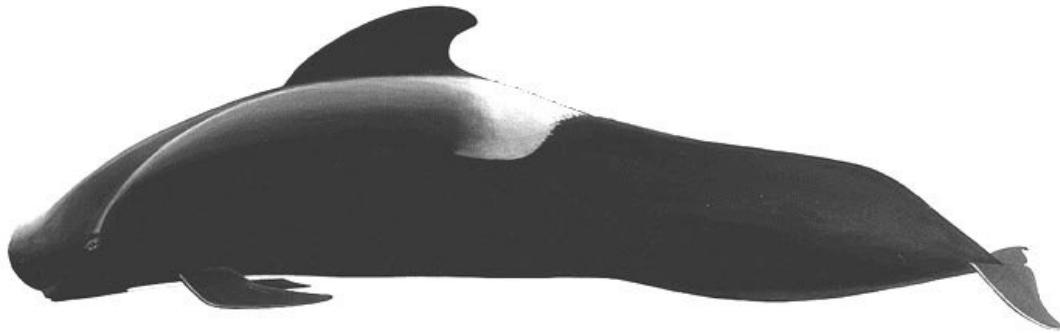
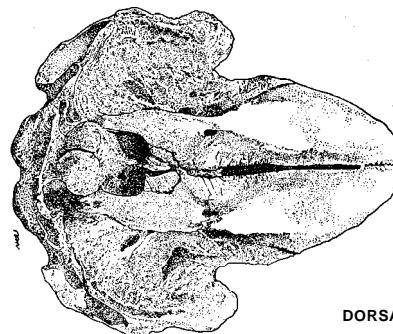


Fig. 280 *Globicephala macrorhynchus*

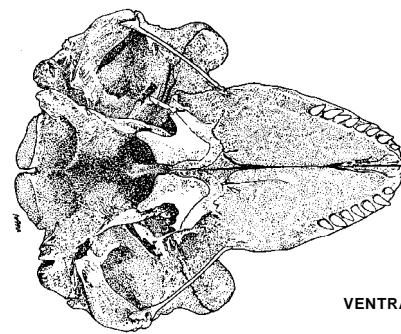
Distinctive Characteristics: Pilot whales are large, with bulbous heads, dramatically upsloping mouthlines, and extremely short or non-existent beaks. The shape of the head varies significantly with age and sex, becoming more globose in adult males. The dorsal fin, which is situated only about one-third of the way back from the head, is low and falcate, with a very wide base (it also varies with age and sex). The flippers are long and sickle-shaped, 16 to 22% of the body length. Adult males are significantly larger than females, with large, sometimes squarish foreheads that may overhang the snout, strongly hooked dorsal fins with thickened leading edges, and deepened tail stocks with post-anal keels.

Except for a light grey, anchor-shaped patch on the chest, a grey "saddle" behind the dorsal fin, and a pair of roughly parallel bands high on the back that sometimes end as a light streak or teardrop above each eye, pilot whales are black to dark brownish grey. This is the reason for one of their other common names, blackfish (although the term blackfish is variously used, usually by fishermen, to refer to killer, false killer, pygmy killer, pilot, and melon-headed whales).

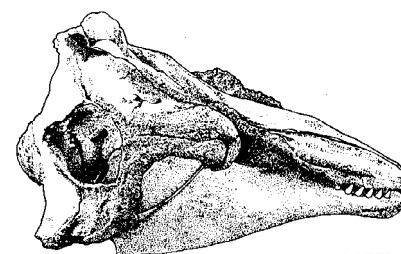
There are usually 7 to 9 short, sharply pointed teeth in the front of each tooth row.



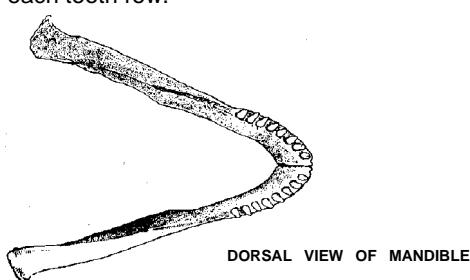
DORSAL VIEW



VENTRAL VIEW



LATERAL VIEW



DORSAL VIEW OF MANDIBLE

Fig. 281 Skull

Can be confused with: In areas of overlap, the 2 pilot whales are difficult or impossible to distinguish at sea. Most sightings can be tentatively assigned to species, based on the area. Other smaller blackfish, such as false killer whales (p. 126), and less commonly, pygmy killer (p. 128) and melon-headed (p. 130) whales, may be confused with pilot whales at a distance. Dorsal-fin shape is the best clue to distinguishing pilot whales from these species.

