

SHORT-BEAKED COMMON DOLPHIN (*Delphinus delphis*): California/Oregon/Washington Stock

STOCK DEFINITION AND GEOGRAPHIC RANGE

Short-beaked common dolphins are the most abundant cetacean off California, and are widely distributed between the coast and at least 300 nmi distance from shore. The abundance of this species off California has been shown to change on both seasonal and inter-annual time scales (Dohl et al. 1986; Barlow 1995; Forney et al. 1995). Historically, they were reported primarily south of Pt. Conception (Dohl et al. 1986), but have been commonly sighted as far north as 42°N during 1991-2005 NMFS line-transect vessel surveys (Figure 1). Four strandings of common dolphins (*Delphinus sp.*) have been reported in Oregon and Washington since 1942 (B. Norberg, pers. comm.), but three of these could not be identified to species. One animal, which stranded in 1983, was identified as a short-beaked common dolphin (J. Hodder, pers. comm.). Significant seasonal shifts in the abundance and distribution of common dolphins have been identified based on winter/spring 1991-92 and summer/fall 1991 surveys (Forney and Barlow 1998). Their distribution is continuous southward into Mexican waters to about 13°N (Perrin et al. 1985; Wade and Gerrodette 1993; Mangels and Gerrodette 1994), and short-beaked common dolphins off California may be an extension of the "northern common dolphin" stock defined for management

of eastern tropical Pacific tuna fisheries (Perrin et al. 1985). However, preliminary data on variation in dorsal fin color patterns suggest there may be multiple stocks in this region, including at least two possible stocks in California (Farley 1995). The less abundant long-beaked common dolphin has only recently been recognized as a different species (Heyning and Perrin 1994; Rosel et al. 1994), and much of the available information has not differentiated between the two types of common dolphin. Although short-beaked common dolphins are not restricted to U.S. waters, cooperative management agreements with Mexico exist only for the tuna purse seine fishery and not for other fisheries which may take this species (e.g. gillnet fisheries). Under the Marine Mammal Protection Act (MMPA), short-beaked common dolphins involved in tuna purse seine fisheries in international waters of the eastern tropical Pacific are managed separately, and they are not included in the assessment reports. For the MMPA stock assessment reports, there is a

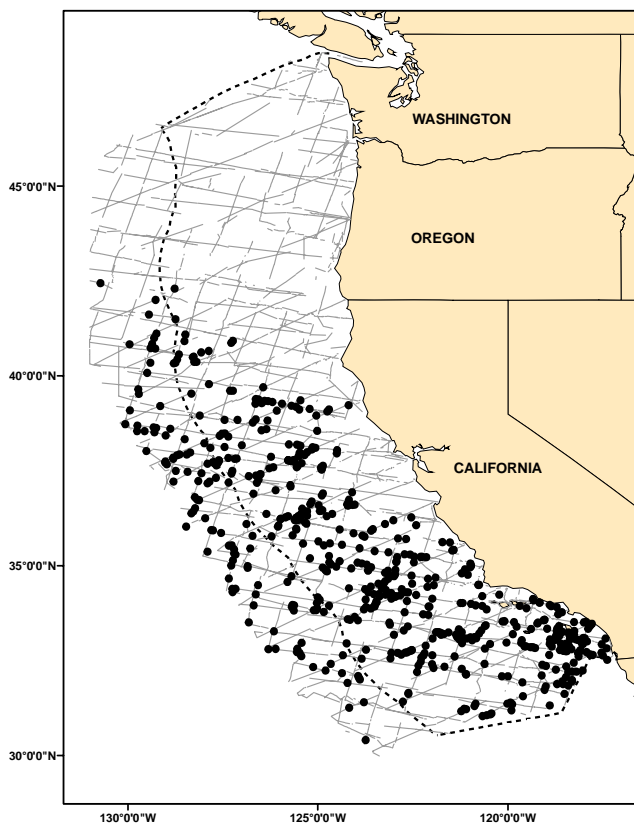


Figure 1. Short-beaked common dolphin sightings based on shipboard surveys off California, Oregon, and Washington, 1991- 2005 (see Appendix 2, for data sources and information on timing and location of survey effort). No *Delphinus* sightings have been made off Washington. Dashed line represents the U.S. EEZ, thin lines indicate completed transect effort of all surveys combined.

single Pacific management stock including only animals found within the U.S. Exclusive Economic Zone of California, Oregon and Washington.

