

The Marine Fauna of the Cullercoats District

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CHORDATA 3

MAMMALIA ; CETACEA

by

W. Stephenson* & H. O. Bull

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*Formerly Naturalist at the Dove Marine Laboratory, now Professor of Zoology,
University of Queensland, Brisbane.

CLASS MAMMALIA Linnaeus

Order CETACEA Brisson

Sub-Order ODONTOCETI Flower

PHOCOENIDAE Bravard

Phocoena phocoena (L.)

Freund 1932, pp.46,47, figs.41,42; Fraser & Parker 1953, p.29; fig.26.

"Frequent under the promontories and in the deep bays" (Wallis 1769): "Abundant in our seas, associated in small herds . . . especially during the herring season. . . . We have seen it abundantly off nearly every part of our coast" (Meynell & Perkins 1864): 8 ft. specimen caught in salmon nets off Cullercoats 16 Aug. 1904 (Meek 1904a): 5 ft. specimen stranded 22 Jul. 1914, Blyth (Harmer 1915, 1927): Many caught in salmon drift nets, Cullercoats, 1917 (Meek 1918): Common off the mouth of the Tyne, salmon season, 1921; 5 ft. 8 ins. female in milk, with young male 2 ft. 9 ins., caught in salmon nets, Cullercoats, 10 Jun. 1921 (Meek 1921): 3 ft. 10½ ins. male stranded Tynemouth 28 Apr. 1925; 5 ft. male stranded South Shields 6 Aug. 1926; 4 ft. 7 ins. female stranded South Shields 20 Aug. 1926; 4 ft. 8 ins. male stranded Tynemouth 21 Aug. 1926; specimen stranded Seaton Carew 29 Oct. 1926 (Harmer 1927); 3 ft. 6 ins. specimen stranded Berwick 2 Jan. 1927; 4 ft. male and 5 ft. female stranded Berwick 13 Dec. 1927; 3 ft. 10 ins. female stranded Berwick 19 Oct. 1928; 3 ft. 6 ins. specimen stranded Berwick 7 Jan. 1929; 5 ft. specimen stranded Berwick 20 Nov. 1929; 4 ft. 9 ins. specimen stranded Berwick 26 Feb. 1930; 5 ft. specimen stranded Redcar 13 Jul. 1932 (Fraser 1934): 5 ft. 6 ins. male stranded Seahouses, 2 Jul. 1933; 3 ft. 9 ins. male stranded Berwick 27 Sep. 1933; 5 ft. 6 ins. specimen stranded Dene Holm (Durham) 10 Jul. 1934; 5 ft. specimen stranded Blyth 7 Sep. 1934; 4 ft. 6 ins. specimen stranded Seaton Sluice 20 Jul. 1936; 5 ft. specimen stranded West Hartlepool 24 Sep. 1936 (Fraser 1946): 7 ft. specimen stranded Berwick 26 Jul. 1938; 5 ft. specimen stranded 29 May 1939 (Fraser 1953): 5 ft. 4 ins. male stranded Blyth, 1 Sep. 1954; 5 ft. 8 ins. specimen stranded Seaham 6 Sep. 1954; 3 ft. 9 ins. specimen stranded Beal, Feb. 1955 (Fraser, personal communication): 3 ft. 9 ins. specimen stranded Druridge Bay 28 Jul. 1957; 4 ft. 9 ins. male stranded 24 Nov. 1957 North Sunderland harbour; 3 ft. 4 ins. specimen stranded Redcar 21 Jan. 1963 (Fraser 1959, and personal communication).

Common near the coast in summer, occasionally caught in salmon nets and freed after mutilation. (W.S.).

DELPHINAPTERIDAE Lacépède

Delphinapterus leucas (PALLAS)

Freund 1932, pp. 43-44, fig. 38; Fraser & Parker 1953, p. 24, fig. 21.

14 ft. 2 ins. male captured in salmon nets, South Shields sands, 10 Jun. 1903 (Meek 1903, 1904b).

