

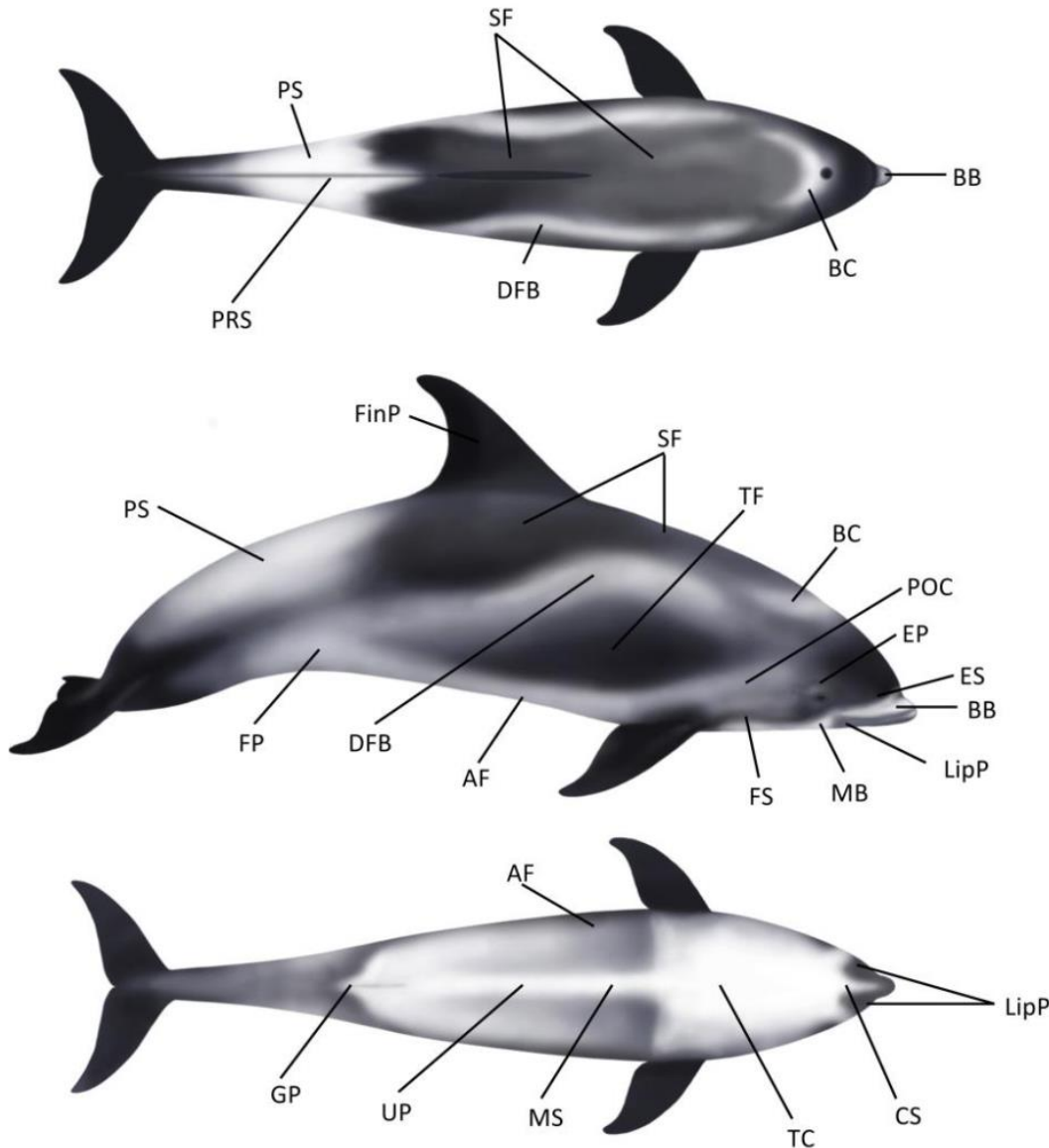
# THE WHITE-BEAKED DOLPHIN IN EUROPE: RESEARCH & CONSERVATION



*Peter G.H. Evans*

School of Ocean Sciences, University of Bangor & Sea Watch Foundation, UK

# White-beaked Dolphin body coloration patterns

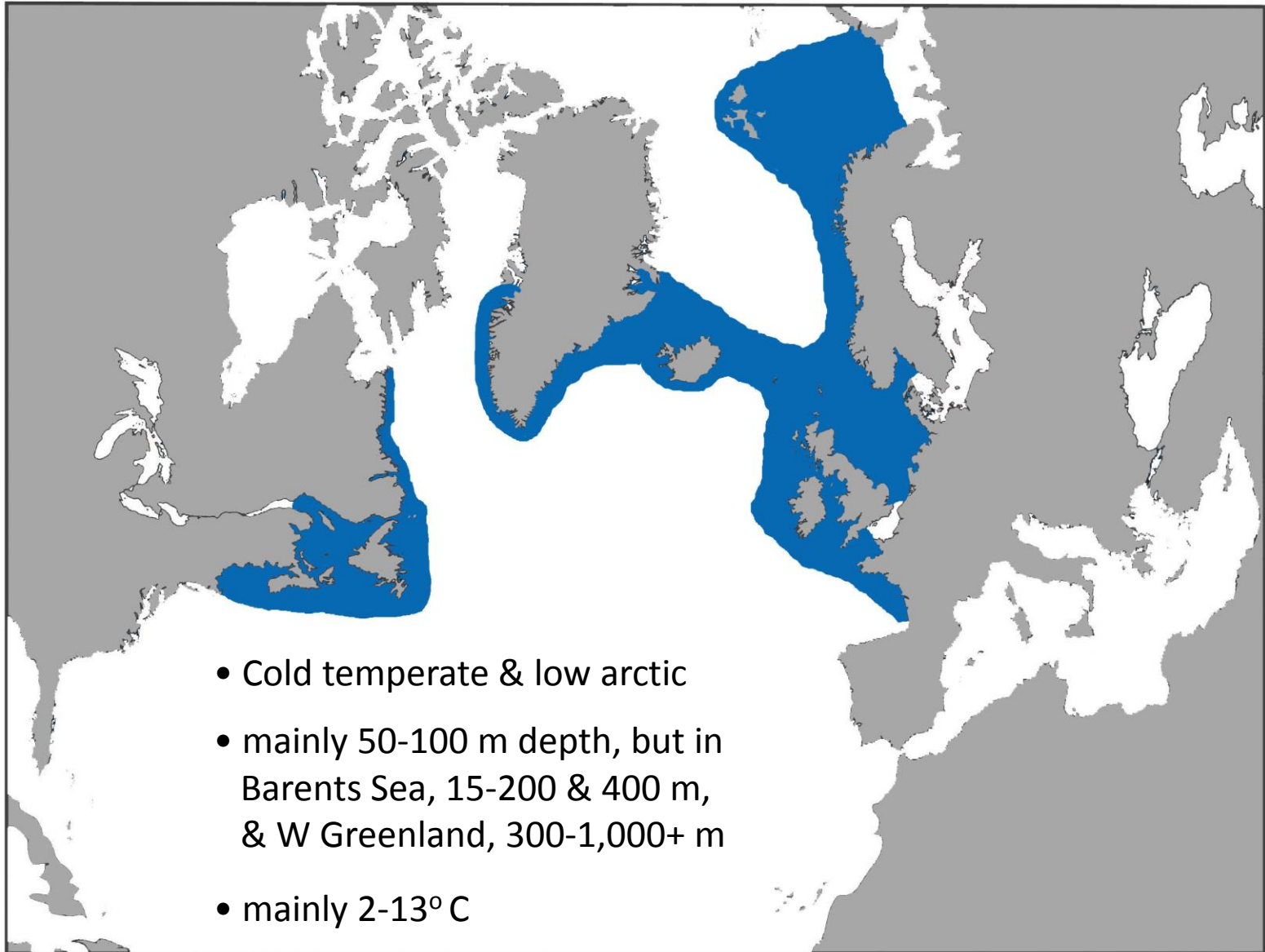


- Juveniles have light grey beaks, and any of the following: speckling, semi-circular head blaze and lateral patch
