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Project Report of Virtual Experiments in Marine  
Bioacoustics: Model Validation

by

**Ted W. Cranford and Petr Krysl**

August 2010

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Prepared for: CNO(N45), Washington, D.C.

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**NAVAL POSTGRADUATE SCHOOL  
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<b>13. SUPPLEMENTARY NOTES</b> The views expressed in this report are those of the authors and do not reflect the official policy or position of the Department of Defense of the U.S. Government.					
<b>14. ABSTRACT</b> A series of finite element model simulations are compared against results from various real world marine bioacoustics experiments with the bottlenose dolphin. Three significant results are revealed. 1) <i>Changes in relative position of fat bodies can adjust echolocation beam direction.</i> This is the first evidence of this. 2) <i>Beam direction is consistent</i> despite several elements being present within the sound transmission system within the dolphin's forehead. This suggests that the skull is the primary structural element in the formation of the sound transmission beam, with other elements playing a major role in concentrating or "focusing" the outgoing beam. 3) <i>There is evidence for focusing of the beam in stages.</i> The model simulations illustrate the narrowing of the sound transmission beam with various level of refinement in structural complexity. It appears as if structures like the melon and air space individually affect the narrowing of the beam, with their combined contributions being significant. All of these results are aligned with, or similar to, results obtained from live animals performing in psychoacoustic experiments over the past fifty years.					
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# **PROGRESS REPORT**

9 April 2010

**Project Title:** Virtual Experiments in Marine Bioacoustics: Model validation.

**Submitted to:**

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## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Any finite element model requires validation, a distinct effort to test the results of a model simulation against the results obtained in a real world situation. We have just completed a series of simulations that we can compare against results obtained from various real world experiments with the bottlenose dolphin (*Tursiops truncatus*).

The simulations reveal three significant results.

### **(1) Changes in Relative Position of Fat Bodies Can Adjust Beam Direction**

This is the first evidence that small changes in relative position of the fatty elements within the sound generation apparatus can produce small changes in beam direction.

### **(2) Consistent Beam Direction**

The sound transmission system within the delphinid's forehead contains several elements. Our virtual model allows us to tease apart the contributions that these structures make to the formation of an echolocation beam. The primary finding is that the beam direction that emanates from the simulations is consistent across them. This suggests that the skull is the primary structural element in the formation of the sound transmission beam. The other elements play a major role in concentrating or "focusing" the outgoing beam.

### **(3) Evidence for Focusing in Stages**

The simulations illustrate the narrowing of the sound transmission beam with various levels of refinement in structural complexity. It appears as if structures like the melon and the air spaces have some effect on narrowing the beam, and their combined contribution is significant.

All of these results are aligned with, or similar to, results obtained from live animals performing psychoacoustic experiments over the past 50 years.

## INTRODUCTION

The research addresses two distinct and fundamental topics: model validation and understanding potential acoustic impacts on odontocetes. This research proposal has been subdivided into those two projects, plus two Options that could be implemented if additional funding becomes available. Project #1 (Model Validation) and Project #2 (Virtual Experiments) are the primary thrusts of our effort.

### ***Scope:***

The breakthroughs and discoveries from our prior work are significant because they were gathered from a little-known beaked whale species, Cuvier's beaked whale (*Ziphius cavirostris*), that is at the forefront of concerns about the potential impacts from Navy sonar. An obvious problem in working with a species for which we know so little is that we do not have any research by which to calibrate or assess the validity of the simulation results. The work reported here will remedy that problem by constructing two models. One will be based on CT scans of a postmortem specimen of an Atlantic bottlenose dolphin that was provided to us by SeaWorld, San Diego. The other will be based on CT scans of a live bottlenose dolphin that was provided by the Navy Marine Mammal Program at SPAWAR Pacific in San Diego.

The physical properties of the tissues were measured directly from the postmortem specimen. We will also use those measurements to estimate the values for the specimen from the Navy Marine Mammal Program, for which we only have scan information.

The emphasis is placed on comparison. The simulated results of our inquiry with the Atlantic bottlenose dolphin will be compared with results from the psychoacoustic literature and with our previous results on Cuvier's beaked whale.

