Mesoplodon mirus True, 1913

ZIPH Mes 9 BTW

FAO Names: True's beaked whale**: Fr -** Baleine à bec de True**; Sp -** Zifio de True.

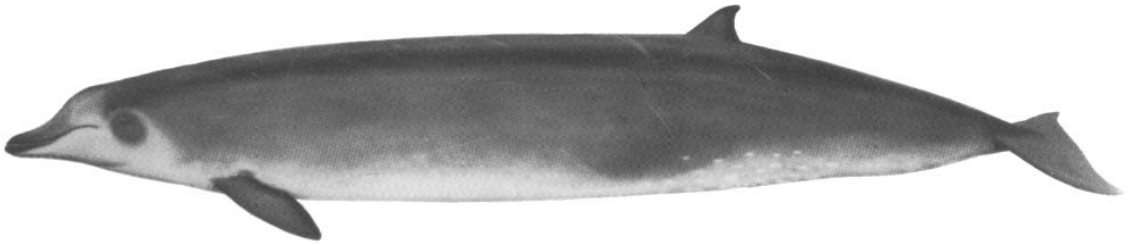

Fig. 253 ***Mesoplodon mirus***

Distinctive Characteristics: True's beaked whales are not known to differ substantially from other species of ***Mesoplodon,*** although they have a slightly bulging forehead and prominent beak.

These beaked whales are characterized by the position of the mandibular teeth at the very tip of the lower jaw. The teeth are oval in cross-section, lean forward, and are visible outside the closed mouth of adult males.

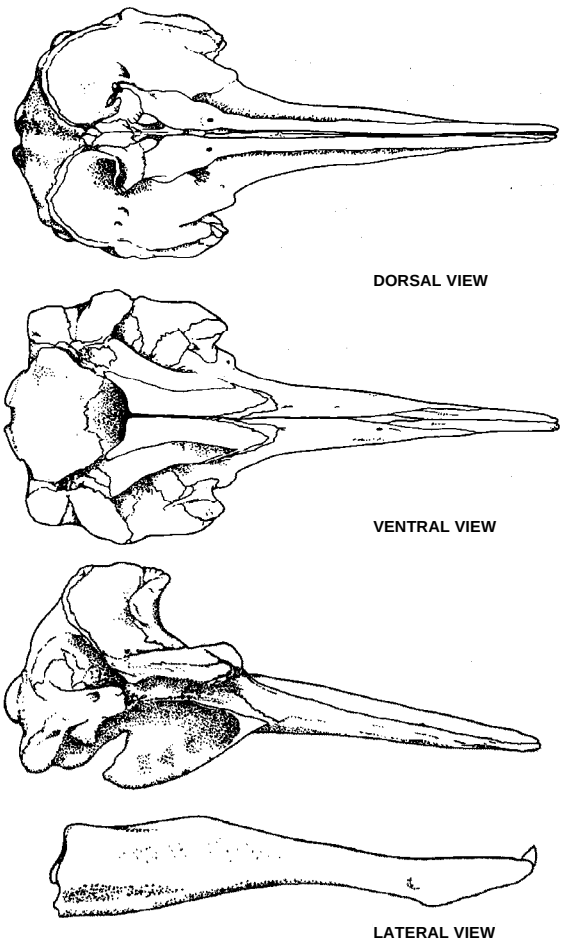

Fig. 254 Skull

Can be confused with: At sea, True's beaked whales are difficult to distinguish from other species of ***Mesoplodon*** (starting on p. 90). The only other species in which males have oval teeth at the tip of the lower jaw is Longman's beaked whale (p. 112); whose appearance is not known.

Size: Both sexes are known to reach lengths of slightly over 5 m. Weights of up to 1 400 kg have been recorded. Newborns are probably between 2 and 2.5 m.

Geographical Distribution: True's beaked whales are known only from strandings in Great Britain, from Florida to Nova Scotia in the North Atlantic, and from southeast Africa and southern Australia in the Indo-Pacific Ocean.

