



Figure 1. False killer whale SWDP #89-21 on Vargas Island. (R. W. Baird Photo)

STRANDED WHALE AND DOLPHIN PROGRAM OF B.C. - 1989 REPORT

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This is the third annual report produced on cetacean strandings and incidental catches recorded through the Stranded Whale and Dolphin Program of British Columbia. This Program has attempted to maximize the recording and dissemination of information on cetacean strandings in B.C. It has also encouraged other marine mammal researchers in B.C. to express an interest in cetacean strandings and to investigate them in more detail than was done in previous years. The Program has been able to provide material or data to researchers elsewhere in Canada and in the United States for incorporation into their respective studies. Readers are referred to these studies for further information on the variety of uses of data collected from stranded animals (Baird et al. 1990; Calambokidis et al. 1990; Jefferson 1989; Margolis and Arai 1989; Law 1989; Lint et al. 1988). Skeletons collected through the Program (or collected with the assistance of it) were distributed for both research and educational purposes to a variety of organizations, including the Sidney Historical and Marine Mammal Museum, Royal British Columbia Museum, Lester B. Pearson College of the Pacific, University of Victoria Zooarchaeology collection, Simon Fraser University Zooarchaeology collection, and Edward Milne Community School (Sooke). Skeletons collected by individuals providing information to the program (listed in Acknowledgements) are now in the collections of some of the above named institutions, as well as those of the National Museum of Natural Sciences (Ottawa), Pacific Rim National Park, and Stubbs Island Charters (Telegraph Cove). We encourage any

small museum or other organization with an educational need for such specimens to contact the authors, as the number of available specimens increases each year.

All attempts have been made to eliminate duplicate records. Details on some records, particularly where the animal was not recovered, are often received from several sources, so this can be quite difficult. As well, if the carcass is not recovered, then it is possible that it may wash away and be recorded in a different location. As such, marking of specimens not recovered is recommended for future identification and avoidance of duplicate records. We have information on several additional events not listed in Table 1 which are possibly different from any events listed. However, we were not able to confirm details and positively rule out a duplicate record.

A total of 33 cetaceans were recorded in 1989 and an additional 2 records are included from 1988, bringing the 1989 total to 29. Nine species are represented in 1989: harbour porpoise (*Phocoena phocoena*) (7), killer whale (*Orcinus orca*) (4), Cuvier's beaked whale (*Ziphius cavirostris*) (2), Dall's porpoise (*Phocoenoides dalli*) (2), gray whale (*Eschrichtius robustus*) (9), Risso's dolphin (*Grampus griseus*) (1), humpback whale (*Megaptera novaengliae*) (2), false killer whale (*Pseudorca crassidens*) (1), and a minke whale (*Balaenoptera acutorostrata*) (1). All these species have been recorded in the previous two years by the Program (Baird et al 1988, Stacey et al, 1989). In addition, there were two small odontocetes and a small cetacean that were not examined and could not be identified.

As some stranded animals died as a result of entanglement with commercial fishing gear, this program has attempted to record all net entanglements of cetaceans. For some of these incidents the outcome was unknown, with the animal swimming away with fishing gear wrapped around it, such as in the two humpback entanglements recorded in Table 1. Also recorded are dead floating cetaceans. As the underlying purpose of the program is to keep track of and attempt to elucidate the causes of mortality of cetaceans in British Columbia, these types of events (dead floating, washed up dead, collision with fishing gear, live strandings) are all recorded.

In 1989, two cetaceans revealed unusually high levels of mercury in liver tissues. Killer whale SWDP #89-02 and false killer whale SWDP #89-21 had levels of 1272 and 1614 ppm wet weight respectively. Further tests are being performed to assess the significance of these levels.

