

Article XIV.—NOTES ON TWO PORPOISES CAPTURED
ON A VOYAGE INTO THE PACIFIC OCEAN.

BY JOHN TREADWELL NICHOLS.

PLATE XIV.

The following notes concern two porpoises captured in the Pacific Ocean from a sailing vessel bound out around Cape Horn. Porpoises not infrequently play about the ship's bow, and sometimes one can be harpooned and secured. Their flesh tastes somewhat like meat, somewhat like fish, and is a very welcome break in a diet composed chiefly of salted and canned foods.

The skull of one and the skeleton of the other of the two specimens were preserved by the writer and are now in the American Museum of Natural History.

Tursiops sp.

No. 35045, Am. Mus. Nat. Hist.
Approximate locality, 12° N., 120° W. Captured December 6, 1906.

Dimensions of skull:—Length 487 mm.; rostrum, 263 mm.; breadth of rostrum at its base, 120.5 mm.; breadth of rostrum at its middle, 74 mm.; orbital breadth, 214 mm.

Color slaty black, grayer from throat to vent. Approximate length, 7½ feet.

The stomach contained mostly large shrimp-like animals; also a few fish, and perhaps other food matter, and many parasitic worms. The posterior teeth are much worn down, with hollow or soft centers.

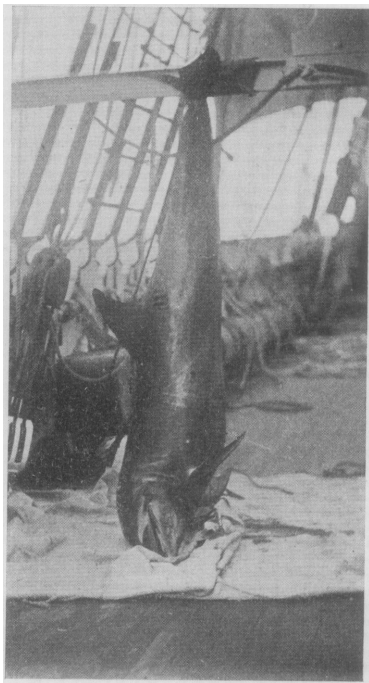


Fig. 1. *Tursiops* sp.

This animal is quite different from *Tursiops gillii*, and probably different from *T. truncatus* of our Atlantic Coast, though the material is not sufficient to warrant separating it positively from that species.

The skull differs in several points from that of *T. truncatus*. The intermaxillæ are rather flat distally. The maxilla, just back of the maxillary notch, is much less thickened. The malar along its outer margin is longer, and directed less downward.

On the under side of the back of the cranium at the posterior border of the inferior nares, the vomer is visible between the backward prongs of the two pterygoids. At this point its sides are flaring, and it is much broader than either pterygoid alone. There is considerable variation in the series of *truncatus* skulls examined as to the comparative breadth of vomer, but it

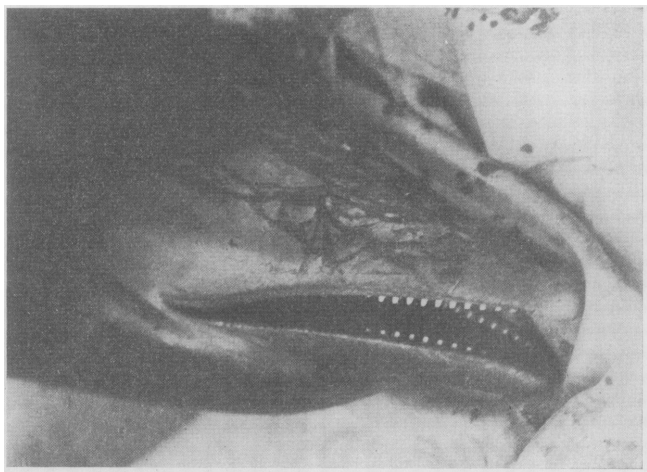


Fig. 2. *Tursiops* sp.

is generally narrower than in No. 35045, even to less than half the breadth of a single pterygoid; and its sides are not flaring, *i. e.*, they have a more parallel tendency.

The comparative characters given in the two preceding paragraphs would be quite sufficient to separate No. 35045, were they not broken by two or three skulls.

There is a *truncatus* skull ¹ in the National Museum Collection from off Hatteras, N. C., which has the conditions back of the maxillary notch perhaps more like those of No. 35045 than like those found typically in *truncatus*.

In the 'Ostéographie des Cétacés,' Van Beneden and Gervais, there is a

¹ Nat. Mus. No. 21538. Off Hatteras, N. C. U. S. F. C.

figure¹ of a skull of *T. truncatus* from Cette, France, which shows plainly the vomer-ptyergoid conditions, and they are very like those of No. 35045.

