

ISSN 2307-8235 (online) IUCN 2020: T40635A50380449

Scope(s): Global Language: English



Indopacetus pacificus, Indo-pacific Beaked Whale

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Citation: Pitman, R.L. & Brownell Jr., R.L. 2020. *Indopacetus pacificus. The IUCN Red List of Threatened Species* 2020: e.T40635A50380449. https://dx.doi.org/10.2305/IUCN.UK.2020-3.RLTS.T40635A50380449.en

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Taxonomy

Kingdom	Phylum	Class	Order	Family
Animalia	Chordata	Mammalia	Cetartiodactyla	Ziphiidae

Scientific Name: Indopacetus pacificus (Longman, 1926)

Synonym(s):

Mesoplodon pacificus Longman, 1926
Mesoplodon pacificus Longman, 1926

• Mesoplodon pacificus (Longman, 1926)

Common Name(s):

• English: Indo-pacific Beaked Whale, Indo-Pacific Beaked Whale, Longman's Beaked

Whale, Longman's Beaked Whale, Tropical Bottlenose Whale, Tropical

Bottlenose Whale

• French: Baleine A Bec De Longman, Baleine A Bec De Longman

• Spanish; Castilian: Zifio De Longman, Zifio De Longman

• Japanese: Taiheiyou akaboumodoki

Taxonomic Source(s):

Committee on Taxonomy. 2017. List of marine mammal species and subspecies. Available at: www.marinemammalscience.org. (Accessed: 31 August 2018).

Taxonomic Notes:

This species was originally included in the genus *Mesoplodon* (Longman 1926), but based on morphological features, Moore (1968) created the monotypic genus *Indopacetus*. There has been debate about the validity of this genus (e.g., Mead 1989, Rice 1998), and, although Dalebout *et al.* (2003) were unable to validate *Indopacetus* based on available genetic evidence, they recommended retention of the genus based on morphological features. Prior to descriptions of its field characteristics, sightings in tropical waters of what are now known to be this species were sometimes mistakenly attributed to the genus *Hyperoodon* (Pitman *et al.* 1999, Dalebout *et al.* 2003).

Assessment Information

Red List Category & Criteria: Least Concern ver 3.1

Year Published: 2020

Date Assessed: August 23, 2020

Justification:

There is no information on global abundance or trends in abundance for this species. The species was classified as Data Deficient (DD) on the IUCN Red List in 2008. Clarifying language in the Guidelines (Version 14, 2019) states that: "If the data are so uncertain that both CR and LC are plausible categories, the taxon can be listed as DD." Although the information is sparse, this species appears to occur in a variety of locations and across a substantial swath of ocean in the Southern Hemisphere and the western North Pacific. Therefore, it is not rare (see Supplement for definitions), therefore the category

of CR cannot be plausibly applied and the species does not belong in the DD category. This species is not rare and it appears to be fairly common in at least some parts of its large range (see Supplement for definitions), which spans parts of both the Pacific and Indian Oceans. Longman's Beaked Whales are vulnerable to low-level threats in a substantial portion of their range. However, well-documented threats (especially anthropogenic noise) are not significant in much of the range. In addition, the large range allows the potential to contain demographically independent populations that could buffer overall risk to the species. Plausible categories are NT or LC. Least Concern is the more appropriate category since the species is fairly common in parts of its large range and subpopulations (demographically independent populations) may exist (see Supplement).

Previously Published Red List Assessments

2008 - Data Deficient (DD)

https://dx.doi.org/10.2305/IUCN.UK.2008.RLTS.T40635A10345818.en

1996 - Data Deficient (DD)

1996 – Data Deficient (DD)

1994 - Insufficiently Known (K)

Geographic Range

Range Description:

The distribution is not fully known, but these whales apparently range throughout the tropical Indo-Pacific region (i.e., eastern Pacific to western Indian Ocean; Dalebout *et al.* 2003, Anderson *et al.* 2006, Jefferson *et al.* 2015) and in the southern Bay of Bengal (Afsal *et al.* 2009). They were rarely seen in the eastern tropical Pacific during systematic large-scale surveys (Hamilton *et al.* 2009), and may be more common in the western Pacific (Pitman *et al.* 1999). They also appear to be relatively common in the western Indian Ocean, especially around the Maldives (Anderson *et al.* 2006). Stranded specimens are known from tropical and warm-temperate waters of Australia, Somalia, South Africa, the Maldives, Kenya, India, Myanmar, New Caledonia, the Philippines, China, Taiwan, Japan and Hawaii.

Country Occurrence:

Native, Extant (resident): Australia; China; Comoros; Indonesia; Japan; Kenya; Madagascar; Malaysia; Maldives; Mayotte; Mexico; Myanmar; New Caledonia; Philippines; Somalia; South Africa; Sri Lanka; Taiwan, Province of China; United States (Hawaiian Is.)