- Adults have fully-developed blowhole chevron, completely filled-in post-ocular crescent, continuous dorsal flank blaze, peduncular saddle, dark grey abdominal field, beak blaze of dark grey colour with white or pink tip, and flipper stripe as a demarcation line between white throat chevron and grey post-ocular crescent

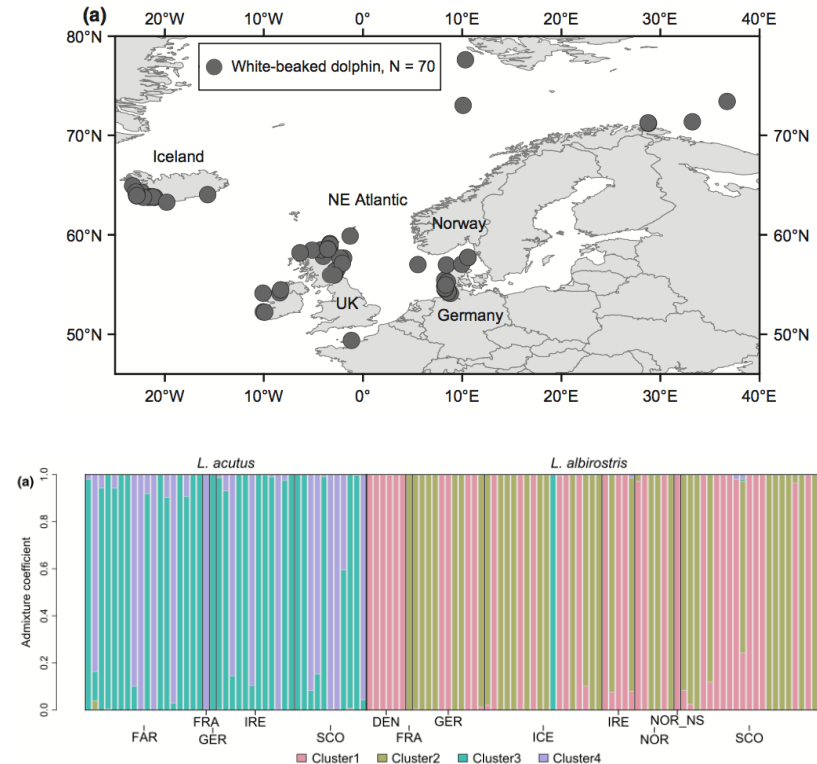
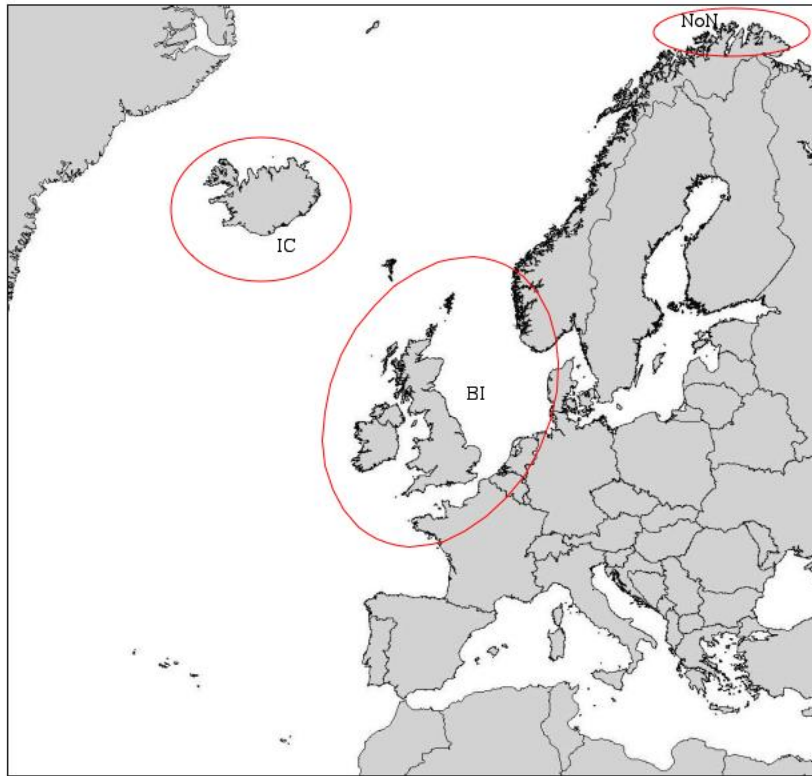
**Source:** Bertulli *et al.*, 2016



