

Lagenorhynchus obliquidens Gill, 1865

DELPH Lag 2

DWP

FAO Names: En - Pacific white-sided dolphin; Fr - Dauphin à flancs blancs du Pacifique; Sp - Delfín de costados blancos del Pacífico .

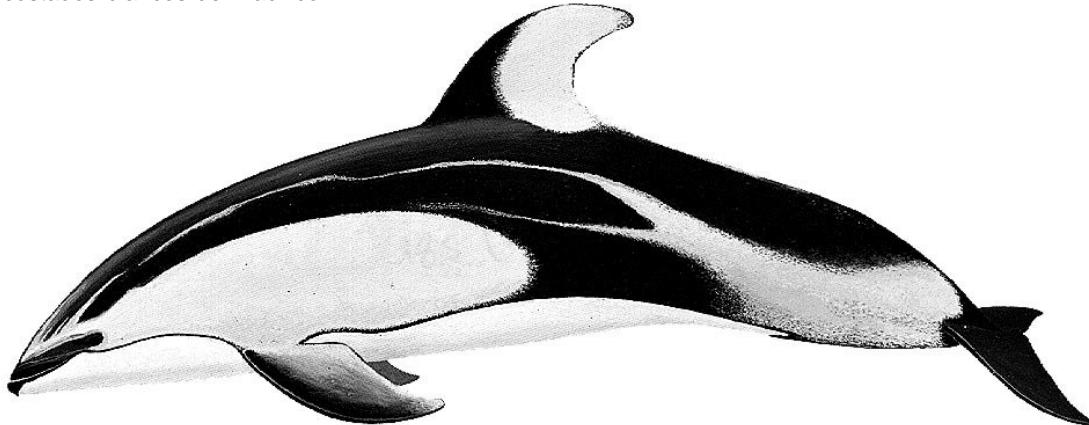
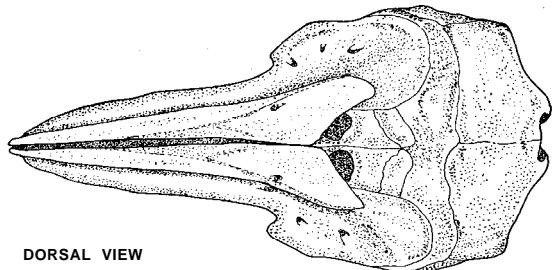


Fig. 304 *Lagenorhynchus obliquidens*

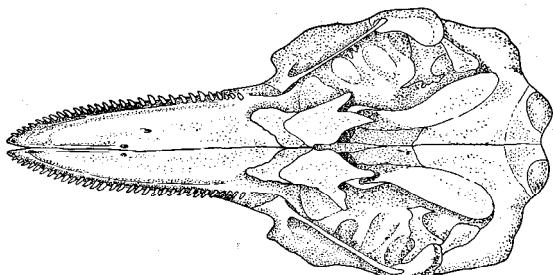
Distinctive Characteristics: Pacific white-sided dolphins, like all members of the genus ***Lagenorhynchus***, are stocky animals with very short, thick snouts. The large flippers have slightly rounded tips. The dorsal fin, the species' most diagnostic feature, is prominent, strongly recurved, and bi-coloured.

The dark grey back and sides are distinctly set off from the white belly by a black border. Light grey streaks beginning on the sides of the melon sweep downwards behind the eye and expand into large grey thoracic patches. Grey "suspender stripes", which start above the eyes, widen to bands on the sides of the tail stock. The lips are black.

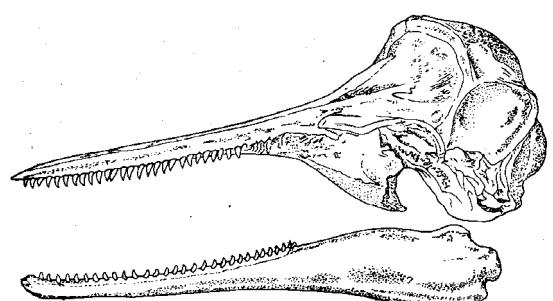
Each tooth row contains 23 to 36 pairs of relatively fine, sharply pointed teeth.



