

# FRANCE. PROGRESS REPORT ON CETACEAN RESEARCH, APRIL 2000 TO APRIL 2001, WITH STATISTICAL DATA FOR THE CALENDAR YEAR 2001.

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This report summarises information obtained from: Centre de Recherche sur les Mammifères Marins (CRMM), La Rochelle.  
Groupe de Recherche sur les Cétacés (GREC), Antibes. Opération Cétacés Nouvelle Calédonie (OCNC), Noumea.

## 1. Species and stocks studied

| Common name    | Scientific name               | Area/stock(s)             | Items referred to       |
|----------------|-------------------------------|---------------------------|-------------------------|
| Cetaceans      | <i>Cetacea</i>                | French continental coast  | 4.3, 5, 7.1, 8          |
| Cetaceans      | <i>Cetacea</i>                | French continental waters | 2.1.2, 3.1.1,           |
| Cetaceans      | <i>Cetacea</i>                | North-East Atlantic       | 2.1.2,                  |
| Sperm whale    | <i>Physeter macrocephalus</i> | Mediterranean Sea         | 2.1.1, 3.1.1, 9         |
| Humpback whale | <i>Megaptera novaeangliae</i> | French Polynesia          | 2.1.1, 3.1.1            |
| Humpback whale | <i>Megaptera novaeangliae</i> | New Caledonia             | 2.1.1, 2.2, 3.2, 4.1, 9 |
| Cetaceans      | <i>Cetacea</i>                | New Caledonia             | 2.1.2, 2.2              |

## 2. Sightings data

### 2.1 Field work

#### 2.1.1 SYSTEMATIC

- Sperm whale, Mediterranean Sea (GREC) : dedicated distribution survey from small boat (June-July 2000).
- Humpback whale, French Polynesia (GREC) : dedicated distribution survey from small boat (September-October 2000).
- Humpback whales, New Caledonia (OCNC). Survey held from 8 July to 10 September, 2000 : 50 observation days in the southern lagoon and 10 observation days in the northern lagoon of New Caledonia.

#### 2.1.2 OPPORTUNISTIC, PLATFORMS OF OPPORTUNITY

- Cetaceans, French waters (CRMM). In 1999 the CRMM recorded 250 sightings of cetaceans: 200 in the Atlantic (mostly in the Bay of Biscay) and the English Channel, 50 in the Western Mediterranean Sea.
- Cetaceans, New Caledonia (OCNC). Sighting data are collected from incidental sighting forms returned by the general public (total holdings : 466 forms, analysis in progress).

### 2.2 Analyses/development of techniques

- Cetaceans, New Caledonia (OCNC)

Inventory of marine mammal species using opportunistic sightings collected over a 9 year period lead to a total of 13 species (Garrigue and Greaves 2001).

Estimation of the humpback whale population ranged between 243 and 386 individuals using weighted mean of Petersen estimates (Garrigue et al. 2000a). The crude birth rate is included in between 3.4 and 10 % (Garrigue et al. 2000a).

## 3. Marking data

### 3.1 Field work

#### 3.1.1 NATURAL MARKING DATA

| Species            | Feature  | Area/stock   | Calendar year/season/<br>no. photographed | Catalogued<br>(Y/N) | Catalogue total | Contact person/insititute |
|--------------------|----------|--------------|-------------------------------------------|---------------------|-----------------|---------------------------|
| Bottlenose d.      | Dors.Fin | Atlantic     | 2001/6                                    | Y                   | 6               | CRMM, La Rochelle         |
| Long-fin. pilot w. | Dors Fin | Atlantic     | 2000/25                                   | Y                   | 31              | CRMM, La Rochelle         |
| Humpback whale     | Fluke    | N. Caledonia | 2000/57 (27 new id.)                      | Y                   | 206             | OCNC                      |
| Sperm whale        | Fluke    | Mediterran.  | 2000/6                                    | Y                   |                 | GREC & NAMSWC             |

### 3.2 Analyses/ development of techniques

- Humpback whales, New Caledonia (OCNC)

Photographic comparison have been done on a regularly basis with eastern Australia (Garrigue et al. 2000b). More comparisons have been realized during two workshops of the South Pacific Whale Research Consortium. Theses involved catalogues of humpback whales in New Zealand, Tonga, East Australia, French Polynesia, Cook Islands, Antarctic Peninsula (INACH), part of Columbia and Ecuador. The number of resight are : East Australia : 9, New Zealand : 2, Tonga : 7, other countries or areas : 0.

