

Mesoplodon perrini Dalebout, Mead, Baker, Baker and van Helden, 2002

English: Perrin's beaked whale

German: Perrin's-Zweizahnwal

Spanish: Zifio de Perrin, ballena picuda de Perrin

French: Mésoplodon de Perrin, baleine à bec de Perrin

Family Ziphiidae

1. Description

The beak is shorter than in other mesoplodonts and the two tusks erupt in males just behind the tip of the lower jaw. The mouthline is relatively straight. Apparently counter-shaded with a dark-grey back and a whitish belly. Adult males have a white patch around the umbilicus and dark grey mask joining the eyes dorsally. Externally very similar to Hector's beaked whale, with which it was confused until its description in 2002 (Dalebout et al., 2002; Jefferson et al., 2008).

2. Distribution

<http://www.iucnredlist.org/details/41759/0/rangemap>

Possible distribution of Mesoplodon perrini (Taylor et al. 2008; © IUCN). All known specimens stem from the central and southern Californian coast (Jefferson et al. 2008).

Dalebout et al. (2002) describe *M. perrini* on the basis of five animals stranded on the coast of California (between 33°55'N, 117°15'W and 36°37'N, 121°55'W) from May, 1975 to September, 1997. Four of these animals were initially identified as Hector's beaked whales (*M. hectori*) based on cranial morphology (Mead, 1989). A fifth specimen was initially identified as a neonate Cuvier's beaked whale (*Ziphius cavirostris*) based on external features.

These specimens were first recognised as representatives of an undescribed species through phylogenetic analysis of mitochondrial DNA control region and cytochrome b sequence data. Although similar morphologically, the genetic data do not support a close evolutionary relationship between *M. perrini* and *M. hectori*. Instead, these data suggest a possible sister-species relationship with the lesser beaked whale *M. peruvianus* (Dalebout et al. 2002).

Dalebout et al. (2002) suggest that *M. hectori* is confined to the Southern Hemisphere, while *M. perrini* is known to date only from the North Pacific.

3. Population size

Unknown.

4. Biology and behaviour

Based on a limited sample of stomach contents, Perrin's beaked whale probably feeds mainly on squids (including *Octopoteuthis* sp.). The remains of an unidentified invertebrate have been found in the stomach of an animal stranded in California (Taylor et al. 2008).

5. Migration

Unknown

6. Threats

Unknown

7. Remarks

Range states: USA and possibly Mexico (Taylor et al. 2008).

Categorised as "Data Deficient" by IUCN and is not listed by CMS. The species is listed in Appendix II of CITES.

8. Sources and further Information

see "Genus *Mesoplodon* – Beaked Whales: Introduction and Sources".

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