Size: Pilot whales are about 1.4 m long at birth. Adults reach 5.5 m (females) and 6.1 m (males). Males may weigh nearly 3 600 kg.

Geographical Distribution: Short-finned pilot whales are found in warm temperate to tropical waters of the world, generally in deep offshore areas. They do not usually range north of 50°N or south of 40°. There is some distributional overlap with their long-finned relatives (*G. melas*), which appear to prefer cold temperate waters of the North Atlantic, Southern Hemisphere, and previously the western North Pacific. Only short-finned pilot whales are thought to inhabit the North Pacific, although distribution and taxonomy of pilot whales in this area are still largely unresolved. There are 2 geographic forms of short-finned pilot whales off Japan.

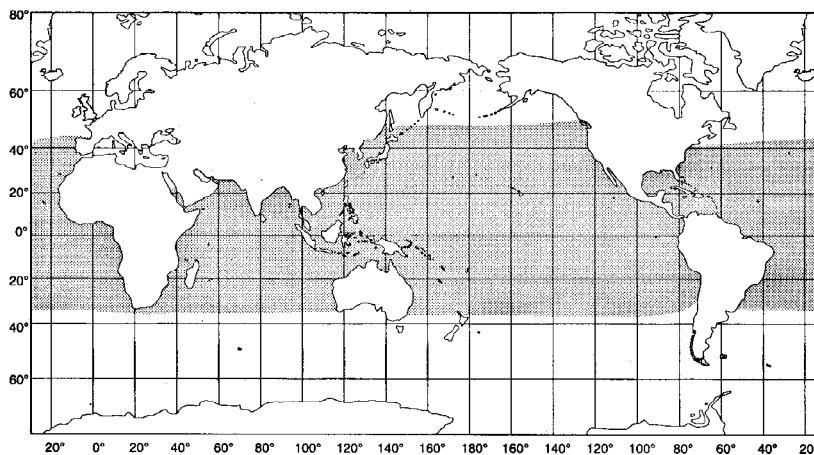


Fig. 282

Biology and Behaviour: In the eastern Pacific, pilot whales are commonly associated with other species (such as bottlenose, Pacific white-sided, and Risso's dolphins, and sperm whales). Pods of up to several hundred short-finned pilot whales are seen, and members of this highly social species are almost never seen alone. Strong social bonds may partially explain why pilot whales are among the species of cetaceans that most frequently mass-strand. Although detailed studies of behaviour have only begun recently, pilot whales appear to live in relatively stable female-based groups.

Females become post-reproductive at around 35 years, but may continue to suckle young for up to 15 additional years, suggesting a complex social structure in which older females may give their own or related calves a "reproductive edge" through prolonged suckling. Calving peaks occur in spring and autumn in the Southern Hemisphere, and vary by stock in the Northern Hemisphere.

Although they also take fish, pilot whales are thought to be primarily adapted to feeding on squid. They show the tooth reduction typical of other squid-eating cetaceans.

Exploitation: Short-finned pilot whales have been hunted throughout their range in small numbers, although not as heavily as their congeners in the North Atlantic. The largest catches have recently occurred off Japan, where small coastal whaling stations and drive fisheries take a few hundred annually. A catch of a few hundred per year existed until recently in the Caribbean, but numbers taken there have apparently declined. Incidental catches in fishing gear are known for several areas. A few have also been captured live off southern California for display and research.

IUCN Status: Insufficiently known.

Pseudorca crassidens* (Owen, 1846)*DELPH Pseu 1****FAW**

FAO Names: En - False killer whale; Fr - Faux-orque; Sp - Orca falsa.

