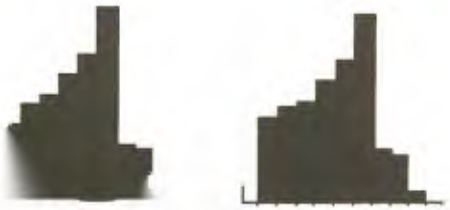
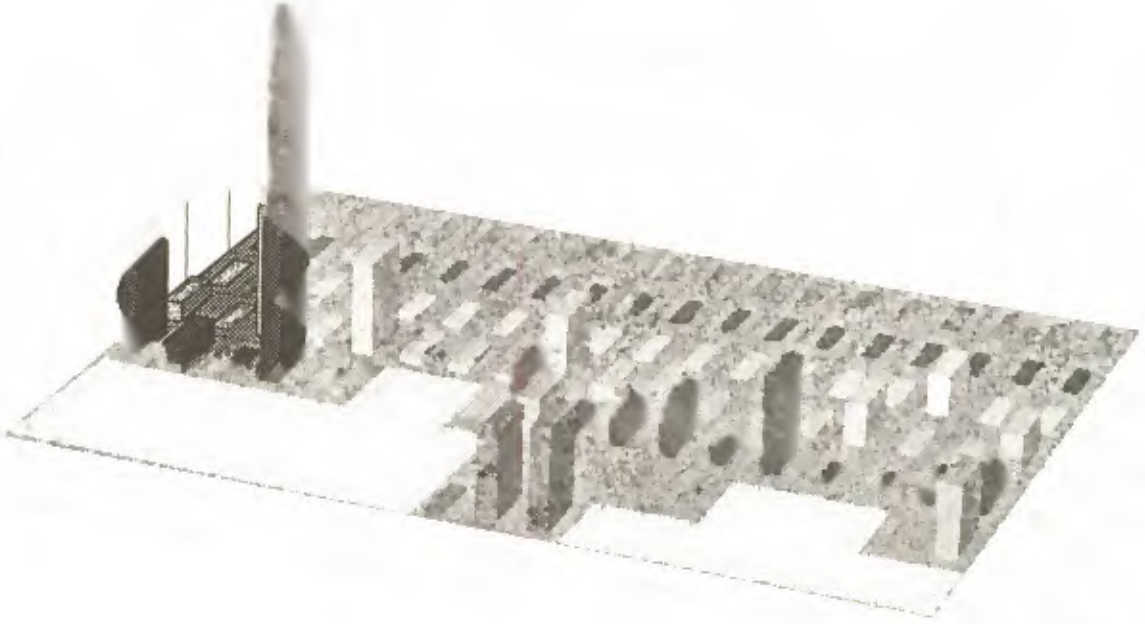
