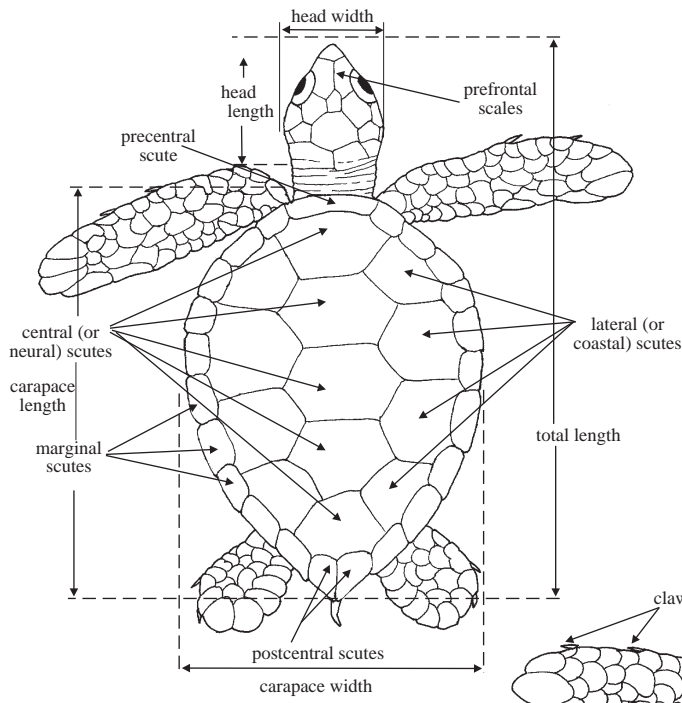


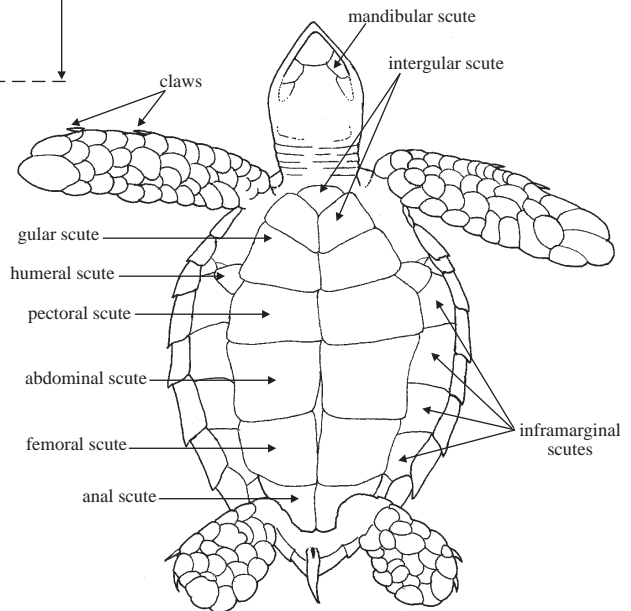
SEA TURTLES

Of the 8 species of sea turtles worldwide, 5 occur in Namibia. Most sea turtle species are considered endangered and are protected under an international agreement. All turtles receive total protection in Namibia. In the past they were incidentally exploited for their fresh meat, their eggs, for ornamental crafts made from their shell, and for leather from their skin. Today they are inadvertently caught in some fisheries. This guide is intended as an aid for conservationists in the management of this endangered group.

TECHNICAL TERMS AND MEASUREMENTS



dorsal view of a juvenile sea turtle
(Family Cheloniidae)



ventral view of a juvenile sea turtle
(Family Cheloniidae)

Caretta caretta (Linnaeus, 1758)

FAO names: **En** - Loggerhead turtle; **Fr** - Tortue caouanne; **Sp** - Caguama.

Local names:

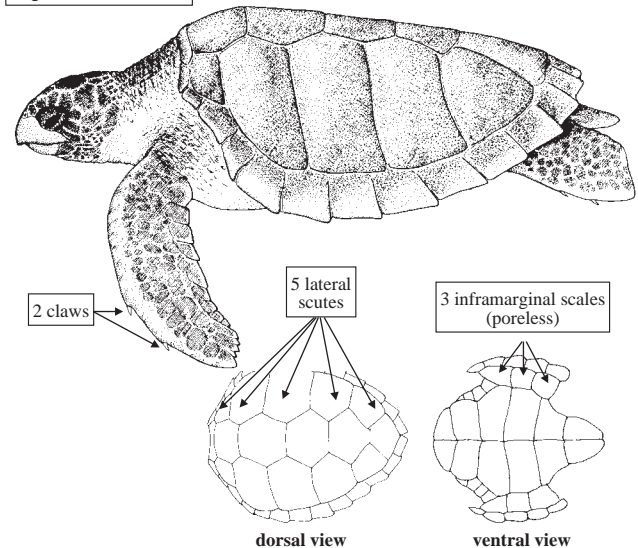
Size: Mean straight carapace length of mature females between 80 and 105 cm.

Fisheries: Caught accidentally by trawlers.

Habitat and biology: Primarily in shallow waters of the continental shelf. Feeds on a wide variety of invertebrates as well as on bony fishes. It is preyed upon by sharks, at all age classes.

carapace oblong, length greater than width

CHELONIIDAE



Chelonia mydas (Linnaeus, 1758)

FAO names: **En** - Green sea turtle; **Fr** - Tortue verte; **Sp** - Tortuga blanca.

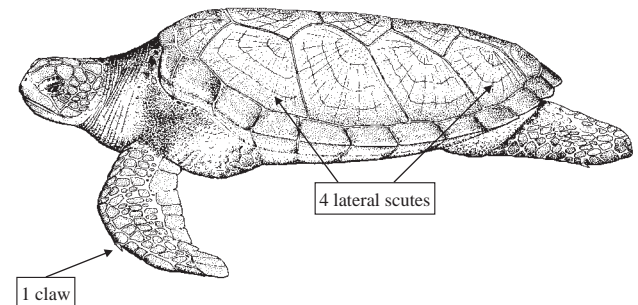
Local names:

Size: To 140 cm curved carapace length.

Fisheries: Caught inadvertently in trawls.

Habitat and biology: A solitary, nektonic species, sometimes forming feeding aggregations in shallow waters. Feeds, during daytime, on algae and sea grass. High predation on this species occurs at all its life stages, sharks being its worse enemies.

CHELONIIDAE



Eretmochelys imbricata (Linnaeus, 1766)

FAO names: **En** - Hawksbill sea turtle; **Fr** - Tortue caret; **Sp** - Tortuga de carey.

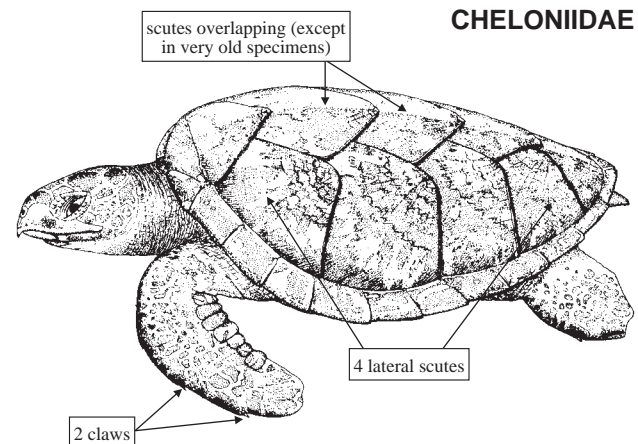
Local names:

Size: Adult females measure from 50 to 115 cm straight carapace length.

Fisheries: Elsewhere caught by turning the females while crawling on the beach, by spearing, entangling nets, and incidentally in trawls. This species is particularly valuable because of the scutes covering its carapace which are used in some countries in jewelry (tortoise shell), though not in Namibia.

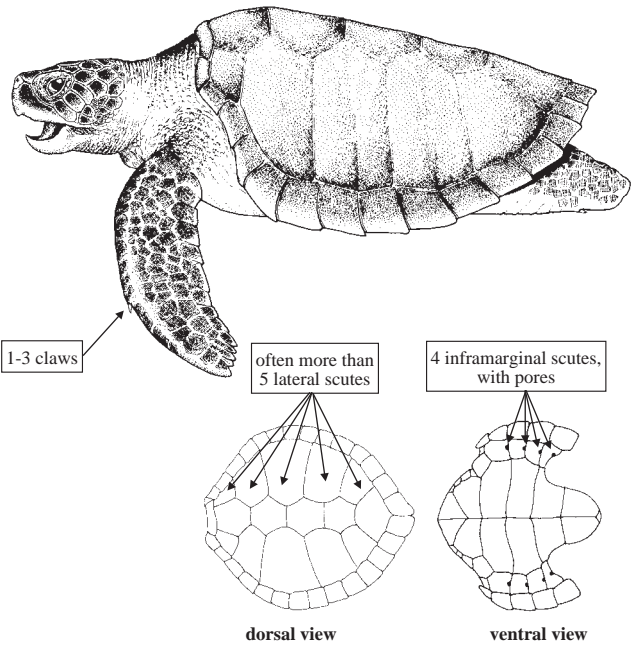
Habitat and biology: Occur in clear littoral waters. Carnivorous, feeds on a wide variety of invertebrates. It is heavily preyed upon at all life stages.

