

Sightings of whitenose dolphins, *Lagenorhynchus albirostris* (Gray) in Danish waters

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The whitenose dolphin is seldom seen in Danish waters. Except for some scarce information from catchings and a few open sea observations (JONSGÅRD 1962; JONSGÅRD and CHRISTENSEN 1968), very little is known about its biology. Besides this, most papers on this species deal with strandings, and readers should be referred to the excellent review of SCHULTZ (1970). According to this author there have been only 29 strandings between 1862 and 1966 in Denmark.

In June 1971, whitenose dolphins were spotted in the Little Belt, separating the island of Funen from Jutland. The dolphins were dwelling in the area between two pillar-supported bridges that cross the Belt (fig 1). The school was estimated to contain 4 animals at the most. They split up in sub-groups of 2–3 animals, which were observed in the area intermittently for about two weeks.

Once, when approached by a slowly drifting boat, one of the greater animals departed from the others and slowly passed by the boat at a distance of about 5 meters and a depth of 3–4 meters. He was giving the impression that he was visually inspecting the boat.

There was a marked difference in the size of one of the animals and the others. This was seen not only on the size of the dorsal fin, but also on the portion of the back, that became visible during blowing. Because of the large dorsal fin of this

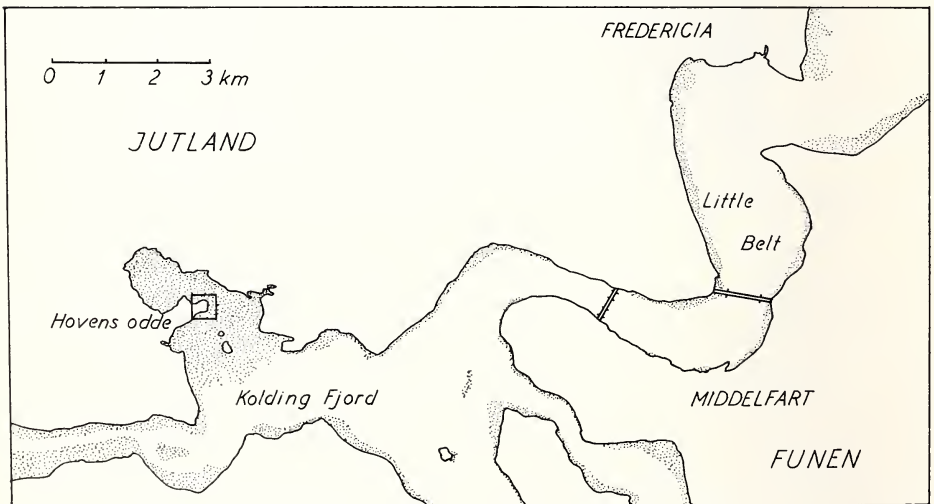


Fig. 1. Map over the area where the animals were observed. The location of the stranded animal is indicated with an open square. The dotted areas mark roughly the waters within the 3 meter depth line.

species and the comparably slow rolling during surfacing, the school was easy to spot and to follow. Accurate identification of the species could be made from photos and from a double-8 movie film, where the white snout of one of the animals could be seen.

In december 1972 a lone dolphin was spotted in the waters around the entrance of Kolding Fjord (fig 1). At that time the species could not be determined, but a few days later a whitnose dolphin was found in shallow water at Hovens Odde in Kolding Fjord (fig. 1). The animal was not actually stranded, but was laying more or less motionless about 100 meter off shore. The water depth was around 1 meter, and at the occasion the water was covered with very thin ice. The animal did not make any attempt to escape when approached by humans, although nothing could be found preventing it from swimming away. It also accepted to be seized in the dorsal fin and petted on the back. It showed to be a female with a length of 243 cm. The apparently bad general condition of the animal led to the conclusion that it was best to euthanate it.

References

- JONSGÅRD, Å. (1962): On the Species of Dolphins Found on the Coast of Northern Norway and in Adjacent Waters. *Norsk Hvalfangst-Tidende* 1, 1—13.
 JONSGÅRD, Å.; CHRISTENSEN, J. (1968): A Preliminary Report on the Harøybuen Cruise in 1968. *Norsk Hvalfangst-Tidende* 6, 174—175.
 SCHULTZ, W. (1970): Über das Vorkommen von Walen in der Nord- und Ostsee (Ordn. Cetacea). *Zool. Anz.* 185, 172—264.

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BEKANNTMACHUNG

Protokoll über die Mitgliederversammlung der Deutschen Gesellschaft für Säugetierkunde e. V. am 24. September 1974 im Marmorsaal der Zoologischen Gesellschaft von Antwerpen, Koningin Astridplein 26

Der 1. Vorsitzende, Herr FRICK, eröffnete die Versammlung um 17.00 Uhr.

1. Die Tagesordnung wird angenommen.

2. Herr KUHN verliest den Bericht über das abgelaufene Geschäftsjahr 1973:

Im Berichtsjahr erschien der 38. Band der Zeitschrift für Säugetierkunde mit 384 Seiten in 6 Heften.

Die verstärkte Mitgliederwerbung der letzten Jahre machte sich in einem Anwachsen der Mitgliederzahl, aber auch in einer verstärkten, die Geschäftsstelle belastenden Mitgliederbewegung bemerkbar. 42 Neuaufnahmen standen 9 Austritte gegenüber, so daß sich ein Stand von 637 ergibt. Durch den Tod verlor die Gesellschaft ihr langjähriges Mitglied Dr. GÜNTHER MELCHIOR aus Straubing.

Studentische Mitglieder werden dringend gebeten, neben ihrer Semester- auch ihre Heimatanschrift anzugeben.