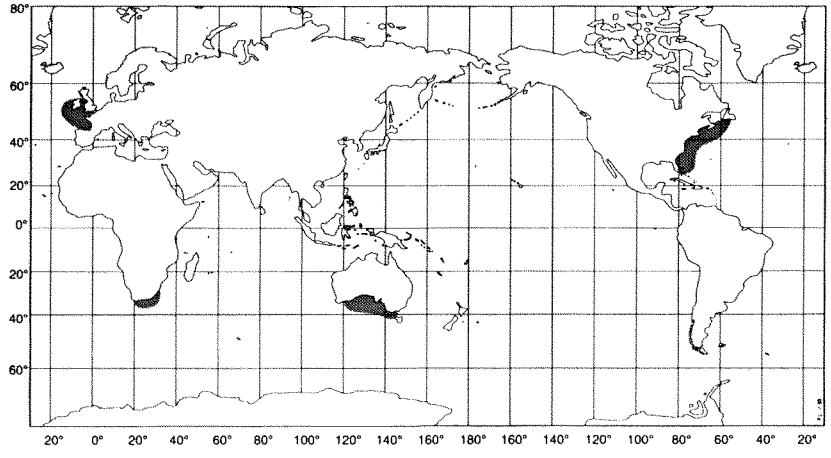

Fig. 255

Biology and Behaviour: There is almost no information available on the natural history of this species of beaked whale. Stranded animals have had squid in their stomachs.

Exploitation: An individual of this species was taken off Nova Scotia in 1938, but no other exploitation is known.

IUCN Status: Insufficiently known.

Mesoplodon layardii (Gray, 1865) **ZIPH Mes 10** **TSW**

FAO Names: En - Strap-toothed whale**; Fr -** Baleine à bec de Layard**; Sp -** Zifio de Layard.

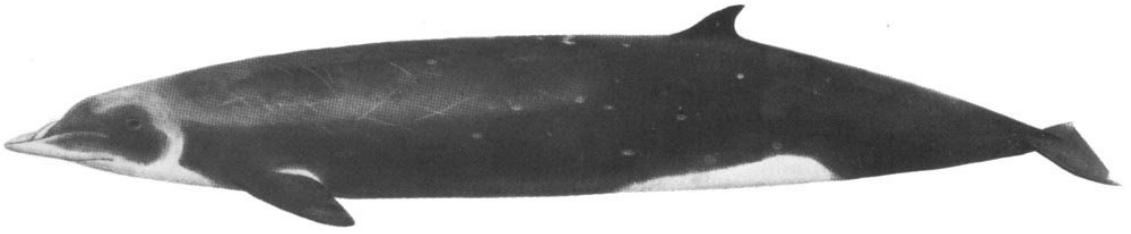

Fig. 256 ***Mesoplodon layardii***

Distinctive Characteristics: Although the body shape of this whale is rather undistinctive, the teeth of adult males are unique. The long tusks emerge from near the middle of the lower jaw and curl backward and inward, extending over the upper jaw, often preventing it from opening more than a few centimetres. How the animals eat with such an arrangement is unknown.

The complex-colour pattern is better-known than that of most species of ***Mesoplodon,*** as this species is known from more specimens than any other in the genus. The body is mostly grey or black, sometimes with a purple or brown tinge. Much of the underside is white: around the urogenital opening, between the flippers, on the beak, and in a band of variable width around the head. Variable white or light grey patches tend to be found on the back and sides.

