

Short note | Nota breve

First records of Fraser's Dolphin *Lagenodelphis hosei* for the Cape Verde Islands

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Keywords: Delphinidae, *Lagenodelphis*, Cape Verde Islands, distribution

On 31 August 2003, at 11:40 local time, *c.* 5 nm southwest of São Nicolau (16°33.1N, 024°27.7W), Cape Verde Islands, GT and PLS observed *c.* 20 Fraser's Dolphins *Lagenodelphis hosei* Fraser, 1956 (Fig.1). The sighting was made under excellent weather conditions (sea state Beaufort 2 with sun) from the 39.6 m diesel engine powered oceanographic research vessel *Taliarte* during a two week cetacean survey conducted as part of the Hydrocarpo project.

The animals were *c.* 2.5 m in length, with a short beak, robust body, small dorsal and pectoral fins and showed the characteristic longitudinal striping (cf. Jefferson *et al.* 1993, Carwardine 1995). The dolphins were travelling eastwards, but when the vessel changed direction in order to get closer to the animals, they changed course as well and accompanied the ship while bow-riding. During the *c.* 15 minutes of their presence, several juveniles were observed.

Water depth in the area of the sighting was 500 m according to the 1: 500,000 Spanish Navigation Chart No. 366. Within one mile of the Fraser's Dolphins, a pod of *c.* 15 Short-finned Pilot Whales *Globicephala macrorhynchus* Gray, 1846 was observed resting and socializing.

On 10 March 2006, at the beach near Curral

Velho on the southern coast of Boavista, PLS found the carcass of a small odontocete, 132 cm in length (Fig. 2). The specimen was identified as an immature female Fraser's Dolphin on account of the short beak, small size of the dorsal and pectoral fins and the contrast between the dark dorsal and whitish ventral.

These are the first records of Fraser's Dolphin for the Cape Verde Islands (cf. Hazevoet & Wenzel 2000). The species has a pantropical distribution (Jefferson *et al.* 1993, Perrin *et al.* 1994), but in many regions its distribution is poorly known (Jefferson & Leatherwood 1994), with most records being from the tropical Pacific and Indian Oceans (Leatherwood *et al.* 1983, Weir *et al.* 2008). In the western tropical Atlantic, there are sightings and strandings from the Caribbean region and Venezuela (Mignucci-Giannoni *et al.* 1999, Bolaños & Villarroel-Marin 2003). In West Africa, a stranding has been reported from Senegal, landings from Ghana, a tentative sighting off Nigeria and sightings off Angola (Van Waerebeek *et al.* 2000, Ofori-Danson *et al.* 2003, Weir *et al.* 2008, Weir 2010). There is also a record from the Canary Islands (Vonk & Martel 1990) and an unconfirmed sighting off Sierra Leone (Jefferson *et al.* 1997).



Fig. 1. *Lagenodelphis hosei*, 5 nm southwest of São Nicolau, 31 August 2003
(Gergely Torda)



Fig. 2. *Lagenodelphis hosei*, lateral and ventral view, Curral Velho, Boavista, 10 March 2006
(Pedro López Suárez)

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The survey was sponsored by the Hydrocarpo Project (2003-2005): Sustainable management of the coastal natural heritage and marine living resources of the Republic of Cape Verde (Interreg III B Program). The Instituto Canario de Ciencias Marinhas (Spain) and the Instituto Nacional de Desenvolvimento das

Pescas (Cape Verde) provided logistic support. We thank Vanda Marques Monteiro, Nuria Varo and Daniel Cejudo for assistance in the field. Vidal Martin helped with the identification of the stranded specimen. We also wish to thank the crew of RV *Taliarte* for their support of field activities.

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Received 19 February 2010

Accepted 26 February 2010