

Hyperoodon planifrons Flower, 1882

ZIPH Hyp 1

SRW

FAO Names: **En** - Southern bottlenose whale; **Fr** - Hyperoodon austral; **Sp** - Ballena nariz de botella del sur.



Fig. 223 *Hyperoodon planifrons*

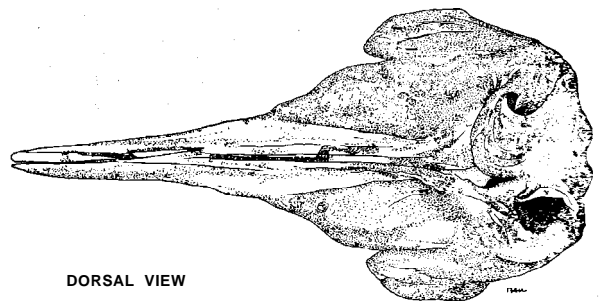
Distinctive Characteristics: This species resembles the northern bottlenose whale, with a bulbous melon (especially in adult males), tube-like beak, throat grooves, small dorsal fin, small blunt flippers, and flukes with no notch (or only a shallow one).

These animals are light brown to dull yellow. The belly and probably much of the head are lighter. Large animals can be covered with light splotches, scratches, and scars. The colour pattern of young calves is unknown.

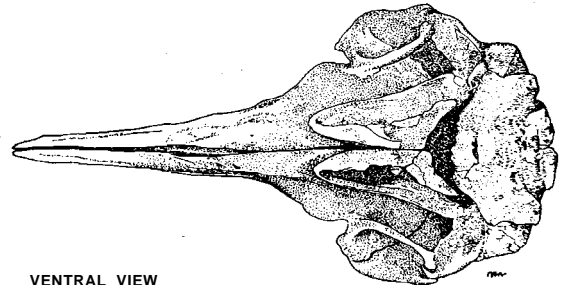
There is a single pair of conical teeth at the tip of the lower jaw, which erupts only in adult males, and is not visible outside the closed mouth. There may be a smaller second pair, and several sets of vestigial teeth, as well.

Can be confused with: Arnoux's beaked whales (p. 80) can be distinguished from southern bottlenose whales by differences in dorsal fin and head shape, and from Cuvier's beaked whales (p. 82) and Mesoplodon (starting on p. 90) primarily by head shape and body patterning.

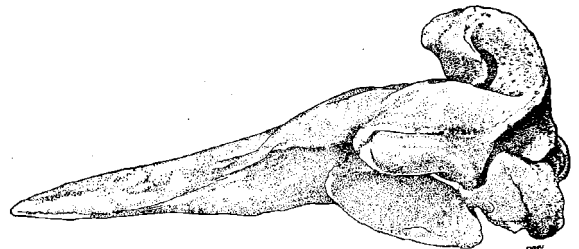
Size: Maximum known sizes are 7.8 m for females and about 7.2 m for males. If females are, in fact, larger than males, this species differs from its northern counterpart. However, the disparity is more likely a result of the small sample size of measured animals. Length at birth appears to be around 2 m.



DORSAL VIEW



VENTRAL VIEW



LATERAL VIEW

Fig. 224 Skull

Geographical Distribution: Southern bottlenose whales are thought to have a circumpolar distribution in the Southern Hemisphere, south of 29°S. They apparently migrate, and are found in Antarctic waters during the summer. Like other beaked whales, these are deep-water oceanic animals. It is possible that the whales in several sightings of bottlenose whales in the equatorial Pacific and Indian oceans were of this species (see below).