# White-beaked Dolphin distribution in North Atlantic



# White-beaked Dolphin population structure

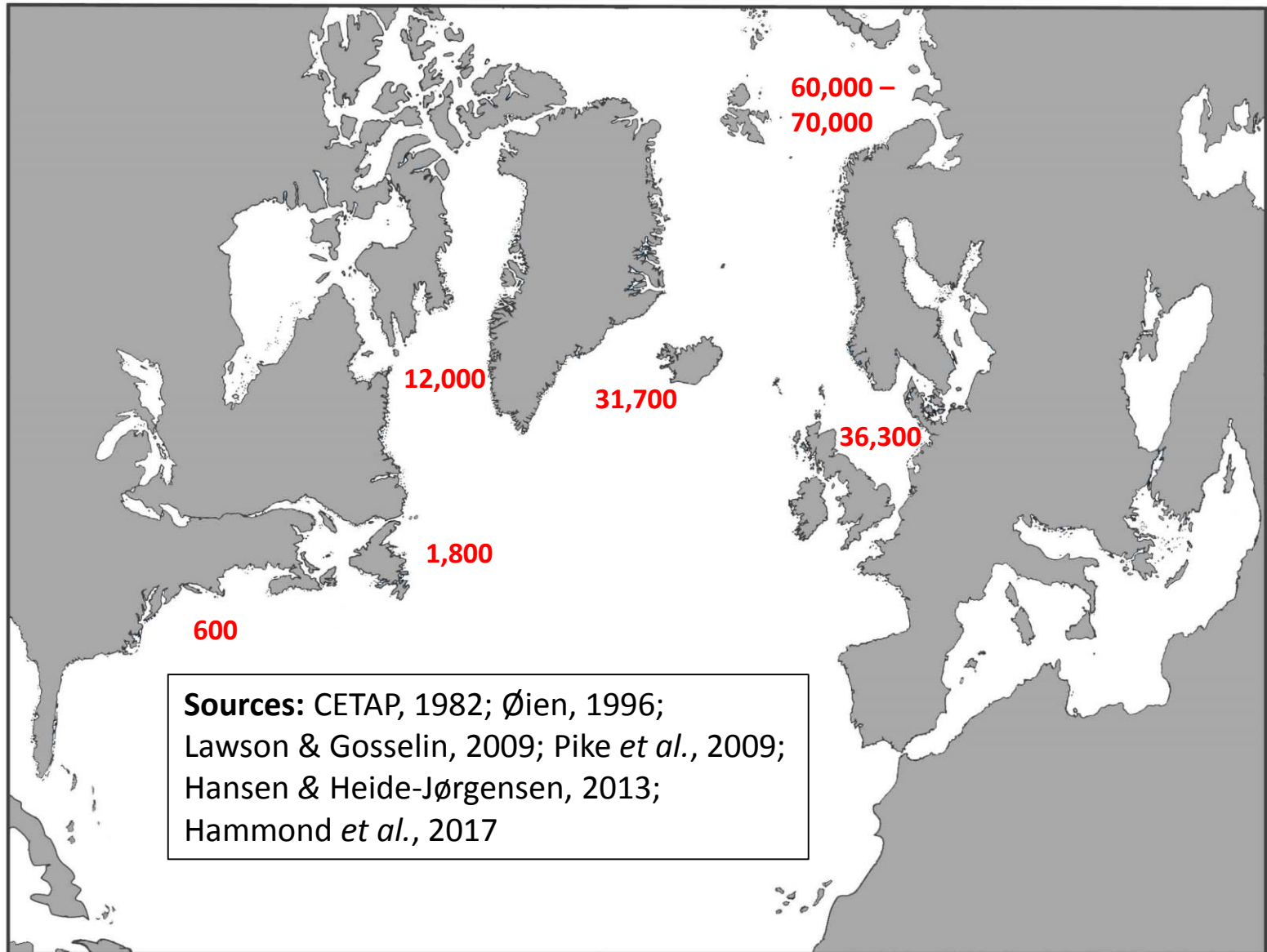


- mtDNA analysis indicated three management units in Europe: British Isles/Netherlands, northern Norway and Iceland, with a separate one in the NW Atlantic
- Moderate haplotype diversity ( $h=0.73$ ) from mt D-loop
- Low nucleotide diversity ( $\pi=0.0056$ ) indicating past bottleneck
- Some sub-structuring in white-beaked dolphin compared with white-sided dolphin, based on RADSeq of whole genome
- Observed heterozygosity = 0.012
- Low nucleotide diversity ( $\pi=0.03$ )

