

Ziiphids recorded in Irish waters

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In view of recent mass stranding of Ziiphids in the Bahamas (March, 2000) and the recovery of three Ziphids between the 14th and 25th March on the west coast of Ireland I have provided a brief review of Ziphidae in Ireland for the ECS Workshop on Beaked whales. Data on strandings were obtained from O'Riordan (1972) and Berrow and Rogan (1997), trends in sightings from Evans (1991) and recent strandings from the Irish Naturalists' Journal and the IWDG database.

There are confirmed records of five species of Ziphid, the northern bottlenosed whale *Hyperoodon ampullatus* and four members of the genus *Ziphius*.

Northern Bottlenosed Whale *Hyperoodon ampullatus* (Forster)

There have been 26 stranded bottlenosed whales reported occurring all around the Irish coast. Ten of these (38%) occurred between Counties Louth and Dublin on the east coast and it is the only Ziphid regularly reported from the Irish Sea. Stendall (1926) reported a Bottlenose Whale in Belfast Lough with a smashed jaw possibly due to a ship's propeller and two strandings (one in 1998 and one in 1999) were live strandings. In addition the carcass found on Wexford in 1985 was reported as fresh. The live stranding on Bere Island in 1998 was one of a group of three, the other two were refloated.

In addition to stranded animals there are four records of bottlenosed whales captured off the Irish coast (O'Riordan, 1972). Bottlenosed whales were regularly caught off the Scottish coast by commercial whaling vessels in the early 20th century but none were reported caught off Ireland (Evans, 1991).

Sightings of bottlenosed whales are common in deep water to the west while thought to be migrating north in spring and south in autumn. Sightings in coastal waters are concentrated off the southwest and northwest coasts (Evans, 1991).

| Date | Location (Grid Ref.) | Sex | Length Reference (m) |
|---------|----------------------|-----|----------------------|
| 9:1824 | Killiney, Dublin | ? ? | CEO'R |
| 1829-30 | Howth, Dublin | ? ? | CEO'R |
| 8:1836 | Dunnany Pt., Louth | ? ? | CEO'R |
| 1885-86 | Fethard, Wexford | ? ? | CEO'R |

| | | | | | |
|-------------|----------------------------------|---|------|------|-------------------------------|
| 12:9:1897 | Dunany Pt., Louth | | ? | ? | CEO'R |
| Summer,1910 | Ventry, Kerry | | ? | 4.9 | CEO'R |
| Summer,1910 | Ventry, Kerry | | ? | 5.6 | CEO'R |
| 20:9:1917 | Schull, Cork | | ? | 7.62 | CEO'R |
| 4:9:1918 | Ballvaughan, Clare | | ? | 5.59 | CEO'R |
| 12:9:1923 | Dundalk, Louth | ? | 5.18 | | CEO'R |
| 10:10:1926 | Belfast Lough, Derry | | ? | 6.4 | CEO'R |
| 27:8:1931 | Aran Isl., Galway | | ? | 7.01 | CEO'R |
| 27:8:1931 | Aran Isl., Galway | | ? | 6.25 | CEO'R |
| 3:9:1932 | Ballyvaughan, Clare | | M | 6.10 | CEO'R |
| ?27:1:1934 | Ballycronane, Cork | | F | ? | CEO'R |
| 7:10:1938 | Dungarvan, Waterford | F | 3.78 | | CEO'R |
| 27:1:1947 | Carnlough, Antrim | | ? | 5.23 | CEO'R |
| 31:8:1947 | Whiddy Isl., Cork | | ? | 7.31 | CEO'R |
| 27:9:1954 | Ireland's Eye, Dublin | ? | 7.92 | | CEO'R |
| 27:9:1954 | Ireland's Eye, Dublin | ? | 7.59 | | CEO'R |
| 27:9:1954 | Ireland's Eye, Dublin | ? | 4.24 | | CEO'R |
| 26:9:1959 | River Foyle, Derry | | ? | 7.21 | CEO'R |
| 30:1:1976 | Camp, Dublin (O1866) | M | 5.92 | | Holmes & O'Connor (1977) |
| 31:8:1985 | Grogan's Burrow, Wexford (T0605) | F | 6.12 | | CN (1985) |
| 17:8:1998 | Bere Island, Cork (| | M | 6.5 | (live stranding, 2 refloated) |
| 31:8:1999 | Killala, Mayo (| F | 6.15 | | (live stranding) |

Cuvier's Beaked Whale *Ziphius cavirostris* Cuvier

There have been 26 reported strandings of Cuvier's beaked whale throughout the last century of which at least 20 (77%) were on the western seaboard. Cabot (1965) found no seasonal patterns in strandings, but Berrow and Rogan (1997) showed that most strandings occurred at the beginning of the year with a peak during February to March. Two of these strandings (Wexford, 1985 and Sligo, 2000) were reported as fresh, the rest partially decomposed and usually without skin attached.