## METHODOLOGY

### ***Technical approach:***

The approach is based on physics, computing resources, and engineering principals combined with the anatomic details of the organism. To date the Vibroacoustic Simulator is the *only* tool that is currently capable of finding answers to a broad spectrum of questions that are critical to understanding the issue of marine mammal exposure to high intensity sound.

Our approach to the finite element modeling of vibroacoustic phenomena in biological tissues was described in detail in Krysl *et al.* (2008). The starting point when modeling the geometry of biological specimens is volumetric imaging: CT scans. From these images we derive directly an image-based discrete finite element model. The intensity of the 3-D images data (in Hounsfield units) is mapped to material properties. Here we used the mapping proposed by Soldevilla *et al.* (2005), and also the experimentally determined melon properties from Norris and Harvey (1974). Since all the elements are rectangular and of the same shape, the Wilson incompatible formulation is a natural choice, because both the bending response and the dilatational locking insensitivity are significantly enhanced (Krysl *et al.*, 2008). The equations of motion in the discrete form (system of ordinary coupled differential equations) is integrated from initial conditions (to be described next) in time using the centered difference algorithm.

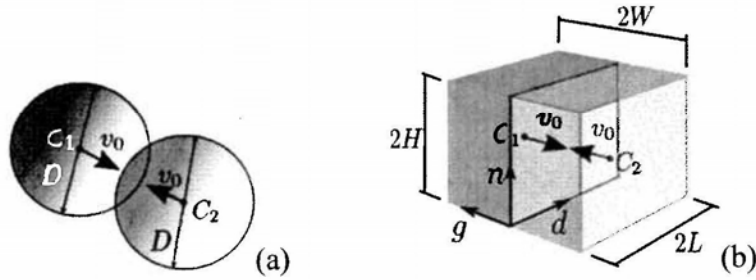
The so-called “phonic lips” are hypothesized to be the biosonar sound source in the bottlenose dolphin (Cranford, 2000; Cranford *et al.*, 1996). The phonic lips consist of constrictions in the spiracular nasal passage. The walls of the lips contain pairs of fat bodies ensheathed in connective tissue (bursae). During sound generation, air is pushed through the phonic lips, setting them into vibration. As the opposing walls or lips vibrate, they impact one another and generate short pulses of sound. In this work we produce sound in a simplified but related manner: tissue at the two locations of the bursae is given initial velocity which starts the tissue “blobs” in opposing directions so that they collide and thereby produce an acoustic pressure wave. The location of the phonic lips could play a role in the forming of the echolocation beam. The musculature associated with the dolphin's melon suggests that the beam may be actively distorted or shaped by the animal. Evidence for “beam steering” in odontocetes does exist (Amundin; Amundin, 1991a; Amundin, 1991b; Møhl *et al.*, 2000; Moore *et al.*, 2008). Thus we also consider the location of the phonic lips among the sources of modeling error.

Placing a simulated click source at the location of the left and right phonic lips (Cranford and Amundin, 2003), we can compute a wave train (simulated echolocation beam) whose characteristics in terms of spreading in the vertical and horizontal direction can be extracted at the location of the hydrophones used in the experimental studies (Au *et al.*, 1978; Au *et al.*, 1986; Moore *et al.*, 2008).

In order to avoid the complications involved in modeling such an intricate mechanism (along the lines of, for instance, Dubrovsky, 2009) we produce sound in a simplified but related manner: tissue at the two locations of the bursae is given initial velocity, which starts the tissue “bodies” in opposing directions so that they collide and thereby produce a pressure wave or sound. In effect we are producing the sound by specifying the initial conditions of suitably distributed nonzero velocity.

We use two variants of this initial condition, which we called the *spherical bursae* and the *block bursae*. Figure 1 shows the relevant parameters. The spherical bursae model specifies initial velocity of equal magnitude and opposite direction at the centers of two touching spheres. The initial velocity is tapered off in the form of a cosine function to zero at the surface of each sphere. The line connecting the centers of the two spheres defines the direction of the generated sound pulse, which in a homogeneous medium would travel in either direction,  $C_1 \rightarrow C_2$  or  $C_2 \rightarrow C_1$ .