CHELONIIDAE

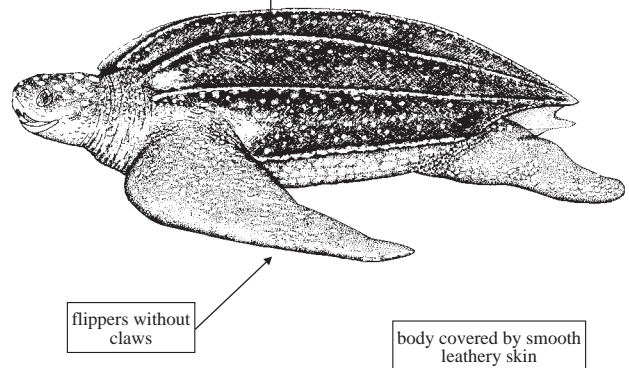


Lepidochelys olivacea (Eschscholtz, 1829)

carapace nearly round, length nearly equal to width

CHELONIIDAE**FAO names:** **En** - Olive ridley turtle; **Fr** - Tortue olivâtre; **Sp** - Tortuga golfina.**Local names:****Size:** Mature specimens between 50 and 75 cm straight carapace length.**Fisheries:** Caught inadvertently in some fisheries.**Habitat and biology:** Occurs in shallow coastal waters and offshore. Feeds on a wide variety of fishes and invertebrates. Juveniles and adults are preyed upon by sharks.***Dermochelys coriacea*** (Vandelli, 1761)

longitudinal ridges on carapace

DERMOCHELYIDAE**FAO names:** **En** - Leatherback turtle; **Fr** - Tortue luth; **Sp** - Tortuga laud.**Local names:****Size:** Maximum about 270 cm carapace length.**Fisheries:** Caught accidentally with drift nets, longines, and in trawls.**Habitat and biology:** Pelagic species, approaching the coast for spawning. It feeds on jellyfish, tunicates, and other soft-bodied invertebrates with highest concentrations in the upwelling regions. Preyed upon by sharks and killer whales. Adults are able to stand temperatures as low as 10°C.

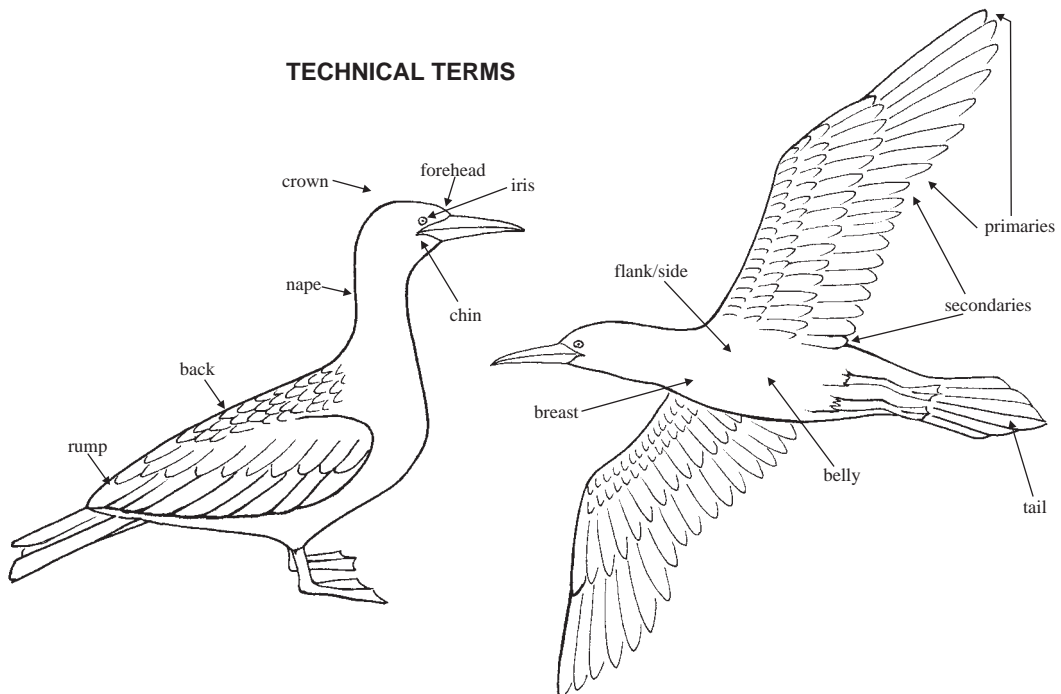
SEABIRDS

Approximately 62 species of seabirds have been recorded in Namibian waters, 20 of which are only rare vagrants. Twelve species of seabirds breed along the Namibian coast. These are: the jackass penguin, *Spheniscus demersus*; the white pelican, *Pelecanus onocrotalus*; the Cape gannet, *Morus capensis*; the white-breasted cormorant, *Phalacrocorax carbo*; the Cape cormorant, *P. capensis*; the bank cormorant, *P. neglectus*; the crowned cormorant, *P. coronatus*; the kelp gull, *Larus dominicanus*; hartlaub's gull, *L. hartlaubii*; the greyheaded gull, *L. cirrocephalus*; the swift tern, *Sterna bergii*; and the damara tern, *S. balaenarum*. The first 7 of these are significant guano producers and included in this guide. Also included here are 11 species of pelagic seabirds commonly encountered by fishermen at sea.

Seabirds were first exploited in Namibia for ship provisions by European sailors during the 15th century. Exploitation was intensified during the 18th century by sealers and whalers but it was only after 1840 that the commercial value of seabird colonies as guano producers was fully realized. A guano rush followed in 1843-1845 during which hundred of ships called at the islands along the Namibian coast and stripped the accumulated deposits of guano for use as an agricultural fertilizer, mostly in Europe. Seabird breeding was completely disrupted for several years, at least on the main islands (Mercury, Ichaboe, Possession, and Sinclair Islands), and breeding habitats were severely altered during this period. However, soon after the guano rush, seabirds were protected and the islands were managed in order to maximize guano production. In addition, new breeding sites were created with the erection of guano platforms. Guano scraping is still a profitable industry today, yielding more than 2 000 t annually. The populations of guano producing seabirds have fluctuated greatly. The causes for these changes probably include direct disturbance and exploitation by man as well as habitat destruction, fishery induced mortality, and depletion of fish stocks (particularly pilchard). On some islands the recovery of the fur seal population has displaced some seabird colonies.

The non-guano producing pelagic seabirds listed here are non-breeding migrants to the Namibian region. Many disperse from the breeding colonies on the islands of the southern oceans in late summer and follow the cold Benguela current northwards along the southwestern coast of Africa into Namibian waters during the winter months. Therefore, these species tend to be more common during the winter months, although some few individuals may remain throughout the year. A few species arrive during the summer months from the north, while others occur throughout the year. Virtually all pelagic seabirds follow fishing vessels and scavenge offal and discarded fish. Otherwise, their diet consists of krill, fish, salps, squid, and virtually anything else that is available.

All seabirds are protected in Namibian waters. Therefore, this guide is intended to help study and monitor this valuable marine resource in order to manage it wisely.



Spheniscus demersus (Linnaeus, 1758)

FAO names: En - Jackass penguin; Fr - Manchot du cap.

Local names: African penguin; Pikkewyn (Ak).

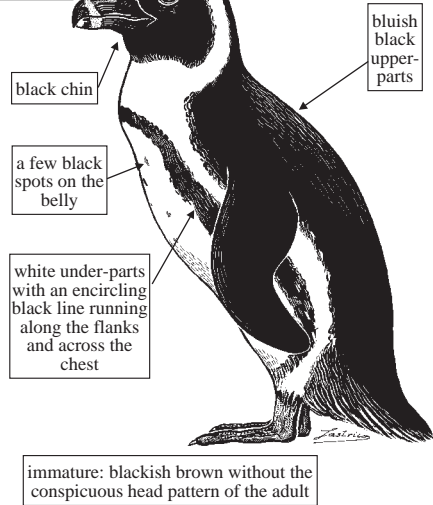
Size: Length from 60 to 70 cm; weight, 2.4 to 3.5 kg.

Utilization: Guano producer, although penguin guano is of poor quality. Today, the penguin colonies are not exploited due to decreasing numbers.

Habitat and biology: The only penguin in the area. Endemic to southern Africa. Breeds on islands off South Africa and Namibia, non-breeders and juvenile occasionally disperse as far as Angola. Common around the breeding colonies and in coastal waters, rarely seen further than 10 to 15 km offshore. The jackass penguin feeds predominantly on pilchard (*Sardinops ocellatus*) but since the collapse of the pilchard stocks, penguins feed mainly on pelagic (bearded) goby (*Sufflogobius bibarbatus*) and cephalopods. Penguins are preyed upon by sharks, fur seals, and killer whales, and kelp gulls prey upon chicks and eggs at the colonies. Breeds throughout the year off Namibia.

face separated from the crown by a broad white band

SPHENISCIDAE

*Diomedea cauta* Gould, 1840

FAO names: En - Shy albatross.