POPULATION SIZE

The most recent estimates of abundance estimates are based on two summer/fall shipboard surveys that were conducted within 300 nmi of the coasts of California, Oregon and Washington in 2001 (Barlow and Forney 2007) and 2005 (Forney 2007). The distribution of short-beaked common dolphins throughout this region is highly variable, apparently in response to oceanographic changes on both seasonal and interannual time scales (Heyning and Perrin 1994; Forney 1997; Forney and Barlow 1998). As oceanographic conditions vary, short-beaked common dolphins may spend time outside the U.S. Exclusive Economic Zone, and therefore a multi-year average abundance estimate is the most appropriate for management within U.S. waters. The 2001-2005 geometric mean abundance estimate for California, Oregon and Washington waters based on the two ship surveys is 392,733 (CV=0.18) short-beaked common dolphins (Forney 2007).

Minimum Population Estimate

The log-normal 20th percentile of the 2001-2005 abundance estimate is 338,708 short-beaked common dolphins.

Current Population Trend

In the past, common dolphin abundance has been shown to increase off California during the warm-water months (Dohl et al. 1986). Surveys conducted during both cold-water and warm-water conditions in 1991 and 1992 (Barlow 1995, Forney et al. 1995) resulted in overall abundance estimates (for both types of common dolphins combined) which were considerably greater than historical estimates (Dohl et al. 1986). The recent combined abundance estimate for the 2001-2005 summer/fall surveys (Forney 2007) is the most precise to date. Environmental models (Forney 1997) and seasonal comparisons (Forney and Barlow 1998) have shown that the abundance of short-beaked common dolphins off California varies with seasonal and interannual changes in oceanographic conditions. An ongoing decline in the abundance of 'northern common dolphins' (including both long-beaked and short-beaked common dolphins) in the eastern tropical Pacific and along the Pacific coast of Mexico suggests a possible northward shift in the distribution of common dolphins (IATTC 1997) during this period of gradual warming of the waters off California (Roemmich 1992). The majority of this shift would likely be reflected in an increase in short-beaked common dolphin abundance. Heyning and Perrin (1994) have detected changes in the proportion of short-beaked to long-beaked common dolphins stranding along the California coast, with short-beaked common dolphin stranding more frequently prior to the 1982-83 El Niño (which increased water temperatures off California), and the long-beaked common dolphin more commonly observed for several years afterwards. Thus, it appears that both relative and absolute abundances of these species off California may change with varying oceanographic conditions.

CURRENT AND MAXIMUM NET PRODUCTIVITY RATES

There are no estimates of current or maximum net productivity rates for short-beaked common dolphins.

POTENTIAL BIOLOGICAL REMOVAL

The potential biological removal (PBR) level for this stock is calculated as the minimum population size (338,708) times one half the default maximum net growth rate for cetaceans ($\frac{1}{2}$ of 4%) times a recovery factor of 0.50 (for a species of unknown status with a mortality rate CV < 0.30; Wade and Angliss 1997), resulting in a PBR of 3,387 short-beaked common dolphins per year.