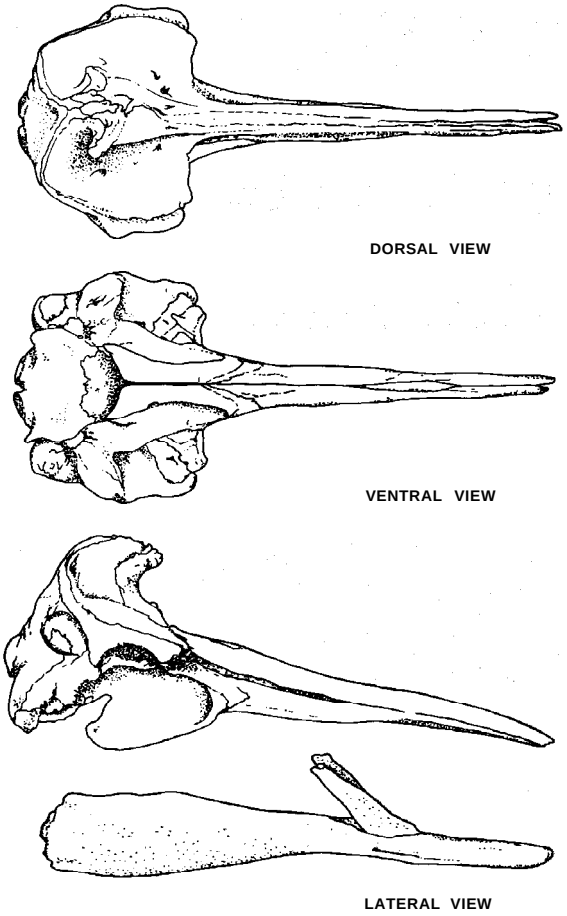

Fig. 257 Skull

Can be confused with: The unique tusks of adult males of this species will make them identifiable, if seen. Females and subadults will likely be impossible to distinguish from other ***Mesoplodon*** species (starting on p. 90).

Size: Adult females reach lengths of at least 6.2 m and males reach 5.9 m, making this the largest species of ***Mesoplodon.*** Length at birth is unknown, but is probably close to 3 m.

Geographical Distribution: Strap-toothed whales may have a continuous distribution in cold temperate waters of the Southern Hemisphere: there have been strandings in South Africa, Australia, Tasmania, New Zealand, Tierra del Fuego, Uruguay, and the Falkland Islands.

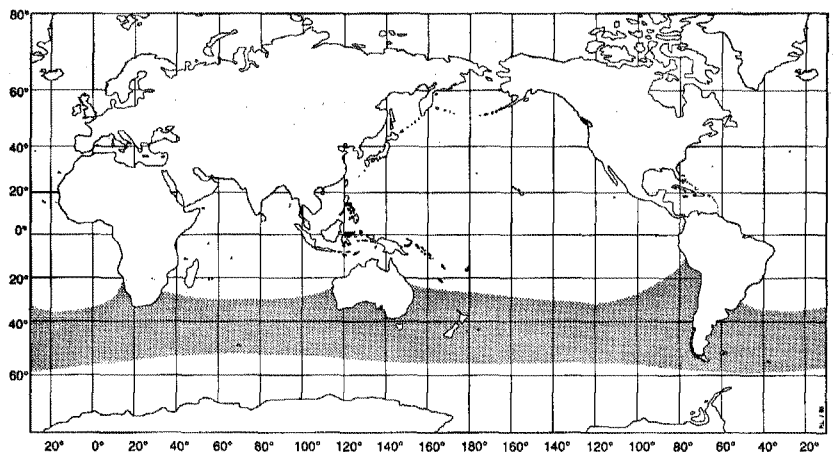

Fig. 258

Biology and Behaviour: Groups of up to 3 individuals have been seen. These animals are difficult to approach. Strap-toothed whales are commonly stranded, but little has been learned from the few sightings of live animals. They eat squid, and the single stomach examined also contained a piece of algae. Calving appears to occur in spring to summer.

Exploitation: No exploitation of this species has been reported.

IUCN Status: Insufficiently known.

Mesoplodon bowdoini Andrews, 1908

ZIPH Mes 11 **BDW**

FAO Names: En - Andrews' beaked whale**; Fr -** Baleine à bec de Bowdoin**; Sp -** Zifio de Andrews.