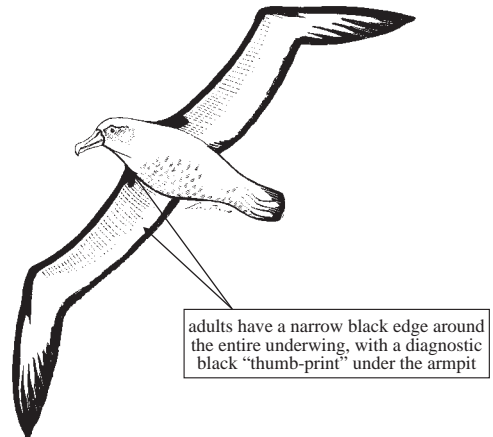
Local names: Whitecapped albatross; Bloubekmalmok (Ak).

Size: Length to 99 cm.

Utilization: None.

Habitat and biology: The shy albatross occurs throughout the southern oceans and is found in Namibian waters at all times of the year. It is the least common of the 3 albatrosses reported in this guide and is more frequent on the outer part of the continental shelf. This species is normally solitary in Namibia, although several shy albatrosses may converge on fishing boats to feed on discarded fish and offal. Otherwise feeds on krill, fish, salps, and squid.

DIOMEDEIDAE

*Diomedea melanophris* Temmick, 1828

FAO names: En - Black-browed albatross.

Local names: Swartrugmalmok (Ak).

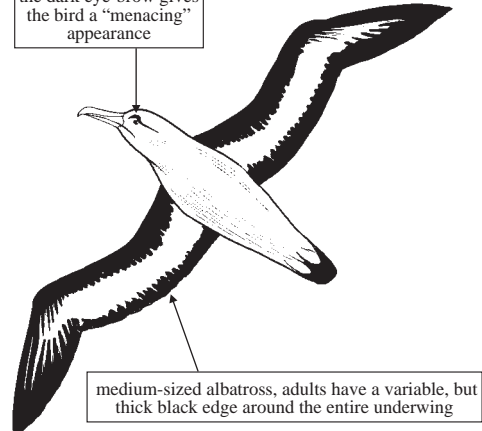
Size: Length from 83 to 95 cm.

Utilization: None.

Habitat and biology: Circumpolar in the southern oceans the black-browed albatross occurs in Namibian waters throughout the year. Found throughout the shelf area, but occasionally moving close inshore in rough weather. Readily follows fishing vessels to feed on offal and discards, sometimes forming fairly large groups.

the dark eye-brow gives the bird a "menacing" appearance

DIOMEDEIDAE



Diomedea chlororhynchos Gmelin, 1789

FAO names: En - Yellow-nosed albatross.

Local names: Geelneusmalmok (Ak).

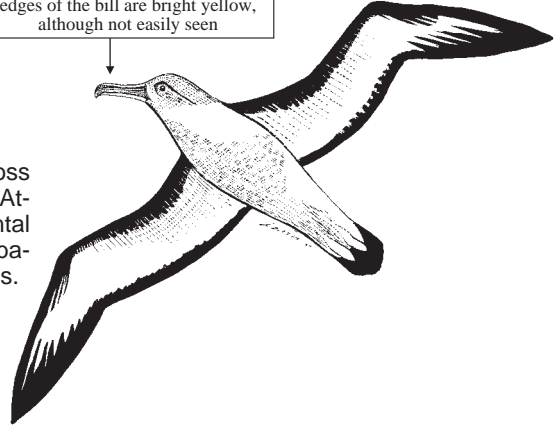
Size: Length from 71 to 81 cm.

Utilization: None.

Habitat and biology: This is the most common albatross in Namibian waters, it occurs throughout the southern Atlantic and Indian Ocean. Found across the continental shelf, but more common closer inshore than other albatrosses. Frequently congregates around fishing vessels.

a small albatross, the upper and lower edges of the bill are bright yellow, although not easily seen

DIOMEDEIDAE



Procellaria aequinoctialis, Linnaeus, 1758

FAO names: En - White-chinned petrel.

Local names: Cape hen; Witkenpylstormvoël (Ak).

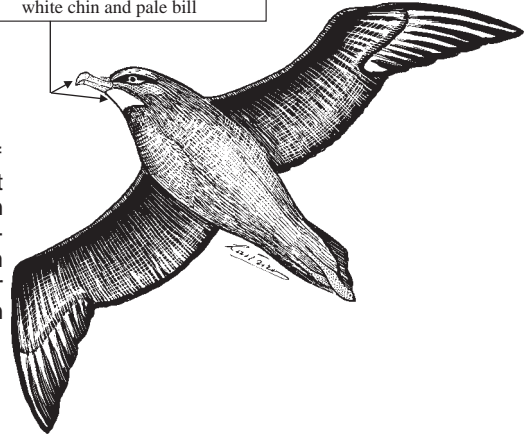
Size: Length from 51 to 58 cm.

Utilization: None.

Habitat and biology: This is the commonest of Namibia's pelagic seabirds and can be seen throughout the year. May occur in large numbers, especially when resting at sea, otherwise dispersed throughout the continental shelf region. This species is frequently seen from the coast. The white-chinned petrel is bolder than other birds closely approaching fishing boats to scavenge on discards and offal.

medium-sized black bird with diagnostic white chin and pale bill

PROCELLARIIDAE



Daption capense (Linnaeus, 1758)

FAO names: En - Cape petrel.

Local names: Pintado petrel, Cape pigeon; Seedulfstormvoël (Ak).

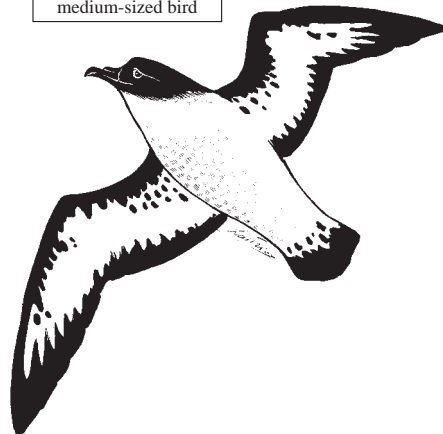
Size: Length from 38 to 40 cm.

Utilization: None.

Habitat and biology: Pintado petrels migrate into Namibian waters during the winter months, and are rarely seen during the summer. This petrel tends to be more gregarious than other common Namibian pelagic seabirds and can form large flocks, although it is usually sparsely distributed across the continental shelf. Readily follows fishing vessels to feed on offal and discards.

striking black and white medium-sized bird

PROCELLARIIDAE



Calonectris diomedea (Scopoli, 1769)

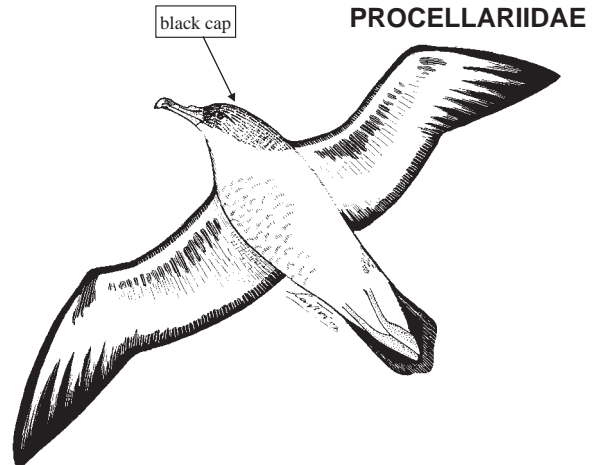
FAO names: En - Cory's shearwater.

Local names: Geelbekpylstormvoël (Ak).

Size: Length from 46 to 53 cm.

Utilization: None.

Habitat and biology: Cory's shearwaters migrate from the Red Sea and Mediterranean region southwards into Namibian waters and hence occur mostly during the summer months. Some few individuals may remain throughout the year. Found throughout the continental shelf this species often occurs in large concentrations either when resting or at a suitable food source, such as fishing vessels.

***Puffinus griseus*** Gmelin, 1789

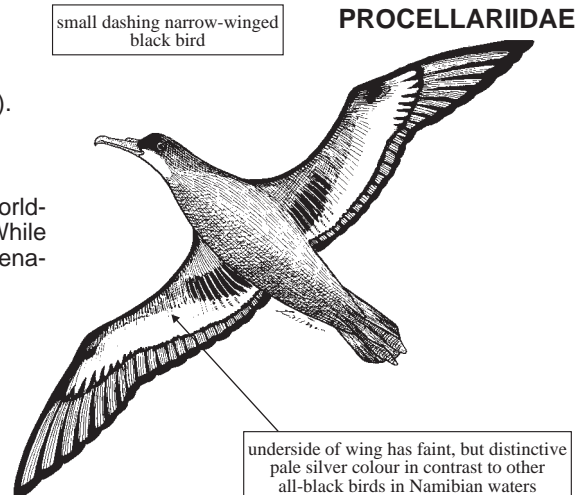
FAO names: En - Sooty shearwater.