HUMAN-CAUSED MORTALITY AND SERIOUS INJURY

Fishery Information

A summary of recent fishery mortality and injury for short-beaked common dolphins is shown in Table 1. Mean annual takes in Table 1 are based on 2002-2006 data. This results in an average estimate of 77 (CV=0.38) short-beaked common dolphins taken annually. More detailed information on these fisheries is provided in Appendix 1. Mortality estimates for the California drift gillnet fishery are included for the five most recent years of monitoring, 2002-2006 (Carretta and Chivers 2004, Carretta et al. 2005a, 2005b,

Carretta and Enriquez 2006, 2007). 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, common dolphin entanglement rates in the drift gillnet fishery dropped considerably (Barlow and Cameron 2003). Since the initial pinger experiments in 1996, short-beaked common dolphin entanglement rates have remained below pre-pinger levels, even though a time/area closure in 2001 shifted fishing effort south of Point Conception, California, where common dolphin densities are highest.

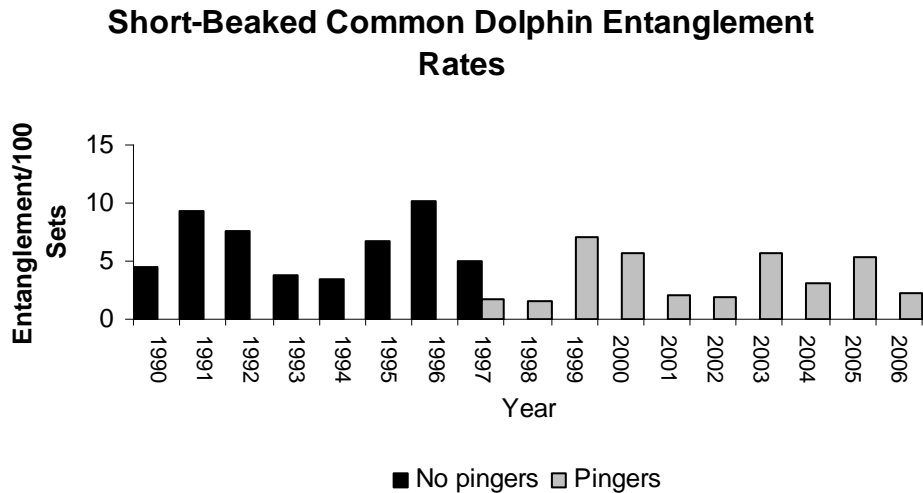


Figure 2. Entanglement rates of short-beaked common dolphin per set fished in the California drift gillnet fishery for swordfish and thresher shark, 1990-2006. Entanglement rates include observations from pingered and unpingered sets. Pingers were not used from 1990-95 and were used experimentally in 1996 and 1997. In 1996, no short-beaked common dolphin were observed killed in 146 pingered sets. For the period 1998- 2006, more than 99% of all observed sets utilized pingers.

Common dolphin mortality has also been reported in halibut set gillnets in California (Julian and Beeson 1998). The fishery has been observed only four times since 1994 (in 1999, 2000, 2006, and 2007), at low levels of observer coverage (<10% of fishing effort). Although no common dolphin were observed taken during these four observation periods, fisher self-reports for 2000-2004 indicate that at least two common dolphins (type not specified) were killed (Marine Mammal Authorization Permit Program data). Although these reports are considered unreliable (see Appendix 4 of Hill and DeMaster 1998) they represent a minimum mortality for this fishery.

The squid purse seine fishery had 193 sets observed from 2004-2006. One short-beaked common dolphin mortality was observed in 2005, with a resulting mortality estimate of 87 (CV=0.98) animals (Carretta and Enriquez 2006). In addition, there was one squid purse seine set in 2006 where 8 unidentified dolphins were encircled. Seven were released alive and the eighth was seriously injured.

Three unidentified and one short-beaked common dolphin stranded with evidence of fishery interaction (NMFS, Southwest Region, unpublished data) between 2002-2006. It is not known which fisheries were responsible for these deaths.

