

## **Cetaceans and pinnipeds, September - November 1991**

Only data from ship-based surveys and seawatching were received in time. Most cetaceans were seen off the Scottish and English east coast, including solitary Minke Whales *Balaneoptera acutorostrata* (4x), and small herds of White-beaked Dolphins *Lagenorhynchus albirostris* (9x), White-sided Dolphin *Lagenorhynchus acutus* (2x), and Harbour Porpoise *Phocoena phocoena* (17x; figure 1). On 10 September, 25 White-beaked Dolphins were seen breaching at 54°25'N, 00°27'E, with 10 'patterned' dolphins (squares in figure 1) behaving just so on great distance from the ship (PD, JH). The next day, 4 White-sided Dolphins were seen breaching further to the north (55°00'N, 00°30'W). Minke Whales seen in these waters were sometimes seen close to fishing trawlers. The herringfleet was working at about 54°30'N, 01°00'E, in waters with Minke Whales, Harbour Porpoises and massive numbers of seabirds. White-beaked Dolphins were often seen at the bow of MV Tridens, or behind the ship during trawling (PD, JH, ML, HB). Of a mixed group of 4 White-sided and 2 White-beaked Dolphins

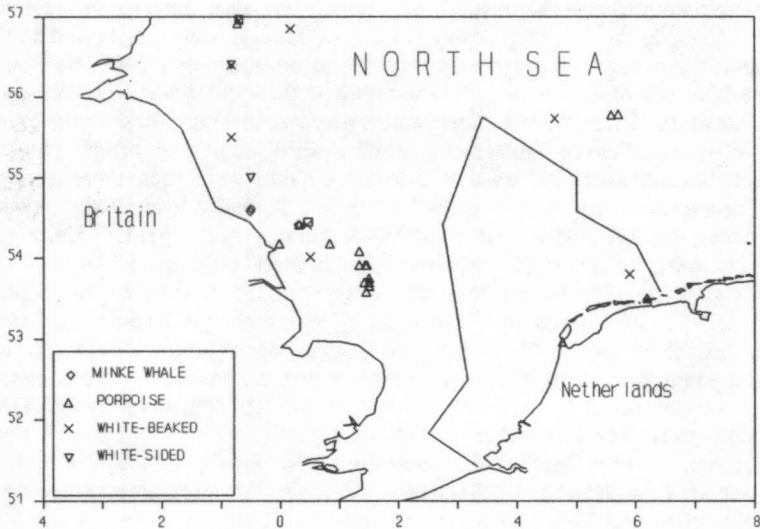


figure 1. Sightings of whales and dolphins, September-October 1991 (NZG marine mammal database)

(with 40 associated Gannets), only the White-beaked Dolphins came to the bow, while the first species stayed at least 500m away from the ship. 26 Harbour Porpoises were seen in flat calm conditions between 54°N, 01°20'E and 53°35'N, 01°27'E (figure 1). The average herd size of Harbour Porpoises off East Britain was  $2.7 \pm 1.4$  ( $n=17$  sightings, 46 individuals). Rather strong winds prevailed during most of the surveys this autumn, otherwise, without doubt, the number of cetaceans seen had been considerably larger.

Coastal sightings included a single Harbour Porpoise in Den Helder, 19 October (FG), and Schiermonnikoog, 12 October 1991 (WvS). White-beaked Dolphins were seen twice in the SE North Sea: 3 on 22 October at 53°48'N, 05°53.5'E (RH, HO), and a possible sighting (1 at the bow) on 30 October at 55°44'N, 04°38'E (BB, TG).

A single Harbour Seal was seen off Schiermonnikoog (23 September, 53°30'N, 06°48'E).

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