

**Abstract.**—We used canonical correspondence analysis (CCA), an eigenvector ordination technique that includes direct gradient analysis, to investigate habitat use by spotted, *Stenella attenuata*, spinner, *S. longirostris*, striped, *S. coeruleoalba*, and common, *Delphinus delphis*, dolphins in the eastern tropical Pacific during 1986–90. Data were collected during annual research vessel cruises conducted in August–November of each year. Environmental variables included in the analyses were surface temperature, salinity, sigma-t, and chlorophyll, and thermocline depth and thickness. The dominant pattern in the species-environment relationship (1st canonical axis) separated common dolphins from spotted and spinner dolphins, based on their associations with cool upwelling habitat and warm tropical habitat, respectively. The second axis separated whitebelly spinners from eastern spinner dolphins. Both occurred in tropical water, but were separated primarily by thermocline topography. The species-environment correlations were 0.67 on the first axis, 0.42 on the second. Overall, the environmental data explained 15% of the variance in the species data. For individual school types this ranged from 36% for common dolphins to 6% for striped dolphins. Interannual variability in the species data was small but was judged significant by a Monte Carlo randomization test. Residual interannual variance was insignificant after removing variance associated with environmental variables.

## Interannual variability of dolphin habitats in the eastern tropical Pacific. I: Research vessel surveys, 1986-1990

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The eastern tropical Pacific (ETP) supports a diverse and abundant cetacean fauna of over 25 species (Leatherwood et al., 1982; Au and Perryman, 1985). It is a vast area, larger than the entire North Atlantic. Its waters are truly pelagic, except near a few islands and over a narrow continental shelf. Prior to the 1960s almost nothing was known of the distribution and ecology of the region's cetaceans beyond summaries of catch localities from nineteenth century fisheries for large whales (Townsend, 1935).

By the late 1960s, it became clear that large numbers of dolphins were being killed in the ETP in tuna purse seine operations (Perrin, 1969). The U.S. government initiated a program at that time to place scientific observers on purse seiners to monitor dolphin mortality (Smith, 1983). Beginning in 1974, research vessels were dispatched to the region to supplement the observer data (Holt et al., 1987). The combination of these efforts has produced unprecedented amounts of information on pelagic cetaceans. In this study we focused on the dolphin species affected by the tuna fishery: spotted dolphins, *Stenella attenuata*, two subspecies of spinner dolphins, *S. longirostris*, "whitebelly spinners" and "eastern spinners" (Perrin, 1990), striped dolphins, *S. coeruleoalba*, and common dolphins, *Delphinus delphis*.

Dolphin distribution patterns have been described from sighting and collection localities (e.g. Evans, 1975; Perrin, 1975; Perrin et al., 1983, 1985; Au and Perryman, 1985). Au and Perryman (1985) studied cetacean habitats of the eastern tropical Pacific from sightings and oceanographic data collected during the northern winter. They described two complementary patterns, both with apparent links to regional oceanography. One pattern, shown by common and striped dolphins, coincided with "upwelling-modified" conditions found along the equator and at the tropical terminations of eastern boundary currents off Baja California and the coasts of Ecuador and northern Peru (described in more detail below in Study Area). The second pattern, shown by spotted and spinner dolphins, coincided with largely tropical waters off Mexico, where warm, low-salinity surface waters occur over a strong, relatively shallow thermocline.

Reilly (1990) examined ETP dolphin distributions during the northern summer, and quantitatively tested Au and Perryman's habitat hypotheses. He found an apparent offshore shift in spotted, spinner, and striped (but not common) dolphins coincident with seasonal shoaling of a thermocline ridge along 10°N (Fig. 1). This seasonal shoaling is part of the dominant

pattern of seasonal change in the ETP, associated with the north-south movement of the Intertropical Convergence Zone between the trade winds (Fiedler, 1992). Statistical tests supported the habitat hypotheses of Au and Perryman (1985) for spotted, spinner,

and common dolphins, but not for striped dolphins. During the summer, striped dolphins occupied habitat that was geographically complementary with habitats of both common and of spotted/spinner dolphins (Fig. 1). Striped dolphin habitat was indistinguishable statistically from either the upwelling-

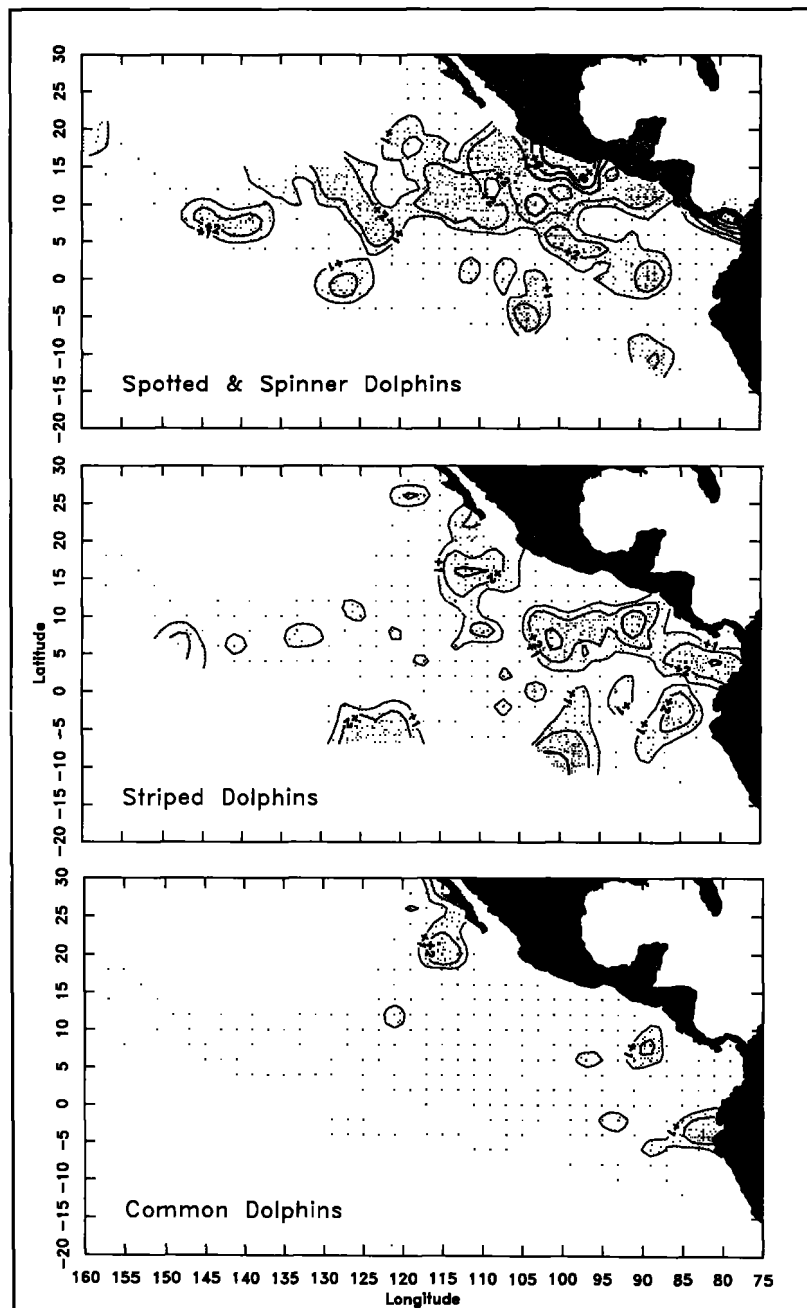
modified or tropical habitats with the variables used, indicating that other factors or processes act to separate these dolphins from the others.