The block bursae model specifies initial velocity at the center of two rectangular blocks that share a face. The initial velocity is tapered off to zero at the surface of each block. The triple of orthonormal vectors  $d, n, g$  defines the orientation of this device:  $d$  points in the direction of the connective tissue in the pair of the bursae as identified in the CT scan,  $n$  is normal to the plane that contains the bursae, and  $g$  completes the triple, defining the direction of the generated pressure pulse. The motivation for the introduction of the block bursae model is the spatially extended contact the bursae present during sound generation. It is well known that man-made transducers in the form of an array of sources can produce more focused beams than point-like sources. Apparently the dolphin's bursae use the same principle.



**Figure 1.** Spherical bursae (a), block bursae (b).

In our simulations we take  $D = 8\text{mm}$ , and we set  $v_0 = \frac{p_{\max}}{\rho_w c_w}$ , where  $p_{\max} = 1\text{kPa}$  (corresponding to overpressure of 180 dB re:  $1\mu\text{Pa}$ ), and  $\rho_w c_w$  is the impedance of seawater. For the block bursae we take  $2L = 11.75\text{mm}$ ,  $2H = 7.5\text{mm}$ , and  $2W = 7.5\text{mm}$ , and the same initial velocity magnitude as for the spherical bursae.

## SUMMARY OF RESULTS

### Model Validation Project

We have accomplished the following tasks.

- Conducted CT scans on a postmortem bottlenose dolphin head when provided by the stranding network or from an unfortunate death at a local captive colony.
- Collected tissue samples from this new specimen and measured tissue properties.
- Borrowed a set of CT scans from an existing library at the Navy Marine Mammal Program, San Diego. (They already had CT scans from a live bottlenose dolphin.)
- Prepared data for a sequence of successively finer grids.
- Developed simulation scripts for validation tasks.
- Completed segmentation of structures from CT scan images of bottlenose dolphins.
- Computed transmission sound beam characteristics from within the dolphin heads.

The simulations reveal three significant results.

#### (1) Small Changes in Relative Position of Fat Bodies Can Adjust Beam Direction

We ran simulations for eight different relative positions or configurations for the bursae, but we will only report on three of those cases: the original case (**OC**), case 1 (**C1**), and case 2 (**C2**). The original case (**OC**) represents the position that the bursae were in for each animal (D1 and D2). In Figures 2 and 3, the icons composed of closed (black) circles and open (white) circles represent the change in position from the OC. In each case, the new position is 5 mm from the OC.

In the OC and C1 the axis through the center of the circles points forward or anteriorly. The beam patterns produced by these two configurations (OC and C1) are shown in the two left-hand columns in Figure 2 (rows A-E) for spherical bursae and Figure 3 (rows A-C) for block bursae. In all of those cases, the beam generated is more focused than for C2. The axis through bursae axis for C2 points upward or anterodorsally. Clearly, these results support the conclusion that small adjustments in the relative position of the bursae can cause changes in acoustic beam focus and direction.

## **(2) Consistent Beam Direction**

The sound generation and transmission system within the forehead of all odontocetes is composed of a similar set of basic elements. The skull is the primary structural element, supporting the remaining soft tissue structures.

One key finding from the simulations is that the beam emanates in a consistent direction, directly forward in all cases, even when only the skull is present. This suggests that the skull is the primary beam forming element for the sound transmission beam. The other elements apparently play incremental roles in concentrating or “focusing” the outgoing beam.

## **(3) Evidence for Focusing in Stages**

These simulations (Figures 2 and 3) illustrate that the narrowing of the sound transmission beam increases with various levels of refinement in structural complexity. It appears as if each additional structure (like the melon, the air spaces, source location and configuration) adds to the effect of narrowing the beam, and their combined contribution is significant.

