

Lissodelphis borealis (Peale, 1848)

DELPH Liss 2

RNW

FAO Names: En- Northern right whale dolphin; Fr - Dauphin à dos lisse boréal; Sp - Delfín líso del norte.

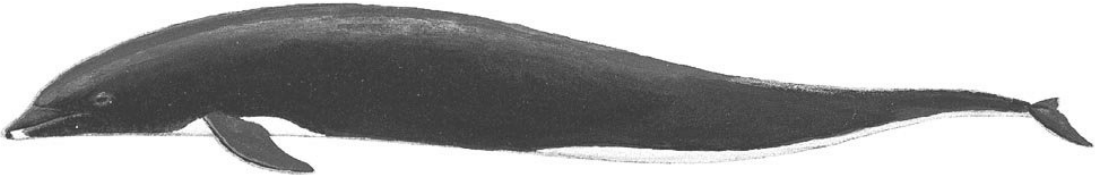
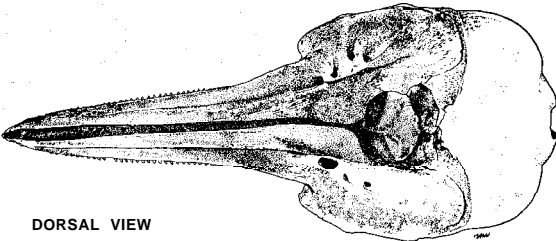


Fig. 349 *Lissodelphis borealis*

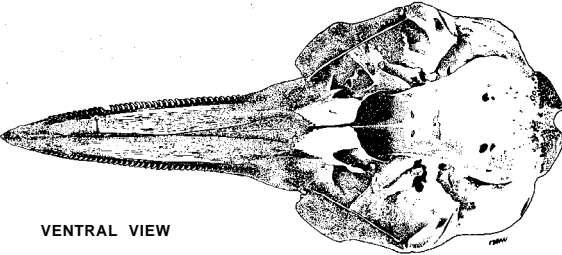
Distinctive Characteristics: The northern right whale dolphin and its Southern Hemisphere relative are the most slender of all small cetaceans. At close range, northern right whale dolphins are unmistakable; they are the only small cetaceans in their range with no dorsal fin. The flukes and flippers are small, and the beak is short, but well-defined.

Northern right whale dolphins are primarily black, with a white band from the throat to the fluke notch that widens to cover the entire area between the flippers, and a white spot just behind the tip of the lower jaw. The trailing edges of the flukes have light grey edging above and white below. Young animals have muted colour patterns of dark grey and light grey.

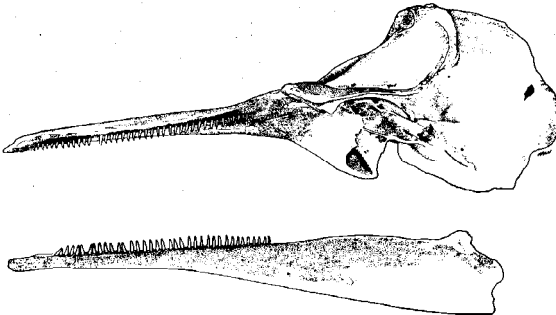
The mouth contains 37 to 54 pairs of sharp, slender teeth in each jaw.



DORSAL VIEW



VENTRAL VIEW



LATERAL VIEW

Fig. 350 Skull

Can be confused with: The slender finless body will allow easy separation from other North Pacific small cetaceans. However, porpoising California sea lions (p. 230), at a distance, can be confused with northern right whale dolphins.

Size: Measured adults have been up to 2.3 m (females) and 3.1 m (males). Length at birth is unknown, but is thought to be approximately 1 m. Maximum known weight is 115 kg.

Geographical Distribution: The northern right whale dolphin is an oceanic species, inhabiting cold and warm temperate regions of the North Pacific, mostly between about 30°N and 50°N.