Interannual variation in the region's oceanography is dominated by the quasi-periodic El Niño-Southern Oscillation (ENSO; Enfield, 1989). Interannual variation exceeds seasonal variation in much of the ETP (Fiedler, 1992). ENSO variability affects all of the patterns and processes so far identified with cetacean habitats in the ETP. From this we hypothesized that dolphin distributions might change interannually in response to changes in the distribution of their habitats. If so, this could have important implications for the monitoring of trends in animal abundance now in progress from research vessel surveys (Gerrodette and Wade, 1991) and tuna vessel observer data (Anganuzzi and Buckland, 1989).

The primary objective of this study was to examine interannual variability in dolphin habitats, defined by multivariate techniques, for the years 1986–90. We also suggest methods for the use of habitat information in the monitoring of trends in cetacean abundance. That is, given a quantitative definition of habitat and a record of interannual changes in habitat distribution, can we help reduce variance or bias, or both, in the estimation of abundance or tests for trends?

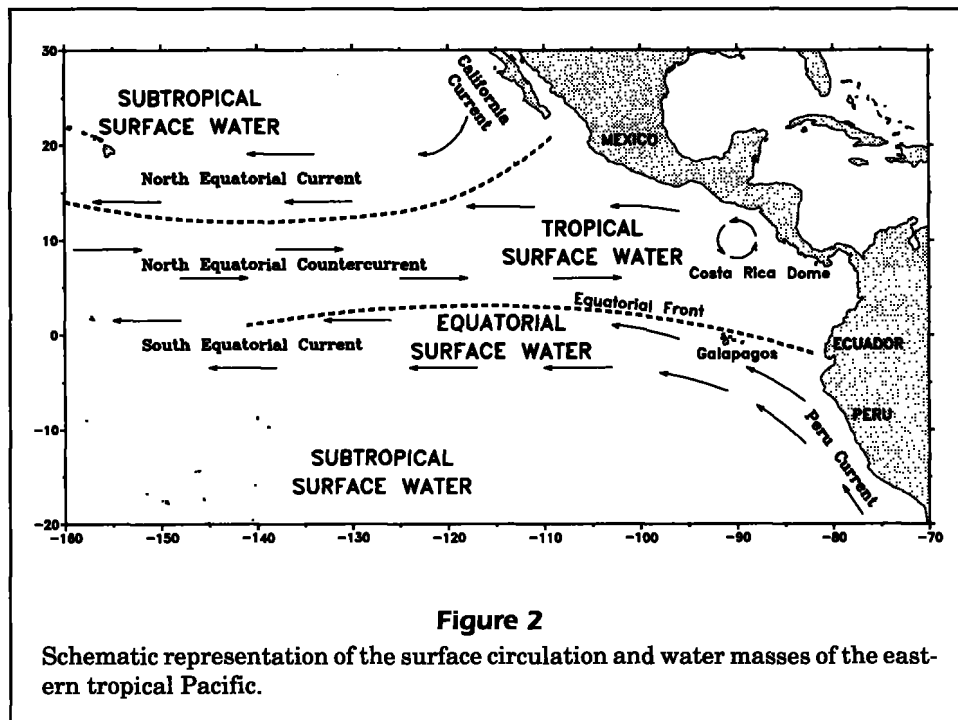
## Study area

The basic physical features of the upper ocean in the eastern tropical Pacific have been described by Wyrski (1966, 1967), and Tsuchiya (1974). Fiedler (1992) updated this description and summarized seasonal and interannual variability. Major surface water masses and currents are depicted in Figure 2. Warm, low-salinity tropical surface water is found in the center of the ETP. Cooler, higher-salinity equatorial surface water is found south of about lat.



**Figure 1**

Dolphin distributions in the northern summer in the eastern tropical Pacific, from Reilly (1990). Contours are for encounter rates per 185 km searched. Dots represent centers of 2° squares in which there was at least 185 km search effort.



3°N. Peru Current and California Current Waters are found along the coasts of Peru-Ecuador and Baja California, respectively. The Peru and California Currents feed into the westward South and North Equatorial Currents (SEC, NEC). The North Equatorial Countercurrent (NECC) flows eastward between the NEC and SEC into the center of the Tropical Surface Water mass. The NECC is strong during September–December and weak or absent during February–April.

A permanent shallow thermocline underlies most of the region, shoaling towards the coast (Wyrтки, 1966). Zonal thermocline ridges are found below surface divergences in the SEC along the equator and between the NEC and NECC along lat. 10°N (Fiedler, 1992). Upwelling driven by equatorward longshore winds off Peru and Baja California and by trade winds along the equator brings cold, nutrient-rich water from below the shallow thermocline (nutricline) into the surface layer. This nutrient input maintains optimal (saturating) concentrations of nitrogen at the surface and results in high levels of new production in equatorial and eastern boundary current systems (Chavez and Barber, 1987). Biological productivity is also enhanced by upwelling at the Costa Rica Dome (a quasi-permanent cyclonic eddy at the eastern end of the thermocline ridge along lat. 10°N; Wyrтки, 1964; King, 1986), and by intermittent, topographically induced offshore winds at several points along the coast of Central America (e.g. the Gulf of Tehuantepec, McCreary et al., 1989). Sec-

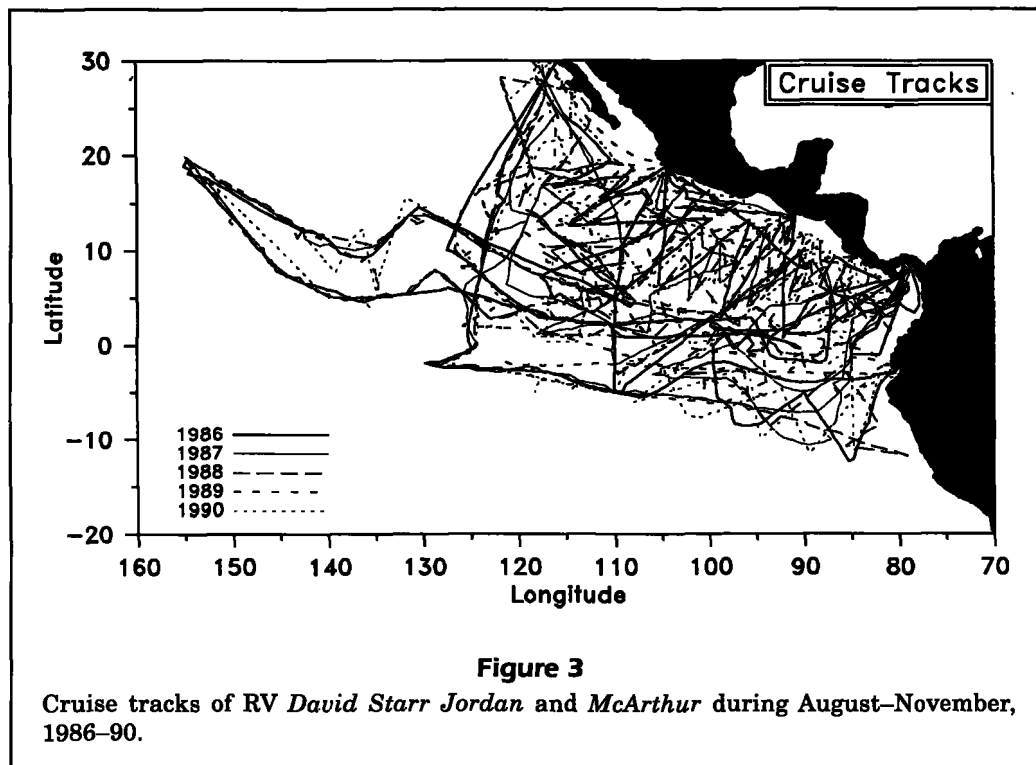
ondary and higher level productivity and standing stocks are generally high in areas of high primary productivity (Blackburn et al., 1970). Within this and other large oceanic regions, the abundance of animals from plankton to large nekton is patchy on a variety of spatial and temporal scales (Haury et al., 1978), with major consequences for the ecology of pelagic predators (e.g. Carr, 1987).