DELPHINIDAE Gray

Orcinus orca (L.)

Freund 1932, p. 47, fig. 43; Fraser & Parker 1953, p. 27, fig. 24.

"Not uncommon off our coast . . . During the recent (1863) dredging expedition off the Northumberland coast when at work about twenty miles east of Berwick, we witnessed with much interest the gambols of many of this species, some of them of large size, which approached within a few yards of our steamboat" (Meynell & Perkins 1864). 20 ft. 6 ins. specimen stranded Blyth 10 Jul. 1943; 21 ft. 7 ins. male specimen stranded Druridge Bay 25 Dec. 1944 (Fraser 1953).

In early and mid July 1946, schools containing specimens up to 20 ft. in length severely damaged the nets of herring drifters about 40 miles N.E. by N. Tyne. (W.S.).

Pseudorca crassidens (OWEN)

Freund 1932, p. 48, fig. 44; Fraser & Parker 1953, p. 28, fig. 25.

15 ft. 6 ins. female stranded Berwick 3 Dec. 1935; 10 ft. 6 ins. specimen stranded Beal 5 Dec. 1935 (Fraser 1946).

Globicephala melaena (TRAILL)

Freund 1932, pp. 49, 50, figs. 45-47; Fraser & Parker 1953, p. 25, fig. 22.

35 specimens stranded near Howick Burn mouth 19 Mar. 1855, lengths 8 ft. to 18 ft. 9 ins., but mostly 14-16 ft.; included 18 ft. 9 ins. male and a "few" females of which one was lactating and four pregnant; lengths fetuses, 2 ft., 3½ ft., 6½ ft.; additional two specimens taken at Craster, and one at Berlin Carr (Tate 1854); 22 ft. specimen killed on shore Newton-by-the-Sea 31 Jan. 1872 (Hardy 1872); 14 ft. specimen stranded Burnmouth nr. Berwick Oct. 1875 (Hardy 1876); 11 ft. specimen stranded Brunton Burn 3 Mar. 1914 (Harmer 1927).

BREEDING.—Lactating female and four pregnant females stranded Howick 19 Mar. 1855; lengths fetuses 2 ft., 3½ ft., 6½ ft. (Tate 1854).

Lagenorhynchus albirostris GRAY

Freund 1932,p.51,figs.50-52 : Fraser & Parker 1953,p.31,fig.28.

Specimen captured off Berwick, skull seen 1881 ; skull of another picked up Newton-by-the-Sea 1895 (Hardy 1895) : 5 ft. 2 ins. male taken in salmon nets at the north side of the mouth of the Tyne 24 Aug. 1911 (Storror 1912) : 7 ft. 7 ins. specimen stranded Redcar, 11 Jul. 1914 ; 4 ft. 2 ins. female stranded Tynemouth 20 Aug. 1924 ; 9 ft. specimen stranded Hartlepool 25 Jul. 1926 (Harmer 1927) : 8 ft. 6 ins. specimen stranded at Morpeth (Blyth) (*sic*) 7 May 1927 ; 5 ft. 7½ ins. female stranded at Berwick 9 Apr. 1931 (Fraser 1934) : 9 ft. 2 ins. specimen stranded Holy Island 25 Sep. 1933 (Fraser 1946) : " Seen from ' Evadne ' on various occasions—off Blyth, Beadnell, and Craster." (B.S. in ms.). 8 ft. 4 ins. specimen stranded South Shields 8 Jul. 1947 ; 8 ft. 6 ins. male stranded 28 Jun. 1951 Bamburgh (Fraser, personal communication).

Commonly seen off the Northumberland Coast in July and August 1947 by Norwegian whalers. (W.S.).

Lagenorhynchus acutus (GRAY)

Freund 1932,p.53,fig.53 : Fraser & Parker 1953,p.32,fig.29.

One 7 ft. 11 ins. female stranded Seaham 18 Mar. 1941 (Fraser 1953).

