

## NOTES

### Notes on Three Beaked Whales from the Aleutian Islands

On June 6, 1947, in the company of a shore party from the motorship "Black Douglas," I discovered the putrid carcass of a male *Ziphius cavirostris* on the northeast side of Samalga Island, Aleutian Islands, Alaska. From this carcass, which was about 19 feet long, I recovered a portion of the right mandible, the symphyseal region of both mandibles, and a portion of the mesorostral ossification. Dr. Remington Kellogg has kindly identified the remains and has placed them in the U. S. National Museum as Specimen No. 276,022 (original No. VBS 1371).

On November 12, 1947, I visited Amchitka Island, in the western Aleutians, and was told by Elmer C. Hanson that the body of a small whale had appeared on the beach near Constantine Harbor some months before. The waves pounded the body to pieces, but Mr. Hanson saved one tooth. In a letter of March 18, 1948, Dr. Remington Kellogg writes that "the large flattened tooth which is broken off above the base belonged to some species of *Mesoplodon*. It is not sufficiently complete for precise identification."

To the best of my knowledge, not over ten skulls or fragmentary specimens of *Berardius bairdii* Stejneger have been preserved. These have been collected around the rim of the north Pacific from Santa Cruz, California, and Tokyo Bay, Japan, on the south to the Pribilof and Commander Islands on the north. Through the kindness of Henry Swanson, I am able to add a recent specimen, the skull of a subadult of unknown sex, which is now in the U. S. National Museum, Biological Surveys Collection, Specimen No. 33431X (original No. BDM 294).

In the fall of 1948 Aleut natives saw the carcass of this specimen stranded on the beach about 5 miles from the village of Unalaska. I tried to recover it in November but could not land on account of a heavy surf. Mr. Swanson subsequently chopped off the head and sent it to Seattle, where it arrived on December 18, 1948.

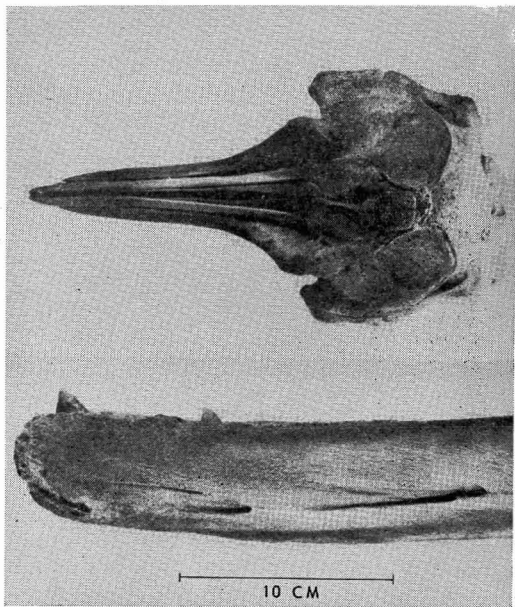


FIG. 1. Skull of Baird beaked whale from Unalaska, Alaska. Above, dorsal view; below, left mandible, anterior portion, outer face, showing the two teeth. (Scale applies to lower figure only.) (Photographs No. 2493 and 2495.)

Sea gulls, ravens, and foxes had torn at the flesh over a period of several months, with the result that the original contour of the head was lost. Karl W. Kenyon and I cleaned the skull in boiling dilute sodium hydroxide, and found that it measured 1,043 mm. in greatest length, and 537 mm. in greatest breadth (Fig. 1).

*Berardius bairdii* normally has four teeth, two in each half of the lower jaw. In my specimen the larger, foremost tooth of the pair is firmly rooted while the smaller, hindmost one can be easily picked out with the fingers.—Victor B. Scheffer, U. S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Seattle, Washington.