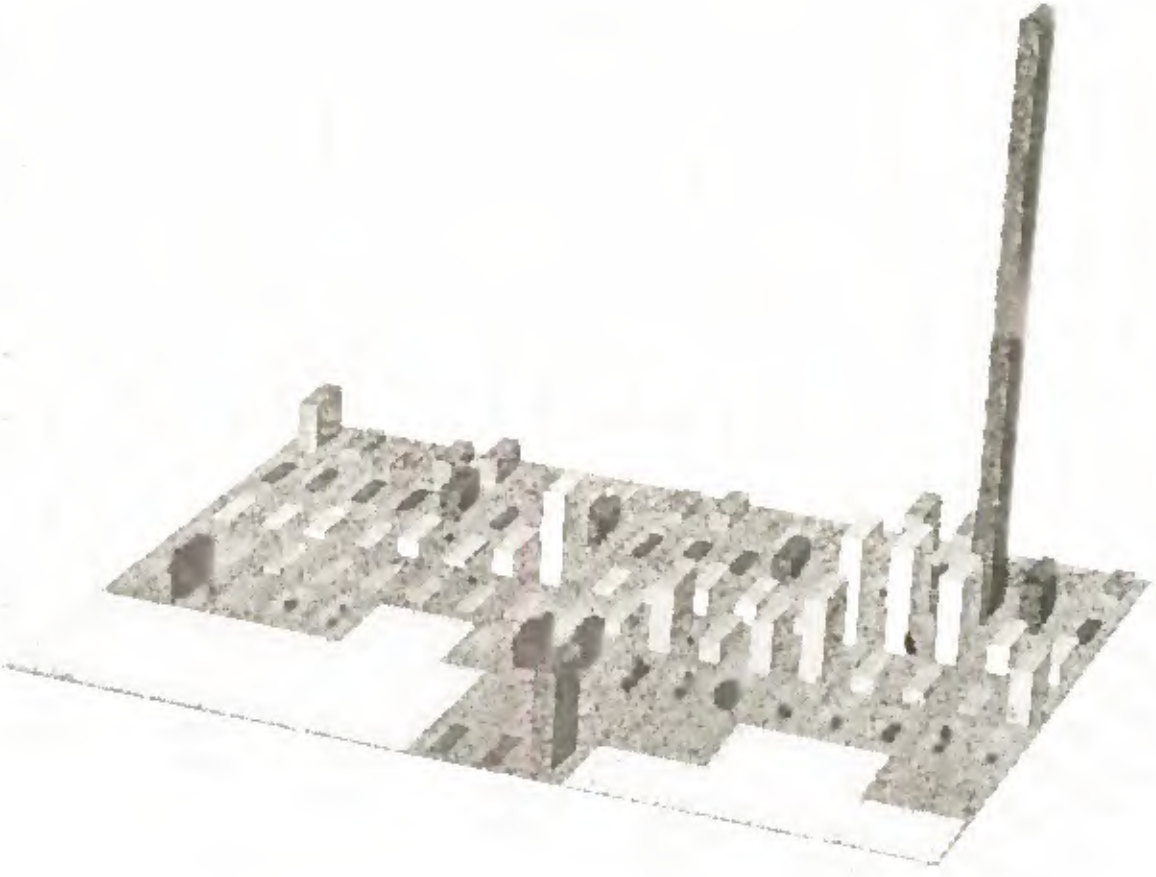
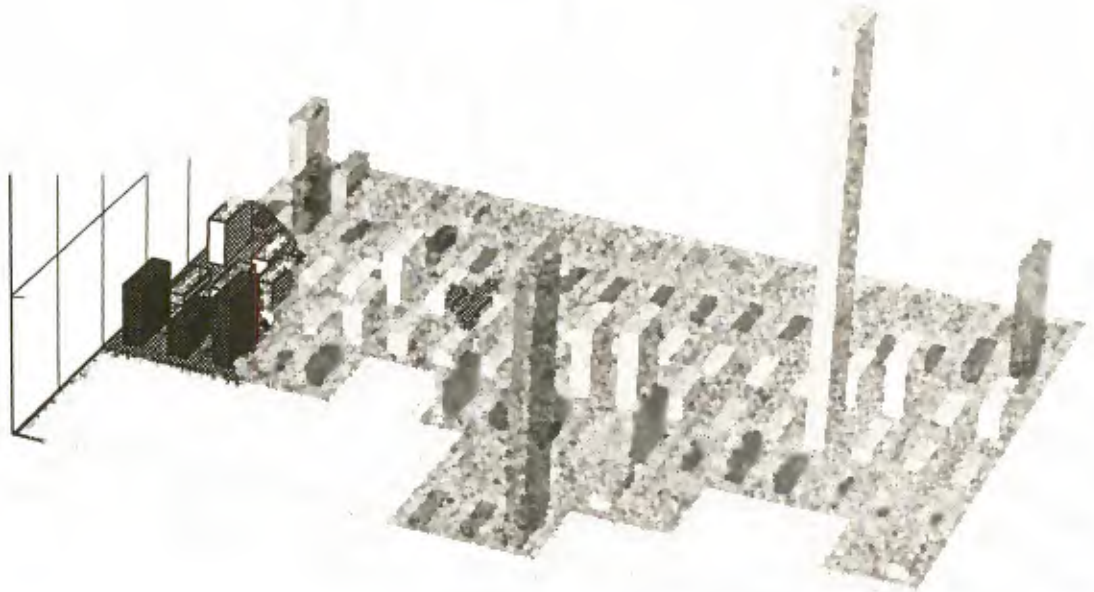