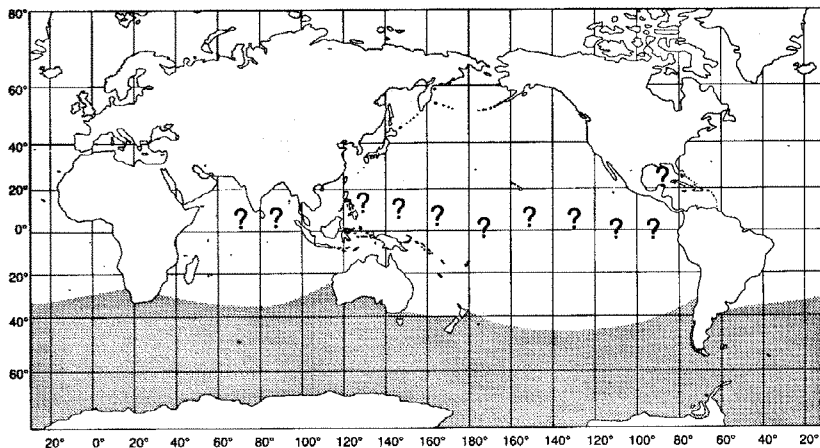


Fig. 225

Biology and Behaviour: Pods of less than 10 are most common, but groups of up to 25 have been seen. They are deep divers that can remain below for over an hour. There is essentially nothing known of the reproductive biology of this species. Southern bottlenose whales are thought to take primarily squid, but probably also eat fish and possibly squid.

Exploitation: Although never taken commercially, some southern bottlenose whales have been killed during whaling for research purposes. Recently, several of this species have been recorded as accidental victims of driftnet fishing in the Tasman Sea. Numbers taken annually are not known, however.

IUCN Status: Insufficiently known.

***Hyperoodon* sp. (unidentified)**

Distinctive Characteristics: There have been several sightings at widespread locations in the tropical Pacific and Indian oceans of an unidentified whale that appears to belong to the genus *Hyperoodon* (possibly the southern bottlenose whale, *H. planifrons*). These animals have steep bulbous foreheads and tube-like beaks. As in most other beaked whales, the dorsal fin is located behind the midpoint of the back, but it is larger than in other beaked whales. During these sightings, no teeth have been visible outside the closed mouth. Colour usually appears tan, but can range from umber-brown to bluish grey, generally with light areas on the sides and around the head. Some individuals have had scratches on the back. When seen, the blowhole was oriented with the concavity facing anteriorly; this is the opposite of the situation in Baird's beaked whale, the species with which it is most easily confused in the North Pacific.

Size: Size estimates have been in the range of 4 to 9 m.

Geographical Distribution: They are only rarely seen in the eastern tropical Pacific and there are a handful of sightings, as well as a single stranding possibly of this species, off Sri Lanka. Recently, there has been a report of what appears to be bottlenose whales in the Gulf of Mexico, as well.

Biology and Behaviour: It is thought that these animals may be southern bottlenose whales, which are normally widely distributed in the Southern Hemisphere, but so far no specimens have been collected to confirm this identification. It is also possible that these animals represent a third, as yet-unidentified, species of *Hyperoodon*. Herds of the unidentified whales have contained from 1 to 100 individuals, with many groups of 10 or greater (this is much larger than for Cuvier's beaked whale or the various *Mesoplodon* species).

Tasmacetus shepherdii Oliver, 1937

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FAO Names: En - Shepherd's beaked whale; Fr - Tasmacete; Sp - Ballena picuda de Shepherd.

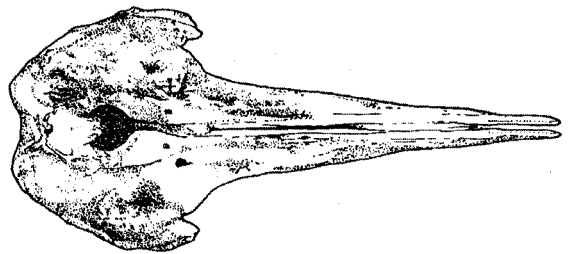


Fig. 226 *Tasmacetus shepherdii*

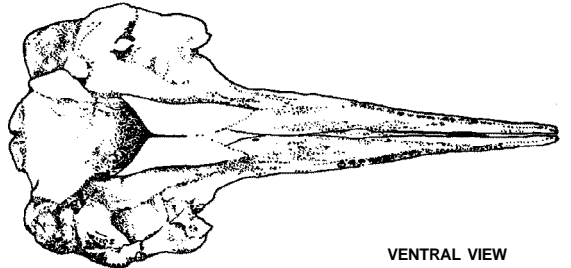
Distinctive Characteristics: Similar in body shape to the species of *Mesoplodon* described below, Shepherd's beaked whales have a long pointed beak, distinct from the relatively steep forehead. There is a shallow pair of throat creases. The flippers are small and rounded, and the dorsal fin, set far back, is short and falcate. Generally, the notch between the flukes (characteristic of most cetaceans) is absent.

