



Not to be cited without the prior reference to the authors.

International Council
For Exploration of the Sea

Marine Mammals Committee
CM 1995/N:9

RECORDS OF CETACEANS STRANDED ON THE CANARY ISLANDS COAST
FROM 1992 TO 1994.

by

V. Martín (1), M. Carrillo (2), M. André (3) and V. Hernández-García (4).

(1) Sociedad para el Estudio y Conservación de los Cetáceos en el Archipiélago Canario. Apartados de correos 10.198 de Santa Cruz de Tenerife. Islas Canarias. España.

(2) Delfinario Octopus. Departamento Científico. Arona. Tenerife.

(3) Departamento de Biología. Centro de Mamíferos Marinos de Canarias. Universidad de las Palmas de Gran Canaria. CULP. 35016 Las Palmas. Islas Canarias. España.

(4) Departamento de Biología. Facultad de Ciencias del Mar ULPGC. Campus universitario de Tafira. 35017 Las Palmas -Islas Canarias. España.

ABSTRACT

The cetaceans stranded on the coasts of the Canary Islands from 1992 to 1994 are reported in this paper. 45 specimens have been recorded during this period. The species and the number of observations are the following: Tursiops truncatus (4), Grampus griseus (4), Lagenodelphis hosei (1), Stenella coeruleoalba (8), S. frontalis (2), S. attenuata (1), Delphinus delphis (3), Globicephala macrorhynchus (3), Kogia breviceps (5), Physeter macrocephalus (5), Ziphius cavirostris (4), Mesoplodon europaeus (1), Balaenoptera physalus (1), B. borealis (1) and B. acutorostrata (2).

INTRODUCTION

The Canary Islands (Spain) of volcanic origin, are situated about 100 Km off the north-west coast of Africa, and have an extension coast of 1.500 Km. The archipelago constitutes an excellent area to study pelagic populations of cetaceans. Nevertheless, the knowledge about their distribution in the zone is fragmentary mainly due to the absence of observers in the area.

At the beginning of the 80's, we started to study the stranded cetaceans. Currently, 19 species have been recorded belonging to the families Balaenopteridae (3), Delphinidae (10), Ziphiidae (5), Kogiidae (2), and Physeteridae (Vonk and Martín, 1989; Martín et al. 1992; Hutterer, 1994). Most of these are pelagic species, being this fact related to the great depths surrounding the coast.

A report on the stranded cetaceans on the Canary Islands from 1992 to 1994 given here was based on a partial geographical and temporal covering, due to the inexistence of an effective network of strandings. When it was feasible, the specimens were measured according to Norris (1961) and necropsied, taking special care with stomach contents, parasites and gonads.

LIST OF OBSERVATIONS

The records of strandings included: date, sex, total length, locality, township and island, and have occurred as follows:

Bottlenose dolphin Tursiops truncatus (Montagu, 1821)

- 1.- February 1992. Male. 315 cm. El Sauzal (Tenerife).
- 2.- 25.07.1992. Female. 130 cm. Los Gigantes (Tenerife).
- 3.- 10.05.1993. Male. 310 cm. La Estaca (El Hierro).
- 4.- 24.01.1994. Female. 266 cm. Caleta del Interian, Garachico (Tenerife).

Risso's dolphin Grampus griseus (G. Cuvier, 1812)

- 5.- 14.02.1992. Sex and TL unknown. Playa de Gui-Gui, San Nicolás de Tolentino (Gran Canaria). Ropes found on the tail.
- 6.- December 1993. Sex and TL unknown. El Médano (Tenerife).
- 7.- 11.01.1994. male. TL unknown. Gáldar (Gran Canaria). Stranded alive and died later.
- 8.- 09.05.1994. Female of 300 cm and calf of 200 cm and sex unknown. Playa del Medio al Mud. Mogán (gran Canaria).

Fraser's dolphin Lagenodelphis hosei, Fraser 1956

- 9.- 25.09.1992. Male. 110 cm. Puerto de Taliarte, Telde (Gran Canaria). Stranded alive and died later.

Striped dolphin Stenella coeruleoalba (Meyen, 1833)

- 10.- 14.01.1992. Male. 220 cm. Güimar (Tenerife).
- 11.- 20.02 1992. Male. 193 cm. San Cristóbal. Las Palmas (Gran Canaria).
- 12.- 06.03.1992. Female. TL unknown. Pájara (Fuerteventura).

13.- 17.05.1993. Male. 210 cm. Tachero. Santa Cruz (Tenerife).

14.- 10.03.1994. Male. 223 cm. Puerto del Rosario (Fuerteventura). Stranded alive and died later, with a group of six animals, which were rescued.

15.- December 1993. Sex and TL unknown. Tinajo (Lanzarote).

16.- 26.05.1994. Male. 218 cm. Tacoronte (Tenerife).

17.- 26.08.1994. Sex and TL unknown. Jinamar (Gran Canaria).

Atlantic spotted dolphin Stenella frontalis (G. Cuvier, 1829)

18.- 14.02.1993. Male. 170 cm. Playa del Roque, Garachico (Tenerife).

19.- 04.01.1994. Adult female of 190 cm and its calf, a female of 145 cm. Caleta de Interian, Garachico (Tenerife). The calf was rescued and translated to a dolphinarium. It died five months later.

