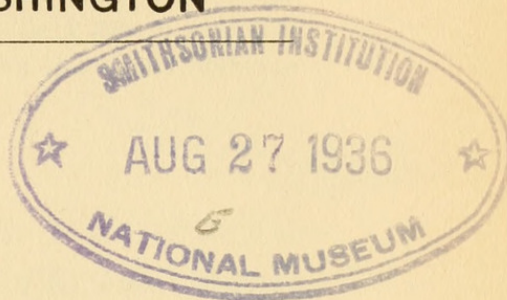


PROCEEDINGS
OF THE
BIOLOGICAL SOCIETY OF WASHINGTON



GENERAL NOTES.

THE STATUS OF *DELPHINUS BAIRDII* DALL.

In 1873 Dall separated the common dolphin of the Californian coast as a species distinct from *Delphinus delphis* of the Atlantic. For the Pacific animal he proposed the name *Delphinus bairdii*; type locality, Cape (now Point) Arguello, Santa Barbara County, California (Proc. Calif. Acad. Sci., vol. 5, p. 12. January 29, 1873). Sixteen years later True concluded that: "From the evidence now obtainable I am unable to distinguish between *D. delphis* and *D. bairdii*, and must, therefore regard the latter as identical with the former" (A Review of the family Delphinidae, Bull. U. S. Nat. Mus., no. 36, pp. 53-54, 1889). In discussing this question True did not mention the "extremely attenuated beak" that Dall regarded as a distinguishing feature of the Californian dolphin. Each of True's Californian skulls (Nos. 15403 and 22305), however, had a considerable part of the rostral extremity broken off. Since 1889 the name *Delphinus bairdii* Dall has remained in the synonymy of *D. delphis* Linnaeus.

There are now in the U. S. National Museum two essentially perfect skulls of *Delphinus* from California (No. 20162, Carmel, and 49800, San Diego) and one from the Gulf side of Lower California (No. 260235, Escondido Bay; recently presented by Mr. W. Chas. Swett). All three of these, together with one from Korea (No. 22881), when compared with eight skulls of the Atlantic common dolphin (two from near Woods Hole, Mass., two from near New York, one from Virginia and three from near Cape Hatteras, North Carolina), clearly show one of the features that Dall regarded as diagnostic of the Pacific animal. Like True, I am unable to find constant differences between any particular linear dimension in the western skulls and the corresponding part in the specimens from the Atlantic, or to see anything unusual in the development of the lateral palatal grooves. But the peculiar slenderness of the rostrum in the Pacific dolphin is a feature that becomes obvious to the eye as soon as perfect skulls are compared. Measurements show that it holds good without exception among the specimens examined. The ratio of rostral length (measured from the maxillary notch) to the greatest diameter of the skull across the zygomatic processes of the squamosals ranges from 1.39+ to 1.53+ in the skulls from the Atlantic, and from 1.69+ to 1.74+ in those from the Pacific (1.71+ in the type specimen as measured by Dall).

In view of the seeming constancy of its unusually slender cranial beak the dolphin to which Dall gave the name *Delphinus bairdii* should be again recognized as a distinct member of the North American fauna. Whether or not Dall's name was the first to be applied to the animal is a question that is, at present, impossible to decide.

—Gerrit S. Miller, Jr.



Miller, G S. 1936. "The status oiDelphinus bairdii Dall." *Proceedings of the Biological Society of Washington* 49, 145–146.

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