DORSAL VIEW



VENTRAL VIEW



LATERAL VIEW

Fig. 305 Skull

Can be confused with: Pacific white-sided dolphins are most likely to be confused with common dolphins (p. 166), because both species are found in large schools and have large light coloured flank patches. Beak length and specifics of the colour pattern are the best keys to distinguishing them.

Size: Adults of this species reach 2.5 m in length, with males slightly larger than females. Maximum weight is about 180 kg. Length at birth is unknown, but is thought to be about 1 m.

Geographical Distribution: Pacific white-sided dolphins inhabit temperate waters of the North Pacific and some adjacent seas. Although they are widely distributed in deep offshore waters, they also extend onto the continental shelf and very near shore in some areas. They reach their southern limits at the mouth of the Gulf of California (and occasionally venture northward to or beyond La Paz) and Taiwan. On both eastern and western sides of the Pacific, separate local stocks have been documented.

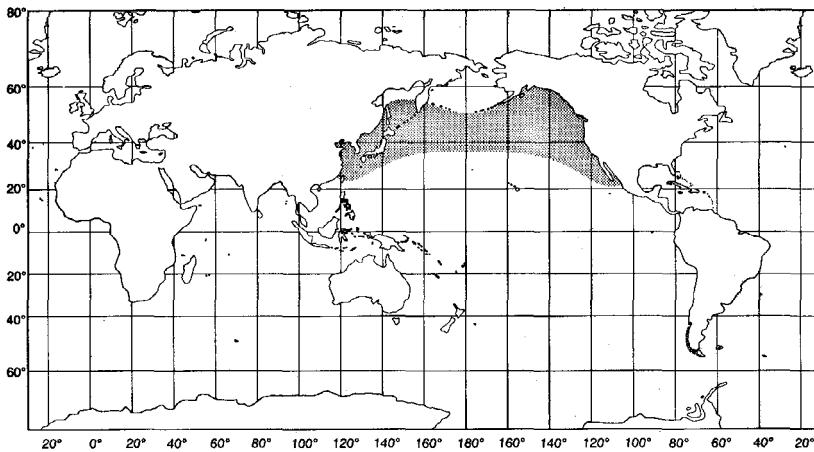


Fig. 306

Biology and Behaviour: Often seen in large herds of hundreds or even thousands, these highly gregarious dolphins are also commonly seen with other species, especially northern right whale dolphins and Risso's dolphins. They are highly acrobatic and playful, commonly bowriding, and often leaping, flipping, or somersaulting.

Calving apparently occurs during a protracted summer breeding season, which extends into autumn.

They feed mostly on small schooling fish and squid. There is evidence that these dolphins feed mostly on deep scattering layer (DSL) organisms, sometimes using cooperative foraging techniques.

Exploitation: In the western Pacific, Japanese drive and harpoon fisheries take hundreds or thousands of Pacific white-sided dolphins in most years. Exploitation in the eastern Pacific has been limited to occasional incidental capture in fishing nets, and small numbers taken in a fishery for live animals. In the central Pacific, white-sided dolphins were recently killed in substantial numbers in the Asian pelagic driftnet fisheries for squid. The annual kill was on the order of 8 000 to 10 000 per year.

IUCN Status: Insufficiently known.

Lagenorhynchus obscurus* (Gray, 1828)*DELPH Lag 3****DDU**

FAO Names: **En** - Dusky dolphin; **Fr** - Dauphin sombre; **Sp** - Delfín obscuro.