## Data and methods

### Field data collection

Dolphin sightings and oceanographic data were collected by two ships operating in different parts of the ETP from 28 July through 6 December each year from 1986 to 1990 (e.g. Holt et al., 1987). Track lines are shown in Figure 3. The surveys were conducted at 10 knots (18.5 km/hr) with three observers simultaneously on watch. One observer covered each side of the ship with a pair of 25× binoculars to search an arc from the bow to about 100° to the beam. The third observer covered the track line with hand-held binoculars and the naked eye. Sightings were approached when necessary to allow estimation of numbers within groups and species identification (Holt and Sexton, 1990).

While the ships were underway, surface temperature and salinity were recorded continuously by thermosalinograph (ODEC Model TSG-102, Inter-



Ocean Model 541, or Seabird SEACAT Model 21). Vertical structure was sampled in two ways. Expendable bathythermographs (XBTs) were deployed four to six times daily (every 55 to 110 km). Twice daily, just before dawn and just after dusk, the ships stopped to deploy conductivity-temperature-depth instruments (CTDs) to 1000 m. Sea water samples were collected with Niskin rosettes for chlorophyll and nutrient analysis. Surface chlorophyll was monitored continuously with a Turner Designs Fluorometer calibrated from discrete samples drawn at the surface at least six times per day (see Fiedler et al., 1990 for details).

The research vessels searched a total of 140,597 km (Fig. 3), and recorded a total of 2,014 sightings of dolphin schools of the seven types considered here, during five annual cruises, 1986 through 1990 (Table 1). The environmental data used include continuous temperature, salinity and fluorescence measurements along most of the trackline, 17,303 surface chlorophyll measurements, 4,726 XBT deployments and 1,596 CTD stations (Table 2).

### Analytic methods

We estimated dolphin relative abundance as the number of schools sighted per unit distance searched, for each day, for seven pod-type categories (Table 1). These are the most frequently sighted types of dolphin schools in the region. They are also the types

captured by the purse seine fishery. Only days with at least two hours of sighting effort (approximately 37 km) during periods of fair or better sighting conditions (Beaufort 5 or less) were used in the analyses. The distance searched in one day varied between 37 and 222 km. We analyzed daily sightings in relation to environmental conditions measured during that day. Our use of Beaufort 5 as the cut-off follows results from Holt (1987) who analyzed the effects of sea state on dolphin school sightability from ETP ship surveys.

Reilly (1990) found that dolphin habitats in the ETP could be defined statistically by a combination of thermocline depth, surface temperature, and salinity (where temperature and salinity were combined into sigma-t, an index of surface water density, by using a simple linear function described by Pickard and Emery, 1982). We used thermocline depth, surface temperature, salinity, and sigma-t, plus surface chlorophyll (log-transformed), and a measure of thermocline strength (the difference in depth between the 20° and 15° isotherms). Surface temperature, salinity, and chlorophyll were averaged from the day's continuous sampling during sighting effort. Thermocline depth (represented by the depth of the 20°C isotherm: Donguy and Meyers, 1987) and strength were estimated from XBT casts made during or within a few hours of sighting effort. We included sigma-t, in addition to both temperature and salinity, in the multivariate analyses as a form of

Table 1

Search effort and number of cetacean schools recorded by year, 1986–90, from the Monitoring of Porpoise Stocks expedition in the eastern tropical Pacific.

	Year					Total
	1986	1987	1988	1989	1990	
Km. searched	28,917	27,735	24,224	27,323	32,398	140,597
<b>Number of Sightings of</b>						
Spotted dolphins <sup>1</sup>	71	85	47	78	78	359
Common dolphins <sup>2</sup>	57	41	73	59	54	284
Spotted with Eastern Spinner <sup>3</sup>	44	40	33	51	33	201
Spotted with Whitebelly Spinner <sup>3</sup>	33	29	23	24	15	124
Eastern Spinner	27	18	6	19	13	83
Whitebelly Spinner	8	10	18	8	10	54
Striped dolphins <sup>4</sup>	158	180	206	213	152	909
Total sightings used in this analysis	398	403	406	452	355	2014
Other cetacean sightings	501	500	462	512	523	2498
Totals	899	903	868	964	878	4512

<sup>1</sup> *Stenella attenuata*.

<sup>2</sup> *Delphinus delphis*.

<sup>3</sup> *S. longirostris*.

<sup>4</sup> *S. coeruleoalba*.

“product variable,” to see if it contributed additional information for determining dolphin habitats. In summary, the six oceanographic variables included were 1) surface temperature, TEMP; 2) surface salinity, SAL; 3) surface density, SIGMAT; 4) thermocline depth, Z20; 5) thermocline strength, ZD; and 6) chlorophyll, LOGC.

We examined the effects of interannual variability by including years (scaled 1–5) as categorical variables (details below). Additionally, we examined the contribution of fixed geographic effects by including latitude and longitude in some analyses. All environmental variables (oceanographic and geographic) were normalized prior to multivariate analyses to remove effects from differing scales of measurement.

Relationships between dolphin school distributions and environmental variation were analyzed by using canonical correspondence analysis (CCA; Ter Braak, 1986). We used the computer program CANOCO (Ter Braak, 1985). Correspondence analysis is an eigenvector ordination technique, similar to principal components analysis, that can be used to investigate community structure. These methods extract dominant, orthogonal axes of variation in

Table 2

Oceanographic data from the Monitoring of Porpoise Stocks expedition, 1986–90, used in the canonical correspondence analyses. Table entries list numbers of observations for discrete measurements, or number of km covered during continuous measurements. XBT = expendable bathythermograph; CTD = conductivity-temperature-depth.

Data type	1986	1987	1988	1989	1990	Total
Surface temperature, salinity (km)	28,917	27,735	24,224	27,323	32,398	140,597
Surface chlorophyll measurements	3,763	1,927	3,613	3,552	4,448	7,303
XBT measurements (drops)	1,144	1,160	835	778	809	4,726
CTD measurements (stations)	244	280	352	352	368	1,596

abundance indices for multiple species at multiple sites. Typically, the ordination axes are then interpreted indirectly with the help of external knowledge and data on environmental gradients, either qualitatively or with regression methods (Gauch, 1982).

