



THE BENEFITS OF LONG-TERM DATA COLLECTION ON CETACEANS IN SKJÁLFANDI BAY, NORTHEAST ICELAND IN COLLABORATION WITH WHALE WATCHING



Basran, CJ

Dr. Charla J. Basran & Dr. Marianne H. Rasmussen
University of Iceland's Húsavík Research Centre

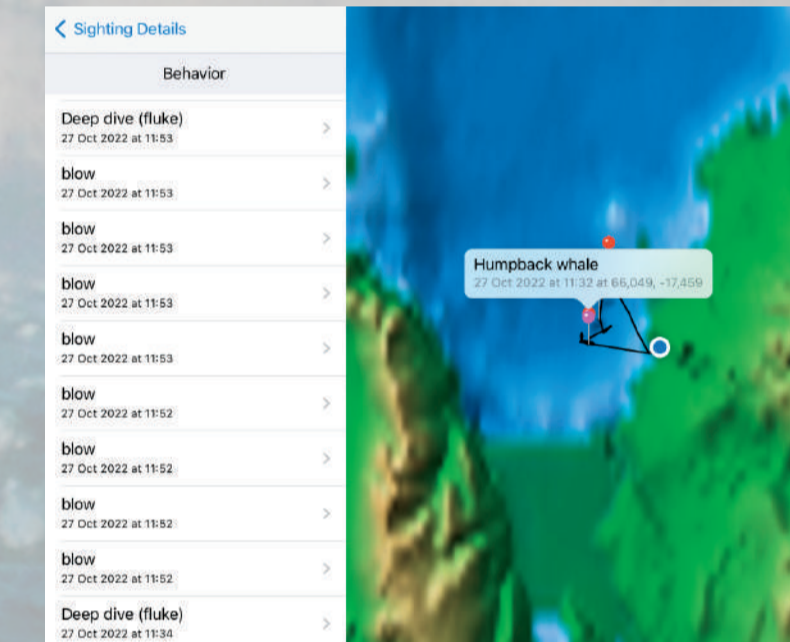
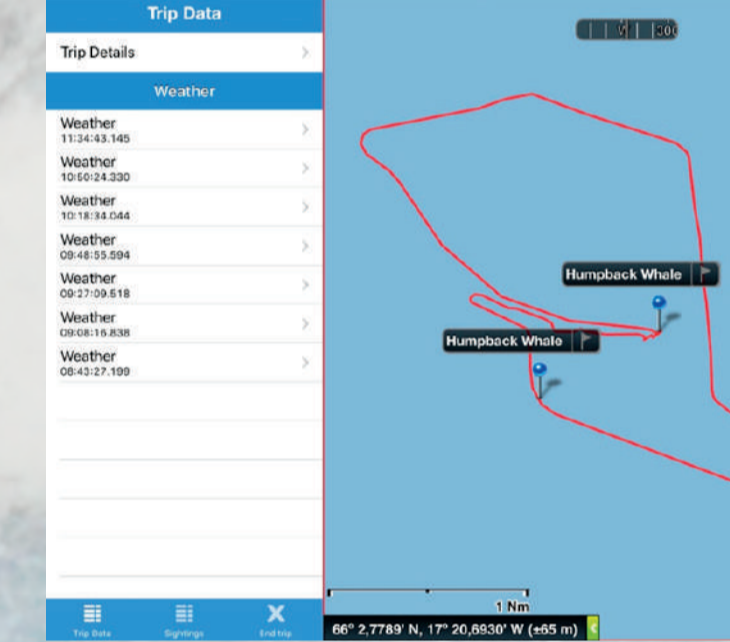
The University of Iceland's Húsavík Research Centre has been collecting cetacean data in Skjálfandi Bay since 2007 through an important collaboration between researchers, students, and whale watching companies. This has led to mutual benefits for all partners, a large cetacean photo-identification database, and interesting scientific findings, showing the great value of long-term, collaborative, and low-cost data collection.