Local names: Malbaatjie, Grysvlerk-pylstormvoël (Ak).

Size: Length from 40 to 46 cm.

Utilization: None.

Habitat and biology: The sooty shearwater occurs worldwide and is an abundant all-year visitor to Namibia. While this species follows fishing vessels, it is often less tenacious than many of its larger competitors.

***Oceanites oceanicus*** (Kuhl, 1820)

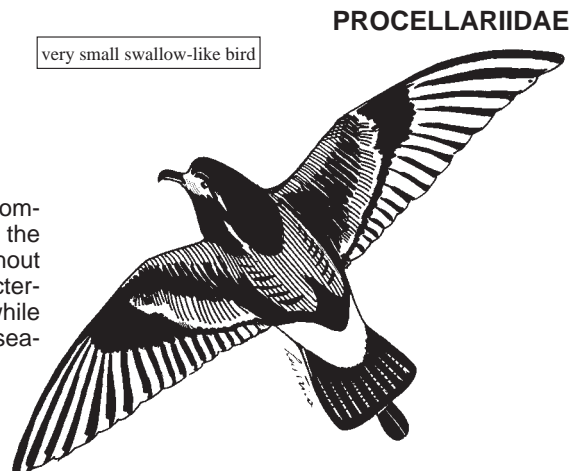
FAO names: En - Wilson's storm-petrel.

Local names: Geelpootstormswael (Ak).

Size: Length from 15 to 19 cm.

Utilization: None.

Habitat and biology: This small dark seabird is a common all-year visitor to Namibia and migrates between the southern and northern hemisphere. It is found throughout Namibian continental shelf waters feeding in a characteristic manner of pattering its feet on the water surface while hovering. Not as strongly attracted to ships as other seabirds.



***Pelecanus onocrotalus* Linnaeus, 1758**

FAO names: En - White pelican; Fr - Pelican blanc.

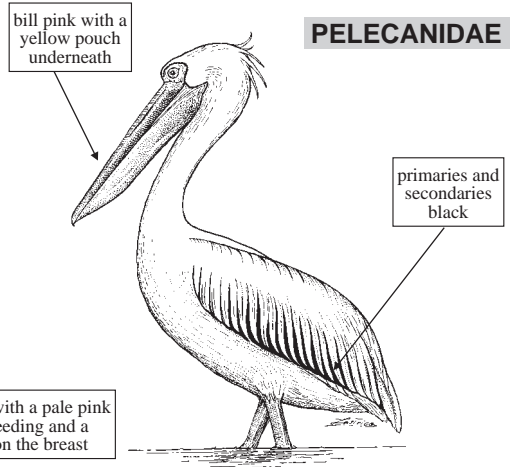
Local names: Pelican.

Size: Length from 140 to 178 cm; weight from 9 to 15 kg.

Utilization: Guano producer.

Habitat and biology: Rare at sea, usually confined to sheltered bays and inland waters. On the coast the white pelican breeds on guano platforms near Walvis Bay and feeds on fish and crustaceans.

Other similar species occurring in the area: The vagrant pinkbacked pelican *Pelecanus rufescens* is smaller with grey wings, pale yellow bill, and grey pouch.



***Morus capensis* (Lichtenstein, 1823)**

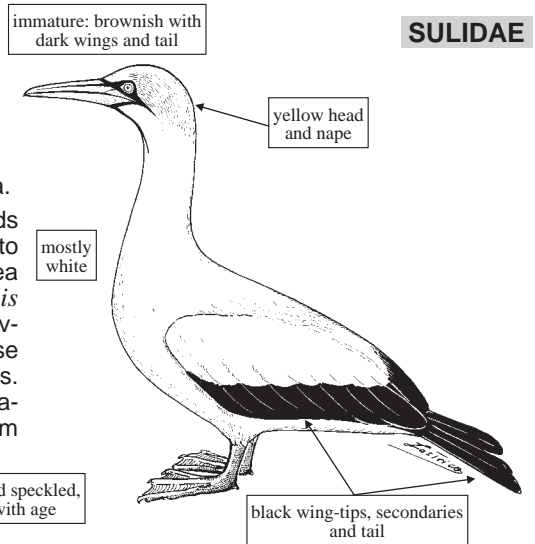
FAO names: En - Cape gannet; Fr - Fou du cap.

Local names: Gannet; Malgas (Ak).

Size: Length to about 90 cm; weight to 2.6 kg.

Utilization: One of the main guano producers in the area.

Habitat and biology: Endemic to southern Africa. Breeds on islands off South Africa and Namibia and disperses to Mozambique in the Indian Ocean and to the gulf of Guinea in the Atlantic. Feeds predominantly on anchovy (*Engraulis capensis*) since the collapse of the pilchard stocks. Scavenges behind fishing vessels. Nests in summer in dense colonies on Mercury, Ichaboe, and Possession Islands. Offshore found mainly in vicinity of pilchard stocks. Population of dark juveniles increase to the north further away from breeding islands.



immature: all dark and speckled, becoming lighter with age

***Phalacrocorax capensis* (Sparman, 1788)**

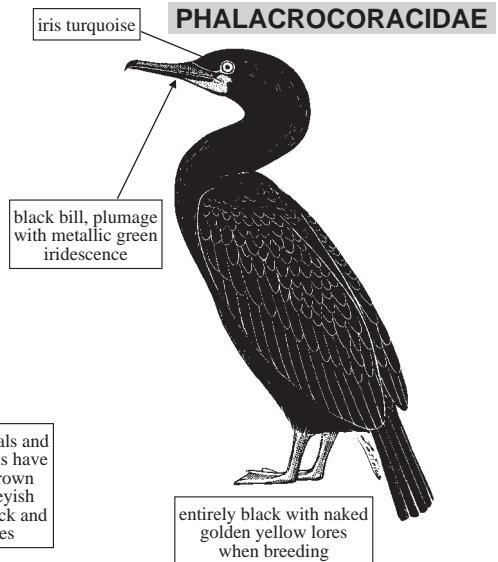
FAO names: En - Cape cormorant; Fr - Cormoran du cap.

Local names: Cormorant; Duiker (Ak).

Size: Length to 64 cm; weight from 1.1 to 1.3 kg.

Utilization: One of the main guano producers in the area.

Habitat and biology: The Cape cormorant is the most abundant cormorant in Namibian waters. Endemic to southern Africa, but disperses as far as Zaire. Feeds mainly on pelagic goby and anchovy but also pilchard when available. Highly gregarious, flying in longlines over the sea. Nests in large numbers on islands and guano platforms, mainly in spring and summer. Rarely found more than about 10 km from land.



immature individuals and non-breeding adults have a dull blackish brown plumage with greyish brown chin and neck and dull brown lores



Phalacrocorax carbo (Linnaeus, 1758)

FAO names: En - White-breasted cormorant; Fr - Grand cormoran.

Local names:

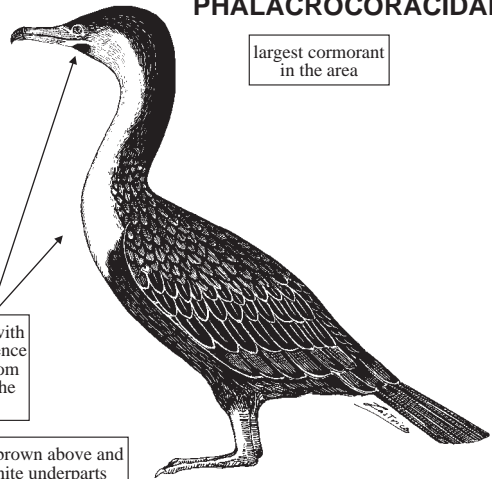
Size: Length to 90 cm; weight from 1.0 to 2.2 kg.

Utilization: Guano producer.

Habitat and biology: Nests on rocky islands guano platforms and other man-made structures. Feeds on larger fish than other cormorants in the area. Rarely found far from the coast.

black plumage with greenish iridescence above, white from chin to below the chest

immature: dark brown above and entirely off-white underparts

**PHALACROCORACIDAE**

largest cormorant in the area

Phalacrocorax coronatus (Wahlberg, 1855)

FAO names: En - Crowned cormorant.

Local names:

Size: Length from 54 cm; weight to 0.8 kg.

Utilization: Guano producer.

Habitat and biology: Restricted to the Benguela system, nests on rocky islands and cliffs. Feeds inshore, often in kelp beds, mainly on small bottom dwelling fish and crustaceans.

red iris

entirely black plumage with conspicuous crest, more prominent than that of the bank cormorant; orange-yellow bill and yellow naked lores when breeding

**PHALACROCORACIDAE**

smallest cormorant in the area

Phalacrocorax neglectus (Wahlberg, 1855)

FAO names: En - Bank cormorant.

Local names:

Size: Length to 75 cm; weight to 1.8 kg.

Utilization: Guano producer.