**Source:** Evans & Teilmann, 2009; Banguera-Hinestroza *et al.*, 2010

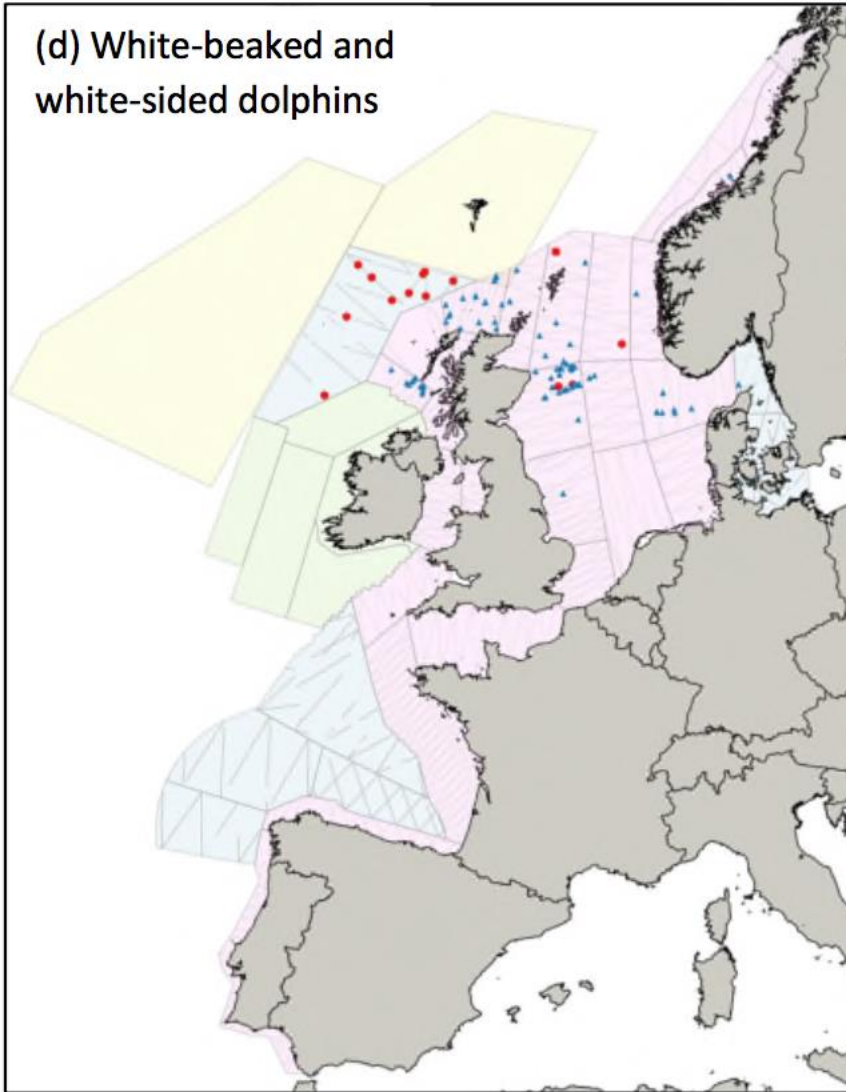
**Source:** Fernandez *et al.*, 2015

# White-beaked Dolphin abundance estimates



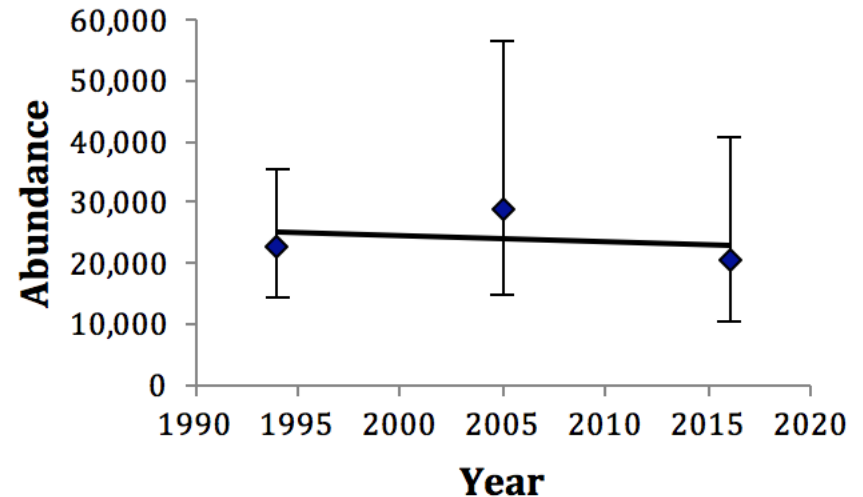
# White-beaked Dolphin population trends

(d) White-beaked and white-sided dolphins



WBD = blue triangles; AWS = red circles

White-beaked dolphin - North Sea



**Total Abundance:** July 2016: 36,287  
(CV=0.29; 95% CI: 18,694-61,869)

July 2005/07: 37,689 (CV=0.36)

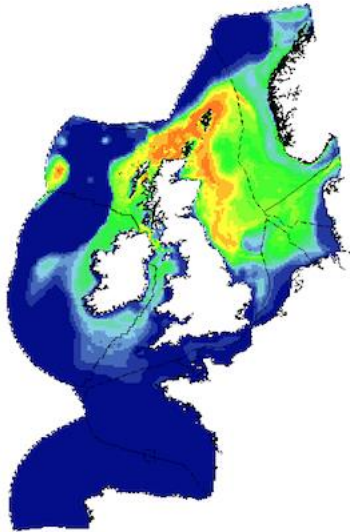
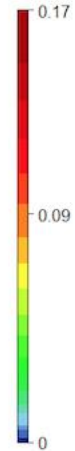
July 1994: 23,716 (CV=0.30)

**Estimated Annual rate of change:**  
-0.5% (95% Cis: -18; 22%),  $p=0.82$  (CV=0.36)

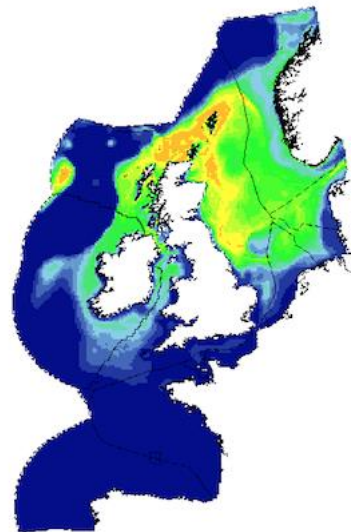
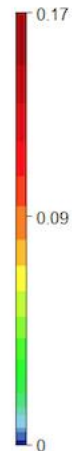
**Source:** Hammond *et al.* (2017)

# White-beaked Dolphin seasonal densities in NW Europe

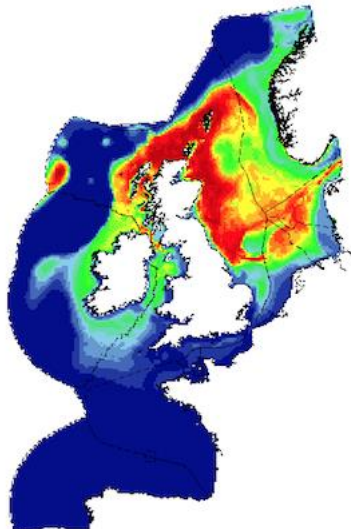
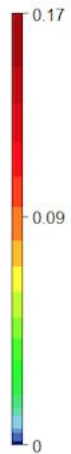
Jan



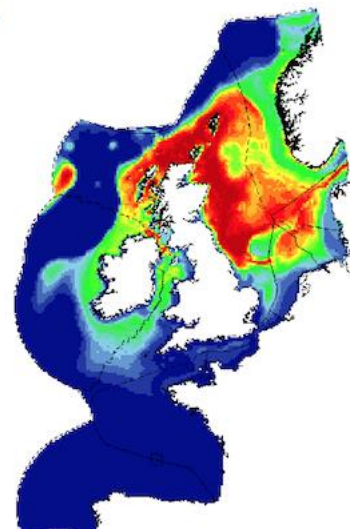
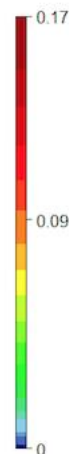
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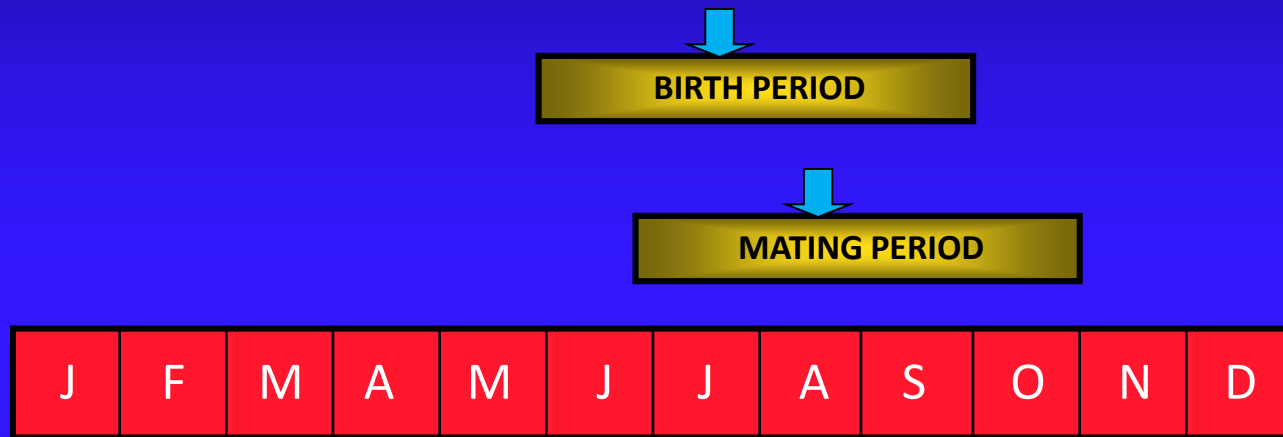


Oct



Source: Evans & Waggitt (unpublished)

# ANNUAL CYCLE OF THE WHITE-BEAKED DOLPHIN



Gestation Period: c. 11 months

Lactation Period: ??

Calving Interval: ??