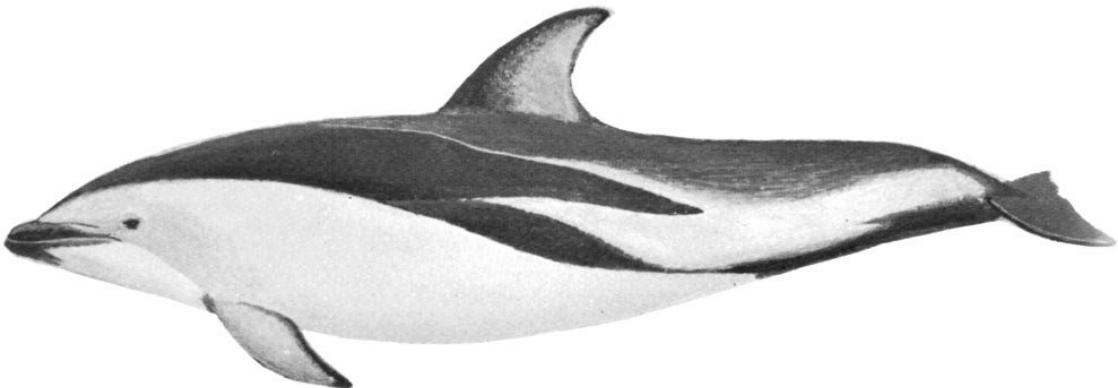
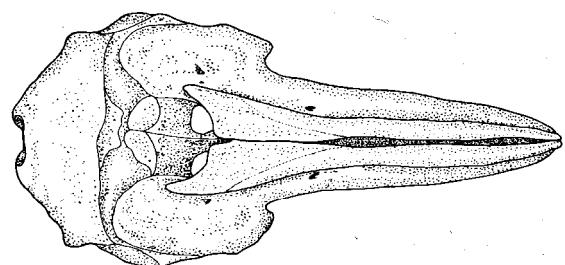


Fig. 307 *Lagenorhynchus obscurus*

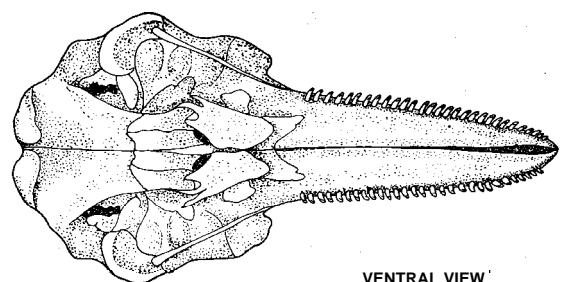
Distinctive Characteristics: The dusky dolphin is a small, moderately robust species. The rostrum is short and clearly demarcated from the melon (forehead). The conspicuous dorsal fin is moderately falcate and pointed. The flippers are moderately curved on the leading edge, with a blunt tip.

The body coloration is complex, and is generally countershaded, dark grey to black above and white below. The sides are marked with blazes and patches of pale grey. In front of the dorsal fin, they bear a broad light grey thoracic patch that encompasses the face, most of the head, and flanks, tapering towards the belly. A separate crescent-shaped flank patch reaches the top of the tail stock just in front of the flukes. The front of this flank patch splits into 2 blazes, a shorter ventral and a longer dorsal one; this latter narrows and stretches up onto the back, almost to the blowhole. The rostrum is grey-black around the tip, tapering back to darken just the lips near the gape. The eye is set in a small patch of grey-black. A variable crescent of pale grey contrasts the trailing half of the dorsal fin with the dark coloured front half, and the flippers are pale grey, but darken around the edges.

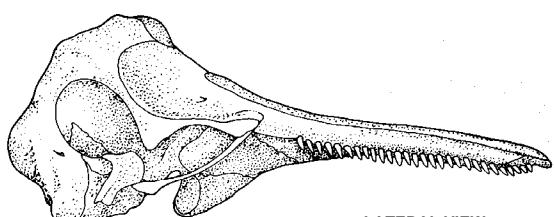
There are 27 to 36 small, pointed teeth on each side of each jaw.



DORSAL VIEW



VENTRAL VIEW



LATERAL VIEW

Fig. 308 Skull

Can be confused with: At sea, dusky dolphins can be distinguished from the closely related, but larger and more robust, Peale's dolphin (p. 150) primarily by careful attention to differences in colour pattern.

Size: The maximum recorded length is 2.1 m.. Most adults are less than 2 m long. Healthy adults weigh 40 to 80 kg. Length at birth has been reported to be 55 to 70 cm.

Geographical Distribution: Dusky dolphins are widespread in the Southern Hemisphere. They occur in apparently disjunct populations in the waters off New Zealand, South America, and southern Africa. This is a coastal species and is usually found over the continental shelf and slope.

