

LIST OF CETACEANS SEEN IN GALÁPAGOS

By: David Day

This list is mainly based on personal observations, records from other qualified observers, and from collected specimens preserved in the islands. Only fairly recently (10-15 years) has there been more than a casual interest in observations of whales; thus, there are anomalies in previous records, e.g. formerly the larger baleen whales were nearly always identified as fin whales (*Balaenoptera physalus*), but recently these are correctly identified as Bryde's (*B. edeni*), or occasionally Sei (*B. borealis*) whales. Tui de Roy, a Galápagos resident and very experienced naturalist, was uncertain of their identification for many years, until she observed fin whales in Baja California. She has since corrected many previous identifications.

Another dilemma is with the common (*Delphinus delphis*) and stenellid dolphins (*Stenella* spp.); in all my years here I have never seen a spinner (*Stenella longirostris*), but some people report them regularly. When the other species leap, and gyrate their tails, as the striped (*S. coeruleoalba*) does, it looks like they are spinning. Spinners certainly are present in the waters around the Islands. To differentiate between these species at distance can be very difficult.

Two other species that are almost impossible to tell apart are the melon headed (*Peponocephala electra*) and the pygmy killer whale (*Feresa attenuata*). The mesoplodont beaked whales are almost impossible to tell apart as well; for many species there is very little data, and new species have been described in the last few years.

A demonstration of our limited knowledge at sea of these creatures is that the Fraser's dolphin (*Lagenodelphis hosei*), a relatively common tropical species, was not described to science until 1956. The most recent case is that of the blue whale (*Balaenoptera*

musculus), a species common to other areas of the eastern tropical and south Pacific. It was never reported for the Galápagos until 1993 when they were sighted on four different occasions in western and southern Isabela and Fernandina Islands, within a few miles from the coast. The southern bottlenose whale (*Hyperoodon planifrons*) could be a potential candidate, as there are records from along the equator.

The following list of 24 species should be regarded as a minimum number rather than a complete list. My taxonomic organization follows Leatherwood and Reeves (1983). Abundance is classified as frequent (F), present (P), occasional (O), rare (R). Range is described as outer, normally in waters deeper than 1000 fathoms (O), mid, waters between 1000 and 100 fathoms deep (M), inner, waters less than 100 fathoms (I), all areas (A).

Note: This describes the normal range from present knowledge, and does not mean that some species from deep water will not make incursions into shallower water, especially where deeper water is close to the coast.

Other classification marks are: ? = lack of data, owing to the animals being shy or rare, or because of identification difficulties and () = in range category that they are occasionally seen there; in abundance category that they are probably more common than sightings suggest. * = probable sighting just off NE coast of Santa Cruz Island. ** = skull and skeleton remains found in 1964 by members of the Galapagos International Scientific Project expedition, buried in sand along the beach at Tortuga Bay, Santa Cruz Island. The skull is deposited in the collection of the California Academy of Sciences (Orr 1965).

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<u>SCIENTIFIC NAME</u>	<u>COMMON NAME</u>	<u>ABUNDANCE</u>	<u>RANGE</u>
A. Suborder Mysticeti			
1. <i>Balaenoptera musculus</i>	Blue whale	R	M, O
2. <i>Balaenoptera borealis</i>	Sei whale	R, ?	M, O
3. <i>Balaenoptera edeni</i>	Bryde's whale	F	A
4. <i>Balaenoptera acutorostrata</i>	Minke whale	R	?
5. <i>Megaptera novaeangliae</i>	Humpback whale	O	I, M (O)
B. Suborder Odontoceti			
6. <i>Physeter macrocephalus</i>	Sperm whale	F	O, (M)
7. <i>Kogia breviceps</i>	Pygmy sperm whale	R, ?	O, (M)
8. <i>Kogia simus</i>	Dwarf Sperm whale	O, ?	A
9. <i>Berardius</i> sp.	Beaked whales*	--	--
10. <i>Ziphius cavirostris</i>	Cuvier's beaked whale	P	M, O
11. <i>Mesoplodon</i> spp.	Beaked whales	O	M, O
12. <i>Peponocephala electra</i>	Melon headed whale	R	O, (I)
13. <i>Feresa attenuata</i>	Pygmy killer whale	R	O
14. <i>Pseudorca crassidens</i>	False killer whale	P	I, M, (O)
15. <i>Orcinus orca</i>	Killer whale	P	A
16. <i>Globicephala macrorhynchus</i>	Short finned pilot whale	P	A, (M, O)
17. <i>Steno bredanensis</i>	Rough-toothed dolphin**	--	--
18. <i>Lagenodelphis hosei</i>	Fraser's dolphin	R, (P)	O
19. <i>Delphinus delphis</i>	Common dolphin	F	M, O
20. <i>Tursiops truncatus</i>	Bottlenose dolphin	F	I, M, (O)
21. <i>Grampus griseus</i>	Risso's dolphin	P	M, O
22. <i>Stenella attenuata</i>	Pantropical spotted dolphin	P, R, ?	O
23. <i>Stenella coeruleoalba</i>	Striped dolphin	P	O
24. <i>Stenella longirostris</i>	Spinner dolphin	?	O

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