***Lagenorhynchus cruciger* (d'Orb. & Gerv.):**

No. 35150 Am. Mus. Nat. Hist. (?♂).

Approximate locality, 49° S., 78° W. Taken November 1, 1906.

Approximate length, 5½ ft.

The stomach contained a mass of more or less digested small fish, which may have been mixed with other food matter.

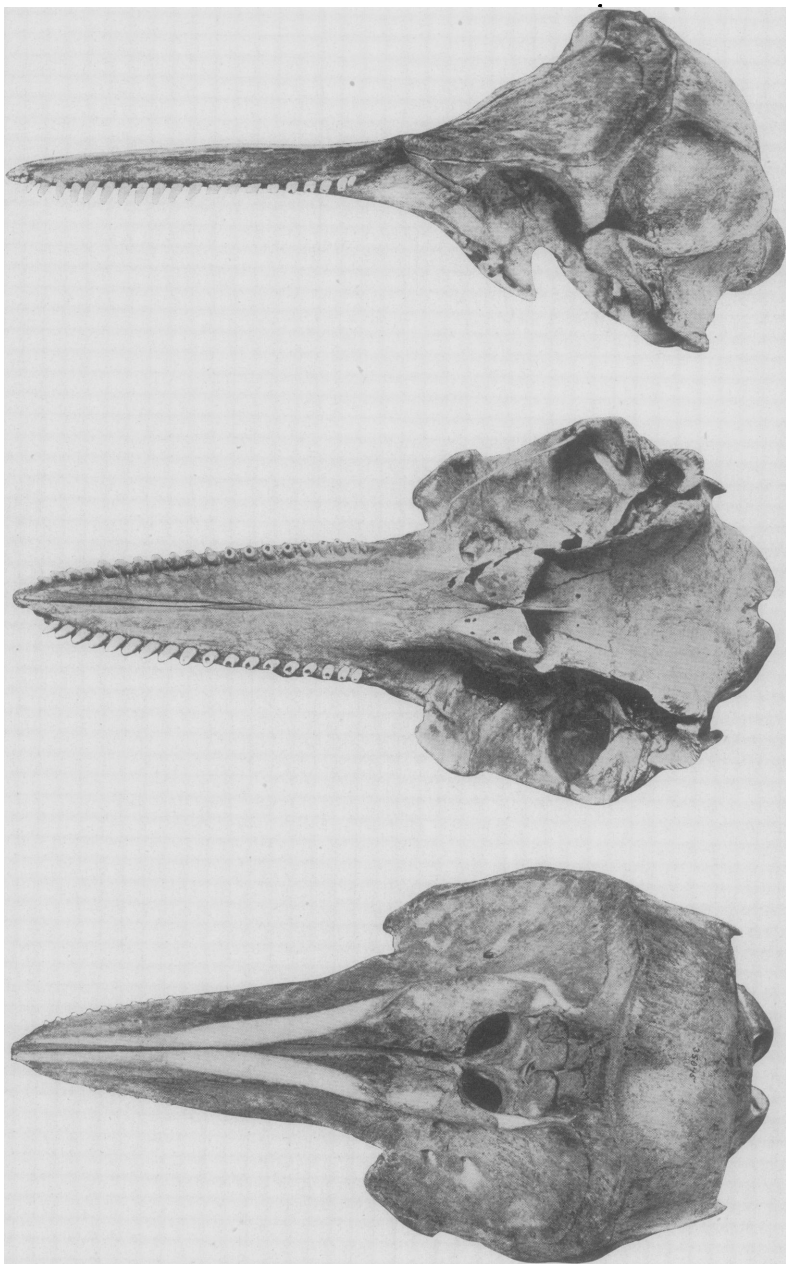


Fig. 3. *Lagenorhynchus cruciger* (d'Orb. & Gerv.).

Porpoises that I believe to have been of this species were seen in approximate localities of 36° 14' S., 52° 43' W. (Sept. 29), 47° 08' S., 59° 34' W. (Oct. 15), 52° 46' S., 66° 00' W. (Oct. 19), 53° 48' S., 78° 42' W. (Oct. 29).

I wish to express my indebtedness to Dr. Frederick W. True of the U. S. National Museum for greatly aiding me in the study of these specimens, placing at my disposal the material of the National Museum and the necessary literature.

¹ Van Beneden and Gervais, 1868-1879, *Ostéographie des Cétacés*, pl. XXXIV, fig. 6.



Tursiops sp.