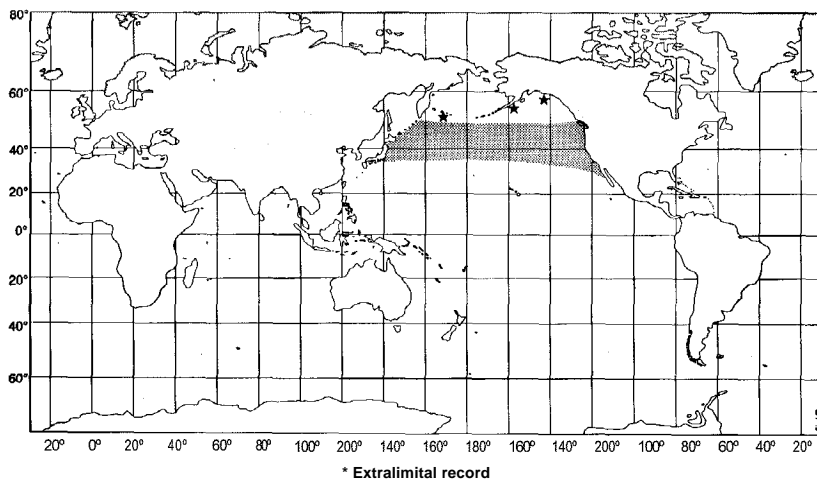


Fig. 351

Biology and Behaviour: Most herds number between 100 and 200 individuals, but groups of up to 3 000 have been seen. These groups commonly mix with other marine mammals, especially the Pacific white-sided dolphins (with which they share a nearly identical range). Northern right whale dolphins are fast swimmers, sometimes creating a great surface disturbance with their low-angle leaps and belly flops. They bowride, especially when accompanied by other species of dolphins.

There appears to be a calving peak in winter to early spring.

Although squid and lanternfish are the major prey items for right whale dolphins off southern California, a variety of surface and mid-water species are taken by this species.

Exploitation: Occasional incidental catches in the eastern Pacific and both direct and accidental catches in the western Pacific do not appear to be seriously affecting stocks. However, in the central Pacific, the northern right whale dolphin appears to be the primary species of small cetacean taken in recent years by the Japanese, Taiwanese, and Korean squid driftnet fisheries, with numbers apparently approaching 20 000 per year.

IUCN Status: Insufficiently known,

Lissodelphis peronii (Lacépede, 1804)

DELPH Liss 1

RSW

FAO Names: En - Southern right whale dolphin; Fr - Dauphin aptère austral; Sp - Delfín liso austral.

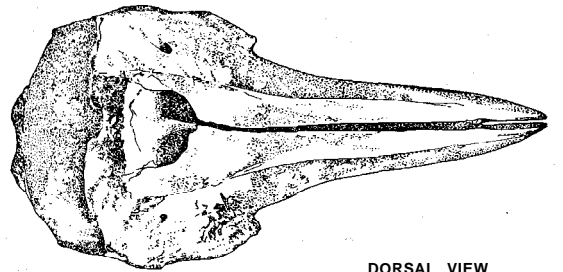


Fig. 352 *Lissodelphis peronii*

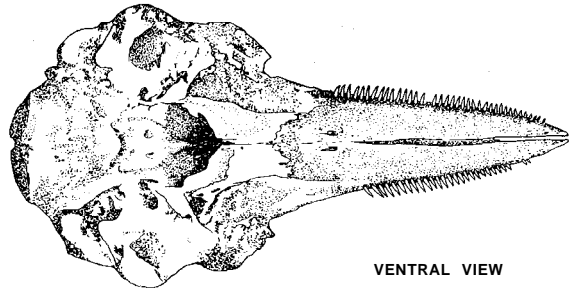
Distinctive Characteristics: Southern right whale dolphins, along with their Northern Hemisphere counterparts, are the most slender of all cetaceans. The body shape is essentially the same as in the northern right whale dolphin, with a short, well-demarcated snout, small recurved flippers, extremely narrow (top to bottom) tail stock, small flukes with a concave trailing edge, and no hint of a dorsal fin or ridge.

The white coloration of the ventral area extends well up the sides; the sharp line demarcating black above and white below runs from the tail stock forward, dips down to the flipper insertion, and then sweeps back up to cross the melon between the blowhole and snout crease. The flippers are generally white, but the trailing edge has a black band. The flukes are white below, and dark grey, fading to white on the leading edge, above.

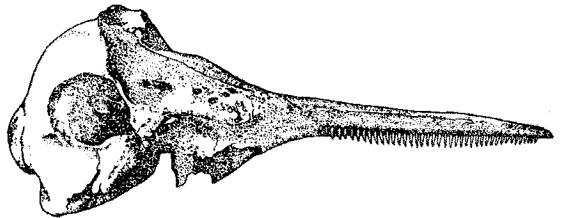
The mouth is lined with 44 to 49 sharp, pointed teeth in each row.