## 4. Tissue/biological samples collected

### 4.1 Biopsy samples

| Species     | Area/stock   | Calendar year/ season no. collected | Archived (Y/N) | No. analysed | Total holdings | Contact person/institute        |
|-------------|--------------|-------------------------------------|----------------|--------------|----------------|---------------------------------|
| Humpback w. | N. Caledonia | 2000/65                             | Y              |              | 217            | OCNC & S. Baker, Univ Auckland. |

### 4.3 Samples from stranded animals

| Species            | Area/stock     | Calendar year/ season | Archived (Y/N) | Tissue type(s)* | Contact person/institute |
|--------------------|----------------|-----------------------|----------------|-----------------|--------------------------|
| Fin whale          | Atlantic & Med | 2000/3                | Y              | Various tissues | CRMM , La Rochelle       |
| Delphinids spp     | Atlantic       | 2000/2                | Y              | Various tissues | CRMM , La Rochelle       |
| Bottlenose d.      | Atlantic.      | 2000/7                | Y              | Various tissues | CRMM ; La Rochelle       |
| Striped d.         | Atlantic       | 2000/12               | Y              | Various tissues | CRMM , La Rochelle       |
| Common d.          | Atlantic       | 2000/126              | Y              | Various tissues | CRMM , La Rochelle       |
| Long fin. pilot. w | Atlantic       | 2000/2                | Y              | Various tissues | CRMM , La Rochelle       |
| Harbour p.         | Atlantic       | 2000/11               | Y              | Various tissues | CRMM , La Rochelle       |
| White beaked d.    | Atlantic       | 2000/1                | Y              | Various tissues | CRMM , La Rochelle       |

\*e.g. liver, skin, blubber etc.

## 5. Pollution studies

- Samples are collected from stranded specimens on the coasts of France by CRMM and pollutant analysis (heavy metals) are carried out by the LBME, University of La Rochelle. In 2000, 70 specimens were sampled for ecotoxicological study, including 3 Bottlenose dolphin, 7 Striped dolphins, 50 Common dolphins, 9 Harbour porpoises, 1 White beaked dolphin.

- Humpback whales, New Caledonia (OCNC). 54 blubber samples collected in 2000 (total holding: 197).

## 7. Statistics for small cetaceans

### 7.1 For the calendar year 2000

In 2000, CRMM recorded 3 incidental catches of harbour porpoises (Atlantic stock) in fishing nets and 245 stranded cetaceans with marks suggesting incidental by-catch in fishing gear.

| Species              | Area/stock  | Directed catch |            | Incidental mortality |            |        | Live-capture |
|----------------------|-------------|----------------|------------|----------------------|------------|--------|--------------|
|                      |             | Reported       | Est. total | Reported             | Est. total | Source | Reported     |
| Bottlenose dolphin   | Atlantic    |                |            | 6                    |            | CRMM   |              |
| Striped dolphin      | Atlantic    |                |            | 11                   |            | CRMM   |              |
| Striped dolphin      | Medit.      |                |            | 4                    |            | CRMM   |              |
| Common dolphin       | Atlantic    |                |            | 201                  |            | CRMM   |              |
| Common dolphin       | English Ch. |                |            | 7                    |            | CRMM   |              |
| Long finned pilot w  | Atlantic    |                |            | 1                    |            | CRMM   |              |
| Long finned pilot w. | English Ch. |                |            | 1                    |            | CRMM   |              |
| Harbour porpoise     | Atlantic    |                |            | 11                   |            | CRMM   |              |
| Harbour porpoise     | English Ch. |                |            | 3                    |            | CRMM   |              |

## 8. Strandings

In 2000, CRMM (La Rochelle), recorded 820 stranded cetaceans on the coasts of France.

## 9. Other studies and analyses

- Good acoustic recordings are used by GREC (Antibes), to study the stock identity of two whale species:
  - Humpback whale, French Polynesia: breeding songs (1997, 1998, 1999, 2000 data/analog and digital tapes/several individuals recorded);
  - Sperm whale, Mediterranean Sea: social vocalisations (1999, 2000 data/ analog and digital tapes/feeding and nursery schools recorded).
- Humpback whale, New Caledonia (OCNC). 7 acoustic recording of songs were collected during 1999 breeding season (total holding 57 recordings).
- Humpback whale, New Caledonia (OCNC): whale watching. Studies on commercial activity of whale watching have been carried on (Virly and Garrigue 2000, Garrigue and Virly 2000, Virly 2000)

## 10. Literature cited

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## 11. Publications

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