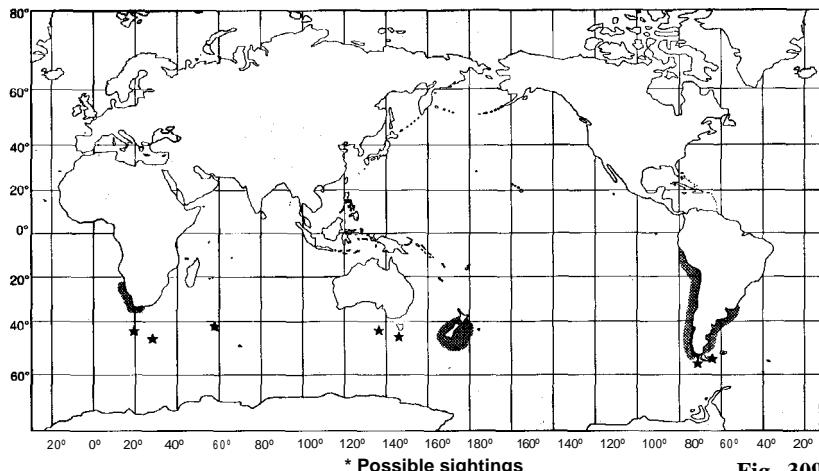


Fig. 309

Biology and Behaviour: Dusky dolphins are highly social, gregarious animals. They sometimes form impressive herds of over 1 000 individuals, but are more likely to occur in groups of 20 to 500. Dusky dolphins are one of the most acrobatic of dolphins, frequently leaping high out of the water, at times tumbling in the air. They readily approach vessels to engage in bowriding. Many species of cetaceans have been observed in association with dusky dolphins.

In New Zealand and Argentina, calving is believed to peak in summer (November to February).

Dusky dolphins take a wide variety of prey, including southern anchovy and mid-water and benthic prey, such as squid and lanternfishes. They may also engage in nocturnal feeding. Cooperative feeding is practiced commonly in some areas.

Exploitation: In New Zealand, some dusky dolphins are entangled in gill nets. Incidental mortality at one fishing port is estimated to be 100 to 200 animals per year. The situation in Peru is of greater concern. It has been calculated that the fishing industry from just one port kills more than 700 dusky dolphins each year. These dolphins are sold for food, so they are taken incidentally and as deliberate targets. Dusky dolphins are assumed to be relatively abundant throughout their range. However, very few surveys have been conducted and no population estimates are available.

IUCN Status: Insufficiently known.

***Lagenorhynchus albirostris* (Gray, 1846)**

DELPH Lag 4

BWD

FAO Names: **En** - White-beaked dolphin; **Fr** - Dauphin à bec blanc; **Sp** - Delfín de hocico blanco .



Fig. 310 *Lagenorhynchus albirostris*

Distinctive Characteristics: White-beaked dolphins are extremely robust. The beak is short and thick, but set-off from the melon by a crease. The dorsal fin is tall and falcate, with a pointed tip.

The colour pattern is highly variable, but the animals are mostly black to dark grey. The beak and most of the belly are white to light grey, and the beak, especially, is often mottled. An area of light grey with an indistinct border originating on the upper flank broadens to cover most of the tail stock. There is often dark or light flecking in the region between the eye and the flipper.

Each half of each jaw is lined with 22 to 28 sharp teeth.