In contrast to principal components analysis and other linear methods, correspondence analysis (CA, also called reciprocal averaging) fits nonlinear Gaussian (unimodal) models to the species abundance data. Canonical correspondence analysis is an extension of CA in which the species ordination is done directly and iteratively in relation to environmental variables. CCA is an efficient ordination tech-

nique when species have bell-shaped response curves or surfaces with respect to environmental gradients (Ter Braak, 1986), which is consistent with general ecological knowledge (e.g. Whittaker et al., 1973). The models and algorithm used in the CANOCO implementation of canonical correspondence analysis are documented in Ter Braak (1986).

As part of the species-environment ordination, CCA estimates a series of site scores (here, site=day) that are linear combinations of the environmental variables that maximize the species-environment correlation. One set of site scores is estimated for each canonical ordination axis. The interpretation of environmental patterns represented by the axes is made from the correlation coefficients and the multiple regression or "canonical" coefficients of the original environmental variables with the canonical axes (Ter Braak, 1986).

The results of canonical correspondence can be best interpreted from an ordination "biplot," on which species and sites can be represented by points and environmental variables by arrows. The biplot displays the mean species scores or "optima" on two canonical axes, usually the first two, which explain the majority of the variance. The directions and relative lengths of the arrows for environmental variables represent their contributions to the ordination. More important environmental variables are therefore represented by longer arrows. In making biplots we used Hill's scaling (Ter Braak, 1986) in which site scores were computed as weighted averages of species scores ( $S=-1$  in our implementation of CANOCO).

Community ordination was not our primary objective, but we used CCA for three reasons. It provides a quantitative definition of habitat for each species/stock in reduced dimensionality. The method estimates habitats using a nonlinear, unimodal model, avoiding the unrealistic assumption of a linear relationship between animal abundance and environmental gradients. CANOCO is also insensitive to a high frequency of zero observations (Ter Braak, 1985), typically found in animal survey data.

In assessing the contributions of environmental variables we took the liberal approach of retaining variables unless their contribution to the ordination was almost entirely encompassed by other, more influential variables. That is, a variable of marginal significance was not excluded if the apparent direction of its influence was different from the other environmental variables. Precision in estimating canonical coefficients was not compromised by retaining these marginal variables because we had 956 cases and a maximum of only 13 environmental variables (considering years as five dummy variables). We did not use stepwise procedures, which appear

to offer an objective approach to variable selection, but are notoriously problematic for other reasons (e.g. Pimentel, 1979, p. 42-43).

We examined the importance of interannual variability in two related ways. First, as noted above, we included years as categorical explanatory variables, in addition to the oceanographic variables. The importance was then gauged by comparing ordination results to those with just the oceanographic variables. Second, we removed the variance associated with the environmental variables (by defining them as covariables), and then extracted axes associated with variance among years, to test for interannual differences in the species data not associated directly with interannual environmental variation.

The significance of an ordination axis was determined by testing the null hypothesis that its eigenvalue was not different from zero. The procedure used was a Monte Carlo randomization test (e.g. Hope, 1968) supplied with the program CANOCO. This procedure randomly associated sets of environmental variables from one case with sets of species data from another, then extracted canonical axes, and estimated their eigenvalues. The procedure was run 1,000 times to produce a reference set of eigenvalues representing random variability. The significance of the eigenvalues from the original data was determined by comparison to these distributions.

We extended the use of canonical correspondence analysis in two ways for our study of interannual variation in cetacean habitats. First, we mapped the spatial distributions of the site scores from the first two CCA axes, lightly smoothed and contoured. We then plotted the localities of cetacean sightings over these contours to allow visual appraisal of species-environment patterns. We did this as an alternative to plotting species and hundreds of sites together on a biplot, which we found to be uninformative. Second, we suggest two ways in which the results of the canonical correspondence analysis can be used in the monitoring of trends in cetacean abundance.

## Results

Table 3 gives the weighted correlation matrix for the six oceanographic variables, the four species axes and four environmental axes from the CCA. The "species-environment" correlations are the values for equivalent axes, e.g. the correlation between the dominant species axis (no. 1) and the first environmental axis is 0.67. The correlation between the second axes is 0.42, and so on.

The ordination including the six oceanographic variables explained 14.7% of the variance in the dol-



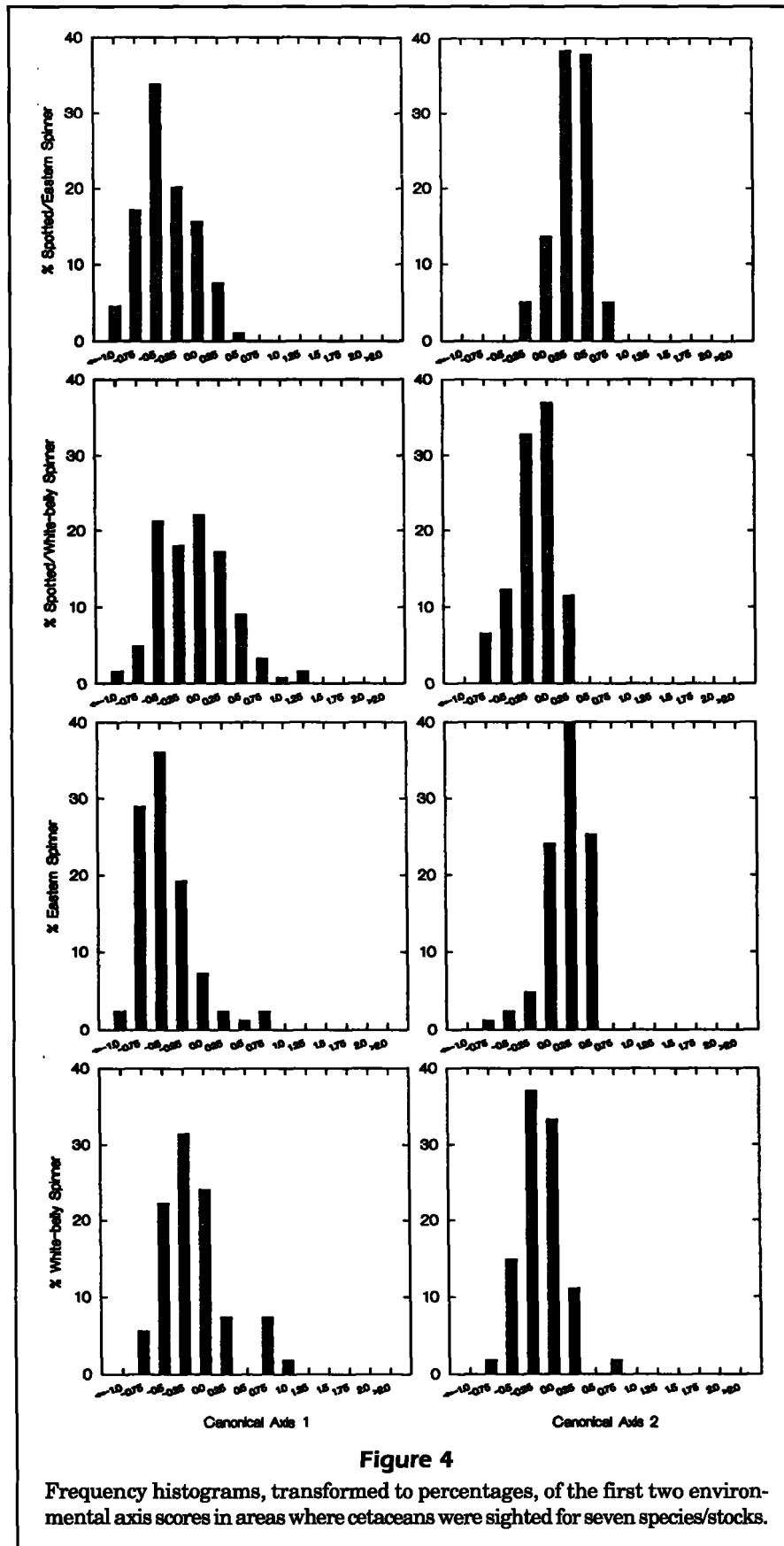


Figure 4

Frequency histograms, transformed to percentages, of the first two environmental axis scores in areas where cetaceans were sighted for seven species/stocks.