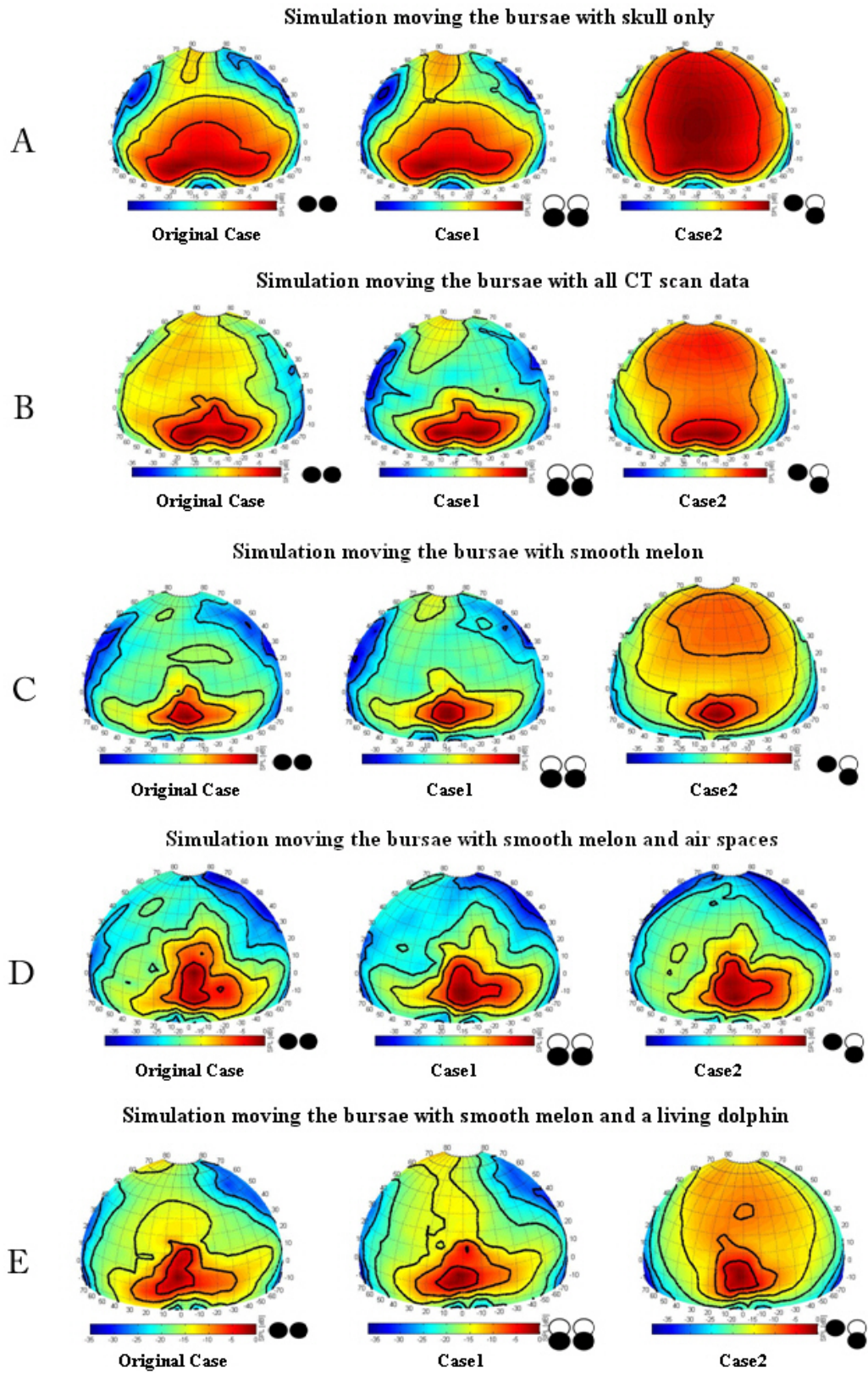
This notion is demonstrated by the fact that the beam gets progressively narrower as additional refinements are added to the model. The progression begins with the skull only (Figure 2A), and continues by adding the soft tissue (Figure 2B), smoothing the melon (Figure 2C), adding the acoustically reflective air spaces (Figure 2D), using a scan from a live animal (Figure 2E), and, finally, representing the shape of the bursae as blocks, which closely approximates the actual anatomic condition (Figures 3A-C).

The Stages could be listed as:

- Skull only
- All soft tissue from scans
- Refine melon to add smoothing
- Addition of air spaces drawn in by hand
- Change conformation of source from spherical to elongate block
- Adjustments of relative position of bursae elements within each pair

All three of these primary results are aligned with, or are similar to, results obtained from live animals performing psychoacoustic experiments over the past 50 years.

