

DWARF SPERM WHALE (*Kogia sima*): California/Oregon/Washington Stock

STOCK DEFINITION AND GEOGRAPHIC RANGE

Dwarf sperm whales are distributed throughout deep waters and along the continental slopes of the North Pacific and other ocean basins (Caldwell and Caldwell 1989; Ross 1984). This species was only recognized as being distinct from the pygmy sperm whale in 1966 (Handley, 1966), and early records for the two species are confounded. Along the U.S. west coast, no at-sea sightings of this species have been reported; however, this may be partially a reflection of their pelagic distribution, small body size and cryptic behavior. A few sightings of animals identified only as *Kogia* sp. have been reported (Figure 1), and some of these may have been dwarf sperm whales. At least five dwarf sperm whales stranded in California between 1967 and 2000 (Roest 1970; Jones 1981; J. Heyning, pers. comm.; NMFS, Southwest Region, unpublished data), and one stranding is reported for western Canada (Nagorsen and Stewart 1983). It is unclear whether records of dwarf sperm whales are so rare because they are not regular inhabitants of this region, or merely because of their cryptic habits and offshore distribution. Available data are insufficient to identify any seasonality in the distribution of dwarf sperm whales, or to delineate possible stock boundaries. For the Marine Mammal Protection Act (MMPA) stock assessment reports, dwarf sperm whales within the Pacific U.S. Exclusive Economic Zone are divided into two discrete, non-contiguous areas: 1) waters off California, Oregon and Washington (this report), and 2) Hawaiian waters.

POPULATION SIZE

No information is available to estimate the population size of dwarf sperm whales off the U.S. west coast, as no sightings of this species have been documented despite numerous vessel surveys of this region. Based on previous sighting surveys and historical stranding data, it is likely that recent ship survey sightings were of pygmy sperm whales; *K. breviceps*.

Minimum Population Estimate

No information is available to obtain a minimum population estimate for dwarf sperm whales.

Current Population Trend

Due to the rarity of records for this species along the U.S. West coast, no information exists regarding trends in abundance of this population.

CURRENT AND MAXIMUM NET PRODUCTIVITY RATES

No information on current or maximum net productivity rates is available for this species.

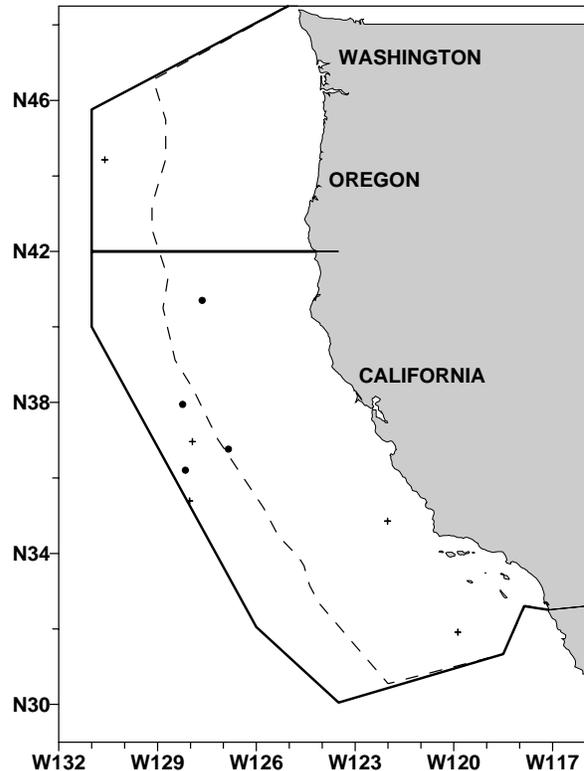


Figure 1. *Kogia* sightings based on aerial and shipboard surveys off California, Oregon and Washington, 1991- 2001 (see Appendix 2 for data sources and information on timing and location of survey effort). Key: ● = *Kogia breviceps*, + = *Kogia* spp. Dashed line represents the U.S. EEZ, thick line indicates the outer boundary of all surveys combined.

POTENTIAL BIOLOGICAL REMOVAL

Based on this stock's unknown status and growth rate, the recovery factor (F_r) is 0.5, and $\frac{1}{2}R_{max}$ is the default value of 0.02. However, due to the lack of abundance estimates for this species, no potential biological removal (PBR) can be calculated.