DORSAL VIEW



VENTRAL VIEW



LATERAL VIEW

Fig. 353 Skull

Can be confused with: The unique body shape of this species should make it easy to distinguish from other species.

Size: These dolphins reach lengths of at least 3 m and weights of 116 kg. Length at birth is probably about 1 m.

Geographical Distribution: Southern right whale dolphins are found only in cool temperate to subantarctic waters of the Southern Hemisphere. The southern limit appears generally to be bounded by the Antarctic Convergence. The range extends furthest north along the west coast of continents, due to the cold counterclockwise currents of the Southern Hemisphere. The northernmost record is at 12°S in northern Peru. This is an open-ocean species, coming close to shore only in deep water coastal areas.

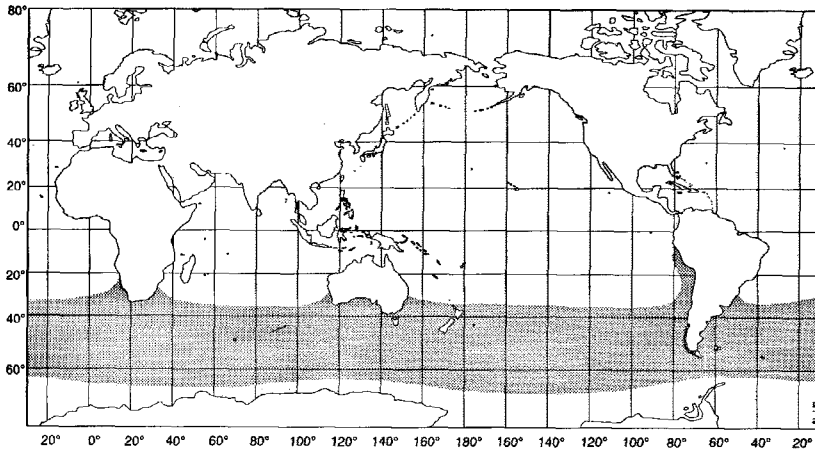


Fig. 354

Biology and Behaviour: Large schools are characteristic of the southern right whale dolphin. Some estimates of group size range to over 1 000 animals. Associations with other marine mammal species are common, especially dusky dolphins and pilot whales. Like their northern cousins, dolphins of this species are active energetic swimmers, often coming out of the water in clean low-angle leaps as they move at speed. Fluke slaps and other aerial displays are common. Southern right whale dolphins occasionally bowride.

Almost nothing is known of this species' reproductive biology.

A variety of fish and squid have been reported as prey; lanternfish are especially common.

Exploitation: Although occasionally taken by whalers in the 1800s for food, southern right whale dolphins appear to be nowhere heavily hunted. They are known to be taken incidentally in driftnets along the coasts of Peru and Chile, and some are taken in the Peruvian small cetacean fishery.

IUCN Status: Insufficiently known.

Cephalorhynchus commersonii (Lacépède, 1804)

DELPH Ceph 1

CMD

FAO Names: En- Commerson's dolphin; Fr - Dauphin de Commerson; Sp - Tonina overa .