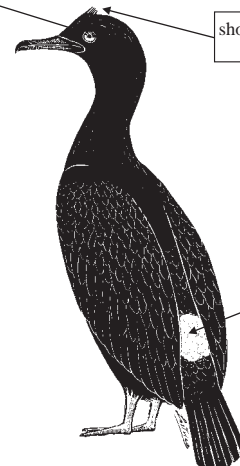
Habitat and biology: Distribution restricted to the Benguela system. Nests on rocky islands, mainly in winter. Feeds on pelagic shoaling fish, mainly pelagic goby. Rarely found far from the coast.

iris orange above, green below

short crest when breeding

completely black, with a white rump when breeding

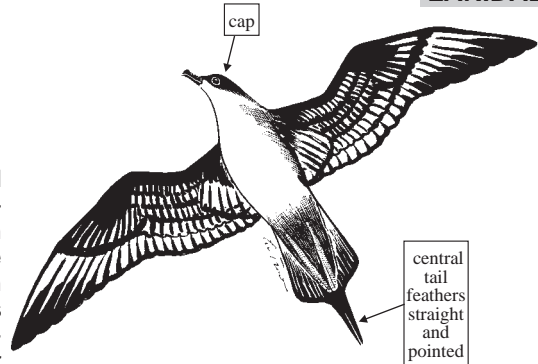
larger than the cape cormorant with no yellow on the face

**PHALACROCORACIDAE**

Stercorarius parasiticus (Linnaeus, 1758)

FAO names: En - Arctic skua.
Local names: Arctic skua; Arktiese roofmeeu (Ak).
Size: Length from 46 to 67 cm.
Utilization: None.

Habitat and biology: This migrant from arctic and sub-arctic regions is a fairly common summer visitor occurring more frequently in the north of the country than further south. Some few birds may remain during the winter months. This skua occurs closer inshore than others, often resting on land. This species readily mobs and steals from gulls and particularly terns, often several birds hunting together. Frequents fishing boats for offal and discarded fish.

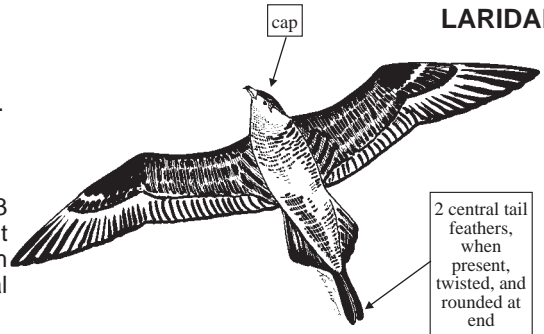


LARIDAE

Stercorarius pomarinus (Temminck, 1815)

FAO names: En - Pomarine skua.
Local names: Pomarine skua; Knopsteroofmeeu (Ak).
Size: Length from 65 to 78 cm.
Utilization: None.

Habitat and biology: This is the least common of the 3 skuas in this guide. It occurs throughout the region, but normally only in summer. Normally found farther from shore than the Arctic skua, but still essentially a coastal bird. Mobs gulls and terns and visits fishing vessels.

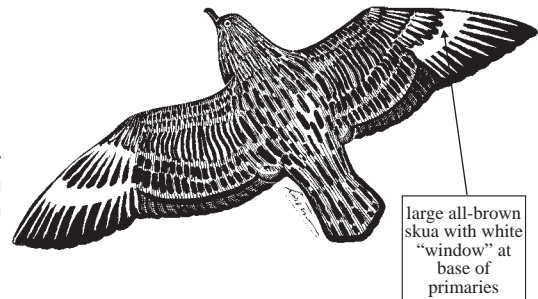


LARIDAE

Catharacta antarctica (Brunnich, 1764)

FAO names: En - Subantarctic skua.
Local names: Subantarctic skua; Bruinroofmeeu (Ak).
Size: Length from 61 to 66 cm.
Utilization: None.

Habitat and biology: The subantarctic skua is a common all-year visitor, although more frequently seen in winter. This skua tends to occur farther from shore than the previous 2 species. More solitary than other skuas, but still an aggressive scavenger.

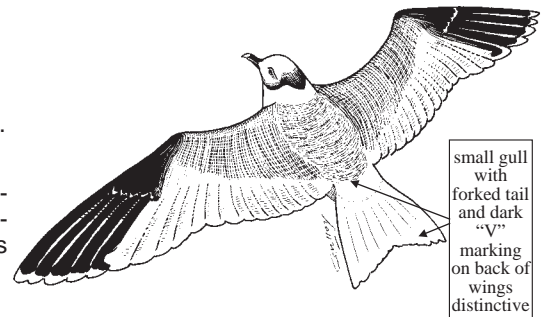


LARIDAE

Larus sabini Sabine, 1818

FAO names: En - Sabine's gull.
Local names: Sabine's gull; Mikstertmeeu (Ak).
Size: Length from 30 to 36 cm; weight from 1.6 to 1.8 kg.
Utilization: None.

Habitat and biology: This species is an uncommon visitor from polar regions to Namibia, although large numbers may be seen close to shore in the south. Feeds mainly on marine invertebrates.



LARIDAE



MARINE MAMMALS

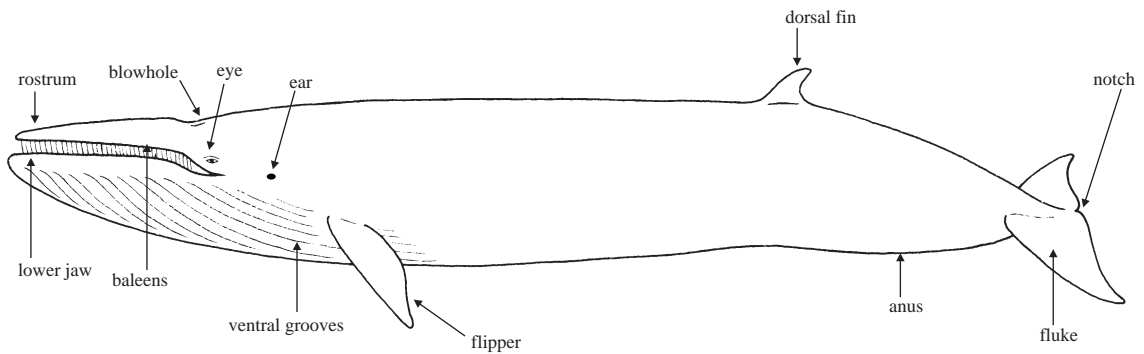
Order CETACEA - Whales and Dolphins

Stranded cetaceans have been used by Khoikhoi people along the Namibian coast for millennia. They provided these nomadic groups with food and even building materials as the bones of large whales were used to build huts on this treeless desert coast. It is only after the arrival of Europeans that the first attempts to catch cetaceans were made. Whaling developed quickly during the second half of the 18th century with the arrival of American and European whalers in search of right whales. By the middle of the 19th century, the southern right whale was driven to virtual extinction in the area and whalers turned their attention to the humpback whale whose populations also soon began to decline. The end of the 19th century marks the beginning of modern industrial whaling using steam boats and cannon harpoons. The intensive exploitation of all species of large whales throughout their range began, and Namibian waters were no exception. During the first 30 years of this century sperm whales, humpback whales, fin whales, blue whales, and other species were caught and processed at whaling stations along the Namibian coast. The local populations soon declined dramatically and shore-based whaling was abandoned in favour of large whale factory ships. The worldwide over-exploitation of most stocks followed, leading to the global downfall of the whaling industry. Today, most species once exploited in Namibian waters are still very rare and all cetaceans are fully protected in the area.

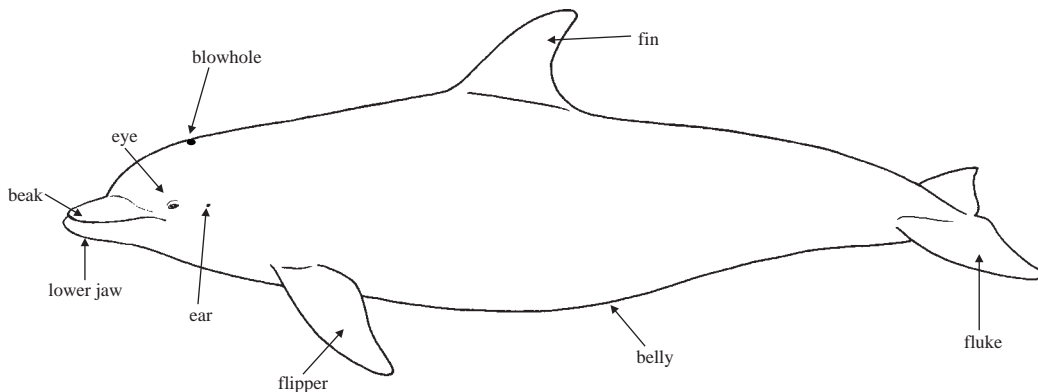
The order Cetacea is subdivided into 2 groups: the Mysticeti (baleen whales) and the Odontoceti (toothed whales, dolphins, and porpoises). The suborder Mysticeti comprises 4 families and 11 species, 8 of which can be found in Namibian waters. The suborder Odontoceti comprises 9 families and about 65 species, 23 of which have been recorded in Namibian waters.