ANNUAL HUMAN-CAUSED MORTALITY AND SERIOUS INJURY

Fishery Information

In the California drift gillnet fishery, no mortality of dwarf sperm whales or unidentified *Kogia* was observed during the most recent five years of monitoring, 1997-2001 (Cameron and Forney 1999, 2000; Carretta 2001, 2002). After the 1997 implementation of a Take Reduction Plan, which included skipper education workshops and required the use of pingers and minimum 6-fathom extenders, overall cetacean entanglement rates in the drift gillnet fishery dropped considerably (Barlow and Cameron 2003). However, because of interannual variability in entanglement rates and the rarity of *Kogia* entanglements, additional years of data will be required to fully evaluate the effectiveness of pingers for reducing mortality of dwarf sperm whales. Mean annual takes in Table 1 are based on 1997-2001 data. This results in an average estimated annual mortality of zero dwarf sperm whales.

Similar drift gillnet fisheries for swordfish and sharks exist along the entire Pacific coast of Baja California, Mexico and may take animals from this population. Quantitative data are available only for the Mexican swordfish drift gillnet fishery, which has increased from two vessels in 1986 to 29 vessels in 1992 (Sosa-Nishizaki et al. 1993). The total number of sets in this fishery in 1992 can be estimated from data provided by these authors to be approximately 2700, with an observed rate of marine mammal bycatch of 0.13 animals per set (10 marine mammals in 77 observed sets; Sosa-Nishizaki et al. 1993). This overall mortality rate is similar to that observed in California driftnet fisheries during 1990-95 (0.14 marine mammals per set; Julian and Beeson, 1998), but species-specific information is not available for the Mexican fisheries. Previous efforts to convert the Mexican swordfish driftnet fishery to a longline fishery have resulted in a mixed-fishery, with 20 vessels alternately using longlines or driftnets, 23 using driftnets only, 22 using longlines only, and seven with unknown gear type (Berdegué 2002).

Table 1. Summary of available information on the incidental mortality and injury of dwarf sperm whales and unidentified *Kogia* sp. (California/Oregon/Washington Stock) in commercial fisheries that might take this species. Coefficients of variation for mortality estimates are provided in parentheses. Mean annual takes are based on 1997-2001 data unless noted otherwise.

Fishery Name	Data Type	Year(s)	Percent Observer Coverage	Observed Mortality <i>K. breviceps</i> / <i>Kogia</i> sp.	Estimated Annual Mortality of <i>K. breviceps</i> / <i>Kogia</i> sp.	Mean Annual Takes (CV in parentheses)
CA/OR thresher shark/swordfish drift gillnet fishery	observer data	1997	23.0%	0 / 0	0 / 0	0
		1998	20.0%	0 / 0	0 / 0	
		1999	20.0%	0 / 0	0 / 0	
		2000	22.9%	0 / 0	0 / 0	
		2001	20.4%	0 / 0	0 / 0	
Minimum total annual takes						0

STATUS OF STOCK

The status of dwarf sperm whales in California, Oregon and Washington waters relative to OSP is not known, and there are insufficient data to evaluate potential trends in abundance. No habitat issues are known to be of concern for this species, but in recent years questions have been raised regarding potential effects of human-made sounds on deep-diving cetacean species, such as dwarf sperm whales (Richardson et al. 1995). In particular, active sonar has been implicated in the mass stranding of beaked whales in the Mediterranean Sea (Frantzis 1998) and more recently in the Caribbean (U.S. Dept. of Commerce and Secretary of the Navy 2001). They are not listed as "threatened" or "endangered" under the Endangered Species Act nor as "depleted" under the MMPA. Given that this species rarely occurs off the U.S. west coast and current fishery mortality is zero, dwarf sperm whales off California, Oregon and Washington are not classified as a "strategic" stock under the MMPA.