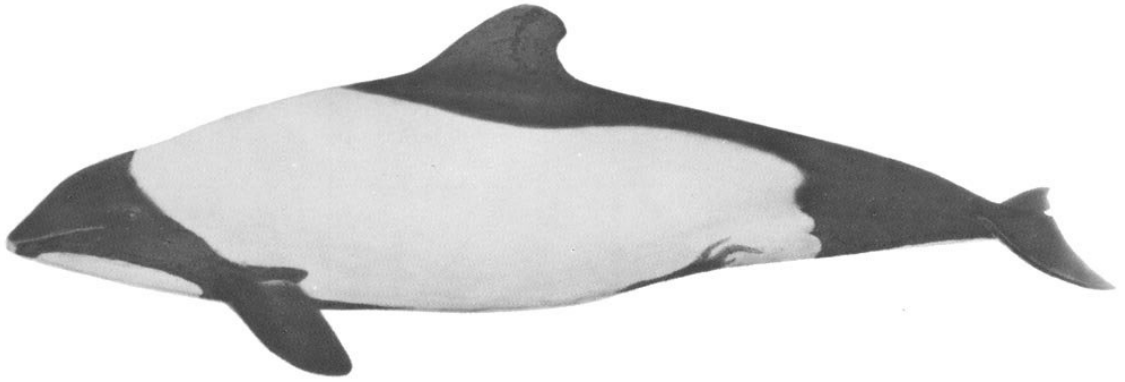


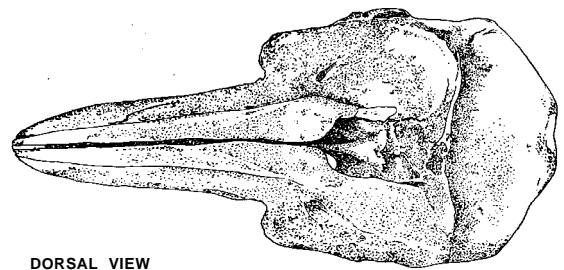
Fig. 355 *Cephalorhynchus commersonii*

Distinctive Characteristics: The stocky Commerson's dolphin is similar in body shape to porpoises (phocoenids), as are other species of the genus. The head is blunt, with little or no beak and a relatively straight mouthline. The dorsal fin is moderately low and rounded, rising at a shallow angle from the back; the flippers and flukes have rounded tips.

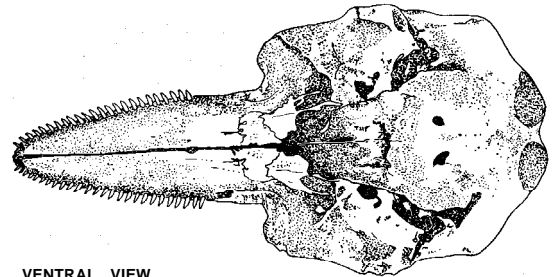
The colour pattern is strikingly contrasted black and white (dark grey and light grey in the Kerguelen Islands). There is a white band that completely encircles the body dorsally from just behind the blowhole to in front of the dorsal fin, and ventrally from behind the flippers to behind the genital area. There is a large white patch on the throat, and a black oval to heart-shaped patch around the genitals that varies in shape between males and females (females generally have the heart-shaped patch pointing forward, males pointing backward). The rest of the animal is black, including the top of the head, flippers, dorsal fin, and flukes. Newborn animals have a muted pattern of mostly grey tones, as do many small cetaceans.

There are 28 to 35 small, pointed teeth in each tooth row.

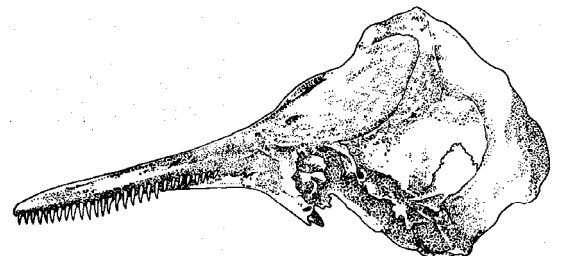
The Kerguelen Islands population is apparently distinct. These animals are larger than South American ones, and have shades of grey replacing black and white in the colour pattern.



DORSAL VIEW



VENTRAL VIEW



LATERAL VIEW



Fig. 356 Skull

Can be confused with: The only other black and white small cetacean likely to be confused with this species is the spectacled porpoise (p. 184) but the dorsal-fin shape and colour pattern differences should make these 2 easily discernable. In some areas, Commerson's dolphins may also be confused with black dolphins (p. 180) which are mostly dark grey.

Size: Length at birth ranges from 65 to 75 cm. Off South America, the adult size of Commerson's dolphin is up to 1.5 m and 66 kg; those off the Kerguelen Islands reach 1.75 m and 86 kg. Females are slightly larger than males in this species.

Geographical Distribution: There are at least 2 disjunct populations of Commerson's dolphins, those off South America and the Falkland Islands, and those off the Kerguelen Islands. There are unsubstantiated reports of this species at South Georgia, but these are rejected by recent workers. Commerson's dolphins appear to prefer relatively shallow coastal waters, but some populations move slightly offshore in winter.