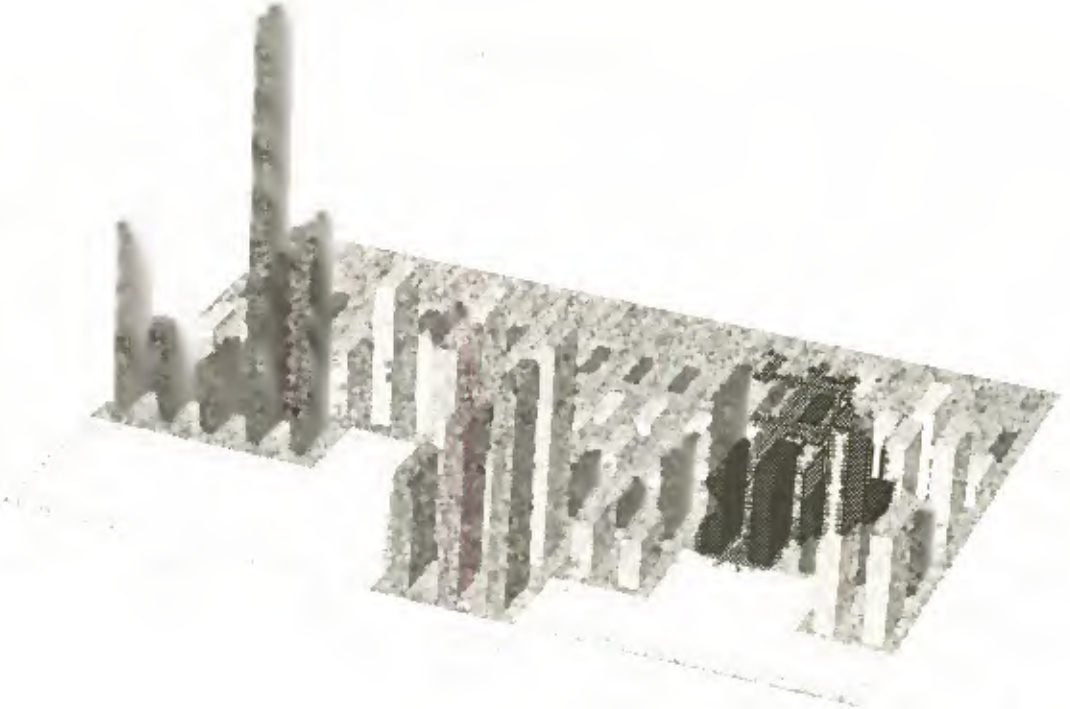
Baleen Whales

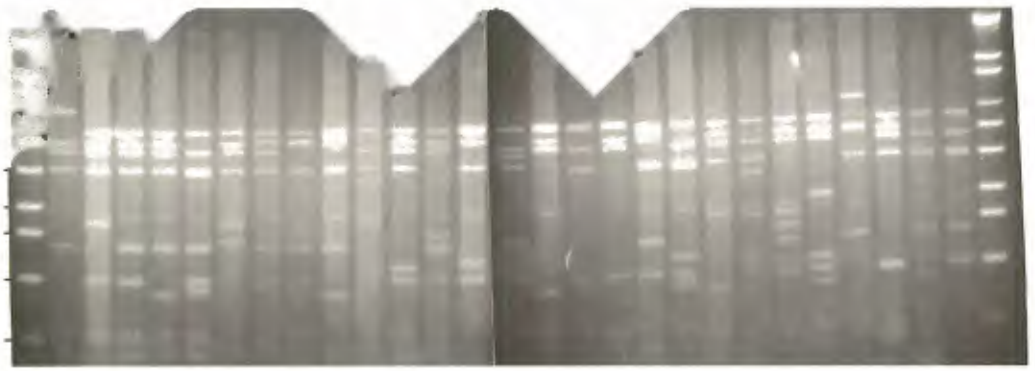
Southern Hemisphere

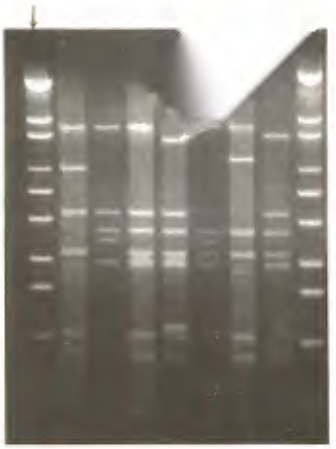












(a)

(b)

Fig. 2. Dwarf minke whales stranded in (a) Rio de Janeiro (8) (photo: 'Agência O Globo', courtesy FBCN) and (b) Paraná (14) (photo: M.C.M. Corrêa, courtesy R.C. Zanelatto).