Pantropical spotted dolphin Stenella attenuata (Gray, 1846)

20.- 12.12.1994. Female. 161 cm. El confital, Granadilla (Tenerife).

Common dolphin Delphinus delphis Linnaeus, 1758

21.- 03.03.1994. Male. 214 cm. Rio Tajao, Arico (Tenerife).

22.- 09.04.1994. Sex unknown. 210 cm. Playa de La Cueva, San Sebastián (La Gomera).

23.- 02.02.1994. Male. 178 cm. San Cristobal, Las Palmas (Gran Canaria).

Short-finned pilot whale Globicephala macrorhynchus Gray, 1846.

24.- 26.02.1992. Female. 340 cm. Adeje (Tenerife).

25.- 08.08.1992. Sex unknown. 140 cm. Playa de Vargas, Agüimes (Gran Canaria).

26.- 29.01.1993. Female. 350 cm. Arrecife (Lanzarote).

Pygmy sperm whale Kogia breviceps (de Blainville, 1838).

27.- February 1992. Male. 295 cm. Playa Blanca. Puerto del Rosario (Fuerteventura).

28.- July 1992. Sex and TL unknown. Pozo Negro. Puerto del Rosario (Fuerteventura).

29.- 08.10.1993. Sex and TL unknown. El cochino, Tinajo (Lanzarote).

30.- December 1993. Pregnant female of 273 cm and its calf, a male of 152 cm. Playa de Las Canteras, Las Palmas (Gran Canaria). Both stranded alive and died later.

31.- 24.12.1993. Male. 280 cm. Caleta del Sebo, La Graciosa (Lanzarote).

Sperm whale Physeter macrocephalus Linnaeus, 1758.

32.- 30.05.1992. male. 520 cm. El Tablado, Güimar (Tenerife). Ropes were found on the tail and flukes.

33.- February 1993. Sex and TL unknown. Gando, Telde (Gran Canaria).

34.- 27.09.1993. Sex unknown. 1050 cm. La Cicer, Las Palmas (Gran Canaria).

35.- 21.02.1994. Male. 17 m. La Salamera, Mazo (La Palma).

36.- March 1994. Playa de la Herradura, Corralejo (Fuerteventura).

Cuvier's beaked whale Ziphius cavirostris G. Cuvier, 1823

37.- 25.01.1992. Female. 500 cm. Playa de Las Galletas, Arona (Tenerife).

38.- February 1992. Sex and TL unknown. Alegranza (Lanzarote). Skull was found on the beach.

39.- 30.05.1992. Male. 550 cm. Playa de La Calabaza, Arona (Tenerife).

40.- June 1992. Female. 570 cm. Punta Ilana (La Palma).

Gervais' beaked whale Mesoplodon europaeus (Gervais, 1855)

41.- 20.04.1994. Female. 400 cm. Playa de Los Siete Chorros, Punta del Hidalgo, La Laguna (Tenerife). Stranded in advanced state of decomposition.

Fin whale Balaenoptera physalus (Linnaeus, 1758)

42.- 28.03.1994. Sex unknown. 21 m. Fuencaliente (La Palma).

Sei whale Balaenoptera borealis Lesson, 1828

43.-27.09.1993. Sex unknown. Aproximate length 14 m. Found floating at 12 miles to the northeast coast of Lanzarote island.

Minke whale Balaenoptera acutorostrata Lacepede, 1804

44.- September 1993. Sex unknown. Aproximate length 5 m. Gran Tarajal, Tuineje (Fuerteventura). Stranded alive, rescued.

45.- 15.06.1994. Male. 360 cm. El Cotillo, Corralejo (Fuerteventura).

The Pantropical spotted dolphin S. attenuata and the Sei whale B. borealis have been cited first for time in the Canary Islands.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The authors wish to express their acknowledgements to D. Antonio Jesus Gonzalo Padrón, D. Pascual Calagüich, D. Luis Barbero, D. Juan Franco, Departamento de Anatomía Patológica de La Facultad de Veterinaria de la Universidad de Las Palmas de Gran Canaria and Museo de Ciencias Naturales de S/C de Tenerife. This research was partially supported by the Sociedad para el Estudio y Conservación de los Cetáceos en el Archipiélago Canario, delfinario Octopus y la Viceconsejería de Medio Ambiente del Gobierno Canario.

REFERENCES

Hutterer, R. 1994. Dwarf sperm whale Kogia simus in the Canary Islands. *Lutra*, 37: 89-92.

Martín, V., Montero, R. Heimlich-Boran, J. and Heimlich-Boran, S. 1992. Preliminary observations on the cetological fauna of the Canary Islands. Abstracts. Sixth Annual Conference of the European Cetacean Society, San Remo, Italy, 20-22 February 1992, 53.

Norris, K.S. 1961. Standardized methods for measuring and recording data on the smaller cetaceans. *J. Mammal.*, 42: 471-476.

Vonk, R. & V. Martin. 1988. First list of odontocetes from the Canary Islands, 1980-1987. -European Research on Cetacea-2. Proceedings of the Second Annual Conference of the European Cetacean Society: 31-35.