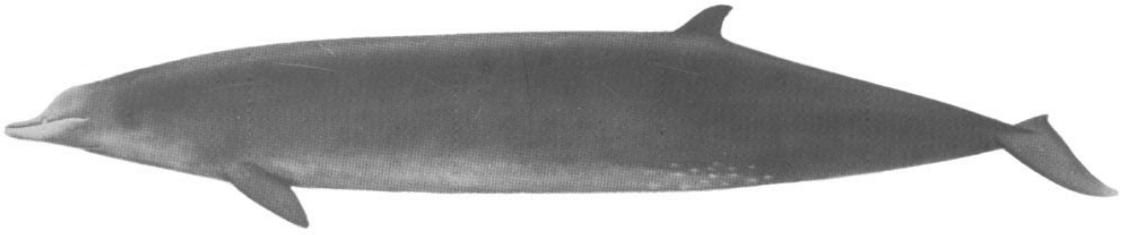

Fig. 259 *Mesoplodon bowdoini*

Distinctive Characteristics: The external appearance of Andrews' beaked whale is poorly known; however, its skeleton is similar to that of Hubbs' beaked whale. Adult males are all dark, except for the front half of the beak, which is white.

The flattened tusks of males of this species emerge from the middle of the lower jaw on raised sockets, and protrude above the upper jaw.

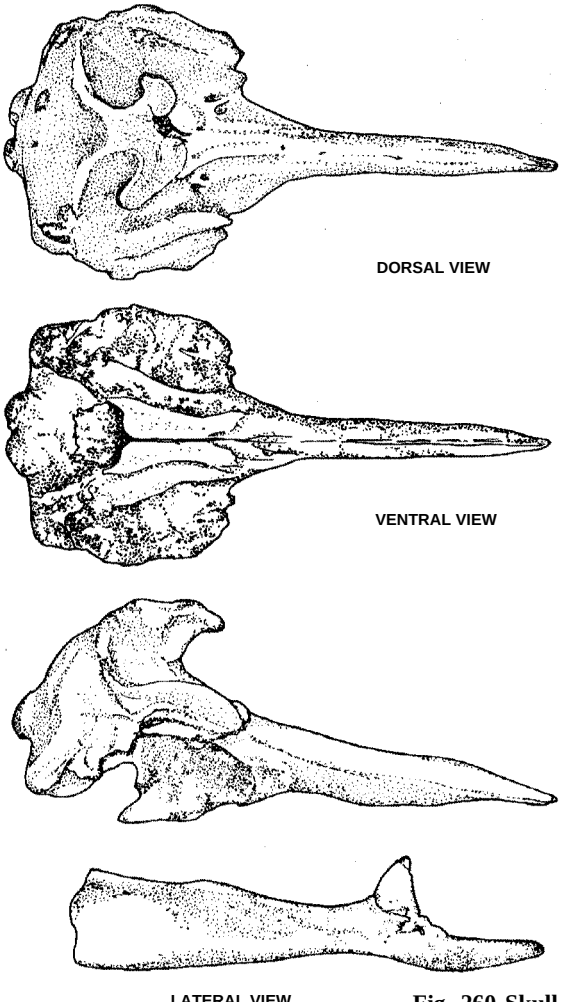

Fig. 260 Skull

Can be confused with: The teeth of bulls, if seen well, will allow Andrews' beaked whale to be distinguished from most other ***Mesoplodon*** species (starting on p. 90). They are most likely to be mistaken for Blainville's beaked whale (p. 90) but lack the arched lower jaw.

Size: Females reach at least 4.6 m in length and males reach 4.7 m. Length at birth is presumed to be about 2 m.

Geographical Distribution: To date, Andrews' beaked whale is known only from the South Pacific and Indian oceans. Strandings have occurred in Australia, New Zealand, Tasmania, and the Kerguelen Islands.