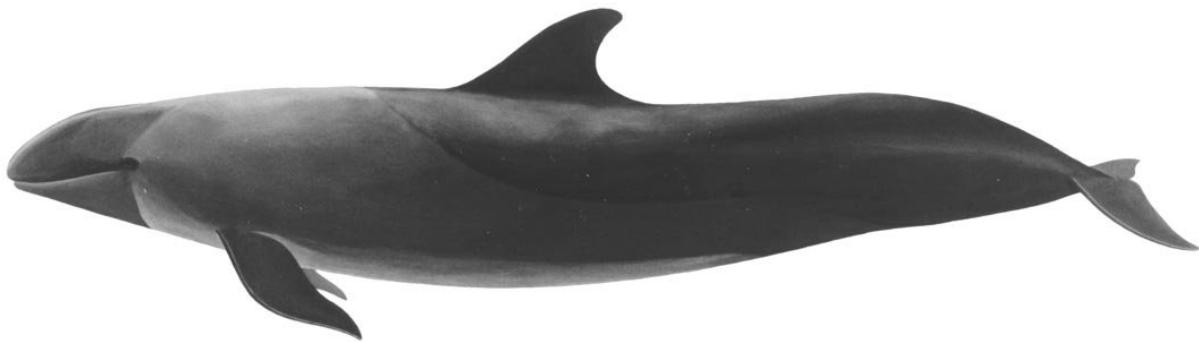


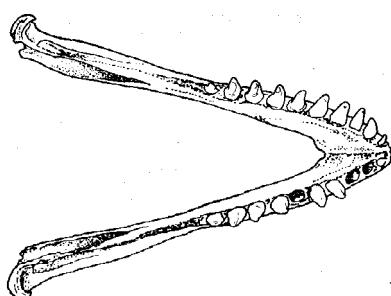
Fig. 283 *Pseudorca crassidens*

Distinctive Characteristics: The false killer whale is one of several species of delphinids that some fishermen call blackfish. It has a long slender body, a rounded overhanging forehead, and no beak. The dorsal fin is falcate and slender, and generally somewhat rounded at the tip. The flippers have a characteristic hump on the leading edge, perhaps the species' most diagnostic character.

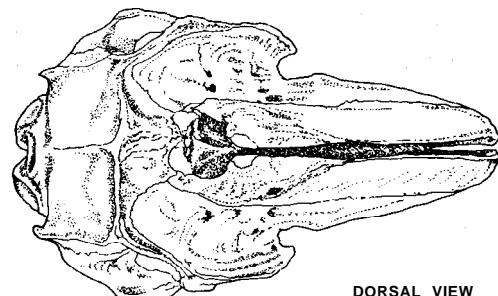
This is a large, dark grey to black dolphin, with a faint light grey patch on the chest, and sometimes light grey areas on the head.

Skulls of false killer whales from Australia, South Africa, and Scotland have been shown to differ, and this suggests the existence of different populations in these areas.

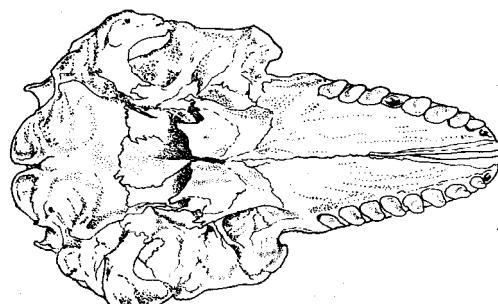
Each jaw contains 7 to 12 pairs of large conical teeth, which are round in cross-section.



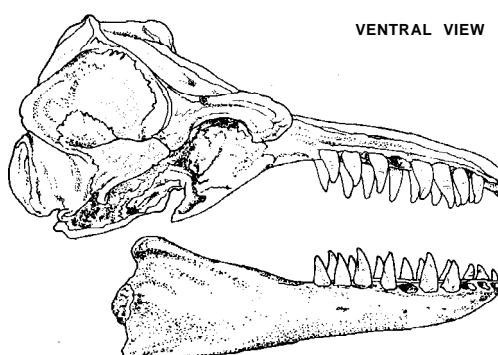
DORSAL VIEW OF MANDIBLE



DORSAL VIEW



VENTRAL VIEW



LATERAL VIEW

Fig. 284 Skull

Can be confused with: False killer whales are most commonly confused with pygmy killer (p. 128) and melon-headed (p. 130) whales, and less commonly, pilot whales (starting on p. 122). Shape of the head, dorsal fin, and flippers will be the best characters to use in distinguishing them (the flipper hump of false killer whales is diagnostic).