TECHNICAL TERMS

MYSTICETI



ODONTOCETI



Suborder MYSTICETI - Baleen Whales

Eubalaena australis Desmoulin, 1822

FAO names: En - Southern right whale; Fr - Baleine australe; Sp - Ballena franca austral.

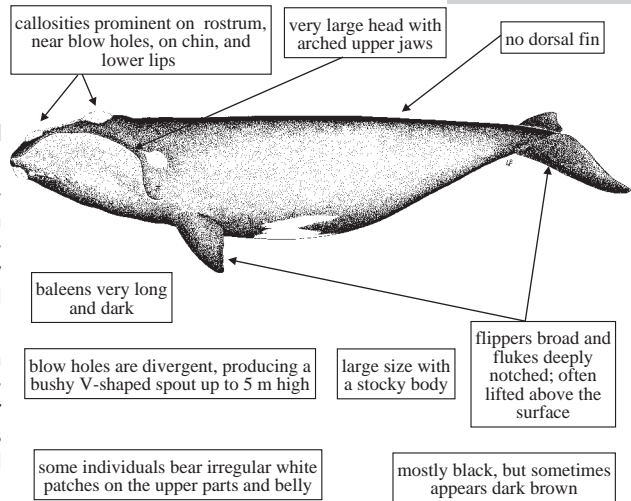
Local names:

Size: Average length 15 m (up to 18 m) and weight up to 96 t.

Utilization: Southern right whales were exploited in the area by American and European whalers since the 18th century until virtual extermination. Legally protected since 1935, they are recovering in southern Africa, but are still rare in Namibia.

Habitat and biology: Circumpolar between 20° S and 55° S, the southern right whale congregates in shallow coastal waters and bays for calving and probably mating. Calving interval is about 3 years. This species feeds on small planktonic crustaceans, mainly copepods.

BALAEINIDAE



Caperea marginata (Gray, 1846)

FAO names: En - Pygmy right whale; Fr - Baleine pygmée; Sp - Ballena franca pigmea.

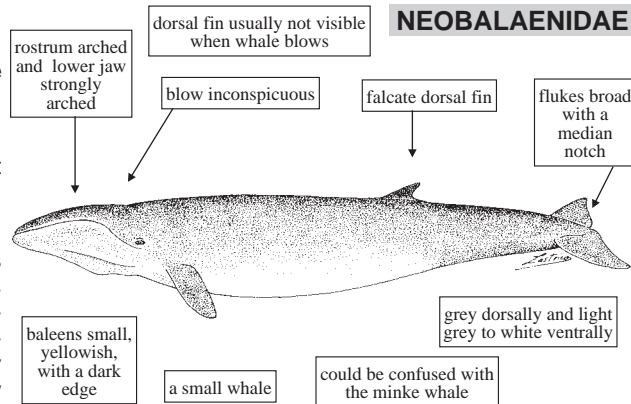
Local names:

Size: Length about 5 m (up to 6.4 m) and weight about 4.5 t.

Utilization: None.

Habitat and biology: Rarely seen, this species is nevertheless widespread in temperate waters of the Southern Hemisphere but never abundant. In the area it may be found inshore, sometimes in sheltered shallow bays. It is poorly known and in Namibia reported only from a few strandings in scattered bays.

NEOBALAEINIDAE



Balaenoptera physalus (Linnaeus, 1758)

FAO names: En - Fin whale; Fr - Rorqual commun; Sp - Rorcual común.

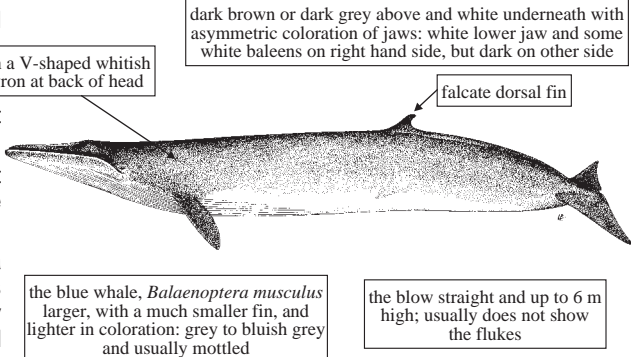
Local names:

Size: Length over 20 m (up to 27 m) weight around 40 t (up to 69 t).

Utilization: Extensively hunted, it was caught regularly in Namibian waters together with the blue whale at the beginning of the century.

Habitat and biology: The fin whale has a worldwide distribution, migrating to low latitudes in winter when calving and mating occurs. They feed on euphausiids, small shoaling fish, and squid. Recent records in Namibia have been between November and March.

BALAEOPTERIDAE



Remarks: The sei whale may also occur in Namibia but since it is difficult to distinguish it from the fin whale, reports of the fin whale may have been sei whales.

***Balaenoptera acutorostrata* Lacépède, 1804**

FAO names: En - Minke whale; Fr - Petit rorqual; Sp - Rorcual enana.

Local names:

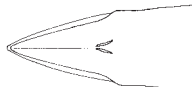
Size: Length 8 to 10 m, weight 6 to 7 t.

Utilization: None in the area.

Habitat and biology: Very wide distribution from the tropics to polar waters of both hemispheres. It often comes close inshore and in bays. Not shy, the minke whale often approaches boats. Feeds on euphausiids and small fish.

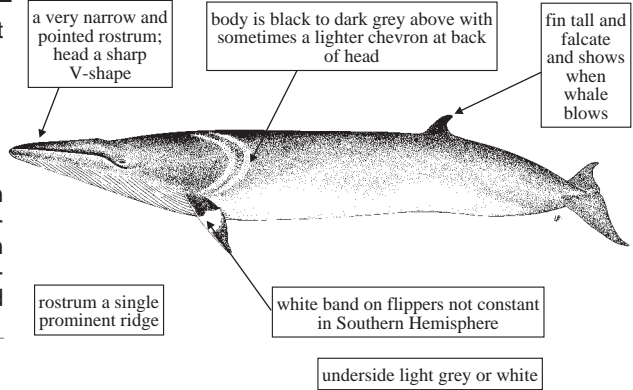


side view of head



dorsal view of head

BALAENOPTERIDAE



***Megaptera novaeangliae* (Borowski, 1781)**

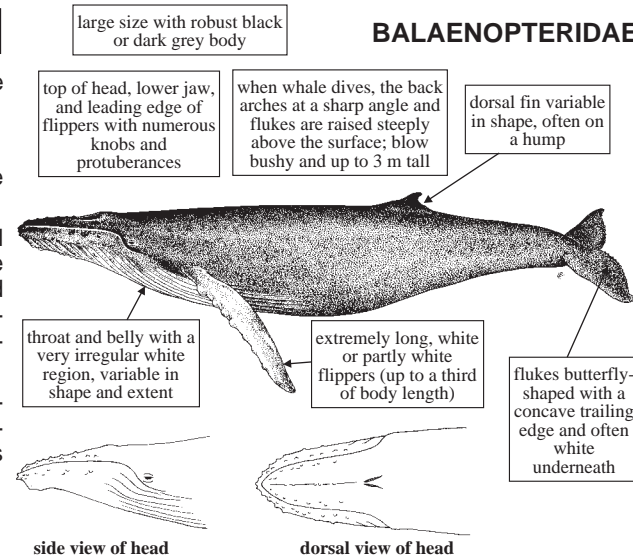
FAO names: En - Humpback whale; Fr - Baleine á bosse; Sp - Rorcual jorobada.

Local names:

Size: Length about 15 m (up to 18 m), average weight 35 t (up to 48 t).

Utilization: Namibian waters were a well known hunting ground for this whale since the 19th century. They were extensively exploited by European and American whalers at the beginning of this century from shore-based whaling stations. It has been protected since 1964.

Habitat and biology: Has a very wide distribution in all oceans and undertakes extensive seasonal migrations wintering in the tropics. It feeds on krill (euphausiids) and small shoaling fish.



BALAENOPTERIDAE

Suborder ODONTOCETI - Toothed Whales and Dolphins

***Physeter catodon* Linnaeus, 1758**

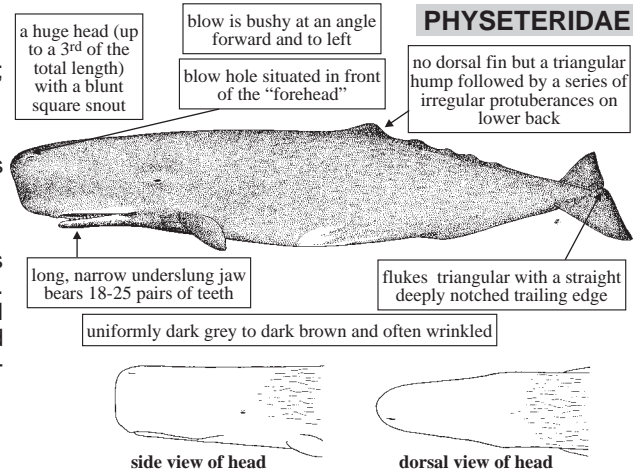
FAO names: En - Sperm whale; Fr - Cachalot; Sp - Cachalote.

Local names:

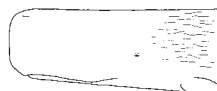
Size: Males around 15 m (up to 18 m), females around 11 m.