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 uses vessels, gear, and operational procedures similar to those in the U.S. drift gillnet fishery, although nets may be up to 4.5 km long (Holts and Sosa-Nishizaki 1998). The fleet increased from two vessels in 1986 to 31 vessels in 1993 (Holts and Sosa-Nishizaki 1998). 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 short-beaked common dolphins (California/Oregon/Washington Stock), in commercial fisheries that might take this species. All entanglements resulted in the death of the animal. Coefficients of variation for mortality estimates are provided in parentheses; n/a = not available. Mean annual takes are based on 2002-2006 data unless noted otherwise.

Fishery Name	Data Type	Year	Percent Observer Coverage	Observed Mortality	Estimated Annual Mortality	Mean Annual Takes (CV in parentheses)
CA/OR thresher shark/swordfish drift gillnet fishery	observer	2002	22.1%	7	32 (0.46)	48 (0.16)
		2003	20.2%	17	84 (0.24)	
		2004	20.6%	7	34 (0.49)	
		2005	20.9%	12	57 (0.30)	
		2006	18.5%	6	32 (0.52)	
CA squid purse seine	observer	2004	unknown	0	0	29 (0.98)
		2005	1.1%	1	87 (0.98)	
		2006	unknown	0	0	
CA angel shark/halibut and other species large mesh (>3.5in) set gillnet fishery¹	MMAP self-reporting	Common dolphins, species not determined				≥0.2 (n/a)
		2002	-	0	0	
		2003	-	0	0	
		2004	-	1	1	
		2005	-	n/a	n/a	
		2006	n/a	n/a	n/a	
	observer	2006-2007	<10%	0	0	0
Unknown fishery	strandings	2002-2006	Three unidentified common and one short-beaked common dolphin stranded with evidence of fishery interactions. Evidence of fishery interactions included net marks and positive metal detector scans. None of the strandings could be linked to a specific commercial fishery. These strandings may have come from observed fisheries that already have bycatch estimates and thus are not included in the annual average to prevent double-counting of fishery mortality. Mean annual takes are therefore based on stranded animals only if the stranding can be attributed to a fishery lacking an observer program or cases where stranded animals represent the only documented fishery-related deaths in a given year.			≥ 0 (n/a)
Minimum total annual takes						77 (0.38)

¹The set gillnet fishery was observed from 1991-94 and then only in Monterey Bay during 1999-2000, where 20-25% of the local fishery was observed. There are no estimates of common dolphin mortality in this fishery because of a lack of recent observer effort. Observer coverage in this fishery resumed in 2006 (12 sets observed) and continued into 2007 (248 sets observed).

Other Mortality

In the eastern tropical Pacific, 'northern common dolphins' have been incidentally killed in international tuna purse seine fisheries since the late 1950's. Cooperative international management programs have dramatically reduced overall dolphin mortality in these fisheries during the last decade (Joseph 1994). Between 2000-2004, annual fishing mortality of northern common dolphins (potentially including both short-beaked and long-beaked common dolphins) ranged between 54 and 159 animals, with

an average of 102 (IATTC, 2006). Although it is unclear whether these animals are part of the same population as short-beaked common dolphins found off California, they are managed separately under a section of the MMPA written specifically for the management of dolphins involved in eastern tropical Pacific tuna fisheries.

STATUS OF STOCK

The status of short-beaked common dolphins in Californian waters relative to OSP is not known. The observed increase in abundance of this species off California probably reflects a distributional shift (Anganuzzi et al. 1993; Barlow 1995; Forney et al. 1995; Forney and Barlow 1998), rather than an overall population increase due to growth. No habitat issues are known to be of concern for this species. They are not listed as "threatened" or "endangered" under the Endangered Species Act nor as "depleted" under the MMPA. The average annual human-caused mortality in 2002-2006 (77 animals) is estimated to be less than the PBR (3,387), and therefore they are not classified as a "strategic" stock under the MMPA. The total estimated fishery mortality and injury for short-beaked common dolphins is less than 10% of the calculated PBR and, therefore, can be considered to be insignificant and approaching zero mortality and serious injury rate.