Benefitting everyone

- Whale watching: extra education + tours with added "purpose"
- Tourists: opportunity to learn
- Students: 20 internship students per year, field experience and access to data for reports/theses
- Researchers: data to answer biological and ecological questions

Data collection

- GPS tracking using Spotterpro app
- Weather effort data
- Sightings locations
- Individual animal behaviours
- Photo-ID images



Scientific outputs

White-beaked dolphins



- ca. 350 individuals ID'd in 10 years
- one individual resighted in 5 years
- fin injuries & patches most stable for ID

Journal of the Marine Biological Association of the United Kingdom, 2016, 96(4), 807–819. © Marine Biological Association of the United Kingdom, 2015. doi:10.1017/S0025315415000284

An assessment of the natural marking patterns used for photo-identification of common minke whales and white-beaked dolphins in Icelandic waters

CHIARA G. BERTULLI¹, MARIANNE H. RASMUSSEN² AND MASSIMILIANO ROSSO³

Minke whales



- 50 recognizable IDs in 8 years
- one resighting in 6 consecutive years
- abundance decline in past 10 years

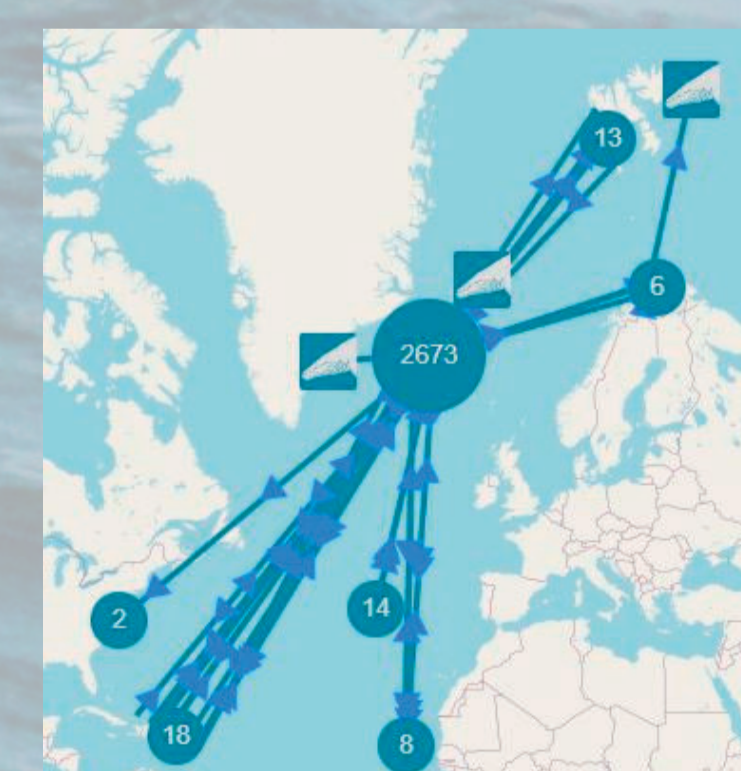
J. Cetacean. Res. Manage. In Press.

Habitat preference and trend in relative abundance of common minke whale (*Balaenoptera acutorostrata*) in Skjálfandi Bay, Iceland

ALEKSANDRA LECHWAR¹, MARIANNE RASMUSSEN¹, CHARLA BASRAN¹, SINÉAD COLLINS²

Humpback whales

- ca. 1000 individuals ID'd in 20 years
- 20-30% yearly resighting rate
- 64 international matches
- 25% entangled in fishing gear



Happywhale.org

Blue whales



- ca. 170 endangered North Atlantic blue whales ID'd in 15 years¹

Fin Whales



- 20 individuals + hybrid ID'd in 7 years
- 2 resightings in consecutive years



Acknowledgements

A huge thank you North Sailing and Gentle Giants Whale Watching for your collaboration, and to all the students and researchers collecting data. Also thank you to our partners the Marine and Freshwater Research Institute and Happywhale.

¹Project Blue Whale (Iversen et al.)