Utilization: Has been hunted in all oceans.

Habitat and biology: Widely distributed, males and females show a different migratory pattern. When not breeding males are solitary or in small groups while females and juveniles form mixed schools. The sperm whale is a deep diver feeding primarily on squid.



PHYSETERIDAE



side view of head



dorsal view of head

***Orcinus orca* (Linnaeus, 1758)**

DELPHINIDAE

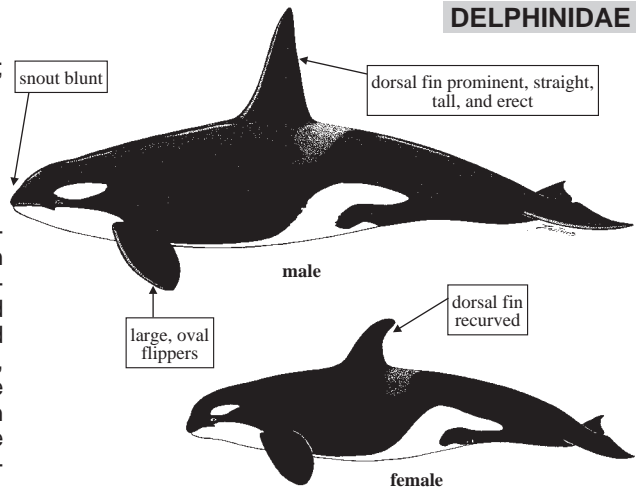
FAO names: En - Killer whale; Fr - Orque; Sp - Orca.

Local names:

Size: To almost 10 m in length and 10 t.

Utilization: None in the area.

Habitat and biology: This species is widespread throughout the world and most common in nearshore waters. They are very fast swimmers and feed on fish, cephalopods, and warm-blooded prey such as seals, whales, and dolphins; they also occasionally eat seabirds, penguins, and turtles. In relation to other large marine mammals, they are fairly common in Namibia. Killer whales have a very distinctive colour pattern and dorsal-fin shape and therefore are easily identified.



black-and-white pattern very distinctive, with a white oval patch above and behind eye, and white area on underside of flukes, head, and belly with a broad white lobe reaching up and back; a light grey patch on back behind dorsal fin

***Globicephala melas* (Traill, 1809)**

DELPHINIDAE

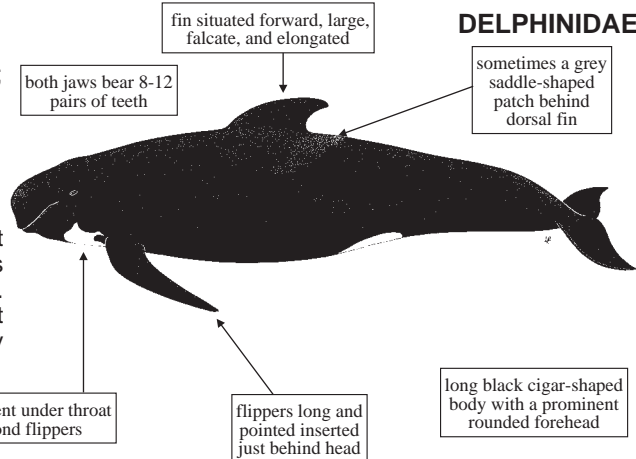
FAO names: En - Longfinned pilot whale; Fr - Globicéphale noir; Sp - Calderón comun.

Local names:

Size: 5 to 8 m in length and weight up to 3.5 t.

Utilization: None in the area.

Habitat and biology: The longfinned pilot whale is widely distributed in temperate waters and in the area often seen at the shelf margin. Most of the time it forms fairly large schools. It feeds primarily on squid. Group size normally 20 to 50 individuals.



***Lagenorhynchus obscurus* (Gray, 1828)**

DELPHINIDAE

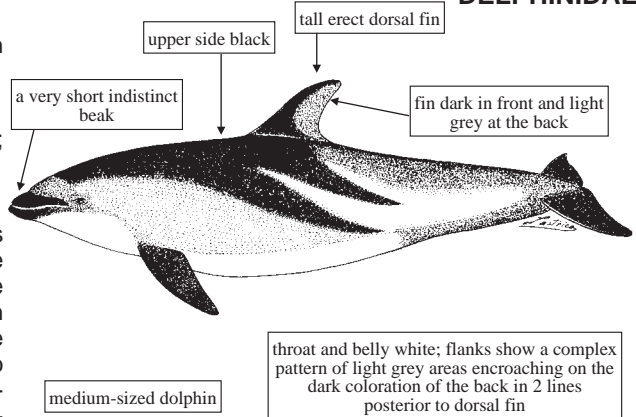
FAO names: En - Dusky dolphin; Fr - Dauphin sombre; Sp - Delfin obscuro.

Local names:

Size: Average length 1.4 to 1.8 m (up to 2.1 m); Weight around 120 kg and up to 140 kg.

Utilization: None in the area.

Habitat and biology: The dusky dolphin is widely distributed in temperate waters of the Southern Hemisphere, particularly along the coasts. It is the most abundant cetacean in Namibian waters and occurs mostly over the shelf and inshore. The group size usually is 2 to 8 individuals but this varies up to several hundred. It occasionally associates with other cetaceans. It feeds on fish and cephalopods.



***Tursiops truncatus* (Montagu, 1821)**

DELPHINIDAE

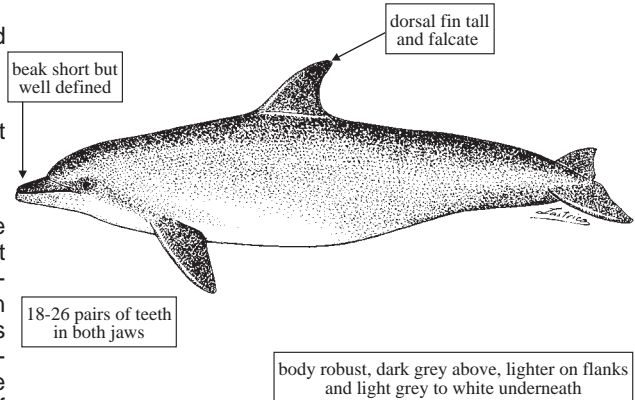
FAO names: En - Bottlenose dolphin; Fr - Grand dauphin; Sp - Tursion.

Local names:

Size: Length about 3 m (up to 4 m); weight about 200 kg.

Utilization: None in the area.

Habitat and biology: Widespread in temperate waters of both hemispheres. This species is not shy and is usually seen in small groups, sometimes associated with other species. In Namibian waters the bottlenose dolphin has been seen offshore and there is a resident population inshore between Walvis Bay and Cape Cross. Bottlenose dolphins feed on a variety of prey including fish and squid.



***Lissodelphis peronii* (Lacepède, 1804)**

DELPHINIDAE

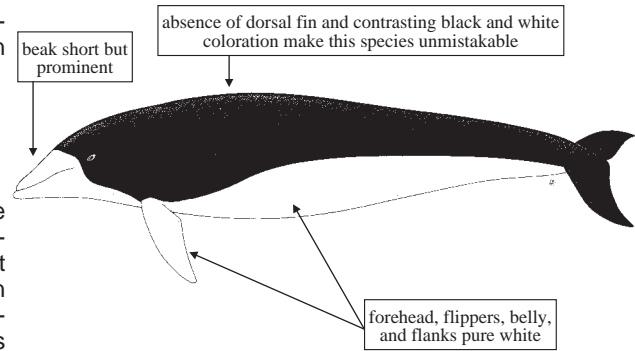
FAO names: En - Southern right whale dolphin; Fr - Dauphin aptere austral; Sp - Delfín liso austral.

Local names:

Size: Length 1.8 to 2.4 m, weight 60 to 80 kg.

Utilization: None in the area.

Habitat and biology: The southern right whale dolphin has a circumpolar distribution in temperate cool waters of the Southern Hemisphere. It forms large schools, sometimes more than 1 000 animals. In Namibian waters it occasionally associates with the dusky dolphin. It feeds on fish (Myctophidae) and squid.



***Cephalorhynchus heavisidii* (Gray, 1828)**

DELPHINIDAE

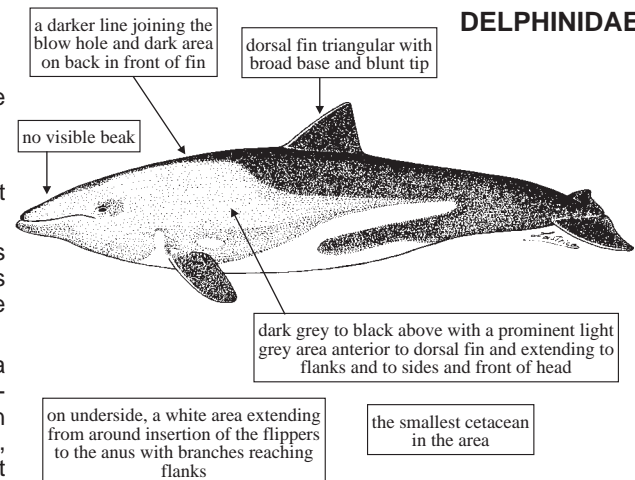
FAO names: En - Heaviside's dolphin; Fr - Dauphin d' Heaviside; Sp - Delfín de Heaviside.