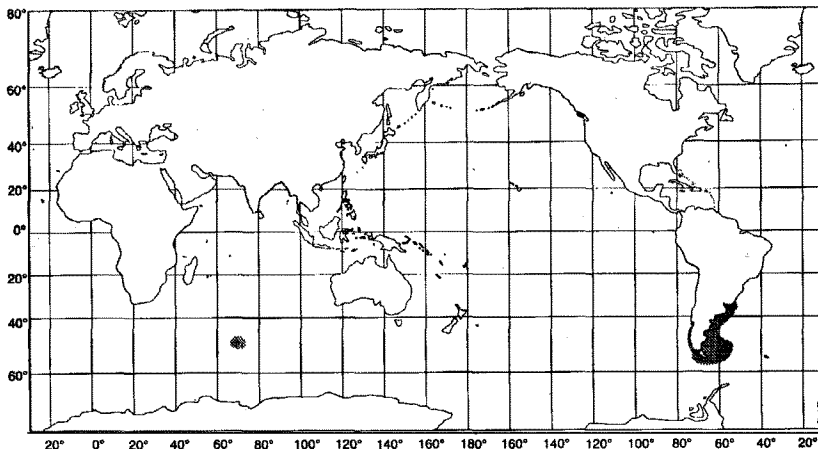


Fig. 357

Biology and Behaviour: Small groups of less than 10 individuals are the norm for this species, although they do sometimes aggregate into groups of over 100. These are quick, active animals. They are known to ride bow waves and to engage in various types of leaps. Commerson's dolphins often swim upside down.

The breeding season is in the southern spring and summer, September to February.

Feeding is on various species of fish, squid, and shrimp. Commerson's dolphins appear to be opportunistic, feeding primarily near the bottom.

Exploitation: Gillnet incidental catches probably represent the greatest threat to Commerson's dolphin populations, but they are also taken directly for crab bait in southern Chile. The effects of these kills on the populations involved are not known. Some Commerson's dolphins have been captured live in recent years, and the species appears to have done relatively well in captivity.

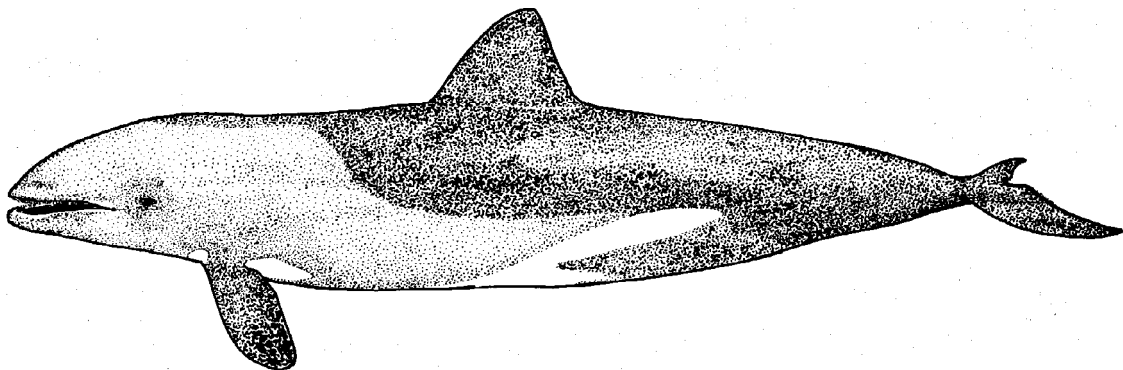
IUCN Status: Insufficiently known.

Cephalorhynchus heavisidii (Gray, 1828)

DELPH Ceph 2

HVD

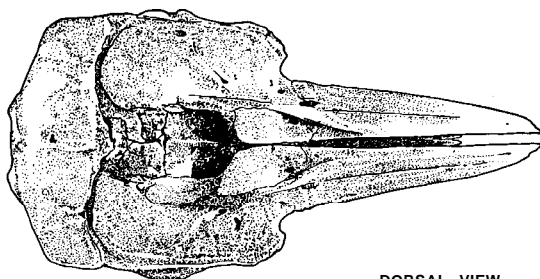
FAO Names: En - Heaviside's dolphin; Fr - Dauphin d' Heaviside; Sp - Delfin de Heaviside.