## SIMULATION WITH BURSAE AS SPHERES

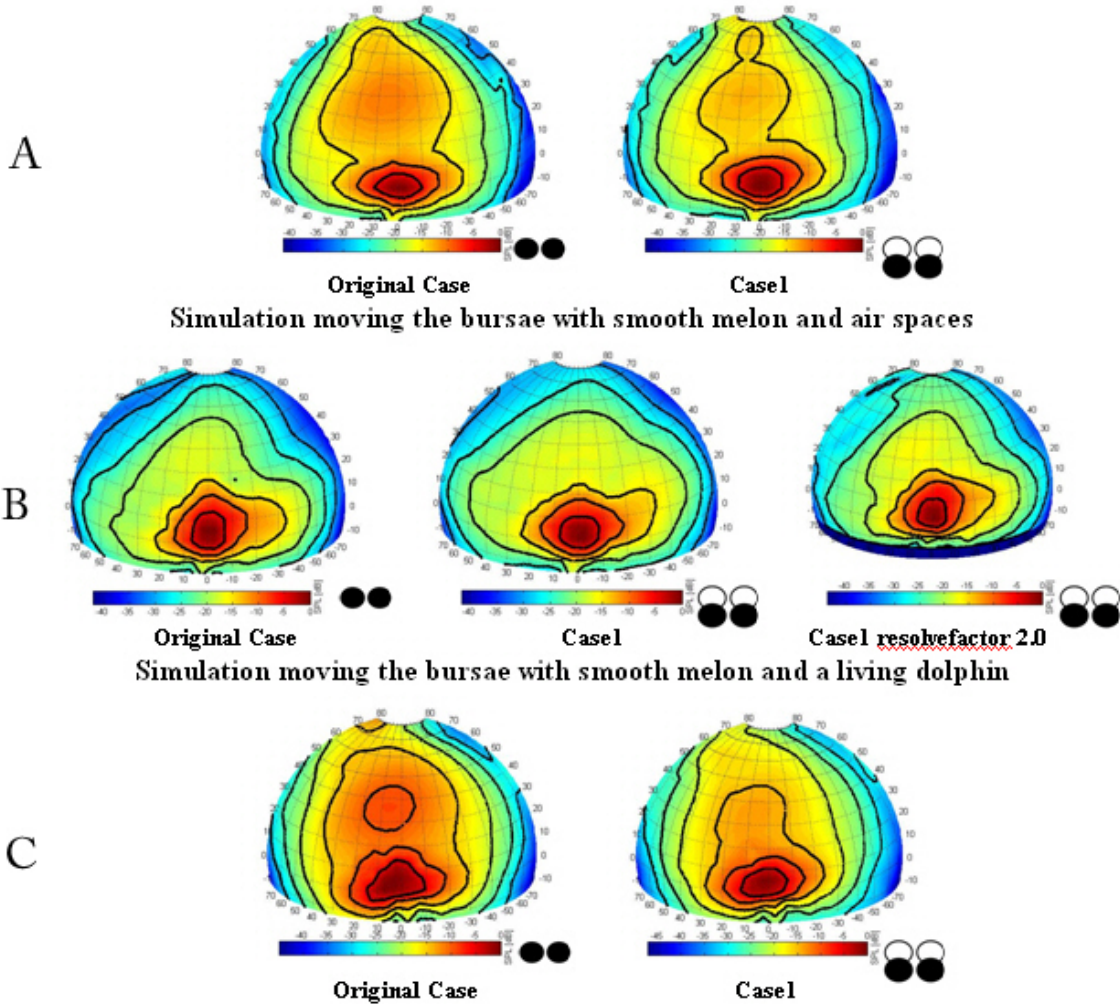


**Figure 2**



## SIMULATION WITH BURSAE AS BLOCKS

Simulation moving the bursae with smooth melon



**Figure 3**

## DISCUSSION

The simulations reveal three significant results.