$P$ -value  $< 0.001$ . The same was true for the first axis alone; no random permutation had an eigenvalue larger than the observed 0.309, again giving a  $P$ -value  $< 0.001$ . These results indicate that the probability of a Type-I error is less than 0.1%. (The CCA program, CANOCO, provided this test only for the trace and first axis, so no test was done for subsequent axes).

The species-environment biplot (Fig. 5A) displays the results for the six variable 'oceanographic' ordination. Fig. 5B shows the ordination with species tolerances, but without the visual distraction of the environmental vectors. The first axis separates common dolphins from all school types containing spotted and spinner dolphins. Positive scores on axis 1 are associated with cooler temperature ( $r = -0.88$ , Table 3), a thermocline that is shallower (i.e. smaller Z20,  $r = -0.70$ ), yet weaker (larger difference in depth between 20° and 15°C isotherms,  $r = +0.45$ ), denser surface water (higher sigma-t,  $r = +0.61$ ) and high chlorophyll ( $r = +0.49$ ). These are characteristics of "cool upwelling" habitat, as found in Equatorial and Peru/California Current surface waters. The distinct placement of common dolphins in the positive region of this axis indicates this is their preferred habitat. Negative scores on axis 1 are associated with warm temperature, a deeper and stronger thermocline, and lower chlorophyll, as found in less productive Tropical Surface Water. The placement of all spotted and spinner school types in the negative region indicates that these oceanographic conditions help define their preferred habitats.

Site or species scores on axis 2 are uncorrelated with scores on axis 1, by definition. Positive axis-2 scores are associated with a relatively shallow thermocline ( $r = -0.63$ , Table 3) and high chlorophyll ( $r = +0.40$ ) as for axis 1, but also with warmer temperatures and lower salinity (lower sigma-t) rather than cool



temperature. These are characteristics of "coastal tropical" habitat found along the coast of Central America, where the surface layer is more stratified and upwelling is more intermittent and localized than in the cool upwelling habitat. Whitebelly spinners, alone and with spotted dolphins, had large negative axis-2 scores, while eastern spinners with spotted dolphins had positive scores. There was a strong separation on axis 2 between mixed schools of whitebelly spinners with spotted dolphins, and schools of eastern spinners with spotted dolphins. Schools of spotted dolphins alone had near-zero axis 2 scores. Striped dolphins loaded near the origin of both axes.

The spatial distributions of yearly axis 1 scores are mapped in Figure 6. Areas with positive scores are shaded to allow quick appraisal of changes between years (interpreted below). Also plotted in Figure 6 are sighting localities for spotted and common dolphins. Spotted dolphins occurred mostly in negative areas, common dolphins in positive areas, but with some overlap.

Spatial distributions of yearly axis 2 scores are mapped in Figure 7, with positive scores shaded. Whitebelly spinners occurred almost exclusively in waters with negative axis-2 scores (Figs. 5 and 7). Eastern spinners ranged throughout both positive and negative areas; a modest majority were found in positive areas. They were less closely associated with this axis than whitebelly spinners (Fig. 5) and seemed to be found in the eastern (more coastal) part of the warm tropical habitat defined by negative axis-1 scores.

### Interannual variability

We obtained only a slight increase in the percent of variance explained for the dolphin data (14.7% to 15.1%, Table 5) from addition of categorical variables representing the five sampled years, in addition to the six oceanographic variables. An ordination biplot from this analysis (Fig. 8) shows that the centroid for 1988 (year 3) loads farthest from the origin. Its

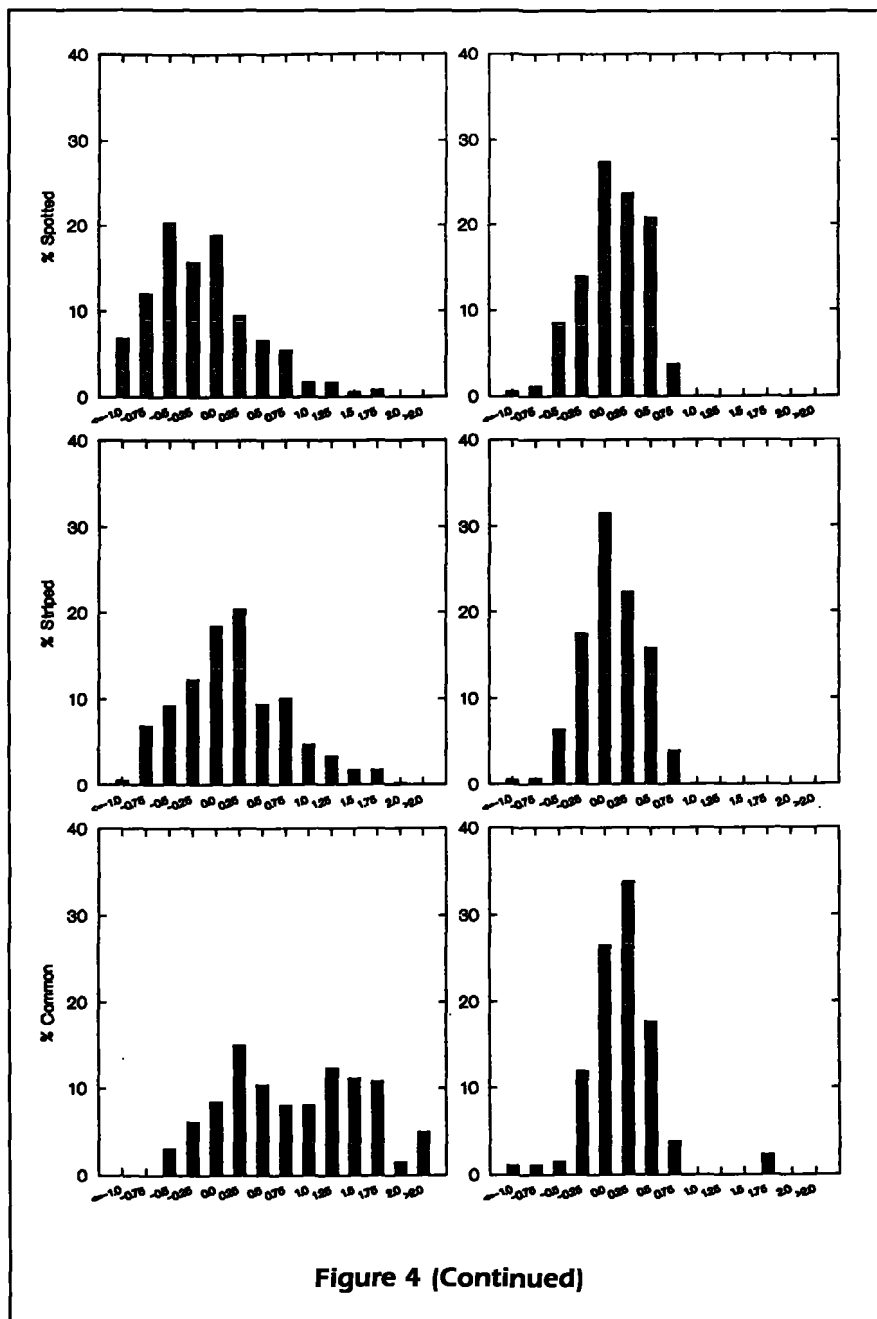


Figure 4 (Continued)

location represents the cooler, more productive conditions associated with the 1988 La Niña.