# White-beaked Dolphin Life History Parameters

## Growth & Reproduction

- Length at birth is 110-120 cm at c. 40 kg weight
- Males become sexually mature at 230-260 cm length and 8-12 years of age
- Females become sexually mature at 230-240 cm length and 6-8 years of age
- Adult males average 273 cm length (range 252-290 cm), up to 354 kg
- Adult females average 251 cm (range 242-265 cm), up to 306 kg

## Life Span

- Males at least 32 years
- Females at least 39 years



**Sources:** Kinze *et al.*, 1997; Evans & Smeenk, 2008; Galatius *et al.*, 2010; Galatius & Kinze, 2016

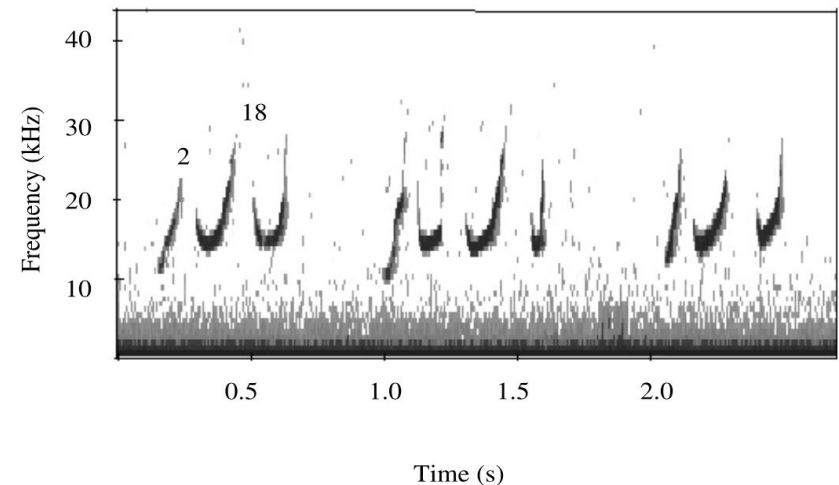
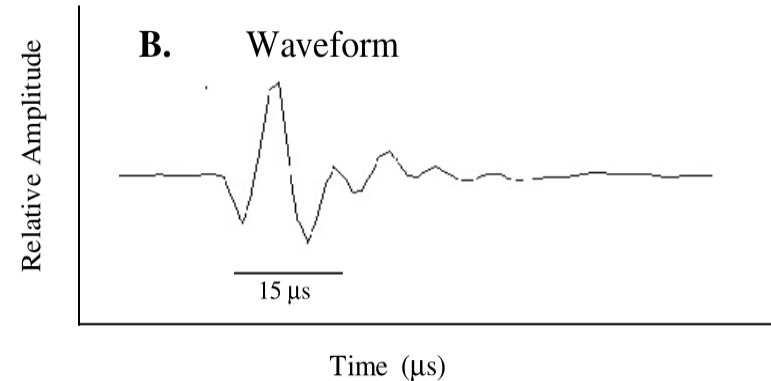
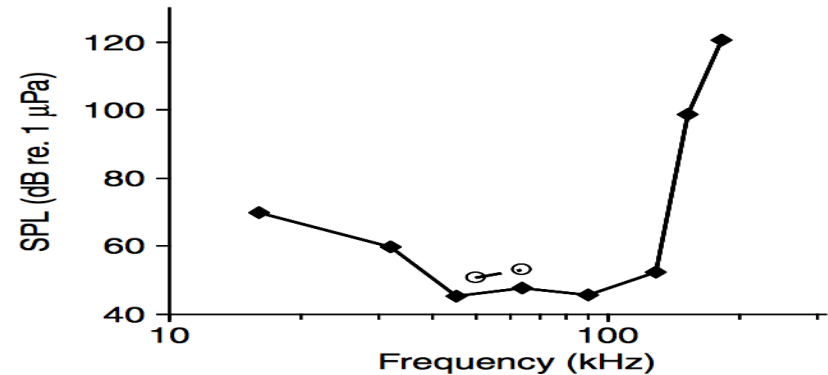
# White-beaked Dolphin Group Sizes



Mean (Range) Group Size: 5.1 (1-220) – UK (Evans, 1992; Anderwald, 2002; Evans *et al.*, 2003)  
7.9 (1-300) – Faxaflói , SW Iceland (Bertulli, 2015)  
10.0 (1-150) – Skjálfandi, N Iceland (Bertulli, 2015)  
8.0 (1-150) – Barents Sea (Fall & Skern-Mauritzen, 2014)  
8.6 (1-200) – Gulf of St Lawrence (Kingsley & Reeves, 1998)  
9.1 (1-20) – Nova Scotia (Simard *et al.*, 2006)  
6.3 (1-100) – NASS Survey, Iceland (Pike *et al.*, 2009)

# White-beaked Dolphin Acoustics

- Audiogram from two free-living white-beaked dolphins indicate a hearing range of 16-181 kHz with peak sensitivity c. 50-64 kHz (Nachtigall *et al.* 2008)
- Highest hearing sensitivity of any dolphin recorded: 90 dB at 152 kHz and 111 dB at 181 kHz (Nachtigall *et al.*, 2008)
- Very narrow echolocation beam width: 8° at 3 dB & 10° at 10 dB (Rasmussen *et al.*, 2004)
- Echolocation clicks have average peak frequencies c. 115 kHz with a secondary peak c. 250 kHz, and a centre frequency at 82 kHz; click source levels 190-210 dB re 1μPa (Rasmussen & Miller, 2002; Rasmussen *et al.*, 2002)
- Burst pulse signals also made at 719 Hz (range 423-1,103 Hz) with mean peak frequency of 35.3 kHz (Simard *et al.*, 2008)
- Whistles range from 3-35 kHz with few having harmonics; duration 0.03-1.62 s. (Rasmussen & Miller, 2002)