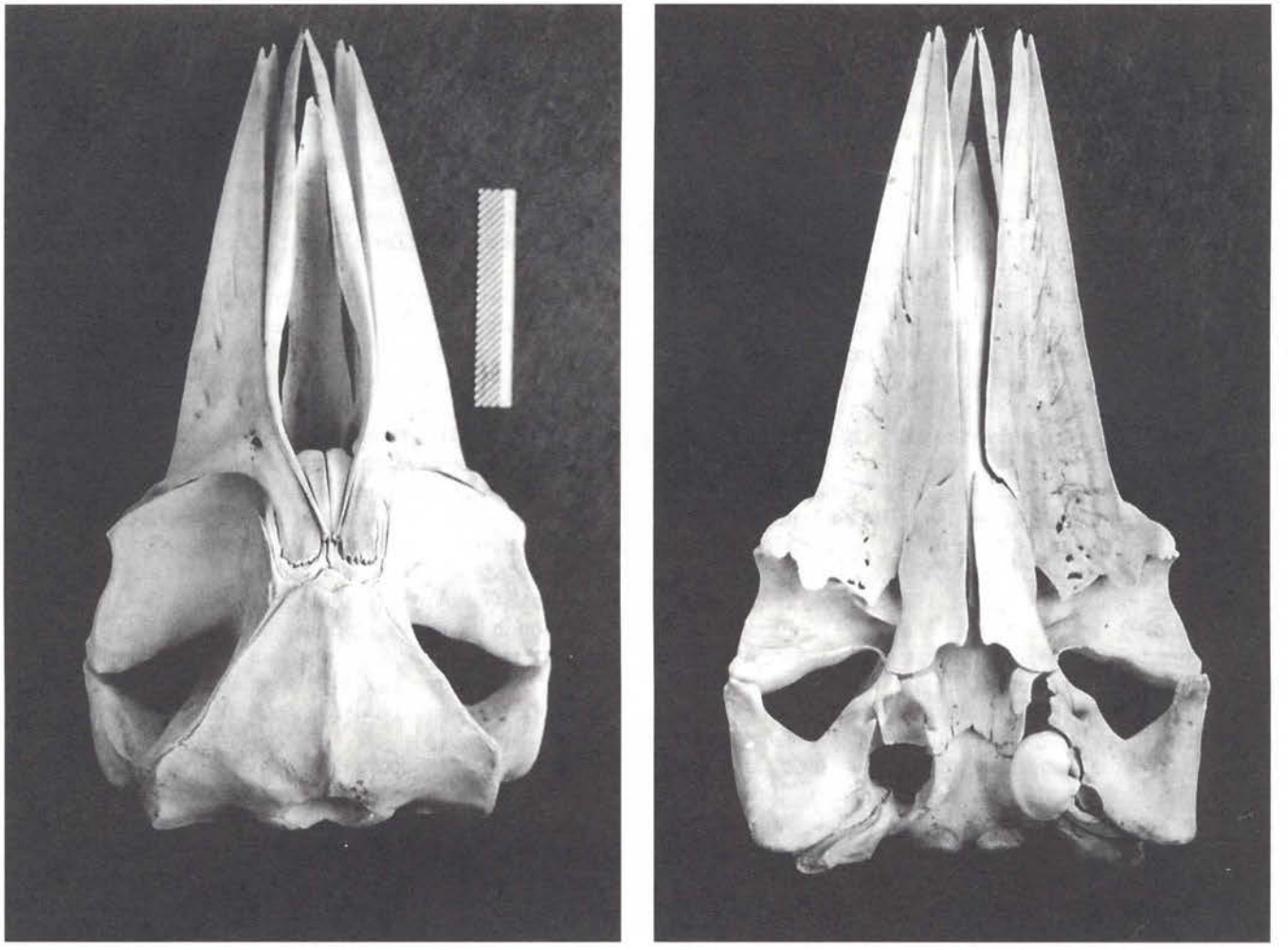


Fig. 3. Dorsal and ventral view of the skull MORG 0096 (scale = 15cm).

DISCUSSION

The presence of the dwarf minke whale along the Brazilian coast was first suggested by Best (1985) based on the three specimens killed during the whaling season off Paraíba (da Rocha and Braga, 1982), and one specimen stranded in RS. Baldas and Castello (1986) subsequently reported the occurrence of minke whales with a white patch on the flippers from RS, SC and RJ. New records confirm that the dwarf minke whale occurs along the Brazilian coast from RS to the possible ordinary minke whale's breeding ground (Horwood, 1990) off northeast Brazil.

In a review of records of the genus *Balaenoptera* from Brazil (Zerbini *et al.*, unpublished data), the dwarf minke whale represented about 75% ($n = 18$) of all minke whale strandings identified to form. Results from the Japanese cruises have shown that the dwarf form is much less abundant than the ordinary form in Antarctic waters (e.g. Kato *et al.*, 1990; Kasamatsu *et al.*, 1993). However, reliable information about the relative abundance of both forms of minke whales in low latitudes is not available (Best, 1985). Singarajah (1984) stated that no minke whale with a white patch on the flippers was found among the 1,745 whales killed between 1979 and 1981 during the Brazilian whaling season. However, he also noted that 'on rare occasions (e.g. 1980 and 1981, about 0.2% of the annual catch) a second type, with a white stripe, was recorded'. Rocha and Braga (1982) reported that three animals with a white patch were found among 902 whales killed during the 1980 season. Best (1985) suggested that the incidence of the dwarf minke whale off Durban and off northeastern Brazil is low (3–4% and 0.2% of the total catch of minke whales respectively). Since this information was obtained from whaling operations, where the commercial interest may have resulted in selection for the ordinary (larger) form (Best, 1985), the percentage obtained may not reflect the real proportions of the two forms in both regions. Although the sample size was small ($n = 13$), Best (1985) observed that almost 80% of the dwarf form animals captured were within 30 n.miles of the coast, suggesting some degree of spatial segregation between the two forms. Given that dwarf minke whales are less abundant, the marked difference observed in the proportion of the strandings of the two forms in Brazil could indicate that, as in South Africa, dwarf minke whales have a more coastal distribution off Brazil and therefore a higher possibility of being found ashore.

The capture of three adult dwarf minke whales among ordinary Southern Hemisphere minke whales in August and November (da Rocha and Braga, 1982) and the statement that dwarf minke whales were regularly sighted during the whaling operations (IWC, 1985) suggest that some overlapping in the distribution of both forms may occur in this region.

It has been accepted that Southern Hemisphere minke whales migrate from low latitude waters southward to the Antarctic Ocean in spring and summer, returning in fall and