An analysis including just years as categories, without oceanographic variables, explained only about 2% of the dolphin variance, but the dominant eigenvalue and trace were both significantly different from zero (Monte Carlo  $P$ -values=0.01 and 0.02, respectively). After extraction of the variance associated with the six oceanographic variables (by defining them as covariables) the ordination was not significant (Monte Carlo  $P$ =0.058, Table 5).

### Fixed geographic effects

Inclusion of latitude and longitude in addition to the six oceanographic variables produced a notable increase in dolphin variance explained, from 14.7% to 20.5% (Table 5). The amount of additional influence

indicated for fixed geographic effects varied substantially among school types. The largest increases were for whitebelly spinners, alone and with spotted dolphins. No improvement in explaining variance was made for schools of spotted dolphins alone.

### Group size effects

This study used encounter rates as an index of abundance. This index does not encompass effects of varying group size. There is some evidence for geographic patterns in group size for the dolphin school types studied (Gerrodette and Wade, 1991), so the analyses reported here were also run with the dependent variables modified as follows. Encounters with schools were weighted by the number of individuals estimated to be in the school. The weighted rate was then log-transformed. Canonical correspondence analyses run with these modified dependent variables produced essentially the same patterns as before, but with a small loss of explanatory power: the cumulative percent of the species variance explained was 14.2%, down from 14.7%.