REFERENCES

- Barlow, J. and T. Gerrodette. 1996. Abundance of cetaceans in California waters based on 1991 and 1993 ship surveys. NOAA Technical Memorandum NMFS, NOAA-TM-NMFS-SWFSC-233.
- Barlow, J. and S. Sexton. 1996. The effect of diving and searching behavior on the probability of detecting track-line groups, g_0 , of long-diving whales during line transect surveys. Administrative Report LJ-96-14. Available from NMFS, Southwest Fisheries Science Center, P.O. Box 271, La Jolla, California, 92038, USA. 21 p.
- Barlow, J. and G. A. Cameron. 2003. Field experiments show that acoustic pingers reduce marine mammal bycatch in the California drift gillnet fishery. *Marine Mammal Science* 19(2):265-283.
- Berdegue, J. 2002. Depredación de las especies pelágicas reservadas a la pesca deportiva y especies en peligro de extinción con uso indiscriminado de artes de pesca no selectivas (palangres, FAD's, trampas para peces y redes de agallar fijas y a la deriva) por la flota palangrera Mexicana. Fundación para la conservación de los picudos. A.C. Mazatlán, Sinaloa, 21 de septiembre.
- Cameron, G.A. and K.A. Forney. 2000. Preliminary estimates of cetacean mortality in California/Oregon Gillnet Fisheries for 1999. Report SC/52/O24 presented to the Scientific Committee of the International Whaling Commission, June 2000 (unpublished). 12p. [Available from Southwest Fisheries Science Center, National Marine Fisheries Service, 8604 La Jolla Shores Drive, La Jolla, CA 92037, USA.]
- Carretta, J.V. 2001. Preliminary estimates of cetacean mortality in California gillnet fisheries for 2000. Report SC/53/SM9 presented to the Scientific Committee of the International Whaling Commission, June 2001 (unpublished). 21p. [Available from Southwest Fisheries Science Center, National Marine Fisheries Service, 8604 La Jolla Shores Drive, La Jolla, CA 92037, USA.]
- Carretta, J.V. 2002. Preliminary estimates of cetacean mortality in California gillnet fisheries for 2001. Report SC/54/SM12 presented to the Scientific Committee of the International Whaling Commission, April 2002 (unpublished). 22p. [Available from Southwest Fisheries Science Center, National Marine Fisheries Service, 8604 La Jolla Shores Drive, La Jolla, CA 92037, USA.]
- Caldwell, D. K. and M. C. Caldwell. 1989. Pygmy sperm whale *Kogia breviceps* (de Blainville, 1838): Dwarf sperm whale *Kogia simus* Owen, 1866. pp. 235-260 *In*: Ridgway, S. H. and R. Harrison (eds.), *Handbook of Marine Mammals*, Vol. 4. Academic Press.
- Handley, C. O. Jr. 1966. A synopsis of the genus *Kogia* (pygmy sperm whales). pp. 62-69 *In*: K. S. Norris (ed.), *Whales, dolphins and porpoises*. University of California Press, Berkeley.
- Jones, R. E. 1981. Food habits of smaller marine mammals from northern California. *Proc. California Acad. Sci.* 42:409-433.
- Julian, F. and M. Beeson. 1998. Estimates of mammal, turtle and bird mortality for two California gillnet fisheries: 1990-1995. *Fish. Bull.* 96:271-284.
- Nagorsen, D. W. and G. E. Stewart. 1983. A dwarf sperm whale (*Kogia simus*) from the Pacific coast of Canada. *J. Mamm.* 64:505-506.
- Richardson, W. J., C. R. Greene, Jr., C. I. Malme, and D. H. Thompson. 1995. *Marine Mammals and Noise*. Academic Press, San Diego. 576 p.
- Roest, A. I. 1970. *Kogia simus* and other cetaceans from San Luis Obispo County, California. *J. Mammal.* 51:410-417.
- Ross, G. J. B. 1984. The smaller cetaceans of the south east coast of southern Africa. *Ann. Cape Prov. Mus. Nat. Hist.* 15:173-410.
- Sosa-Nishizaki, O., R. De la Rosa-Pacheco, R. Castro-Longoria, M. Grijalva Chon, and J. De la Rosa Velez. 1993. Estudio biológico pesquero del pez (*Xiphias gladius*) y otras especies de picudos (marlins y pez vela). Rep. Int. CICESE, CTECT9306.
- U.S. Department of Commerce and Secretary of the Navy. 2001. Joint Interim Report, Bahamas Marine Mammal Stranding Event of 15-16 March 2000. Available from NOAA, NMFS, Office of Protected Resources, Silver Spring, MD.