North Atlantic Whales

North Pacific Whales

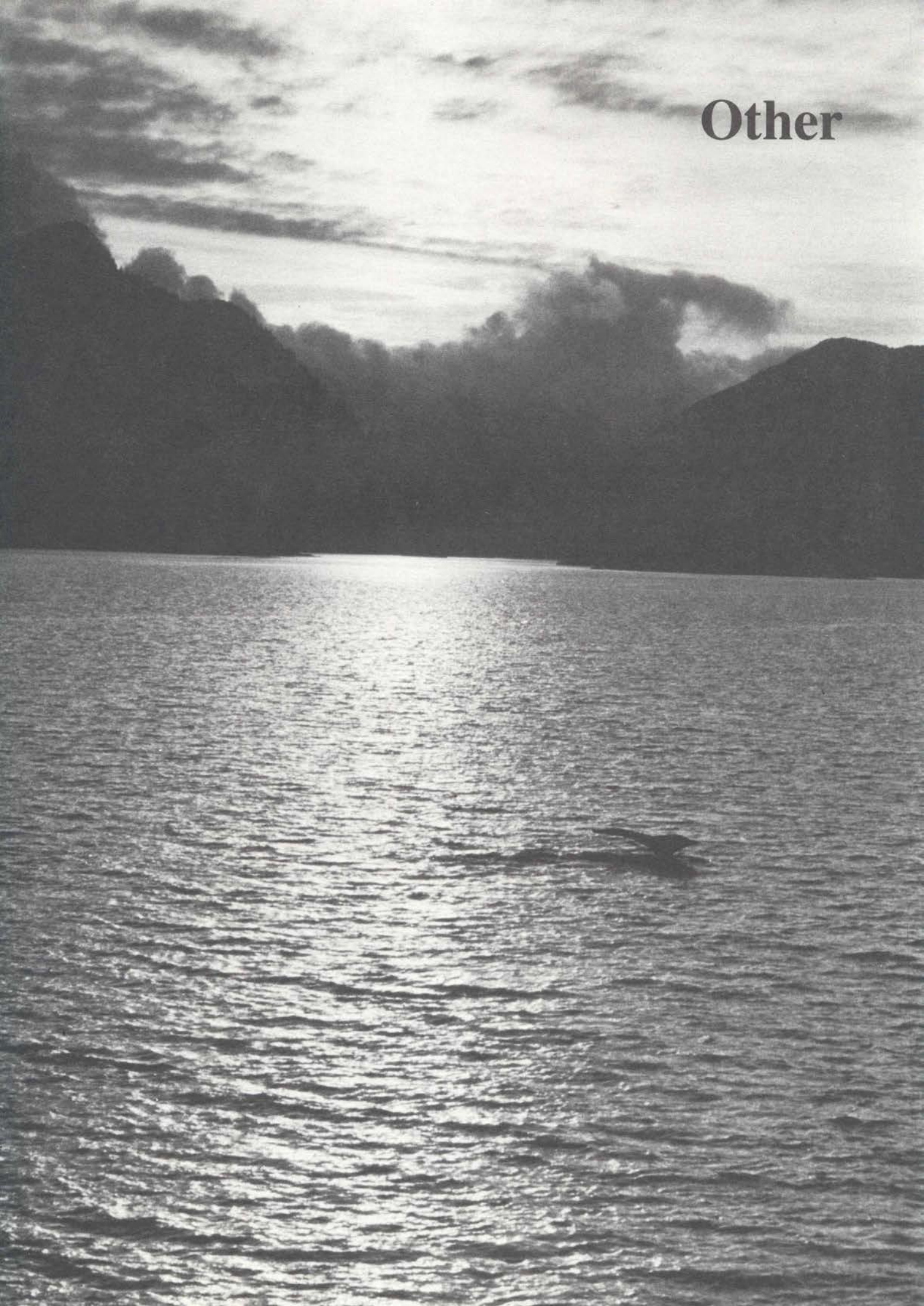
Fig. 2. The research vessel *TosaKaiyo-maru* (48 G/T) used in the present study.

Fig. 3. Bryde's whales off Kochi. The dorsal fins appears to be relatively larger than those from pelagic waters (upper). They were sometimes observed feeding on sardines and other small schooling fishes (lower). Photographs by H. Kato.

Aboriginal Subsistence Whaling

Small Cetaceans

Other



Résumé Section

This section includes Résumés of those papers presented to the Scientific Committee but not published in this volume. They are provided for information only and do not constitute publication; and as such should not be cited in papers without consultation with authors. Copies of the full papers are available at cost price from the IWC Secretariat.