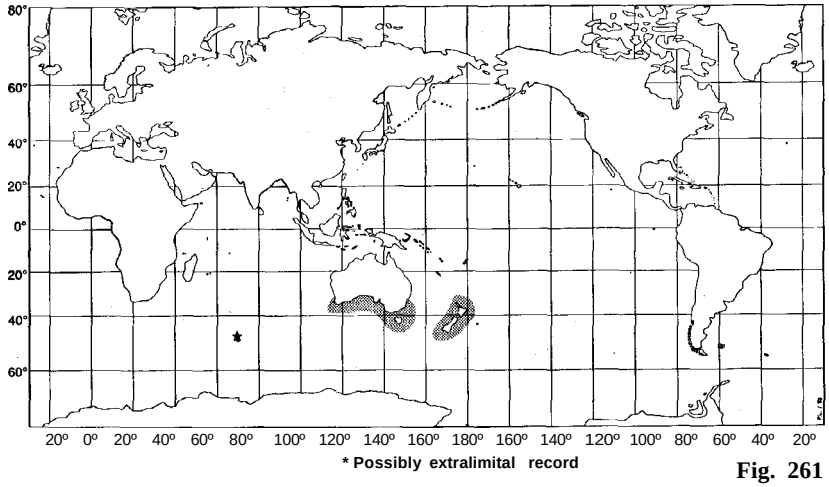

Fig. 261

Biology and Behaviour: Essentially nothing is known of the biology of this species, other than the few facts that have been gleaned from stranded individuals.

Exploitation: No exploitation of this species is known.

IUCN Status: Insufficiently known.

Mesoplodon pacificus Longman, 1926

ZIPH Mes 12 **BNW**

FAO Names: En - Longman's beaked whale**; Fr -** Baleine à bec de Longman**; Sp -** Zifio de Longman.

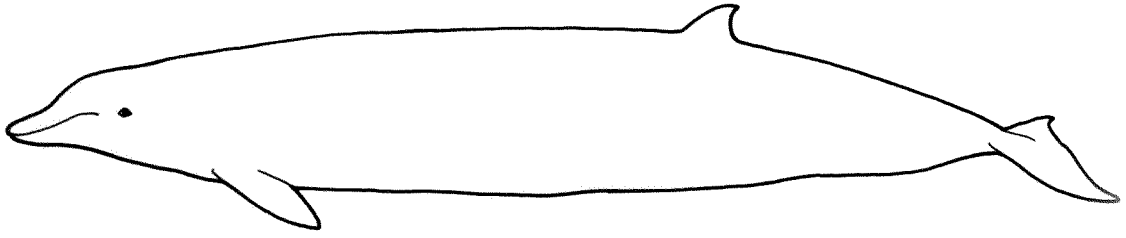

Fig. 262 *Mesoplodon pacificus* (body shape and coloration are unknown for this species)

Distinctive Characteristics: Nothing is known of the external appearance of Longman's beaked whale, as it is known only from 2 damaged skulls. The teeth of adult males are oval in cross-section, are located at the tip of the lower jaw, and point forward.

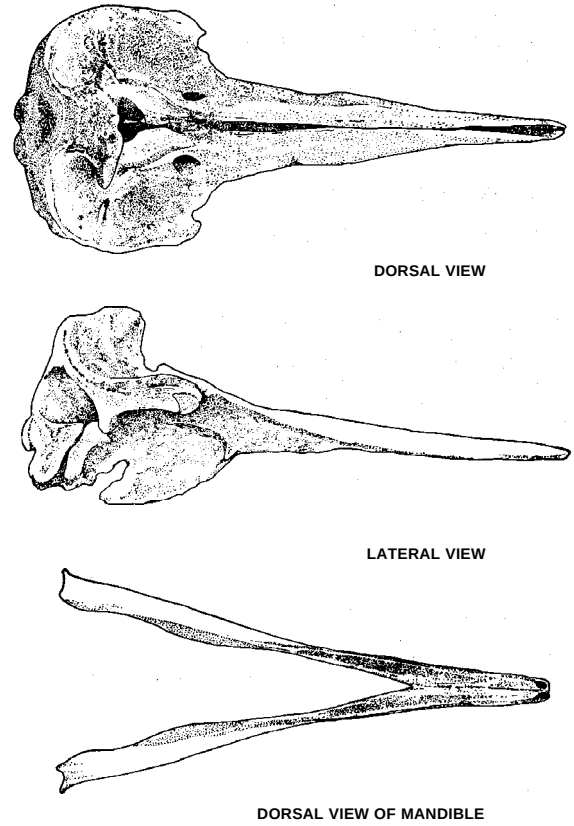

Fig. 263 Skull

Can be confused with: Until a fresh carcass is examined, Longman's beaked whales cannot be positively identified (except from examination of the skull). In shape and position, the teeth most closely resemble those of True's beaked whales (p. 106).