### Discussion

#### Species-environment patterns

The ordination results were generally consistent with past studies of

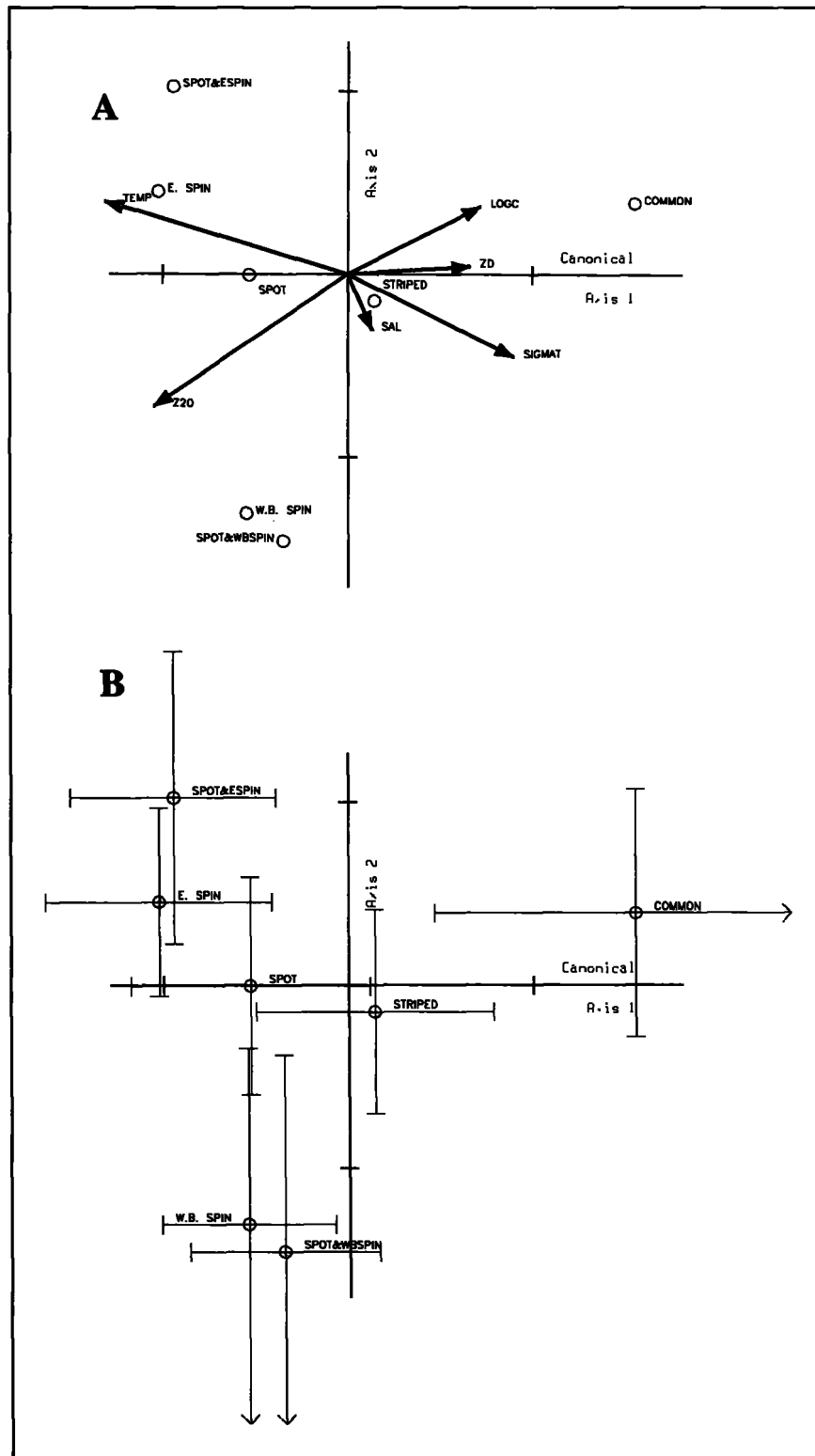


Figure 5

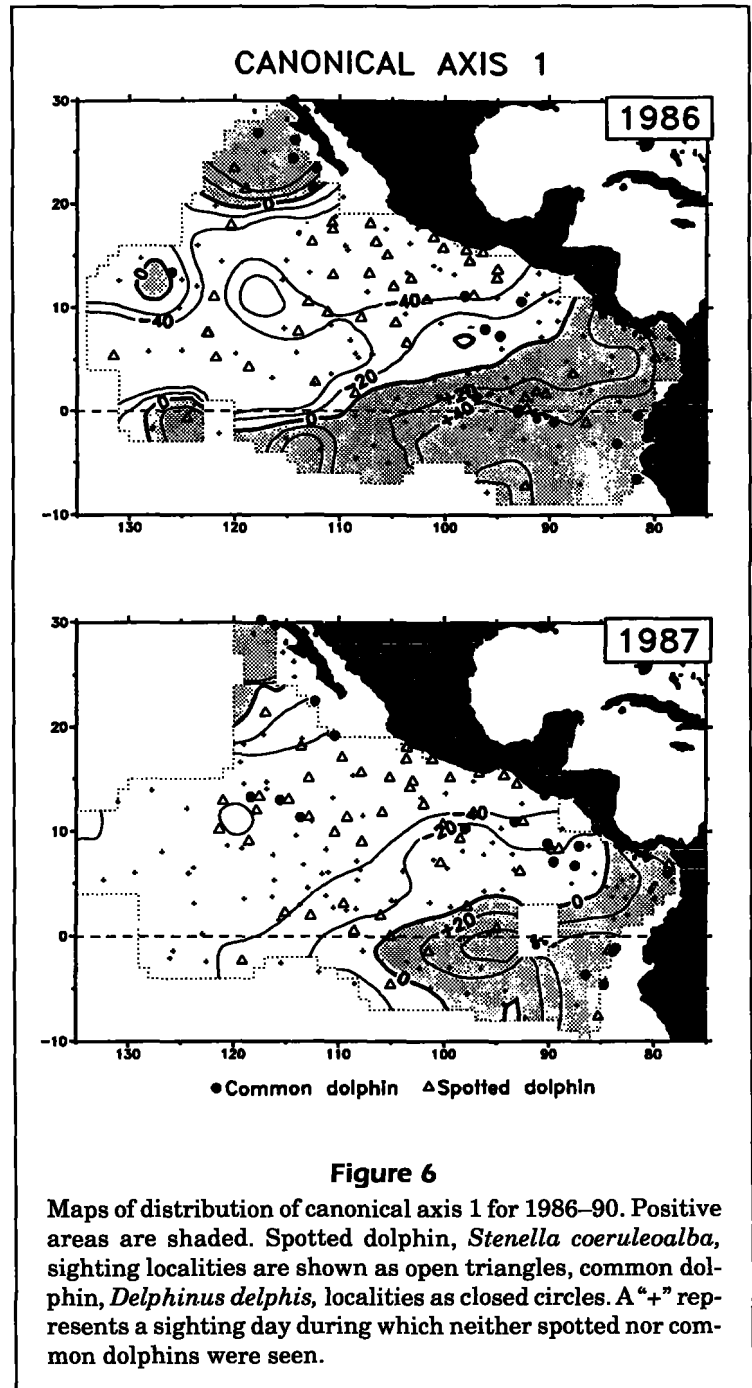
Ordination results from canonical correspondence analysis of cetacean species/stocks and environmental conditions in the eastern tropical Pacific. (A) Biplot of first two canonical axes and environmental variables. (B) Ordination showing 95% confidence limits for the species loadings. The environmental variables, represented by arrows in 5A, are surface temperature (TEMP), surface salinity (SAL), thermocline depth indexed by 20°C isotherm depth (Z20), thermocline strength, indexed by the difference in depth between the 20°C and 15°C isotherms (ZD), surface water density (SIGMAT), and surface chlorophyll, log-transformed (LOGC). These two axes represent 94% of the species-environment variance, 15% of the total encounter rate variance.

ETP cetacean ecology. The first axis contrasts the habitat use of common dolphins with spotted and spinner dolphins. The placement of common dolphins into cool upwelling habitat is consistent with results reported by Au and Perryman (1985) and Reilly (1990). The placement of spotted and spinner dolphins in contrasting habitat (negative axis-1 values; essentially warm tropical water) is also as reported earlier. Consistency with results of Reilly (1990) is not surprising, because that study shared data from 1986 and 1987 with this study, but is somewhat reassuring because different analytical techniques were used.

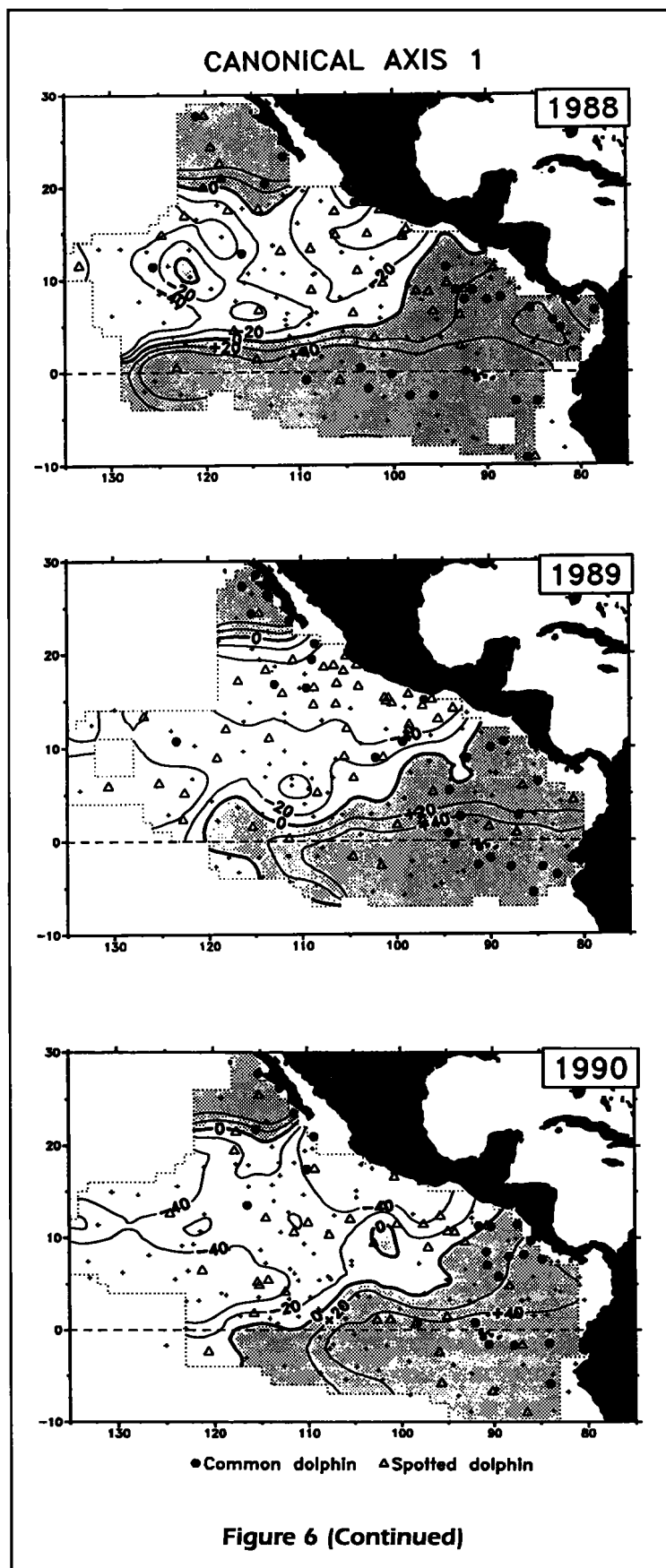
The second axis separated eastern spinners from whitebelly spinner dolphins. This separation was even clearer between sightings of eastern spinners mixed with spotted dolphins and whitebelly spinners mixed with spotted dolphins. The ordination placement of whitebelly spinner dolphins in habitat with a deeper thermocline (negative axis 2) follows from their more offshore distribution and the general tendency for the thermocline to become deeper to the west in the ETP. Spotted dolphins alone occurred intermediate to these mixed schools. If this is a general pattern it suggests that the two mixed-school types of spotted and spinner dolphins are utilizing habitats as different as those used by separate species (e.g. common dolphins and spotted dolphins on axis 1). These results are consistent with the hypothesis that the morphological distinctness of the endemic eastern spinner dolphin subspecies reflects adaptation to local habitat conditions (Dizon et al., 1991), and the recent finding that spotted dolphins north of the equator and east of long. 120°W, i.e. those available to school with eastern spinner dolphins, comprise a distinct 'stock' (Dizon et al., in press).