REFERENCES

- Anganuzzi, A. A., S. T. Buckland, and K. L. Cattanch. 1993. Relative abundance of dolphins associated with tuna in the eastern tropical Pacific Ocean: analysis of 1991 data. Rep. Int. Whal. Commn 43:459-465.
- Barlow, J. 1995. The abundance of cetaceans in California waters. Part I: Ship surveys in summer and fall of 1991. Fish. Bull. 93:1-14.
- 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.
- Barlow, J. and K.A. Forney. 2007. Abundance and population density of cetaceans in the California Current ecosystem. Fishery Bulletin 105:509-526.
- Berdegúe, 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.
- Carretta, J.V. and L. Enriquez. 2007. Marine mammal and sea turtle bycatch in the California/Oregon thresher shark and swordfish drift gillnet fishery in 2006. Administrative Report LJ-07-06, available from Southwest Fisheries Science Center, 8604 La Jolla Shores Drive, La Jolla, CA 92037. 9p.
- Carretta, J.V. and L. Enriquez. 2006. Marine mammal bycatch and estimated mortality in California commercial fisheries during 2005. Administrative Report LJ-06-07, available from Southwest Fisheries Science Center, 8604 La Jolla Shores Drive, La Jolla, CA 92037. 14p.
- Carretta, J.V. and S.J. Chivers. 2004. Preliminary estimates of marine mammal mortality and biological sampling of cetaceans in California gillnet fisheries for 2003. Paper SC/56/SM1 presented to the IWC Scientific Committee, June 2004 (unpublished). [Available from Southwest Fisheries Science Center, National Marine Fisheries Service, 8604 La Jolla Shores Drive, La Jolla, CA 92037, USA].
- Carretta, J.V., S.J. Chivers, and K. Danil. 2005a. Preliminary estimates of marine mammal bycatch, mortality, and biological sampling of cetaceans in California gillnet fisheries for 2004. Administrative Report LJ-05-10, available from Southwest Fisheries Science Center, 8604 La Jolla Shores Drive, La Jolla, California, 92037. 17 p.
- Carretta, J.V., T. Price, D. Petersen, and R. Read. 2005b. Estimates of marine mammal, sea turtle, and seabird mortality in the California drift gillnet fishery for swordfish and thresher shark, 1996-2002. Marine Fisheries Review 66(2):21-30.
- 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.
- Dohl, T. P., M. L. Bonnell, and R. G. Ford. 1986. Distribution and abundance on common dolphin, *Delphinus delphis*, in the Southern California Bight: A quantitative assessment based upon aerial transect data. Fish. Bull. 84:333-343.