Native, Presence Uncertain: India; Mozambique; Pakistan; Tanzania, United Republic of; Thailand; Viet Nam

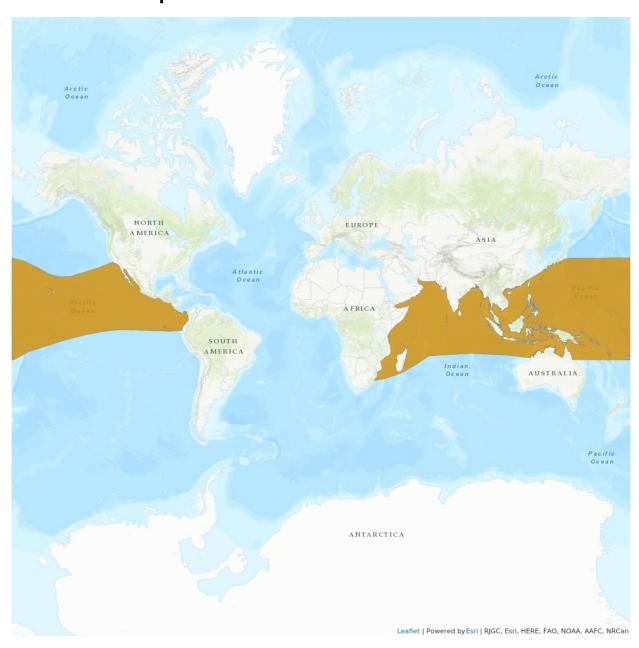
FAO Marine Fishing Areas:

Native: Indian Ocean - eastern

Native: Indian Ocean - western

Native: Pacific - western central

Distribution Map





Compiled by:

IUCN (International Union for Conservation of Nature) 2012





The boundaries and names shown and the designations used on this map do not imply any official endorsement, acceptance or opinion by IUCN.



Population

There is no information on trends in the global abundance of this species. This is apparently a common to un uncommon species although very little survey work has been conducted in low-latitude, openocean areas where it mainly occurs. The only estimates of abundance are: 4,571 individuals (CV= 0.65) around Hawaii (Bradford *et al.* 2013) and 291 (CV=100%) in the eastern Pacific (Ferguson and Barlow 2001).

Current Population Trend: Unknown

Habitat and Ecology (see Appendix for additional information)

Little is known about the biology of this species. Live sightings come from scattered locations, mainly in deep, oceanic waters in the tropical and subtropical Indo-Pacific, in areas with surface water temperatures of 21-31°C. Dive times of up to 33 min have been recorded (Anderson *et al.* 2006). School sizes tend to be large and may vary regionally: reported mean school sizes range from 7.2 (western Indian Ocean) to 29.2 (western Pacific), with individual groups ranging from 1-100 individuals (Pitman *et al.* 1999, Anderson *et al.* 2006). Stomach contents of single animals stranded in Japan (Yatabe *et al.* 2010) and the Philippines (Yamada *et al.* 2012) contained beaks of various mid-water squids.

Systems: Marine

Threats (see Appendix for additional information)

Little specific information is available on threats to Longman's Beaked Whales. Although there has never been a directed fishery for them, pervasive gillnet and longline fisheries throughout their range raise concern that at least some bycatch occurs, as is true for other beaked whales (e.g., Nishimura and Nishiwaki 1964, Julian and Beeson 1998, Waring et al. 2009). In Sri Lanka, for example, there is evidence of occasional incidental or directed takes of animals identified as Southern Bottlenose Whales (Hyperoodon planifrons, Dayaratne and Joseph 1993), which in retrospect were most likely Longman's Beaked Whales (Anderson et al. 2006, Afsal et al. 2009). Even low levels of human-caused mortality might be unsustainable for populations of this naturally uncommon species.

In recent years, there has been increasing evidence that loud underwater sounds, such as active sonar and seismic operations, can be harmful to beaked whales (Cox et al. 2006). In particular, the use of active sonar from military vessels has been implicated in numerous atypical mass strandings of beaked whales, including several *Mesoplodon* species (Balcomb and Claridge 2001, Wang and Yang 2006, D'Amico et al. 2009, Filadelfo et al. 2009). The exact cause for the strandings is unknown, but stranded individuals sometimes suffer from chronic and acute tissue damage due to in vivo formation of gas bubbles, possibly resulting from decompression sickness (Frantzis 1998, Jepson et al. 2003, Fernández et al. 2005). Two Longman's Beaked Whales (possibly a mother and calf) stranded alive in Taiwan coincident with naval training exercises in the area; at least one of these individuals had lesions consistent with gas embolism (Yang et al. 2008). Ingestion of plastic in the ocean by marine organisms is a widespread and increasing problem, and possibly a significant cause of mortality among cetaceans, especially beaked whales (Simmonds 2012, Fossi et al. 2018). The specific threats include macroplastic items that can physically block the digestive tract and lead to death (Secchi and Zarzur 1999), and microplastics (<5 mm; Baulch and Perry 2014, Lusher et al. 2015) that can leach toxic chemicals (Baini et al. 2017). Two Longman's beaked whales examined had plastic in their stomachs (Yamada et al. 2012)