Cuviers has been sighted in deep water off the shelf edge and occasionally sighted inshore. Recent post-mortem analyses recovered a range of squid species from the stomach.

| Date | Location (Grid Ref.) | Sex | Length (m) | Reference |
|--------------|----------------------|-----|------------|-----------|
| winter 1904 | Aran Isl., Galway | ? | ? | CEO'R |
| summer, 1909 | Valentia, Kerry | ? | ? | CEO'R |

| | | | | | |
|--------------|-------------------------------|---|-----|------|---------------------------------|
| 13:2:1913 | Union Hall, Cork | | M | 7.92 | CEOR |
| 18:7:1915 | Fethard, Wexford | | M | 5.54 | CEOR |
| ?3:7:1919 | Gweebarra, Donegal (G7399) ? | | 5.5 | | CEOR |
| Summer,1929 | Valentia, Kerry | ? | ? | | CEOR |
| ?10:2:1931 | Achill Isl., Mayo | | ? | 7.69 | CEOR |
| 7:2:1935 | Inishere, Galway | | M | ? | CEOR |
| 11?:1943 | Slyne Head, Galway | | M | 4.57 | CEOR |
| 20:3:1957 | Kilkee, Clare | | M | 9.8 | CEOR |
| 6?:1964 | Slyne Head, Galway | | ? | 9.1 | CEOR |
| 9:11:1964 | Achill Isl., Mayo | | F | 7.6 | CEOR |
| ?7-10:3:1966 | Lahinch, Clare | M | ? | | CEOR? |
| ?3:1967 | Milton Mowbray, Clare | | M | ? | CEOR? |
| 1969 | Mace Hd., Galway (L7332) | | F | ? | O'Riordan (1974) |
| 30:1:1978 | Rathlin Isl., Antrim | | F | 6.5 | Wilson & Pitcher (1979) |
| 5:1982 | Raghly, Sligo (G5841) ? ? | | | | CN (1983) |
| 8:4:1983 | Streedagh, Sligo (G6552) | | M | 6.01 | CN (1983) |
| ?5:1983 | Brandon, Kerry (Q51) ? | | ? | | CN (1984) (bone) |
| 5:12:1985 | Ring St., Cork (X0672) | | F | 5.77 | CN (1986), correction CN (1997) |
| 14:1:1989 | Ballyconneely, Galway (L5841) | | F | 4.95 | CN (1989) |
| 16:3:1989 | Lurgha Pt., Clare (Q9974) | | F | 6.5 | CN (1989) |
| 20:3:1997 | Omey Island, Co. Galway | | M | 4.66 | CN (1998) |
| 1997 | | | | | |
| 1997 | | | | | |
| 14:3:2000 | Doolin, Clare | | M | c7.0 | Unpubl. |
| 18:3:2000 | Sligo | | M | 5.5 | Unpubl. |
| 1:05:2000 | Ferriters Cove, co. Kerry | | F | 4.5 | Unpubl. |

Sowerby's Beaked Whale *Mesoplodon bidens* (Sowerby)

Sowerby's Beaked Whale has stranded on only three occasions one each from counties Wexford, Galway and Sligo. All three individuals were females.

| Date | Location (Grid Ref.) | Sex | Length (m) | Reference |
|-----------|------------------------------|-----|------------|-----------|
| 21:9:1914 | Rosslare, Wexford | F | 3.61 | CEOR |
| 3:2:1926 | Aran Isl., Galway | F | ? | CEOR |
| 17:8:1990 | Templeboy, Co. Sligo (G4734) | F | 4.55 | CN (1992) |

Gervais Beaked Whale *Mesoplodon europaeus* (Gervais)

There has been only one stranding of Gervais Beaked Whale on the Irish coast from Ballysadare, Co. Sligo in January, 1989 (CN, 1989). The animal was freshly dead and thought to have swam up the channel. No abnormalities were noted on post-mortem examination and the stomach empty. This was only the second record of this species in Europe.

| Date | Location (Grid Ref.) | Sex | Length (m) | Reference |
|-----------|----------------------------|-----|------------|-----------|
| 22:1:1989 | Ballysadare, Sligo (G6331) | M | 4.08 | CN (1989) |

True's Beaked Whale *Mesoplodon mirus* True

True's Beaked Whale has been reported stranded on six occasions, three times in Co. Kerry, twice from Co. Mayo and once from Co. Clare, all along the western seaboard.

| Date | Location (Grid Ref.) | Sex | Length (m) | Reference |
|-------------|-------------------------------|-----|------------|------------------------|
| 9:6:1917 | Liscannor, Clare | M | 5.2 | CEOR |
| 22:4:1935 | Valentia Isl., Kerry | M | 4.8 | CEOR |
| c.6:10:1967 | Dingle, Kerry | ? | 4-5.0 | CEOR |
| 7:1972 | Ballinskelligs, Kerry (V4365) | F | ? | CN (1984) |
| 5:2:1983 | Killadoon, Mayo (L7472) | M | 4.59 | Viney & Fairley (1983) |
| 19:11:1987 | Killadoon, Mayo (L7479) | M | 5.4 | CN (1994) |
| 1997 | | | | |

Unidentified beaked whale

There are four records of unidentified Ziphiidae (1995, Co. Galway, 1998 in Co. Mayo, 1999 in Co. Wexford and March 2000 in Co. Clare).

Conclusions

Ziipds have been stranded regularly through the last century and the increase in stranding records reflects the general increase in reporting of stranded cetaceans (Berrow & Rogan, 1997). Most stranded animals are in an advanced stage of decomposition but the occasional whale would be suitable for post-mortem examination. The recent live strandings of bottle-nosed whales are an example.

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