Local names:

Size: Average length around 1.3 m, weight about 40 kg.

Utilization: None in the area. The heaviside's dolphin is susceptible to entanglement in nets and possibly incidental catch in the purse-seine fishery.

Habitat and biology: Endemic to the Benguela system, the Heaviside's dolphin is fairly common in southern Namibian waters. It is seen mostly within 5 miles from the shore and in bays, in small groups, usually of 2 to 7 individuals. It feeds on small fish and cephalopods.

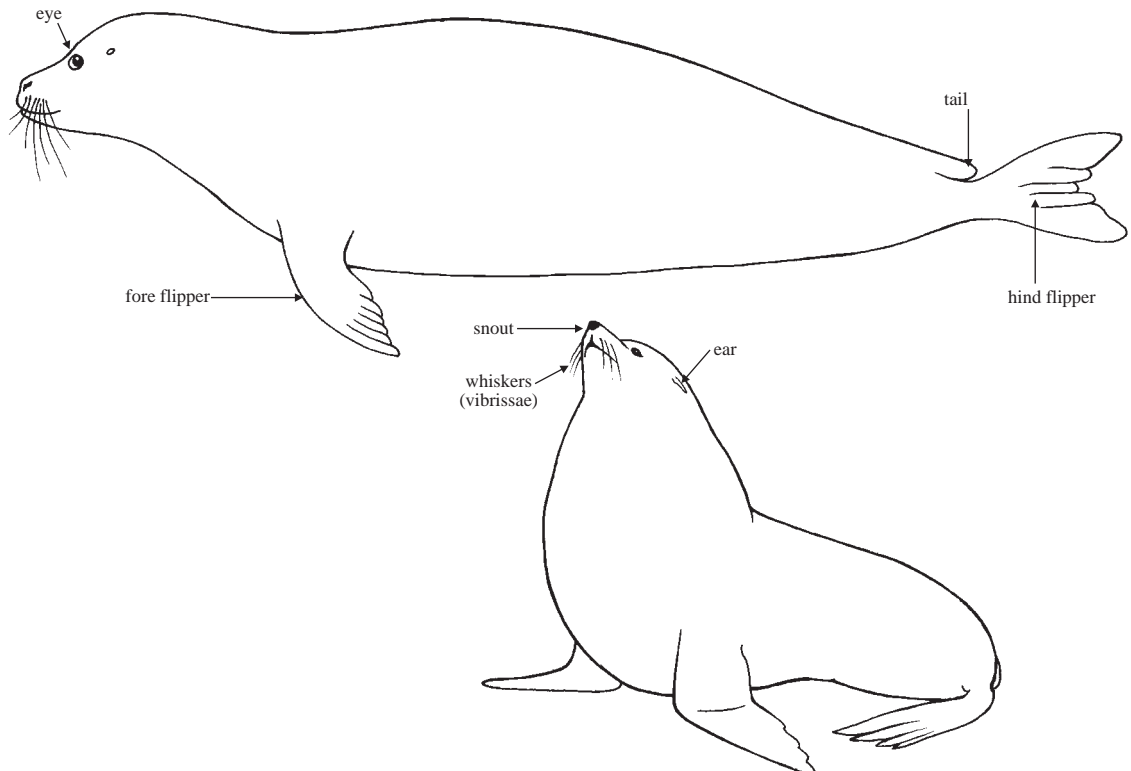


Order PINNIPEDIA - Seals

The South African fur seal, *Arctocephalus pusillus pusillus*, was extremely abundant along the Namibian coast when the first Europeans visited the area. The coastal Khoikhoi people relied on the seals as a source of food and pelts. During the 18th century, sealing developed into the first large scale “fishery” in the region, with the arrival of American and European sealers. The South African fur seal was hunted for its valuable pelt which were traded in China and later on the European and North American markets. Indiscriminate and uncontrolled exploitation soon brought the species to the brink of extinction. In the 19th century, at least 23 island colonies had been eradicated along the Namibian and South African coast. At that time, interest in guano exploitation prevented the seal population from recovering significantly despite a reduction in exploitation. It is only during the 20th century that control on the exploitation permitted the seal population to recover and the sealing industry to flourish again. About 2 million seals have been exploited in Namibia since the beginning of the century while the population was allowed to increase from very low numbers to about 750 000. Since 1984, with the collapse of the world market for furs, sealing has become a marginal activity. Apart from furs, seal products include leather, oil, meat, and carcass-meal. In addition, there is a profitable market in the Far East for male genitalia as a supposed aphrodisiac. The recent decrease in seal exploitation has revived the concern about the potential impact of the seal population on commercial fish stocks.

The Order Pinnipedia (seals) is represented in the area by members of 2 families: the Otariidae which include fur seals and sea lions, and the Phocidae which include true seals (including elephant seals). Only 1 seal, the South African fur seal *Arctocephalus pusillus pusillus* breeds on the Namibian coast. The subantarctic fur seal *Arctocephalus tropicalis* is a very rare vagrant and not included in the guide. The southern elephant seal *Mirounga leonina* is also a rare vagrant but occurs more regularly and is included in this guide. In addition, the skull of a leopard seal was discovered in the sand at Sandwich Harbour.

TECHNICAL TERMS



Arctocephalus pusillus pusillus (Schreber, 1776)**OTARIIDAE**

FAO names: **En** - South African fur seal;
Fr - Otarie du cap; **Sp** - Lobo marino de dos pelos de Sudafrica.

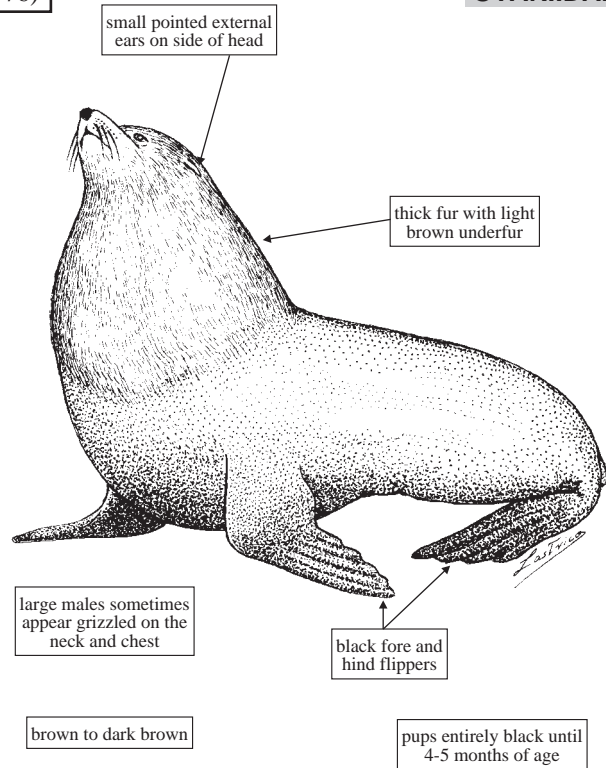
Local names: Seal, sea dog; Rob (Ak).

Size: Length: males up to 2.2 m, females around 1.6 m. Weight: males around 200 kg (up to 300 kg), females 60 to 70 kg.

Utilization: This species has been harvested for more than 2 centuries, primarily for pelts; the most valuable being 8 to 10 months-old juveniles.

Habitat and biology: Common in the Benguela system, the South African fur seal can be seen up to 200 km offshore but is mostly concentrated over the shelf and inshore areas. It breeds in dense colonies on rocky islands and on the mainland between mid November and the beginning of January. The pups are weaned at about 10 months of age. It is preyed upon by sharks and killer whales at sea and by jackals and brown hyenas on the mainland. The diet includes at least 11 species of fish, some crustaceans, and squids. Some individual seals prey on sea birds (particularly jackass penguins).

Other similar species occurring in the area: The rare vagrant subantarctic fur seal *Arctocephalus tropicalis* is smaller, usually darker on the back and has a light brown yellow face fore-neck and upper-chest. In addition, adult males have a short black crest on top of the head.

***Mirounga leonina*** (Linnaeus, 1758)**PHOCIDAE**

FAO names: **En** - Southern elephant seal;
Fr - Elephant de mer; **Sp** - Foca elephante del sur.

Local names:

Size: Length: males 4.5 to 6.5 m; females 3 to 4 m. Weight: males up to 3 500 kg; females up to 800 kg.

Utilization: None in the area, but have been used by Khoikhoi tribes. Has been heavily exploited on the breeding grounds, mainly for oil.

Habitat and biology: When not breeding this seal disperses over a large oceanic area in the cold waters of the Southern Hemisphere. It is a rare but regular vagrant along the Namibian coast. It breeds in dense colonies on subantarctic islands. This seal is rarely seen at sea as it spends very little time on the surface. It is a very deep diver feeding mainly on squid, but some fish is also taken. Elephant seals are preyed upon by killer whales and great white sharks.