and another may have died from ingesting plastic bags (Kaladharan *et al.* 2014). Organochlorine residues have been identified in various species of mesoplodonts (Miyazaki *et al.* 1987, Kajiwara *et al.* 2006, Bachman *et al.* 2014, Anezaki *et al.* 2016), including this species (Bachman *et al.* 2014), but the potential health hazard is of unknown significance. All beaked whales normally live far offshore; mortality from ship strikes would be difficult to document, but some possible cases have been reported (Dalebout *et al.* 2004, Waring *et al.* 2009). Morbilliviruses became recognized as pathogens in marine mammals in the late 1980s (Van Bressem et al. 2014). Infection was first confirmed in Longman's Beaked Whale in 2010 from a stranding in Hawaii (West *et al.* 2013), and this disease syndrome may have contributed to a mass stranding in New Caledonia (Garrigue *et al.* 2016). The prevalence and potential impact of morbillivirus on this species is not currently known.

Predicted effects of global climate change on the marine environment may affect Longman's Beaked Whales although the nature and severity of impacts are unclear (Learmonth *et al.* 2006).

Conservation Actions (see Appendix for additional information)

The species is listed in Appendix II of CITES. Research is needed to determine the impacts of potential threatening processes on this species.

Credits

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Compiler(s):

Authority/Authorities: IUCN SSC Cetacean Specialist Group (dolphins, porpoises and whales)

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Citation

Pitman, R.L. & Brownell Jr., R.L. 2020. *Indopacetus pacificus*. *The IUCN Red List of Threatened Species* 2020: e.T40635A50380449. https://dx.doi.org/10.2305/IUCN.UK.2020-3.RLTS.T40635A50380449.en

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Appendix

Habitats

(http://www.iucnredlist.org/technical-documents/classification-schemes)

Habitat	Season	Suitability	Major Importance?
10. Marine Oceanic -> 10.1. Marine Oceanic - Epipelagic (0-200m)	-	Suitable	Yes
10. Marine Oceanic -> 10.2. Marine Oceanic - Mesopelagic (200-1000m)	-	Suitable	Yes
10. Marine Oceanic -> 10.3. Marine Oceanic - Bathypelagic (1000-4000m)		Suitable	Yes

Threats

(http://www.iucnredlist.org/technical-documents/classification-schemes)

Threat	Timing	Scope	Severity	Impact Score
5. Biological resource use -> 5.4. Fishing & harvesting aquatic resources -> 5.4.3. Unintentional effects: (subsistence/small scale) [harvest]	Ongoing	Minority (50%)	Negligible declines	Low impact: 4
	Stresses:	2. Species Stresses -> 2.1. Species mortality		
9. Pollution -> 9.3. Agricultural & forestry effluents -> 9.3.3. Herbicides and pesticides	Ongoing	Unknown	Unknown	Unknown
9. Pollution -> 9.4. Garbage & solid waste	Ongoing	Unknown	Unknown	Unknown
	Stresses:	2. Species Stresses -> 2.1. Species mortality		
9. Pollution -> 9.6. Excess energy -> 9.6.3. Noise pollution	Ongoing	Minority (50%)	Negligible declines	Low impact: 4
	Stresses:	2. Species Stresses -> 2.1. Species mortality		
		2. Species Stresses -> 2.2. Species disturbance		
11. Climate change & severe weather -> 11.1. Habitat shifting & alteration	Future	Unknown	Unknown	Unknown
	Stresses:	1. Ecosystem stresses -> 1.2. Ecosystem degradation		
		2. Species Stresses -> 2.2. Species disturbance		

Conservation Actions in Place

(http://www.iucnredlist.org/technical-documents/classification-schemes)

Conservation Action in Place		
In-place education		
Included in international legislation: Yes		
Subject to any international management / trade controls: Yes		

Research Needed

(http://www.iucnredlist.org/technical-documents/classification-schemes)

Research Needed

- 1. Research -> 1.2. Population size, distribution & trends
- 1. Research -> 1.3. Life history & ecology
- 1. Research -> 1.4. Harvest, use & livelihoods
- 1. Research -> 1.5. Threats
- 3. Monitoring -> 3.1. Population trends

Additional Data Fields

Population

Population severely fragmented: No

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