Fig. 358 *Cephalorhynchus heavisidii*

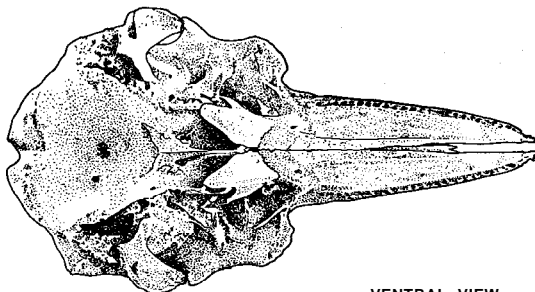
Distinctive Characteristics: Heaviside's dolphin is one of the most poorly known of all cetaceans. The shape of the body is similar to that in other *Cephalorhynchus* dolphins: stocky, with a short blunt snout, and blunt-tipped flippers. The dorsal fin is more triangular than the rounded fins of the other genus members, but it is taller than in most porpoises.

The body is predominantly grey, with a dark cape, which starts at the blowhole, remains extremely narrow in the thoracic region and then widens to dip low on the side below the dorsal fin. The area around the eye and much of the face is often darker grey. There is a white ventral patch that begins just behind the flippers, and splits into 3 arms behind the umbilicus. The middle arm encloses the urogenital area and the side arms extend only to below the midline. There is also a white diamond-shaped patch between the anterior insertions of the flippers, and separate white spots in the axillae. Several predominantly white individuals have been seen.

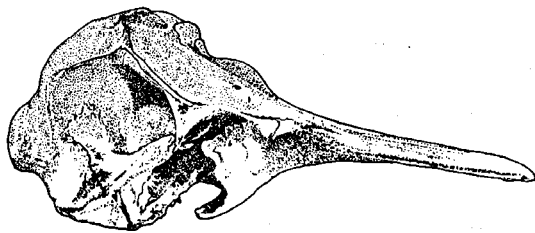
Heaviside's dolphins have 22 to 28 small, sharp teeth in each tooth row.



DORSAL VIEW



VENTRAL VIEW



LATERAL VIEW

Fig. 359 Skull

Can be confused with: The only other small cetaceans within this species' range are larger dolphins, whose falcate dorsal fins should be easy to distinguish.

Size: Adults of this species are up to about 1.7 m in length. Newborn size is unknown, but is likely to be somewhat less than 1 m.

Geographical Distribution: This species of dolphin is found only off southwest Africa, from about 17°S to the southern tip of Africa. As are other species in the genus, it is a coastal, shallow water animal.

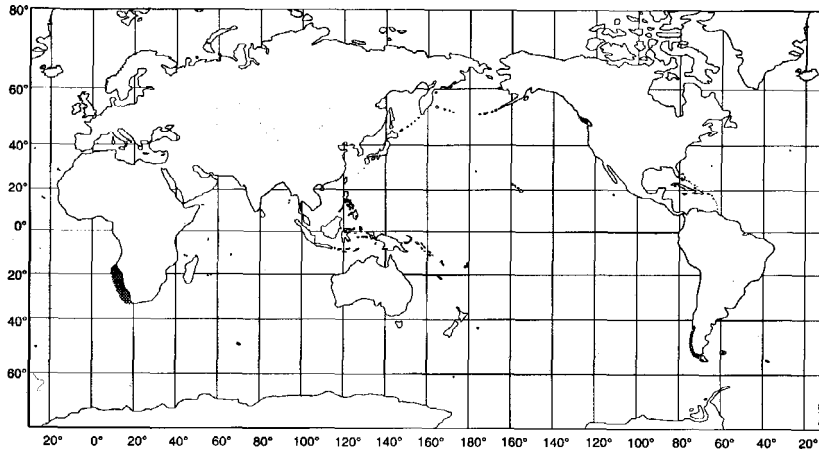


Fig. 360

Biology and Behaviour: Very little is known of the biology of this species. They are seen mostly in small groups of less than 10, with pairs and trios being most common. Heaviside's dolphins are not generally active or boisterous, but they are known to ride bow waves on occasion.

Essentially, nothing is known of their reproductive biology.

The available information on feeding is meagre, but Heaviside's dolphins are known to eat several varieties of fish and cephalopods.

Exploitation: Gillnets and other types of coastal fishing gear (trawls and purse seines) represent threats to Heaviside's dolphins, but there is little information on numbers of animals taken. There may also be some direct hunting by harpoon and other means.

IUCN Status: Insufficiently known.