Size: The size of Longman's beaked whale is unknown, but based on the size of a skull it is thought to reach lengths of over 6 m.

Geographical Distribution: The distribution of Longman's beaked whale is incompletely known, but it may be limited to the Indo-Pacific region. The 2 available skulls are from Australia and Somalia.

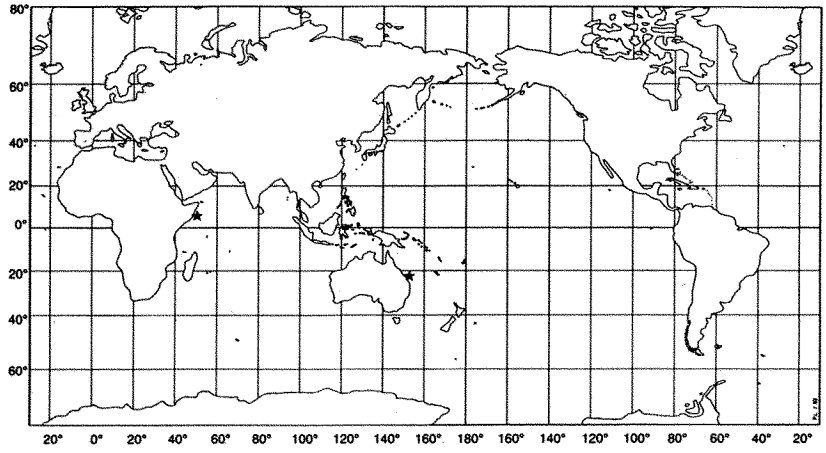

Fig. 264

Biology and Behaviour: Although Longman's beaked whale is here classified in the genus ***Mesoplodon,*** some researchers believe it belongs in its own genus, ***Indopacetus.*** It qualifies as the most poorly known of all the marine mammals.

Exploitation: There is no known exploitation of this species.

IUCN Status: Insufficiently known.

Mesoplodon stejnegeri True, 1885

ZIPH Mes 13 **BTW**

FAO Names: En - Stejneger's beaked whale**; Fr -** Baleine à bec de Stejneger**; Sp -** Zifio de Stejneger.

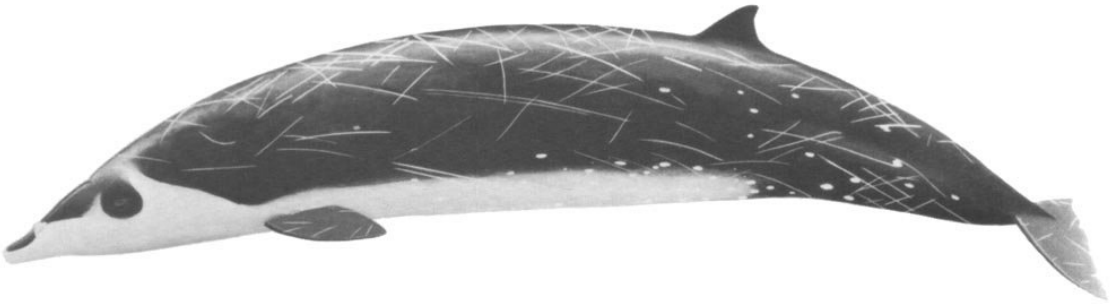

Fig. 265 ***Mesoplodon stejnegeri***

Distinctive Characteristics: Stejneger's beaked whale has the characteristic ***Mesoplodon*** body shape. Apparently, both sexes are uniformly grey to black, often with extensive scarring in bulls.

The flattened tusks of males are situated near the middle of the lower jaw, and point forward. They are located on raised prominences, so that the crowns extend above the rostrum.