Size: Adults are up to 6 m (males) or 5 m (females) long. Large males may weigh up to 2 000 kg. Newborns are 1.5 to 2.1 m.

Geographical Distribution: False killer whales are found in tropical to warm temperate zones, in deep offshore waters. They generally do not range further north or south 50° in either hemisphere.

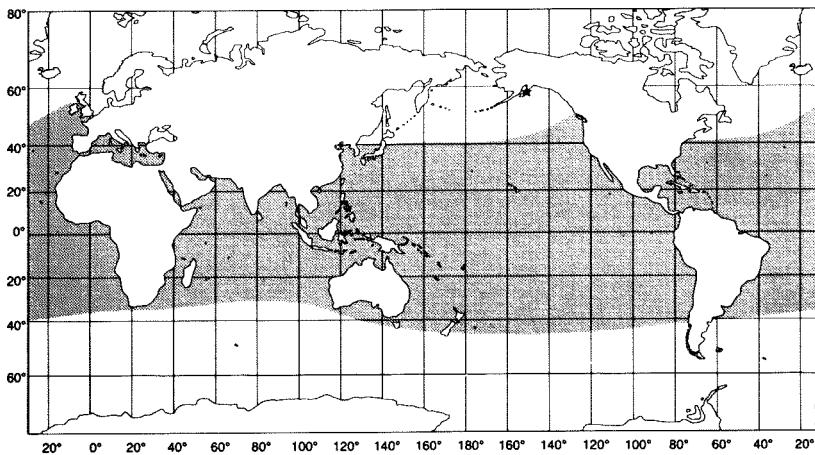


Fig. 285

Biology and Behaviour: As is the case for most of the tropical oceanic delphinids, this species is poorly known. In some areas, false killer whales take bait from longlines and thus irritate fishermen. Groups of 10 to 60 are typical, though much larger groups are known. This is one of the most common species involved in cetacean mass strandings. The false killer whale is a lively, fast-swimming cetacean, which often behaves more like the spritely smaller dolphins than other mid-sized cetaceans.

No seasonality in breeding is known for the false killer whale.

Although false killer whales eat primarily fish and cephalopods, they also have been known to attack small cetaceans and, on one occasion, even a humpback whale.

Exploitation: Small numbers of false killer whales are taken in fishing nets and lines throughout their range, but only in Japan has there been a major catch. This is one of several species killed in the now infamous Iki Island drives, in which cetaceans are driven ashore and killed because they are held responsible for depleting an overfished stock of yellowtail amberjack (*Seriola lalandi*). A few may be shot by fishermen who regard them as competitors, and small numbers have been captured live off California and Hawaii. Incidental catches of small numbers occur in several areas.

IUCN Status: Insufficiently known.

Feresa attenuata Gray, 1875

DELPH Fer 1

KPW

FAO Names: En - Pygmy killer whale; Fr - Orque pygmée; Sp- Orca pigmea.

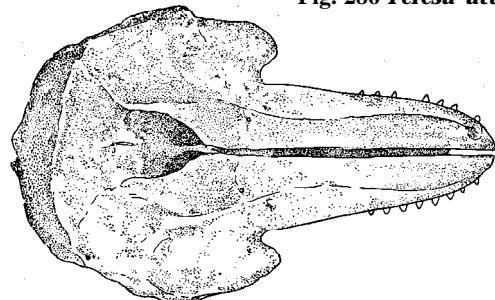


Fig. 286 *Feresa attenuata*

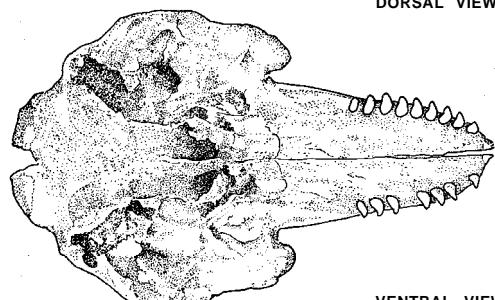
Distinctive Characteristics: The pygmy killer whale is often confused with the false killer whale and melon-headed whale. The best field character for distinguishing among these species is the flipper shape (rounded tips in the pygmy killer whale, pointed tips in the melon-headed whale, and humps on the leading edge-in the false killer whale). The body of the pygmy killer whale is somewhat slender; the head is rounded and has no beak.

