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O RASPREDELENII KITOOBRAZNYKH V MORYAKH,  
OMYVAYUSHCHIKH CHUKOTSKIY POLUOSTROV

(Distribution of Cetaceans in Seas  
Surrounding the Chukchi Peninsula)

by

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## ABSTRACT

The whales were observed in Chukchi area by the author (1937-1941) and the seamen of the Aleut (1942-1943). It appears that Balaena mysticetus and Delphinapterus dorofeevi migrate north in April-May and south in December. Eschrichtius glaucus, Balaenoptera acutorostrata, B. physalus, Megaptera nodosa and Orcinus orca appear off the Chukchi Peninsula in June and remain there until the end of October.

Translator

DISTRIBUTION OF CETACEANS IN SEAS  
SURROUNDING THE CHUKCHI PENINSULA

No one has specifically studied the distribution of whales in the water surrounding the Chukchi Peninsula. The observations conducted by Zenkovich\* and the captains of whaling vessels only partly elucidate the problem for a brief period of the year (August-September).

When the author studied the Chukchi area (1937-1941), it was possible to obtain data on the occurrence of whales in the area. It should be noted that the observations were conducted mainly from the coast, but the observations were not regular. Therefore, the listed figures cannot reflect the numerical composition of whales in the Chukchi water. However, the paper has some interesting points, such as the dates of appearance, duration of stay and disappearance of whales off the Chukchi coast.

Species Composition

The following cetaceans can be considered as constant inhabitants of Chukchi area and N. Bering Sea:

1. Greenland or Arctic Whale (Balaena mysticetus Lin) occurs in coastal belt during migrations in April-June and November-December.
2. Gray Whale (Eschrichtius glaucus Cope) is observed from June to November. It occurs in groups (from several to a hundred or more individuals) and often enters gulfs and lagoons.
3. Little Piked Whale (Balaenoptera acutorostrata Lacepede) is found in the Bering Strait in June and October-November. It migrates south. Occurs singly near the coast.
4. Fin Whale (Balaenoptera physalus Lin) is found in groups in Chukchi area from the second half of June to the end of October.
5. Hump-back Whale (Megaptera nodosa Bonaterre) appears by the end of June or the beginning of July. Forms small groups off the coast; often is seen in bays and lagoons.
6. Killer Whale (Orcinus orca [Fabr]) approaches the Chukchi coast

\*B. A. ZENKOVICH. (Development of marine mammal industry in Chukchi area.) PRIRODA, No. 11-12, 1938.

TABLE 1

## QUANTITY OF WHALES OBSERVED IN CHUKCHI AREA

| Month                   | Year | Total of<br>Observed Whales | Species Not<br>Determined | Fin Whale | Gray Whale | Humpback Whale | Little Piked<br>Whale | Killer Whale | Greenland Whale | Beluga | Place of<br>Observation                                 |
|-------------------------|------|-----------------------------|---------------------------|-----------|------------|----------------|-----------------------|--------------|-----------------|--------|---------------------------------------------------------|
| July                    | 1937 | 151                         | -                         | 70        | -          | 80             | -                     | -            | 1               | -      | Bering Strait<br>mys Serdtse-Kamen'                     |
| Sept.                   |      | 545                         | 1                         | 57        | 230        | 253            | 4                     | -            | -               | -      | Bering Strait<br>Proliv Senyavina<br>mys Serdtse-Kamen' |
| Oct.                    |      | 63                          | 13                        | 50        | -          | -              | -                     | -            | -               | -      | mys Serdtse-Kamen'                                      |
| June                    | 1938 | 153                         | 39                        | -         | 105        | -              | 3                     | 1            | 6               | -      | Metkulen, Bering Strait                                 |
| July                    |      | 244                         | 214                       | 19        | 5          | -              | 1                     | -            | 1               | -      | " " "                                                   |
| Aug.                    |      | 169                         | 88                        | 12        | 1          | 60             | -                     | 8            | -               | -      | Bering Strait, m.<br>Intsova, m. Chaplina               |
| Sept.                   |      | 69                          | 35                        | 16        | 10         | -              | -                     | 8            | -               | -      | Bering Strait                                           |
| Oct.                    |      | 4                           | 4                         | -         | -          | -              | -                     | -            | -               | -      | " "                                                     |
| April                   | 1939 | 86                          | -                         | -         | -          | -              | -                     | -            | 3               | 83     | " "                                                     |
| May                     |      | 38                          | -                         | -         | -          | -              | -                     | -            | 1               | 37     | " "                                                     |
| June                    |      | 5                           | 5                         | -         | -          | -              | -                     | -            | -               | -      | " "                                                     |
| July                    |      | 47                          | 20                        | 19        | 2          | -              | 6                     | -            | -               | -      | " "                                                     |
| Aug.                    |      | 264                         | 16                        | 60        | 70         | 31             | 71                    | 16           | -               | -      | " "                                                     |
| Sept.                   |      | 62                          | -                         | 14        | 35         | 14             | -                     | -            | -               | -      | " "                                                     |
| Aug.                    | 1940 | 85                          | -                         | 7         | 78         | -              | -                     | -            | -               | -      | " "                                                     |
| Sept.                   |      | 72                          | -                         | 7         | 65         | -              | -                     | -            | -               | -      | " "                                                     |
| June                    | 1941 | 90                          | -                         | -         | -          | -              | -                     | 90           | -               | -      | " "                                                     |
| Aug.                    |      | 193                         | -                         | -         | 133        | 50             | 10                    | -            | -               | -      | M. Intsova                                              |
| Sept.                   |      | 12                          | -                         | 5         | 3          | 1              | 3                     | -            | -               | -      | "                                                       |
| Oct.                    |      | 130                         | 130                       | -         | -          | -              | -                     | -            | -               | -      | Bering Strait                                           |
| Aug.                    | 1942 | 1408                        | -                         | 164       | 1012       | 122            | -                     | 110          | -               | -      | Anadyrskiy zaliv,<br>Beringov proliv.                   |
| Sept.                   |      | 782                         | -                         | 551       | 142        | 77             | -                     | 12           | -               | -      | Anadyrskiy zaliv.<br>Beringov proliv.                   |
| Aug.                    | 1943 | 32                          | -                         | -         | 13         | 19             | -                     | -            | -               | -      | Anadyrskiy zaliv.                                       |
| Total<br>for 7<br>Years |      | 4704                        | 564                       | 1051      | 1904       | 687            | 115                   | 245          | 10              | 120    |                                                         |

in November-December. In areas where the greatest masses converge, this carnivorous whale forms groups (from several to tens of individuals).

7. Beluga (Delphinapterus dorofeevi Klumov and Barabasch) appears /257 in the Bering Strait when migrating north in April and south in November-December. In this period the whale is found mainly in the estuaries of Anadyr' and Kolyma.

#### Seasonal Distribution of Whales in Chukchi Water

In April the Greenland whales and belugas migrate north through the Bering Strait. In June some species of whales approach the Chukchi Peninsula. The above table lists the observation data on whales in Chukchi area for 7 years.

#### Conclusion

On the basis of observations it was possible to determine the migration dates of whales in Chukchi area.

During the entire navigational period (April-November) the main commercial species (humpback w., gray w., fin whale and little piked whale) are observed in considerable numbers in the coastal belt in the visible range.

These data once more confirm the need for organization of a whaling base in Chukchi area.

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