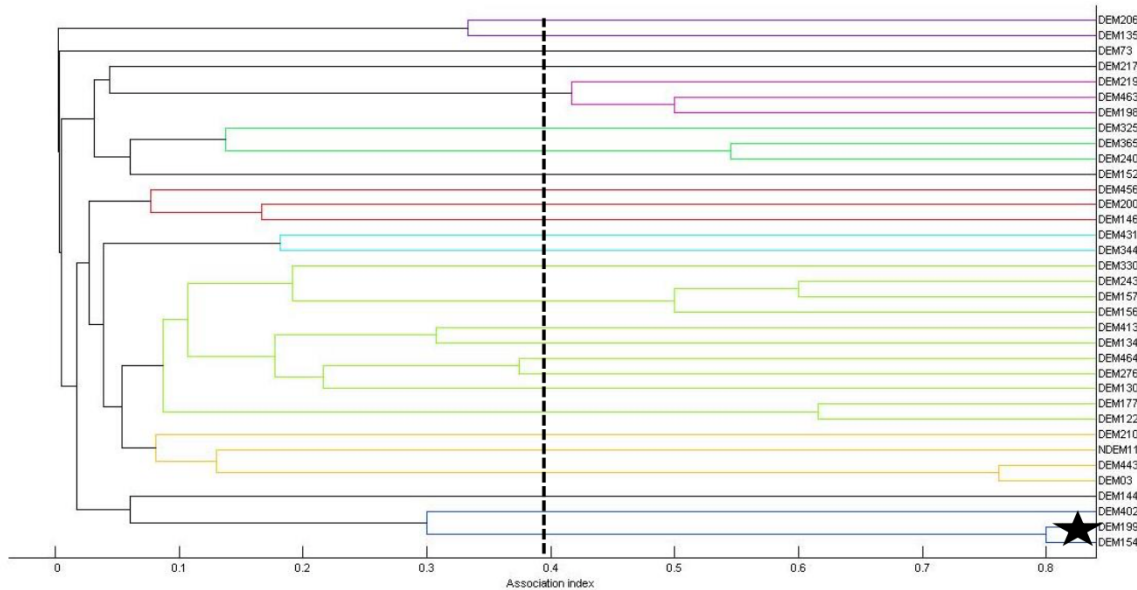
# White-beaked Dolphin Behaviour

- Frequently bow-ride vessels, breach, and may cooperatively herd pelagic fish (Evans, 1987)
- Swim speeds average 6-12 km/hr, but can attain 30 km/h (Evans & Smeenk, 2008)
- Mean dive depth was 24 m for tagged individual in Iceland, with max. dive depth of 45 m in dives of up to 78 sec (Rasmussen *et al.*, 2013)
- More than 50% of dives apparently to sea floor (Rasmussen *et al.*, 2013)
- Travel great distances: one recognisable individual re-sighted 361 km away in only 6 days (Tetley, 2004); a satellite tagged male ranged over large areas of Iceland between the Westfjords and Faxaflói (Rasmussen *et al.* 2013); and movements recorded between Faxaflói, Breiðafjörður and Skjálfandi (Tetley 2006; Bertulli 2010, Bertulli *et al.* 2015)

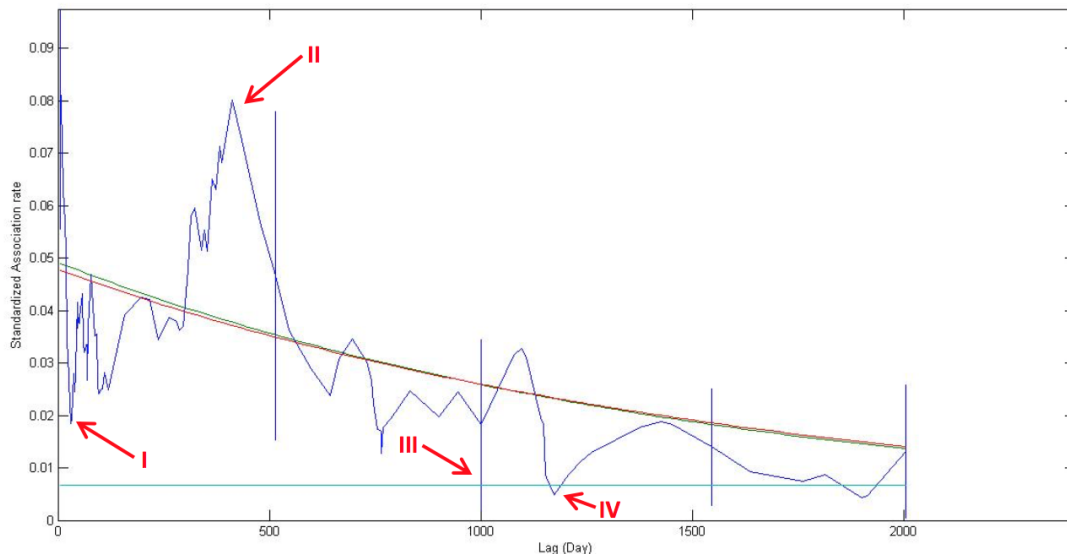




# White-beaked Dolphin Social Structure



- Highly fluid coefficients of association with few long-term bonds
- Association patterns best described as casual acquaintances



- A fall in lagged association rates suggest that individuals may separate after c. 10 days
- However, some associations last through study period

**Source:** Bertulli (2015)

Whaling



Over fishing



Entanglement in fishing gear



Ship strikes



Pollution



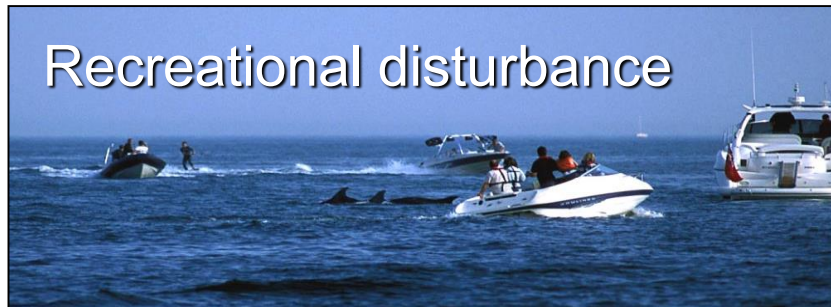
Active sonar



Shipping



Recreational disturbance



Climate



Change



Wind farm construction

# White-beaked Dolphin Threat

		Greater North Sea	Celtic Seas	NE Atlantic
POLLUTION & OTHER CHEMICAL CHANGES	Contaminants	M	M	M
	Nutrient enrichment	L	L	L
PHYSICAL LOSS	Habitat loss	L	L	L
PHYSICAL DAMAGE	Habitat degradation	L	L	L
OTHER PHYSICAL PRESSURES	Litter (inc. <u>microplastics</u> and discarded fishing gear)	L	L	L
	Underwater noise changes	Military Sonar	M	M
		Seismic surveys	M	M
		Pile-driving	M	M
		Shipping	M	M
	Barrier to species movement (offshore windfarm, wave or tidal device arrays)	L	L	L
	Death or injury by collision	L	L	L
BIOLOGICAL PRESSURES	Introduction of microbial pathogens	L	L	L
	Removal of target and non-target species (prey depletion)	M	M	M
	Removal of non-target species (marine mammal bycatch)	M	M	M
	Disturbance (e.g. wildlife watching)	L	L	L
	Deliberate killing + hunting	L	L	L

