

Sowerby's Beaked Whale

Mesoplodon bidens



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Species Description

The Sowerby's Beaked Whale is a small, dark grey whale up to 5.5 m long. It has a long narrow beak (rostrum), small triangular dorsal fin (2/3 down its body length), and tail flukes with no notch in the middle. Adult whales can have extensive linear scarring along their back, which are typically absent in juveniles. Males have one visible pair of triangular teeth in the lower jaw, while females and juveniles have no visible teeth. They occur in deep waters of the continental slope.



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Key ID Features: *long, narrow beak

STATUS



Special Concern COSEWIC

Special Concern SARA

Found only in the North Atlantic Ocean. Range from Cape Cod to the Davis Strait, from Spain to Norway, and near Iceland, Madeira, and the Azores. The Gully, Shortland and Haldimand canyons are some of the only places where consistently seen.

Population Range



Interesting Points

- An extremely deep-diving species.
- Exposure to acute, intense underwater sounds (military sonar) can result in injury and death.

Threats

- Low reproductive rates.
- Mass strandings (from the use of military sonar).
- Acoustic disturbances (seismic surveys).
- Unintentional by-catch (swordfish, tuna, shark longline fisheries).
- Entanglement in fishing gear.
- Vessel collisions.
- Chemical contaminants.



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Scarring and triangular dorsal fin.



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Whale research in the Gully.

Learn how you can help on page 136.

Contacts, Information, Sighting Reports & Stewardship Opportunities

Contact: DFO Species at Risk 1-866-891-0771 or xmarsara@mar.dfo-mpo.gc.ca

Info: www.dfo-mpo.gc.ca/species-especes, www.sararegistry.gc.ca

Sighting Reports: xmarwhalesightings@dfo-mpo.gc.ca

Stewardship: Report distressed or dead marine mammals to MARS: 1-866-567-6277