- Farley, T. D. 1995. Geographic variation in dorsal fin color of short-beaked common dolphins, *Delphinus delphis*, in the eastern Pacific Ocean. Administrative Report LJ-95-06, Available from National Marine Fisheries Service, Southwest Fisheries Science Center, P.O. Box 271, La Jolla, California, 92038.
- Forney, K. A. 1997. Patterns of variability and environmental models of relative abundance for California cetaceans. Ph.D. Dissertation, Scripps Institution of Oceanography, University of California, San Diego.
- Forney, K. A. and J. Barlow. 1998. Seasonal patterns in the abundance and distribution of California cetaceans, 1991-92. *Mar. Mamm. Sci.* 14:460-489.
- Forney, K. A., J. Barlow and J. V. Carretta. 1995. The abundance of cetaceans in California waters. Part II: Aerial surveys in winter and spring of 1991 and 1992. *Fish. Bull.* 93:15-26.
- Forney, K.A. 2007. Preliminary estimates of cetacean abundance along the U.S. west coast and within four National Marine Sanctuaries during 2005. U.S. Department of Commerce, NOAA Technical Memorandum NMFS-SWFSC-406. 27p.
- Heyning, J. E. and W. F. Perrin. 1994. Evidence for two species of common dolphins (Genus *Delphinus*) from the eastern North Pacific. *Contr. Nat. Hist. Mus. L.A. County*, No. 442.
- Hill, P. S. and D. P. DeMaster. 1998. Alaska Marine Mammal Stock Assessments, 1998. U.S. Dep. Commer., NOAA Tech. Memo. NMFS-AFSC-97. 166pp.
- Hodder, J. Oregon Institute of Marine Biology, Charleston, OR, 97420.
- Holts, D. Southwest Fisheries Science Center, National Marine Fisheries Service, 8604 La Jolla Shores Drive, La Jolla, CA 92037.
- Holts, D. and O. Sosa-Nishizaki. 1998. Swordfish, *Xiphias gladius*, fisheries of the eastern North Pacific Ocean. In: I. Barrett, O. Sosa-Nishizaki and N. Bartoo (eds.). *Biology and fisheries of swordfish, Xiphias gladius*. Papers from the International Symposium on Pacific Swordfish, Ensenada Mexico, 11-14 December 1994. U.S. Dep. Commer., NOAA Tech. Rep. NMFS 142, 276 p.
- IATTC. 1997. Annual Report of the Inter-American Tropical Tuna Commission, 1995, La Jolla, California.
- IATTC. 2006. Annual Report of the Inter-American Tropical Tuna Commission, 2004, La Jolla, California. 96p.
- Joseph, J. 1994. The tuna-dolphin controversy in the eastern Pacific Ocean: biological, economic and political impacts. *Ocean Dev. Int. Law* 25:1-30.
- Julian, F. 1997. Cetacean mortality in California gill net fisheries: Preliminary estimates for 1996. Paper SC/49/SM02 presented to the International Whaling Commission, 1997 (unpublished). 13 pp.
- 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.
- Mangels, K. F. and Gerrodette, T. 1994. Report of cetacean sightings during a marine mammal survey in the eastern Pacific Ocean and Gulf of California aboard the NOAA ships *McARTHUR* and *DAVID STARR JORDAN* July 28 - November 6, 1993. NOAA Technical Memorandum NMFS, NOAA-TM-NMFS-SWFSC-211.
- NMFS, Southwest Fisheries Science Center, P.O. Box 271, La Jolla, CA 92038-027.
- NMFS, Southwest Region, 501 West Ocean Blvd, Long Beach, CA 90802_4213.
- Norberg, B., NMFS, Northwest Region., 7600 Sand Point Way NE, BIN C15700, Seattle, WA 98115_0070.
- Perrin, W. F., M. D. Scott, G. J. Walker and V. L. Cass. Review of geographical stocks of tropical dolphins (*Stenella* spp. and *Delphinus delphis*) in the eastern Pacific. NOAA Technical Report NMFS 28. Available from NMFS, Southwest Fisheries Science Center, P.O. Box 271, La Jolla, California, 92038. 28p.
- Roemmich, D. 1992. Ocean warming and sea level rise along the southwest U.S. coast. *Science* 257:373-375.
- Rosel, P. E., A. E. Dizon and J. E. Heyning. 1994. Population genetic analysis of two forms of the common dolphin (genus *Delphinus*) utilizing mitochondrial DNA control region sequences. *Marine Biology* 119:159-167.
- Sosa-Nishizaki, O., R. De la Rosa-Pacheco, R. Castro-Longoria, M. Grijalva Chon, and J. De la Rosa Velez. 1993. Estudio biologico pesquero del pez (*Xiphias gladius*) y otras especies de picudos (marlins y pez vela). Rep. Int. CICESE, CTECT9306.

- Wade, P. R. and R. P. Angliss. 1997. Guidelines for Assessing Marine Mammal Stocks: Report of the GAMMS Workshop April 3-5, 1996, Seattle, Washington. U. S. Dep. Commer., NOAA Tech. Memo. NMFS-OPR-12. 93 pp.
- Wade, P. R. and T. Gerrodette. 1993. Estimates of cetacean abundance and distribution in the eastern tropical Pacific. Rep. Int. Whal. Commn 43:477-493.