One approx. 7 ft. specimen (tail had been cut off when seen), female, caught in salmon net, Cullercoats 4 May 1950 (H.O.B.).

PHYSETERIDAE Gray

Physeter catodon L.

Freund 1932,pp.38,39,figs.30,31 (as *P.macrocephalus* L.) : Fraser & Parker 1953,p.17,fig.14.

" Sperma-ceti-whale was cast on shore about twenty years ago at Hauxley, near Warkworth. It was fifty-four feet long Another of the same kind was found dead at sea, about forty-four years ago, by the fishermen of Cresswell, who towed it on shore with their boats " (Wallis 1769). Young specimen stranded Hartlepool over 200 years ago (Meynell & Perkins 1864).

Hyperoodon ampullatus (FORSTER)

Freund 1932,pp.40-41,fig.33 ; Fraser & Parker 1953,p.19,fig.16.

Fragments of skeleton of adult removed from Tyne at Newcastle at very low ebb tide May 1857. Specimen had probably " strayed up the river by some chance and died there " (Embleton 1858) : 28 ft. male

stranded Blyth, 11 Mar. 1914 (Harmer 1915): One, male about 20 ft. stranded Seal Sands, R. Tees 8 Oct. 1958 (Fraser, 1959 and personal communication).

Mesoplodon bidens (SOWERBY)

ZIPHIIDAE Gray

Freund 1932, pp. 41-42, figs. 34, 35: Fraser & Parker 1953, p. 21, fig. 18.

One, 15 ft. 2 ins. specimen, male, stranded West Hartlepool 26 Jul. 1940 (Fraser 1953).

Sub-order MYSTACOCETI Flower

Balaenoptera physalus (L.)

BALAENOPTERIDAE Gray

Freund 1932, pp. 33-35, figs. 23-25: Fraser & Parker 1953, p. 12, fig. 10.

"One captured in 1831, near our own coast, measured 80 ft. in length" (Meynell & Perkins 1864 (as *Physalus antiquorum* Fischer)); 16 ft. specimen stranded Amble 12 May 1915 (Harmer 1927).

Balaenoptera acutorostrata LACÉPÈDE

Freund 1932, pp. 32-33, fig. 22: Fraser & Parker 1953, p. 13, fig. 11.

16 ft. specimen (from description) female, caught Craster 6 Feb. 1858. Details from J. Hancock (Meynell & Perkins 1864): 30 ft. female "swam blindly to the shore at Druridge Bay and was stranded" 19 Aug. 1902 (Meek 1902): 28 ft. female stranded Marsden 7 May 1919 (Harmer 1921): 14 ft. specimen stranded Amble 16 Apr. 1928 (Fraser 1934): 25 ft. specimen came alongside "Evadne" while sampling, 15 m. E. Amble 27 Sep. 1928 (Storow, B., in Lab. Note Book): 30 ft. specimen stranded West Hartlepool 22 Jun. 1932 (Fraser 1934): Specimen stranded West Hartlepool 27 Jan. 1935 (Fraser 1946): 9 ft. 7 ins. specimen stranded Seahouses 5 Feb. 1944 (Fraser 1953).

Specimen entangled in crab pot buoy line of Mr. H. Aitchison ("Braw Lads") off Berwick 6 May 1948 (W.S.): Small numbers caught by Norwegian whalers in our area in summers of 1947 and 1948 (Stephenson 1951).

BREEDING.—Births chiefly in Nov. and Dec. but possible at any season (Stephenson 1951).

Megaptera novaeangliae (BOROWSKI)

Freund 1932, pp. 31-32, fig. 21 (as *M. boops*): Fraser & Parker 1953, p. 11, fig. 9.

35-36 ft. female stranded 2 miles N. Berwick 19 Sep. 1829; a few weeks previously, 58 ft. specimen stranded Holy Island (Johnston 1831 as *Balaena boops*): Specimen stranded Boulmer 19 Sep. 1891 (Hardy 1891).

CETACEA

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