

STRIPED DOLPHIN, STENELLA COERULEOALBA (MEYEN) IN THE CENTRAL MEDITERRANEAN SEA: AN ANALYSIS OF THE NEW DATA °

by

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SUMMARY

All the data concerning the striped dolphin, Stenella coeruleoalba, collected by the Project Cetacea in the Central Mediterranean Sea are summarized and analysed in the present paper.

Stenella coeruleoalba seems to be very common, mainly in the offshore waters; information about its biology and behaviour is also given in this work.

RESUME

Le dauphin bleu et blanc, Stenella coeruleoalba, semble être bien plus commun que ce que l'on a retenu jusqu'à présent.

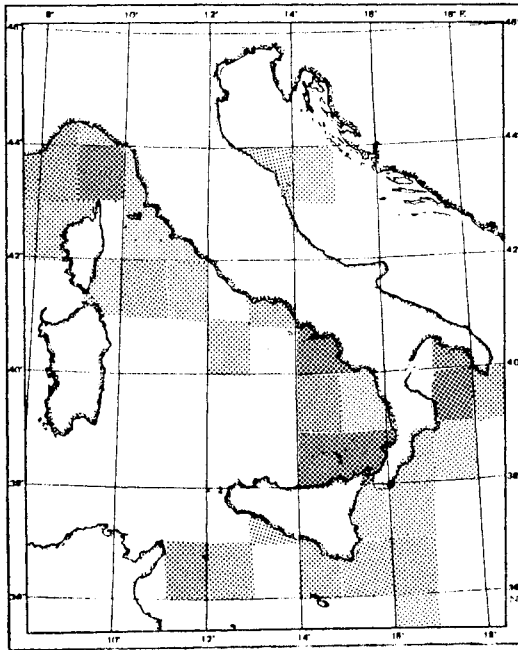
En effet, pendant que jusqu'en 1978 on avait peu de notices certaines sur la réelle distribution de cette espèce dans les eaux italiennes, actuellement on dispose de 102 signalements, pour un total d'environ 1952 individus, repérés, échoués ou capturés. Des ces signalements il a été possible avoir des indications sur la biologie et sur la composition numérique des écoles, qui apparaît souvent atypique.

An up-to-date statement of the status of the striped dolphin, Stenella coeruleoalba (Meyen, 1833) is reported in this paper. 92 sightings (concerning about 1923 specimens) have been collected until October 1982. This amount of records give a reliable indication of the numerical composition of the schools (see the table of the next page) and a good image of the geographical distribution of this species in the Italian seas.

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specimens per school													
1	2	3	4	5	6-10	11-15	16-20	21-30	31-40	41-50	51-100	101-500	> 500
10	6	5	5	12	30	6	6	5	-	10	5	2	-
amount of records													

6 strandings are also reported, all involving specimens with a length of about 2 meters; one specimen of Stenella coeruleoalba was killed by the propellers of a fishing boat and another one was killed by arpoons. 21 specimens were captured in two separated cases, by tuna purse nets in the Ligurian Sea, but only one specimen died, while the others were left free.



Coupling specimens have been noticed in July; calves and very young specimens were sighted in February (1), May (3), June (8), July (6), August (4), September (2) and October (1).

The striped dolphin seems to prefer the open clear waters and to feed mainly on anchovies and sardinas (DI NATALE, 1979).

The maximum reported speed is 32 knots, due to an herd of five specimens in the southern Tyrrhenian Sea and noticed by an hydrofoil. Stenella coeruleoalba is often reported to bow ride and, rarely, to jump vertically clear of the water. This species seems to be more com-

mon in the Mediterranean Sea than the old Authors believed.

REFERENCE

- DI NATALE A., 1979 - Progress of research relating to Mediterranean Cetacea. Project Cetacea, special report, V. Annex to: Mem.Biol.Mar.Ocean., IX (1-2), 50 pp.