Source: Updated from ICES, 2015



# White-beaked Dolphin

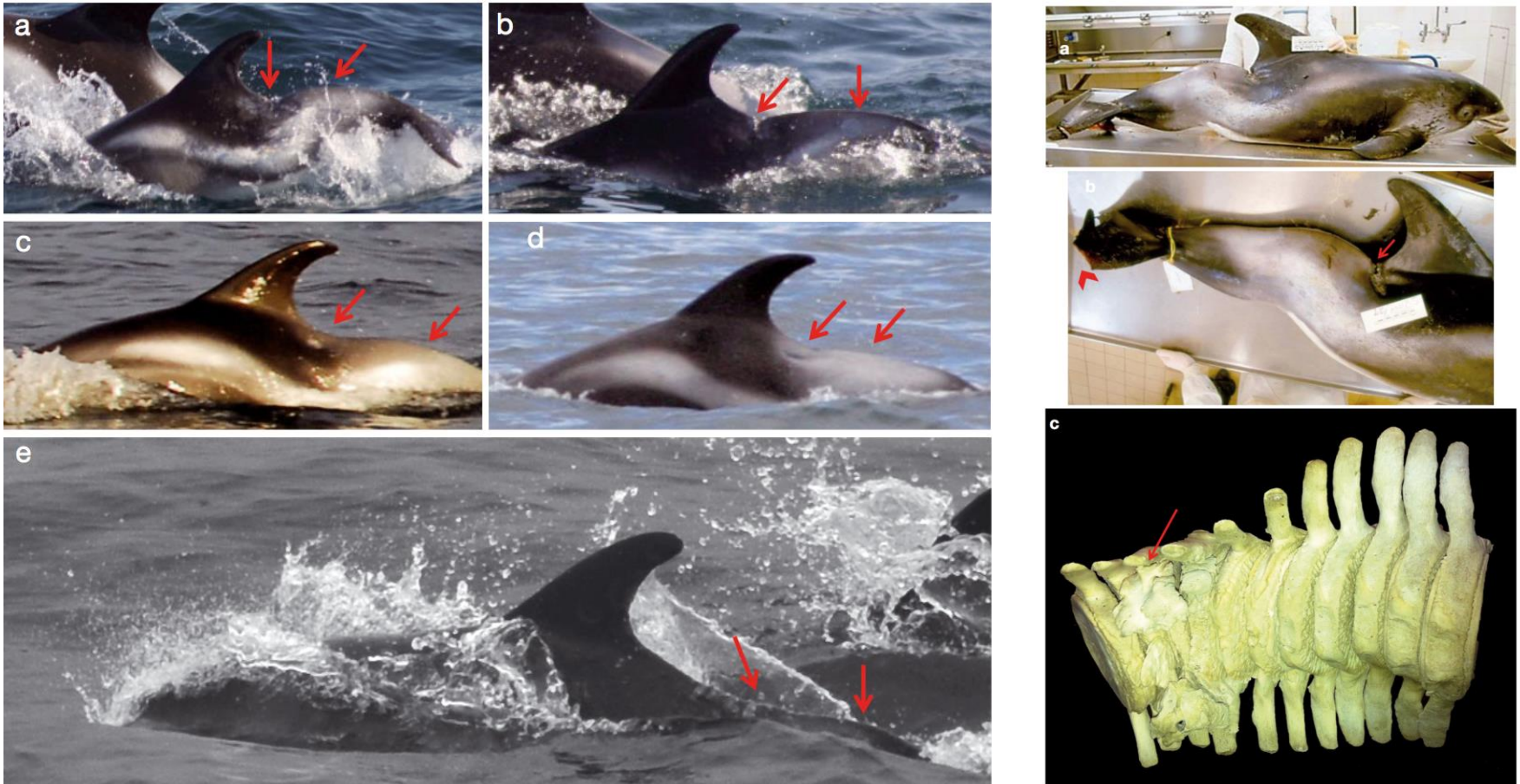
## Health Status



- Of 89 PME's in the UK from 1990-2011, 29 (33%) were live strandings, 14 (16%) had died of starvation, 9 (10%) of infectious disease, 8 (9%) of by-catch, 7 (8%) of physical trauma of unknown origin, 5 (6%) from dystocia (Deaville, 2013)
- Levels (mg/kg dry weight) of heavy metals from 28 ice entrapped indivs from Newfoundland ranged between 0.01-2.17 lead, 3.5-32.1 copper, 0.2-43.8 cadmium, 0.0-5.8 mercury, **0.0-20.2 selenium**, and 43.5-136.0 zinc; 4.5-88.6  $\Sigma$ DDT, 20.3-83.8  $\Sigma$ oxaphenes, **9.6-87.0 for  $\Sigma$ PCBs**, and 3.7-25.0 mg/kg wet wt  $\Sigma$ chlordanes (Muir *et al.*, 1988)
- Levels of **mercury** ranged between 1.3-27 mg/kg wet wt in the UK (Law *et al.*, 1991), and **5.7-220.7** mg.kg dry wt in Germany, and **229** mg/kg dry wt in French Channel (Anderson & Rebsdorff, 1976; Law *et al.*, 1991; Siebert *et al.*, 1999; Das *et al.*, 2003)



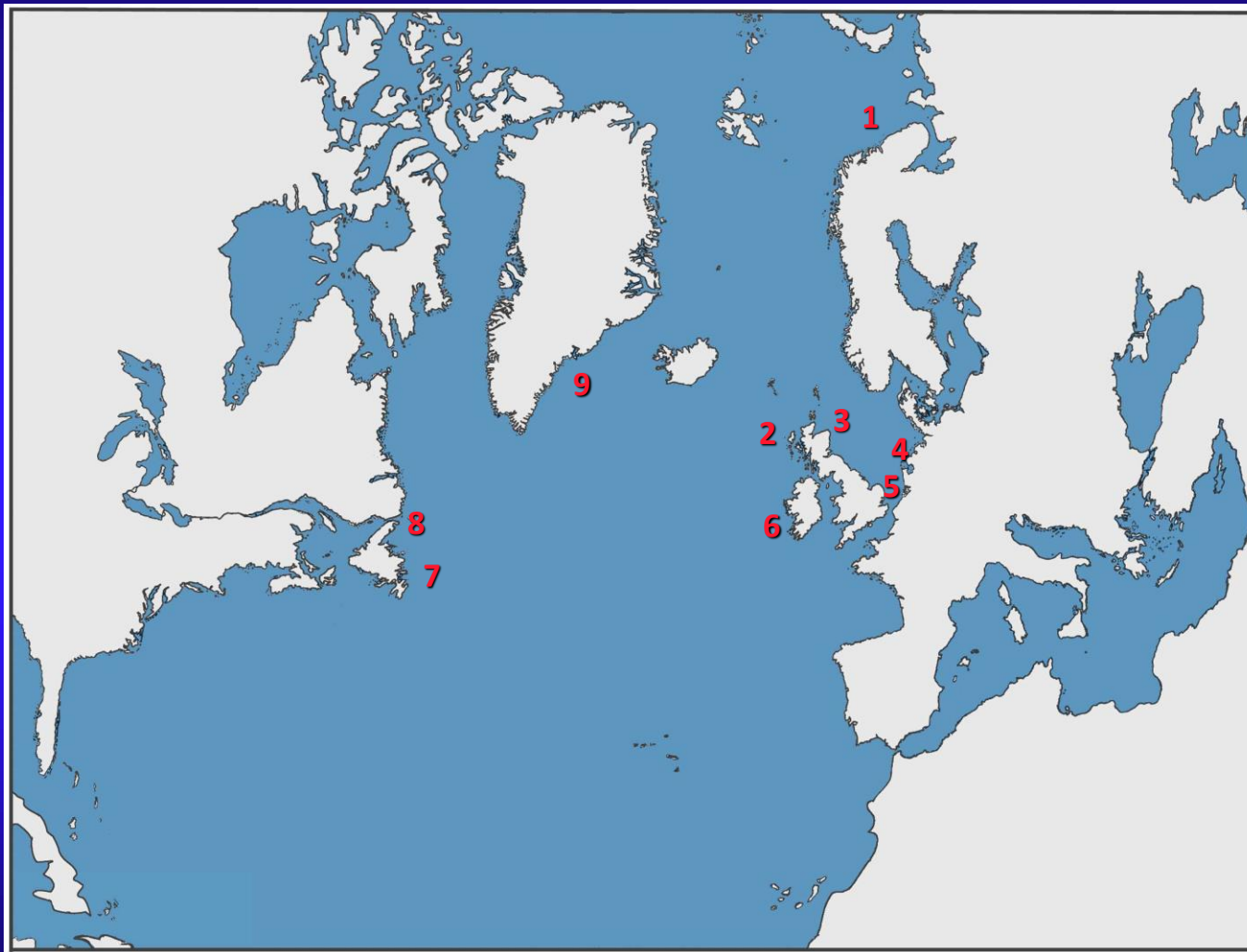
# White-beaked Dolphin Vertebral Deformities