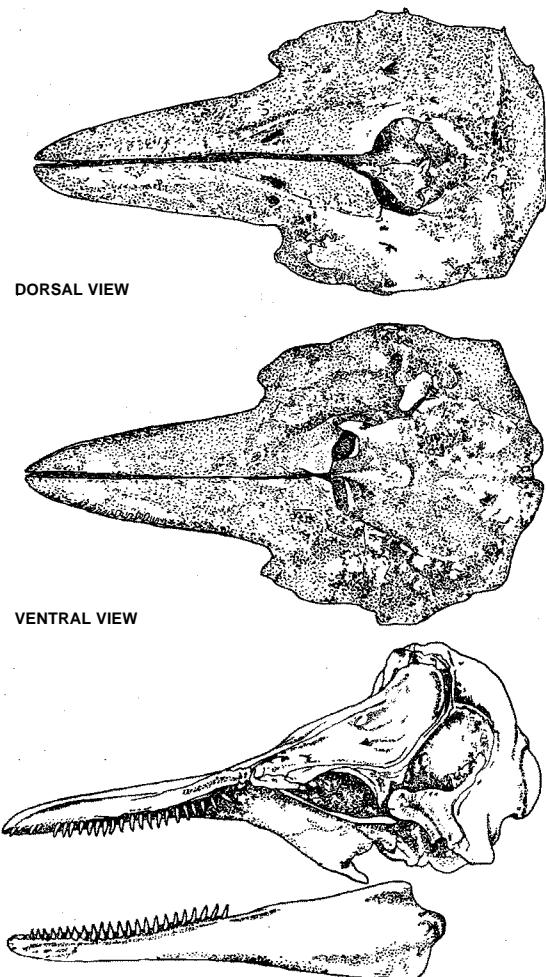


Fig. 311 Skull

Can be confused with: White-beaked dolphins are most likely to be confused with Atlantic white-sided dolphins (p. 146) from which they can be distinguished by differences in coloration and beak length. In the few areas where they overlap with bottlenose dolphins (p. 154), care must be taken to distinguish between these 2; colour-pattern differences are most useful.

Size: Adults are up to 3.2 m in length (males grow larger than females). Newborns are between 1.2 and 1.6 m.

Geographical Distribution: White-beaked dolphins inhabit cold temperate to subpolar oceanic waters of the North Atlantic, from Cape Cod and Portugal, north to central Davis Strait, central Greenland, Iceland, and northern Norway. There are also records from the western Mediterranean.

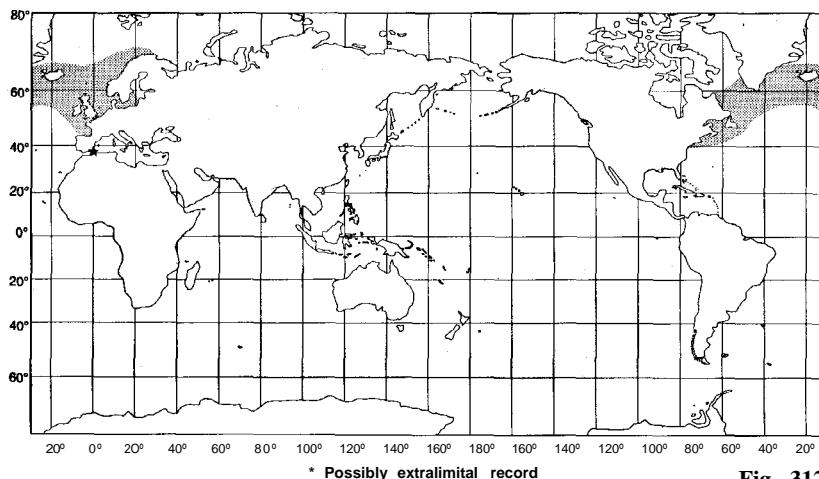


Fig. 312

Biology and Behaviour: Groups of less than 50 are most common, but herds of many hundreds have been seen. These animals are active, often leaping and breaching. While feeding they sometimes associate with large whales.

There appears to be a calving peak in summer and early autumn, but not much is known about reproduction in this species.

White-beaked dolphins feed on a variety of small schooling fishes, squid, and crustaceans.

Exploitation: There is a long history of hunting for white-beaked dolphins in Norway, the Faeroe Islands, Greenland, and Labrador. Hunting in some areas continues today. Incidental catches in fishing gear occur, but are not thought to be high enough to represent a threat to this species.

IUCN Status: Insufficiently known.

Lagenorhynchus acutus* (Gray, 1828)*DELPH Lag 5****DWH**

FAO Names: **En** - Atlantic white-sided dolphin; **Fr** - Dauphin à flancs blancs de l'Atlantique; **Sp** - Delfín de flancos blancos.



Fig. 313 *Lagenorhynchus acutus*

Distinctive Characteristics: Atlantic white-sided dolphins have the typical *Lagenorhynchus* body shape which is a stocky body with a short thick snout and tall falcate dorsal fin. The tail stock is strongly deepened.