### (1) Small Changes in Relative Position of Fat Bodies Can Adjust Beam Direction

This is a new discovery, the first evidence that small changes in relative position of the fatty elements within the sound generation apparatus can produce small changes or adjustments in bottlenose dolphin biosonar beam direction. There are likely more discoveries ahead as we run additional simulations, for example adding the sound source on the left side of the nasal apparatus. The details of this apparatus have been described previously (Cranford, 1988; Cranford, 1999; Cranford, 2000; Cranford *et al.*, 1996; Cranford *et al.*, 2008b).

## (2) Consistent Beam Direction

Biosonar beam formation in dolphins has been the subject of considerable research (Au, 1980; Au, 1993; Au *et al.*, 1978; Au *et al.*, 1986; Au *et al.*, 1993; Au *et al.*, 1995; Au *et al.*, 1987; Cranford *et al.*, 2008a; Diercks *et al.*, 1973; Evans and Prescott, 1962; Norris and Evans, 1966; Norris *et al.*, 1961; Schevill and Watkins, 1966). This previous work was primarily concerned with describing the dimensions of the biosonar beam under particular circumstances with a few target species. Sorting out the anatomic contributions to the formation of that beam has not been possible in the past. This can now be accomplished with the tools and techniques that we have brought to bear on this issue.

The sound transmission system within the delphinid's forehead contains several elements. The inherent flexibility of our FEM technique allows us to tease apart the contributions that these structures make to the formation of an echolocation beam. We have tested a few conformations for various elements. The primary finding that the beam emanates from the simulations in a consistent direction suggests that the skull is the primary structural element in the formation of the sound transmission beam. The other elements play an additive role in concentrating or "focusing" the outgoing beam.

The odontocete skull has been revamped during the evolution of the biosonar system (Miller, 1923). All of the soft tissues lie atop the skull and are anchored to it. The consistent beam direction in all of the simulations is to be expected because other studies have shown that a similar directional beam can be formed by the skull alone (Evans *et al.*, 1964; Romanenko, 1973; Romanenko, 1974).

## (3) Evidence for Focusing in Stages

The idea of focusing in stages was put forth by Dr. Kenneth S. Norris more than 40 years ago (Norris, 1964; Norris, 1968; Norris, 1969; Norris, 1975). It is only by the development of our FEM techniques that we can now test and apparently verify his hypothesis.

## FUTURE PLANS

We will continue to test adjustments or small changes in the configuration of the components of the nasal apparatus in order to tease apart the functional contributions of these anatomic components.

## PEER REVIEWED PUBLICATIONS DURING THIS PROJECT

CRANFORD, T.W., P. KRYSL, AND M. AMUNDIN. **Accepted**. A new acoustic portal into the odontocete ear and vibrational analysis of the tympanoperiotic complex. *PLoS ONE*.

CRANFORD T.W., P. KRYSL, AND J.A. HILDEBRAND. **2008b**. Sound pathways revealed: simulated sound transmission and reception in Cuvier's beaked whale (*Ziphius cavirostris*). *Bioinspiration and Biomimetics* **3(016001)**: 1-10.

CRANFORD T.W., M. MCKENNA, M. SOLDEVILLA, S.M. WIGGINS, R. SHADWICK, J. GOLDBOGEN, P. KRYSL, J.S. LEGER, AND J.A. HILDEBRAND. **2008a**. Anatomic geometry of sound transmission and reception in Cuvier's beaked whale (*Ziphius cavirostris*). *The Anatomical Record* **291(4)**: 353-378.

## CONFERENCE PRESENTATIONS DURING THIS PROJECT

- CRANFORD, T.W., P. KRYSL, AND J.A. HILDEBRAND. **2009**. Knocking on the door of the inner ear in Cuvier's beaked whale. *18th Biennial Conference on the Biology of Marine Mammals*, Quebec City, Canada.
- BARROSO, C., A. BERTA, AND T.W. CRANFORD. **2009**. Shape analysis of odontocete mandibles. *18th Biennial Conference on the Biology of Marine Mammals*, Quebec City, Canada.
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## AWARDS AND HONORS

- Excellence in Science Communication Award** (2009) – Society for Marine Mammalogy, *18th Biennial Conference on the Biology of Marine Mammals*, Quebec City, Quebec, Canada.

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