The colour of the body is dark grey to black, with a prominent narrow cape that dips only slightly below the dorsal fin, and a white to light grey ventral band that widens around the genitals. Also, the lips and snout tip are sometimes white.

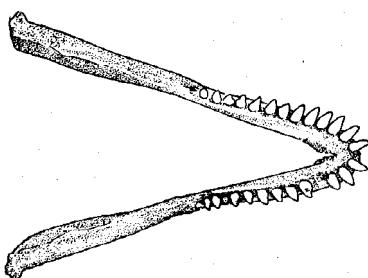
The upper jaw contains 8 to 11 pairs of teeth, and the lower jaw has 11 to 13 pairs.



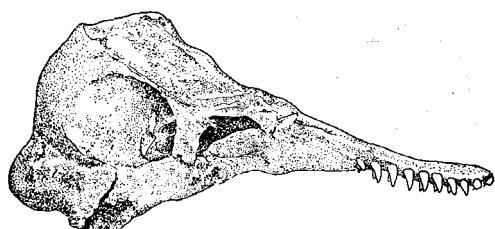
DORSAL VIEW



VENTRAL VIEW



DORSAL VIEW OF MANDIBLE



LATERAL VIEW

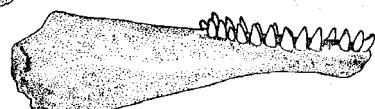


Fig. 287 Skull

Can be confused with: Pygmy killer whales are most easily confused with melon-headed whales (p. 130), and less easily with false killer whales (p. 126). Flipper shape, head shape, and the contour of the cape are the best features to use in distinguishing pygmy killer and melon-headed whales.

Size: Newborns are about 80 cm long, adults up to 2.6 m. Males are slightly larger than females. Maximum known weight is 225 kg.

Geographical Distribution: This is a tropical and subtropical species that inhabits oceanic waters around the globe, generally not ranging north of 40°N or south of 35°S.

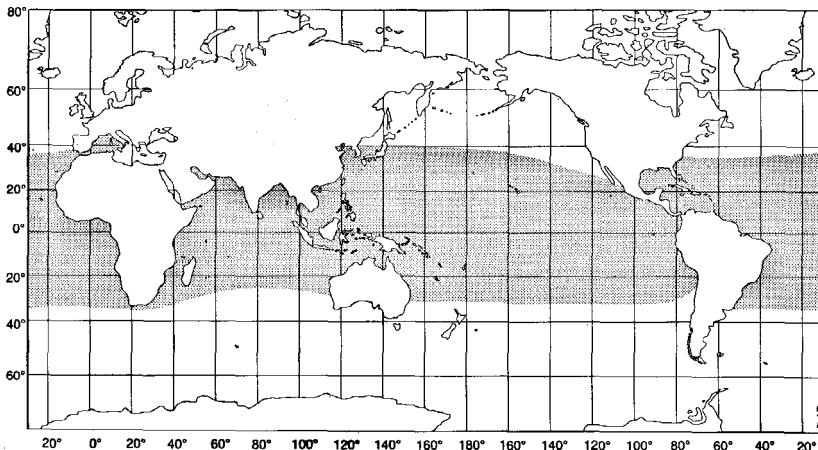


Fig. 288

Biology and Behaviour: There is little known of the biology of the pygmy killer whale. Groups generally contain 50 or fewer individuals, although herds of up to several hundred have been seen. It is slow and lethargic compared to the similar-appearing melon-headed whale.

Not much is known of the reproductive biology of this species.

Pygmy killer whales eat mostly fish and squid, although they occasionally attack other dolphins, at least when those dolphins are involved in tuna fishery interactions in the eastern tropical Pacific.

Exploitation: A few individuals are known to be taken in drives and in driftnets in various regions, most notably Japan and Sri Lanka. Small incidental catches are known in fisheries in other areas.

IUCN Status: Insufficiently known.