- 72% (18 of 25 adults) in the North Sea had vertebral lesions associated with spondylosis deformans; 11 of these had pathologically fused vertebrae; 5/400 adults in Iceland had similar deformities

**Sources:** Galatius *et al.*, 2009; Bertulli, 2015; Bertulli *et al.*, 2015

# Geographic Variation in White-beaked Dolphin Diet



## Principal Species

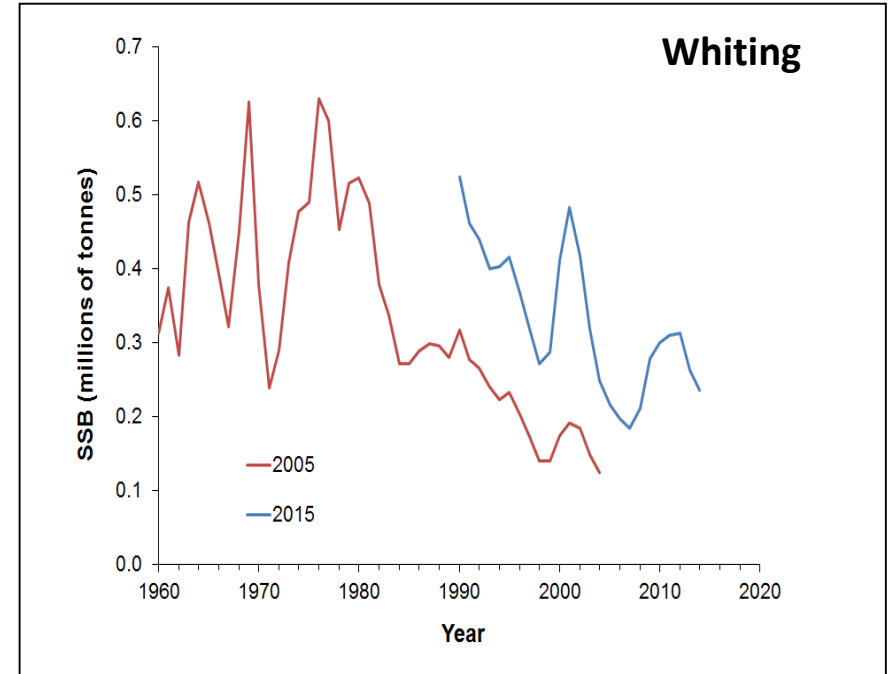
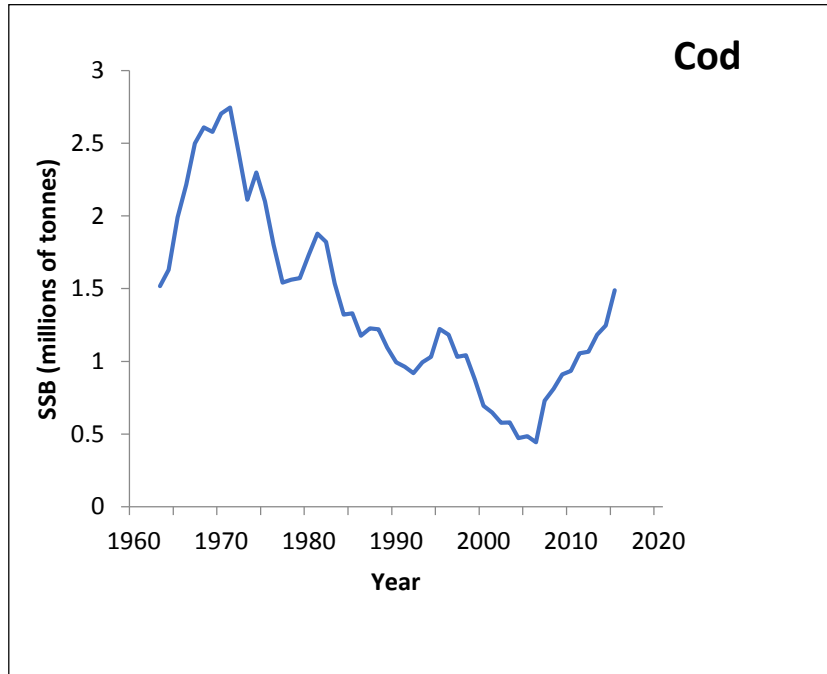
- |   |   |
|---|---|
| 1 | Blue whiting*,<br>herring*, capelin*                    |
| 2 | Herring*, mackerel*                                     |
| 3 | Haddock, whiting,<br>hake, cod                          |
| 4 | Cod, whiting, poor-<br>cod                              |
| 5 | Cod, whiting, bib,<br>sandeel, gobies,<br>shrimp, squid |
| 6 | Scad, gadids  |
| 7 | Cod   |
| 8 | Cod   |
| 9 | Capelin   |

(Sources: Sergeant & Fisher, 1957; Jonsgard & Christensen, 1968; Evans, 1987; Lick, 1994;

Berrow & Rogan, 1996; Dong *et al.*, 1996; Canning *et al.*, 2008; Skern-Mauritzen *et al.*, 2009; Jansen *et al.*, 2010)

# Temporal trends in fish prey species

## North Sea Spawning Stock Biomasses



Source: ICES data





*Thanks to Chiara Bertulli, Anders Galatius,  
Phil Hammond & Carl Kinze for additional  
unpublished information*