The colour pattern is complex. The back and upper sides, upper jaw, dorsal fin, flippers, and flukes are black or dark grey, and a dark line runs backwards from the beak and surrounds the eye. The lower jaw and belly, as far as the urogenital area, are white. In between, the sides from just ahead of the eye to the base of the flukes are light grey. Along the upper margin of the grey side is a white patch from below the dorsal fin to midway along the tail stock. There is another narrow band, this one ochre in colour, at the lower margin of the dark upper flank, from the middle of the tail stock to just in front of the flukes.

Each tooth row contains 30 to 40 pointed teeth.

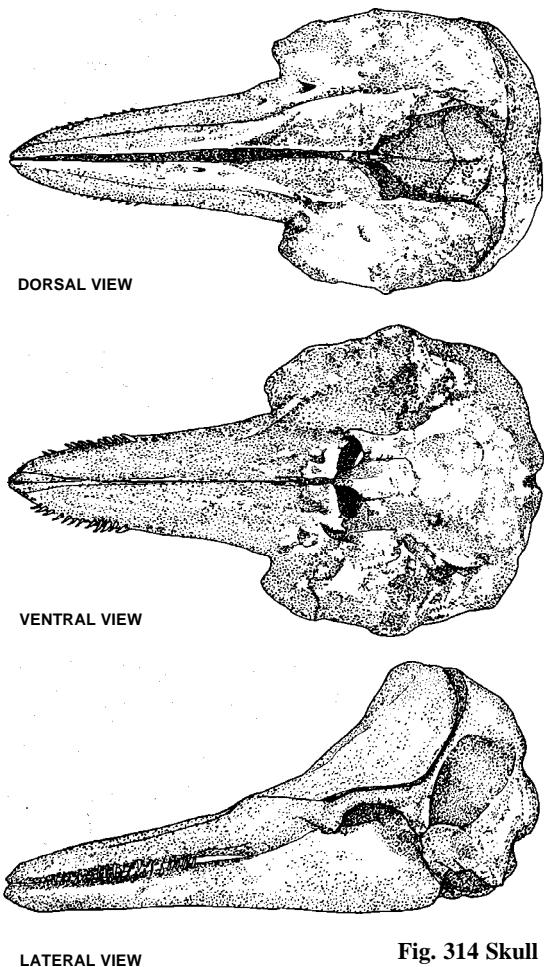


Fig. 314 Skull

Can be confused with: Confusion is most likely with the white-beaked dolphin (p. 144), which shares a nearly identical range. The 2 can be distinguished most easily by colour-pattern differences.

Size: Adult Atlantic white-sided dolphins reach 2.8 m (males) or 2.5 m (females) in length and about 235 kg (males) and 182 kg (females) in weight. Newborns are 1.1 to 1.2 m.

Geographical Distribution: Atlantic white-sided dolphins are found in cold temperate to subpolar waters of the North Atlantic, from about New England in the west and France in the east, north to southern Greenland, Iceland, and southern Norway. They rarely enter the Baltic Sea. The preferred habitat appears to be deep waters of the outer continental shelf and slope.

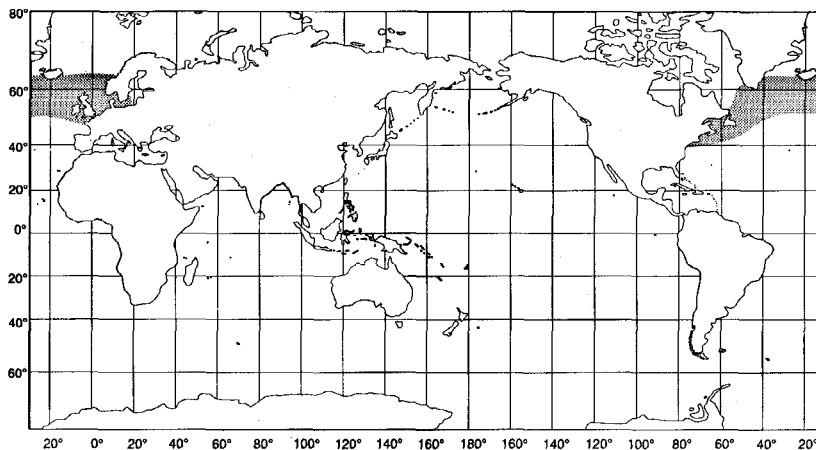


Fig. 315

Biology and Behaviour: Herds of up to several hundred are seen, and there is some age and sex segregation of herds. Older immature individuals are not generally found in reproductive herds of mature females and young. Atlantic white-sided dolphins are lively and acrobatic. Much of what we know of this species' biology comes from examination of individuals from mass strandings.