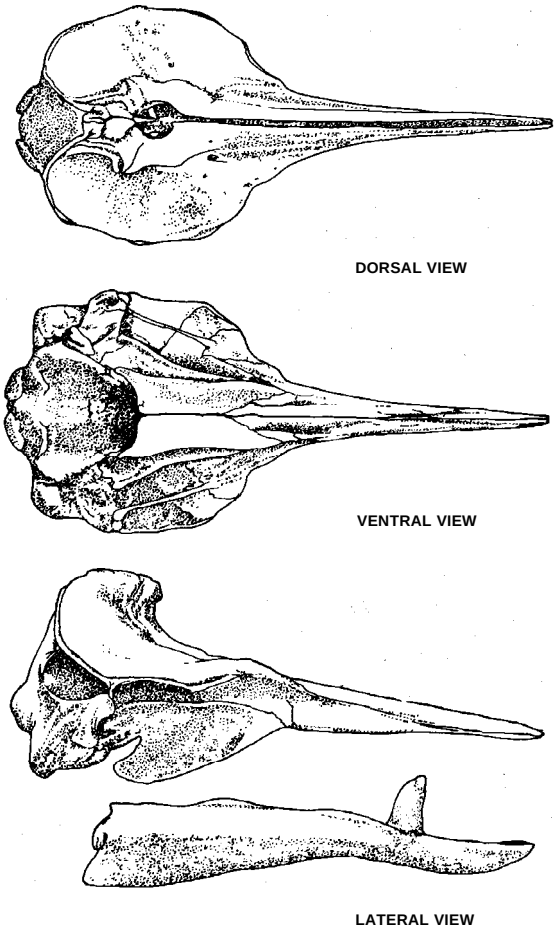

Fig. 266 Skull

Can be confused with: Adult males will be distinguishable from most other ***Mesoplodon*** species (starting on p. 90) by tooth shape and position. Within Stejneger's beaked whale's range, both Hubbs' (p. 98) and Blainville's (p. 90) beaked whale males have similar teeth.

Size: Both sexes reach lengths of at least 5.3 m. Newborns are assumed to be between 2 and 2.5 m in length.

Geographical Distribution: Stejneger's beaked whales are found in continental slope and oceanic waters of the North Pacific Basin, from southern California, north to the Bering Sea, and south to the Sea of Japan. This appears to be primarily a cold temperate and subarctic species. It is most commonly stranded in Alaska, especially along the Aleutian Islands.

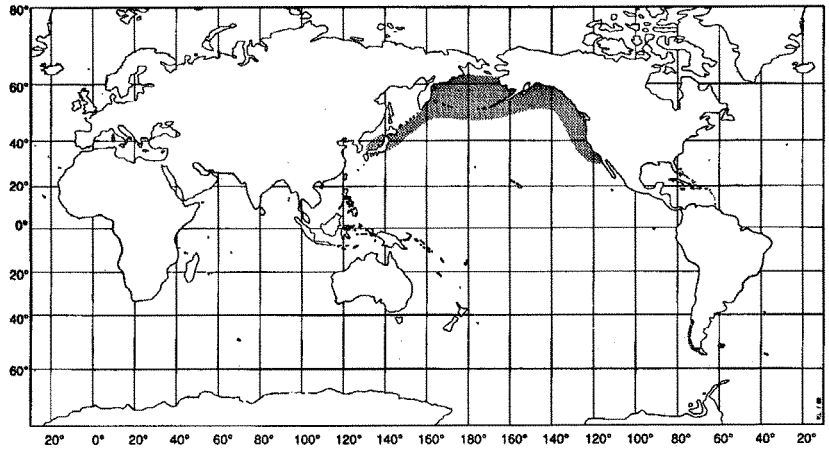

Fig. 267

Biology and Behaviour: Groups of 5 to 15 individuals have been observed, often containing animals of mixed sizes. Stejneger's beaked whales are known to feed on squid.