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Table 1. Strandings and incidental catches from 1989, and previously unreported records from 1988. (V.I.=Vancouver Island)						
NUMBER (1)	DATE	SPECIES	LOCATION	COMMENTS*	LATITUDE	LONGITUDE
SWDP 88-27(2)	04Aug88	gray whale	Cape Scott, V.I.	A,D,U	50o 47'N	128o 21'W
SWDP 88-28(3)	00Jun88	minke whale	Swordfish B., Hunter I.	C,4,U	51o 53'N	128o 14'W
SWDP 88-29	26Jun88	sperm whale	Goose I.	C,D,2,U	51o 58'N	128o 26'W
SWDP 89-01	29Jan89	harbour porpoise	Boundary Bay	C,1,4,5,8-10,13-15,F	49o 2'N	123o 3'W
SWDP 89-02 (4)	24Apr89	killer whale	Radar Beach, V.I.	C,1,2,4,5,8-15,17,M	49o 5'N	125o 50'W
SWDP 89-03	25Feb89	harbour porpoise	Tlell R., Graham I.	C,4,U	53o 37'N	131o 60'W
SWDP 89-04	24Mar89	harbour porpoise	Tlell R., Graham I.	C,4,U	53o 37'N	131o 60'W
SWDP 89-05	19May89	Cuvier's beaked whale	Beresford B., Graham I.	B,2,U	54o 5'N	133o 5'W
SWDP 89-06	11May89	killer whale	200 mi off Cape Scott	C,D,U	50o 49'N	134o 19.2'W
SWDP 89-07	30May89	Dall's porpoise	Sooke, V.I.	C,1,2,4,5,9,10,13-15,19,U	48o 22.5'N	123o 51.0'W
SWDP 89-08	15May89	Dall's porpoise	Victoria, V.I.	C,1,2,4,5,9,10,13-15,19,M	48o 25.5'N	123o 26'W
SWDP 89-09	12May89	harbour porpoise	Qualicum Beach, V.I.	A,1,2,4,5,8-15,F	49o 22'N	124o 26'W
SWDP 89-10	07Jun89	gray whale	Sooke, V.I.	C,1,2,4,9,10,13,M	48o 19'N	123o 40'W
SWDP 89-11	06Jun89	gray whale	Echachis I.	C,D,1,U	49o 7'N	125o 56'W
SWDP 89-12	13Jun89	killer whale	Namu	C,1,2,4,5,10,13,M	51o 52'N	127o 52'W
SWDP 89-13	10Jun89	Risso's dolphin	Long Beach, V.I.	C,4,5,10,13,U	49o 4'N	125o 46'W
SWDP 89-14	24Jul89	killer whale	Tlell, Graham I.	C,1,2,4,5,9,10,13,15,17,M	53o 37'N	131o 60'W
SWDP 89-15	01Jun89	gray whale	Cumshewa Hd., Moreaby I.	C,1,D,U	53o 1'N	131o 33'W
SWDP 89-16	18Aug89	humpback whale	Greenway Sound	E(prawntrap gear),U	50o 48'N	126o 30'W
SWDP 89-17	14Sep89	small odontocete	Beechy Head, V.I.	C,D,U	48o 19'N	123o 39'W
SWDP 89-18	14Jul89	harbour porpoise	Long Beach, V.I.	C,1,2,4,8-15,17,M	49o 3'N	125o 44'W
SWDP 89-19	02Sep89	small odontocete	Long Beach, V.I.	C,D,U	49o 3'N	125o 44'W
SWDP 89-20	00Sep89	Cuvier's beaked whale	Estevan Point, V.I.	C,2,4,U	49o 23'N	126o 30'W
SWDP 89-21	30Sep89	false killer whale	Vargas I., V.I.	B,1-19,M	49o 10'N	126o 0'W
SWDP 89-22	01Oct89	minke whale	Nootka I.	C,1,2,10,13,M	49o 44.2'N	126o 57.9'W
SV/DP 89-23	00Jan89	gray whale	Cape Fife, Graham I.	C,D,U	54o 5'N	131o 40'W
SWDP 89-24	00Jan89	gray whale	Cape Fife, Graham I.	C,D,U	54o 5'N	131o 40'W
SV/DP 89-25	24Oct89	harbour porpoise	Tlell R., Graham I.	C,D,U	53o 37'N	131o 60'W
SWDP 89-26	23Aug89	gray whale	Ucluelet, V.I.	C,D,U	48o 57'N	125o 35'W
SWDP 89-27	05Jul89	gray whale	Pachena Pt., V.I.	C,1,2,10,M	48o 53'N	125o 5'W
SWDP 89-28	00Oct89	small cetacean	Nanaimo, V.I.	C,D,U	49o 10'N	123o 55'W
SWDP 89-29	29Oct89	gray whale	Sooke, V.I.	C,1,2,4,10,13,19,F	48o 19.7'N	123o 40.6'W
SWDP 89-30	25Oct89	humpback whale	Campbell River, V.I.	E(gillnet),U	50o 2'N	125o 15'W
SWDP 89-31	20Sep89	harbour porpoise	Long Beach, V.I.	C,D,U	49o 3'N	125 44'W
SWDP 89-32	00Jan89	gray whale	Estevan Pt., V.I.	C,D,U	49o 23'N	126o 30'W

(1) Consecutive record numbers are given as each event is reported, therefore records are not in chronological order.

(2) This record replaces SWDP #88-27 reported in Stacey et al. (1989) which was previously reported as an unidentified cetacean, but which was examined closely at a later date and determined to be a sea lion.

(3) Reported in Stacey et al. (1989) as unidentified and not collected. Subsequently collected by L. Prestash and R. Burns.

(4) A killer whale was reported to be floating off Cape Beale on April 10, 1989 and is treated as the same individual.

*Comments: A, incidental catch, died; B, live stranded, died; C, found dead; D, not recovered; E, incidental catch, released alive; F, live stranded, returned to water alive; Sex: M, male; F, female; U, unknown. 1. measurements taken; 2. photographs taken; 3. radiographs; 4. skeleton, whole/partially collected; 5. aging of teeth; 6. blood tests/cultures; 7. histology samples; 8. gross post mortem examination; 9. heavy metal toxicology analysis; 10. organochlorine tissue level analysis; 11. dioxin tissue level analysis; 12. duplicate tissue samples stored in Ottawa; 13. duplicate tissue samples stored in Nanaimo; 14. parasitology examination; 15. stomach content analysis; 16. reproduction studies; 17. DNA fingerprinting; 18. Plaster cast replica of whole/part animal; 19. educational use (anatomy labs, class displays etc.).

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