Calves are born in summer, with a peak in June and July.

Atlantic white-sided dolphins feed on small schooling fish and squid. They often feed in association with large whales.

Exploitation: Some hunting for this species occurred in the past, especially in Norway. Some are still taken in Greenland, the Faeroe Islands, and eastern Canada. Incidental kills in gillnets and other fishing gear is known from both sides of the Atlantic. Despite this exploitation, Atlantic white-sided dolphins are very abundant; at least off the northeast coast of North America.

IUCN Status: Insufficiently known.

Lagenorhynchus cruciger (Quoy and Gaimard, 1824)

DELPH Lag 1

HRD

FAO Names: **En** - Hourglass dolphin; **Fr** - Dauphin crucigère; **Sp** - Delfín cruzado.

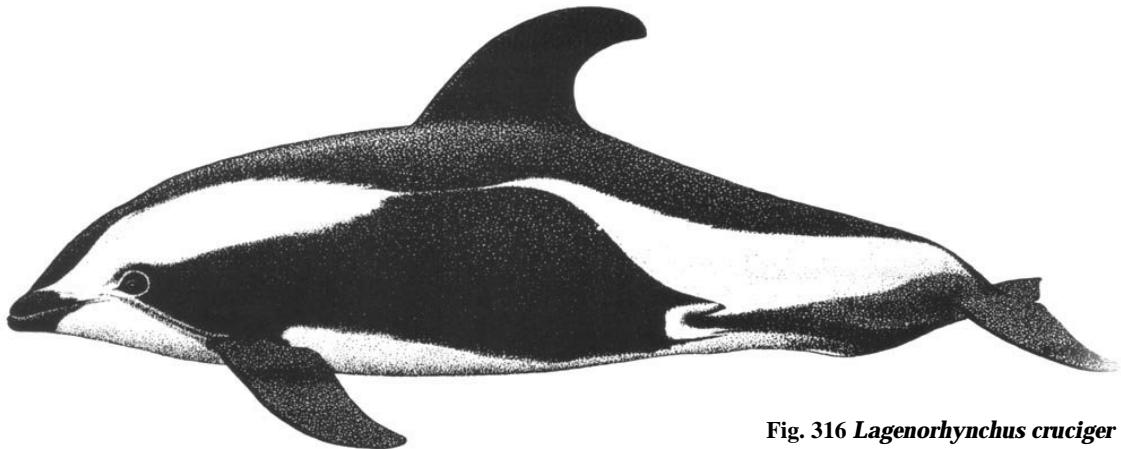
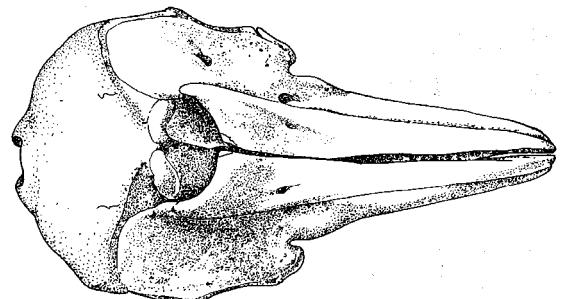


Fig. 316 *Lagenorhynchus cruciger*

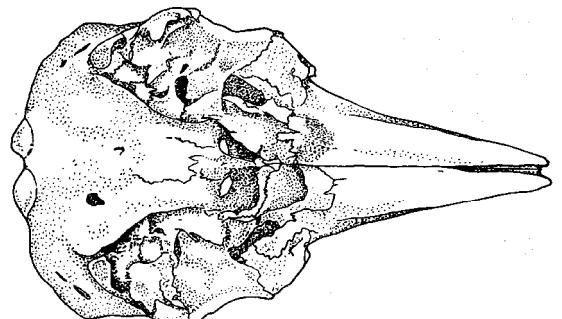
Distinctive Characteristics: Hourglass dolphins are robust, with extremely short and stubby (but well-defined) beaks. The moderately tall dorsal fin is set midway along the back. The markedly hooked fins seen on some individuals probably develop at the onset of physical maturity.