Exploitation: Several Stejneger's beaked whales are known to have been taken in salmon driftnets off Japan, and there have probably been occasional direct catches of this species off Japan and possibly elsewhere.

IUCN Status: Insufficiently known.

***Mesoplodon* sp.** (unidentified)

FAO Names: En - ***Mesoplodon*** species "A."

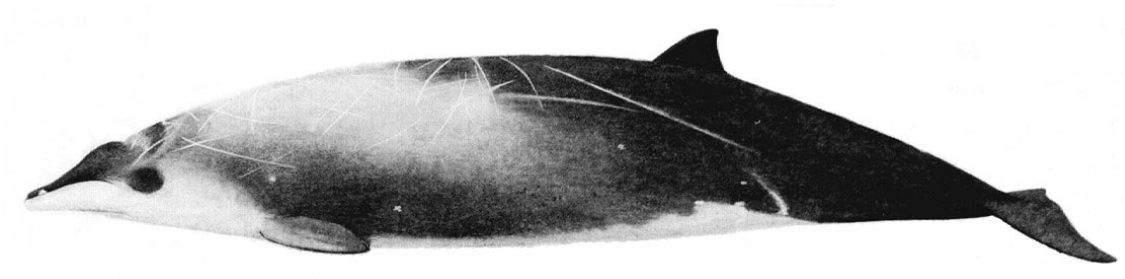

Fig. 268 *Mesoplodon* sp. (unidentified)

Distinctive Characteristics: An unidentified whale of the genus, referred to as ***Mesoplodon*** species 'A," has been described from the eastern tropical Pacific, based on many sightings at sea. Two morphs exist, a scarred black and white form that is easily identified in the field (presumably adult males), and a smaller uniformly brown one (probably females and subadults). These animals have moderately long beaks, and low triangular dorsal fins with slightly falcate or straight trailing edges. They do not match with descriptions of any known whale, and may represent an undescribed species.

Can be confused with: Adult males may be distinguishable by the presence of a broad swathe that runs from the head and down the sides, on the otherwise black body. Females and immatures are not readily distinguishable from other species of ***Mesoplodon*** (starting on p. 90).

Size: Maximum length estimates for these animals are about 5.5 m.

Geographical Distribution: ***Mesoplodon*** species "A" is the most frequently sighted ***Mesoplodon*** whale in the offshore eastern tropical Pacific, and may be endemic to these waters.

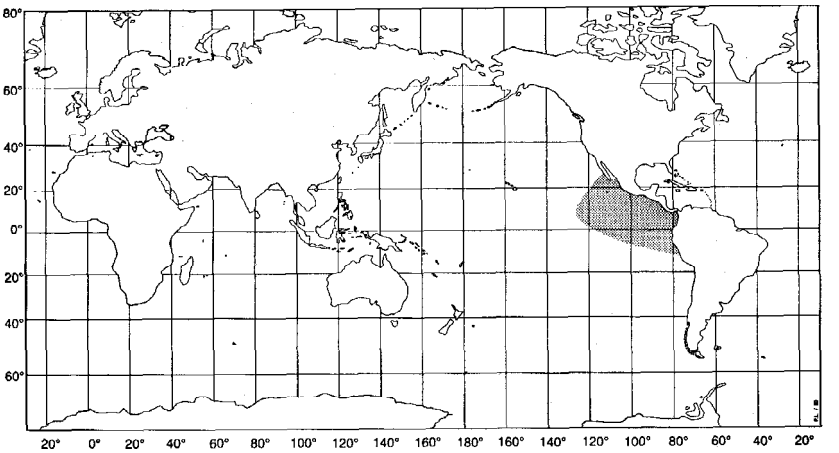

Fig. 269

Biology and Behaviour: Most groups have been of 2 animals, but have ranged up to 4. The behaviour of these animals appears to be similar to that of other species of mesplodonts, but during a sighting of a single male in the eastern tropical Pacific, the animal breached 3 times.

Exploitation: This animal is known only from sightings at sea, and no human exploitation is known.

IUCN Status: Not listed.