Although all the descriptions are based on partially decomposed specimens, the colour pattern appears to be largely countershaded, dark grey above and lighter below. There are often several dark diagonal bands on the sides.

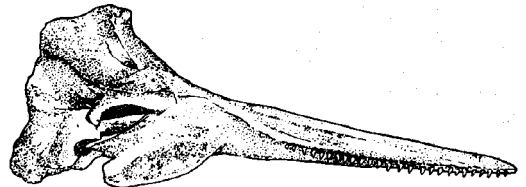
Unique to beaked whales, this species has a mouthful of sharp functional teeth. There are 17 to 21 per row in the upper jaw, and 17 to 29 in the lower. At the tip of the lower jaw is a pair of typical beaked whale tusks, which erupt only in adult males.



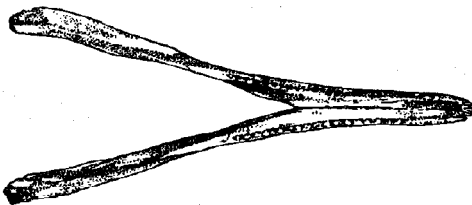
DORSAL VIEW



VENTRAL VIEW



LATERAL VIEW



DORSAL VIEW OF MANDIBLE



Fig. 227 Skull

Can be confused with: Shepherd's beaked whales can be confused with other beaked whales, especially *Mesoplodon* (starting on p. 90). However, they appear to be somewhat larger than most species of *Mesoplodon*, and have a more steeply rising forehead.

Size: Lengths of 6.6 m (female) and 6.1 to 7 m (males) have been reported. Length at birth is unknown, but is presumed to be around 3 m.

Geographical Distribution: Shepherd's beaked whales are thought to have a circumpolar distribution in cold temperate waters of the Southern Hemisphere. There are records from New Zealand, southern and western Australia, both coasts of South America, and islands of the South Atlantic. Like other members of the family, these are probably exclusively oceanic, deep water animals.

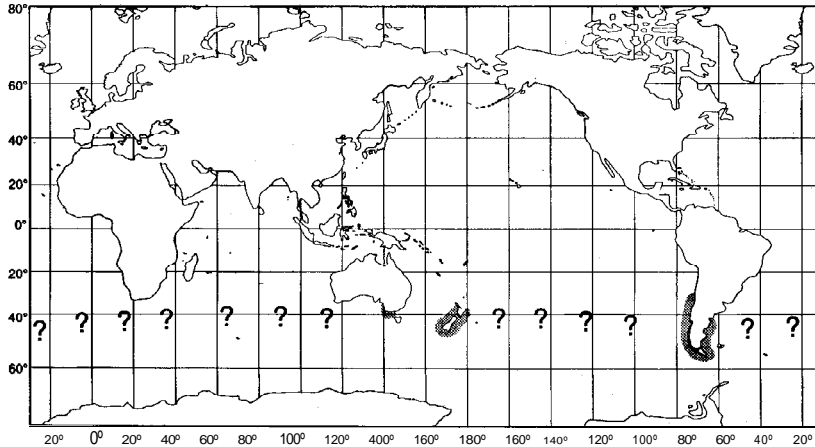


Fig. 228

Biology and Behaviour: Very little is known of the natural history of this species. All of the confirmed records are at least partially decomposed strandings. There are only 2 possible sighting records.

They are known to feed on several species of fish, possibly near the bottom in deep waters.

Exploitation: No records of human exploitation exist.

IUCN Status: Insufficiently known.