Hourglass dolphins are strikingly marked; black above and white below. The black sides are broken by a bold white flank patch that covers most of the tail stock in a wedge shape, tapering as it rises towards the fin. There, it meets the vertex of a white dorsal-spinal blaze that widens over the flippers, passes above the eye to cover the sides of the face and finally converges at the gape with the white of the chest and throat. These white markings resemble an hourglass in shape and give the dolphin its common name. The black rostrum is typical for the genus. The forehead and top of the head are also black. A white, hook-shaped mark curves up to the black side below the flank patch, near the genital aperture. The flippers, dorsal fin, and flukes are all black.

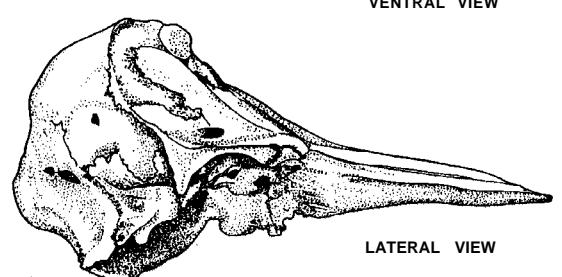
There are approximately 28 small, sharp teeth on each side of each jaw.



DORSAL VIEW



VENTRAL VIEW



LATERAL VIEW

Fig. 317 Skull

Can be confused with: The hourglass dolphin has distinctive markings and is the only small oceanic dolphin with a pointed dorsal fin in subantarctic and antarctic waters; therefore, it is difficult to confuse with other species.

Size: Few animals have been measured; a 1.63 m male and a 1.83 m female have been reported. Length at birth is assumed to be about 1 m.

Geographical Distribution: Hourglass dolphins are circumpolar in the higher latitudes of the southern oceans. They range to the ice-edges in the south, but the northern limits are not known. Hourglass dolphins appear to be oceanic; however, some sightings have been made in waters of 200 m or less, near islands and banks.

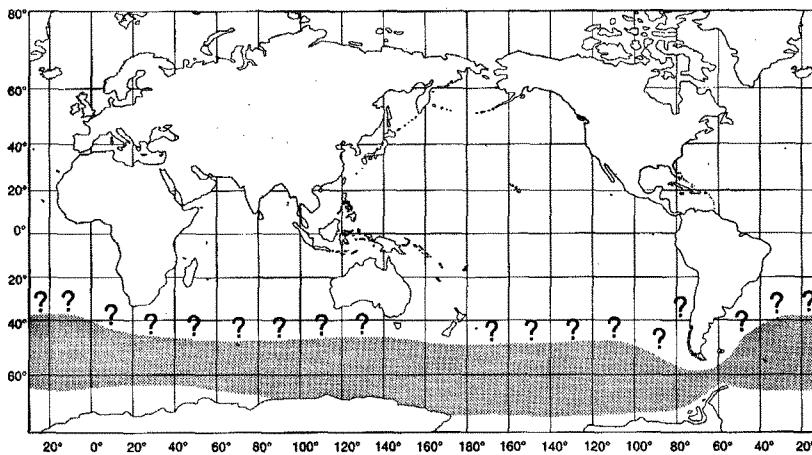


Fig. 318

Biology and Behaviour: Very little is known about hourglass dolphins. Groups tend to be small, which is unusual for a small oceanic delphinid. Although herds of up to 40 have been seen, groups of 1 to 6 are more common. Hourglass dolphins have been encountered with several other species of cetaceans. These dolphins are enthusiastic bowriders, often leaping as they race towards the bow or stern. They can also move rapidly without leaping, usually when avoiding a vessel; at such times they cause a highly visible "rooster tail" spray.

Almost nothing is known of the reproductive biology of this species.

The stomach contents of one hourglass dolphin contained a mass of partially digested small fish.

Exploitation: It may be more fair to describe the hourglass dolphin as poorly known rather than rare. It is likely that their numbers are at or near original levels. There has never been any systematic exploitation.

IUCN Status: Insufficiently known.