The ordination of striped dolphins near the origin of both axes 1 and 2 indicates either that this is near their optimum habitat or that their distribution is unrelated to the environmental patterns represented in the canonical axes. The low " $R^2$ " for striped dolphins (Table 4), and their widespread spatial distribution (Fig. 1; Reilly, 1990) support the latter interpretation.

The species-environment correlations observed were quite high: 0.67 for the first species and environment axes, 0.42 for the second axes. However, variation extracted by the canonical correspondence analysis accounted for just 15% of the total encounter rate variance. (This was increased to over 20% when fixed geographic effects were considered.) This



modest explanatory power is in fact fairly good, given the unknown but surely large sampling variability inherent in daily encounter rates, and is consistent with levels of explanatory power in similar CCA analyses of abundance data (e.g. Ter Braak, 1986). Dolphins are very mobile and patchily distributed large predators, and are known to have complex social and behavioral interactions with their own and other species. These characteristics combine to produce highly variable abundance indices.



Explanatory power for common dolphins was surprisingly high: 36% with the six oceanographic variables, and 42% with fixed geography included. This result indicates that common dolphins have the tightest association with the environmental variables of the seven school types studied here. It also demonstrates the robustness of CCA, considering the bimodal distribution of common dolphins on axis 1 (Fig. 4).

The notable increase in performance for whitebelly spinner dolphins resulting from consideration of fixed geography raises interesting questions. Are they directly responding to some geophysical cue, such as magnetic anomalies (Kirschvink et al., 1986; Klinowska, 1985)? Or, does this result simply reflect orientation to oceanographic features or processes (e.g. prey distribution) not represented in our data?

**Interannual variability**

Interannual environmental variability is apparent in the geographic distributions of the canonical axis scores, and to a lesser extent in locations of dolphin sightings (Figs. 6 and 7). In 1986, cool upwelling habitat was found along the equator to long. 130°W, north of the equator to about lat. 10°N along the coast of Central America, and off the coast of Baja California. In 1987, cool upwelling habitat south of Baja California did not extend west of 110°W or north of 4°N, except in the Gulf of Panama. The study area was dominated by warm, low-productivity tropical water (negative axis-1 scores). This change was caused by a moderate El Niño event that began in late 1986 and lasted through 1987 (Kousky and Leetmaa, 1989). In 1988, cool upwelling water extended far north of the equator and south of Baja California, considerably reducing the area covered by tropical water. 1988 was a strong anti-El Niño or La Niña year (Leetmaa, 1990; Fiedler et al., 1992). In 1989 and 1990, conditions represented by axis-1 scores returned to a state similar to 1986. Interannual variation along axis 2 was not strongly related to ENSO variability. The area with positive axis-2 scores (“coastal tropical” habitat) was small in 1986 and 1987, increased in 1988 and again in 1989, and showed some diminishment in 1990.

Common dolphin distribution was previously observed to show no apparent seasonal changes (Reilly, 1990) but was observed here to change interannually more than the other school types studied, and these changes appear related to

ENSO variability. In 1987, with "cool upwelling" conditions contracted eastward and southward at the equator as part of that year's El Niño, in the southern ETP (south of about 2°S) common dolphins occurred only in the far east off South America. In 1988 during the strong La Niña these conditions were well established along the equator to the western extent of the study area, and common dolphins occurred in equatorial waters as far west as 110°W.

The maps in Figures 6 and 7 are imprecise representations of species-environment patterns derived by CCA for two reasons. First, the maps show only presence-absence, while we used an effort-corrected index of abundance (daily encounter rate) in the CCA. Second, the contouring requires some smoothing and interpolation between sites, while the CCA compared abundance indices only to environmental variables measured during the same day, along the same track lines where the cetaceans were sighted. These species are apparently separating more strongly on a smaller scale than we could effectively represent on the maps. A further consideration is that the scaling of axes for biplot presentation was done by using a method in which the canonical scores (as plotted on the maps here) are rescaled to produce biplot locations (Ter Braak, 1988). The resulting ordination gives an accurate relative placement of species centroids, but does not allow direct projection of centroids or toler-

ances onto canonical axis values as mapped in Figures 6 and 7.

The small but significant interannual variation in the species data was effectively accounted for by interannual variation in the environment. This was demonstrated by the low eigenvalue ( $\lambda=0.02$ ,  $P=0.06$ ) for interannual differences after extracting variance associated with the six oceanographic variables. This result does not necessarily apply to total population abundances, however, because in the above analyses we did not include school size estimates in our species data.

### Group size effects

Inclusion of group-size data in the dolphin abundance index produced ordinations that were very similar to those using simple encounter rates, but with a slight decrease in explanatory power from the environmental data. We interpret this result to indicate that schools of all sizes occupy approximately the same habitats, and that school size variability within these habitats is not strongly related to the environmental variables analyzed here.

### Applications to dolphin assessments

We suggest two approaches to use the results of this study in cetacean abundance and trend monitoring.

**Table 5**

Comparative ordinations from canonical correspondence analyses of seven types of dolphin school in the eastern tropical Pacific, with six different sets of environmental variables. Set 1 = surface temperature (SST), thermocline depth (Z20) and thermocline strength (ZD). Set 2 = SST, Z20, ZD, surface salinity (SAL), surface chlorophyll (LOGC) and surface density (SIGMA-T). Set 3 = Set 2 plus years (1-5) as categorical variables. Set 4 = Set 2 plus latitude and longitude. Set 5 = Set 2 plus both latitude & longitude and years. Set 6 = years (1-5) as categorical variables, after removing variance associated with all other environmental variables (Set 5).

	Environmental variable set					
	1	2	3	4	5	6
Eigenvalue sum	0.384	0.443	0.464	0.622	0.644	0.022
P-value	<0.001	<0.001	<0.001	<0.001	<0.001	0.058
<b>Percent variance accounted for</b>						
total species data	12.8	14.7	15.1	20.5	21.1	0.9
spotted dolphin <sup>1</sup>	7.8	8.1	8.8	8.8	9.6	0.8
common dolphin <sup>2</sup>	32.6	35.5	36.2	41.2	42.2	1.0
spotted and eastern spinner dolphins <sup>3</sup>	18.8	22.5	22.8	25.0	25.3	0.3
spotted and whitebelly spinner dolphins <sup>3</sup>	9.2	9.7	9.9	16.4	17.3	1.0
eastern spinner dolphin	7.5	8.3	9.5	10.4	11.2	0.9
whitebelly spinner dolphin	3.6	5.1	6.4	20.0	20.3	0.3
striped dolphin <sup>4</sup>	1.9	5.9	6.6	12.6	13.8	1.9

<sup>1</sup> *Stenella attenuata*.

<sup>2</sup> *Delphinus delphis*.

<sup>3</sup> *S. longirostris*.

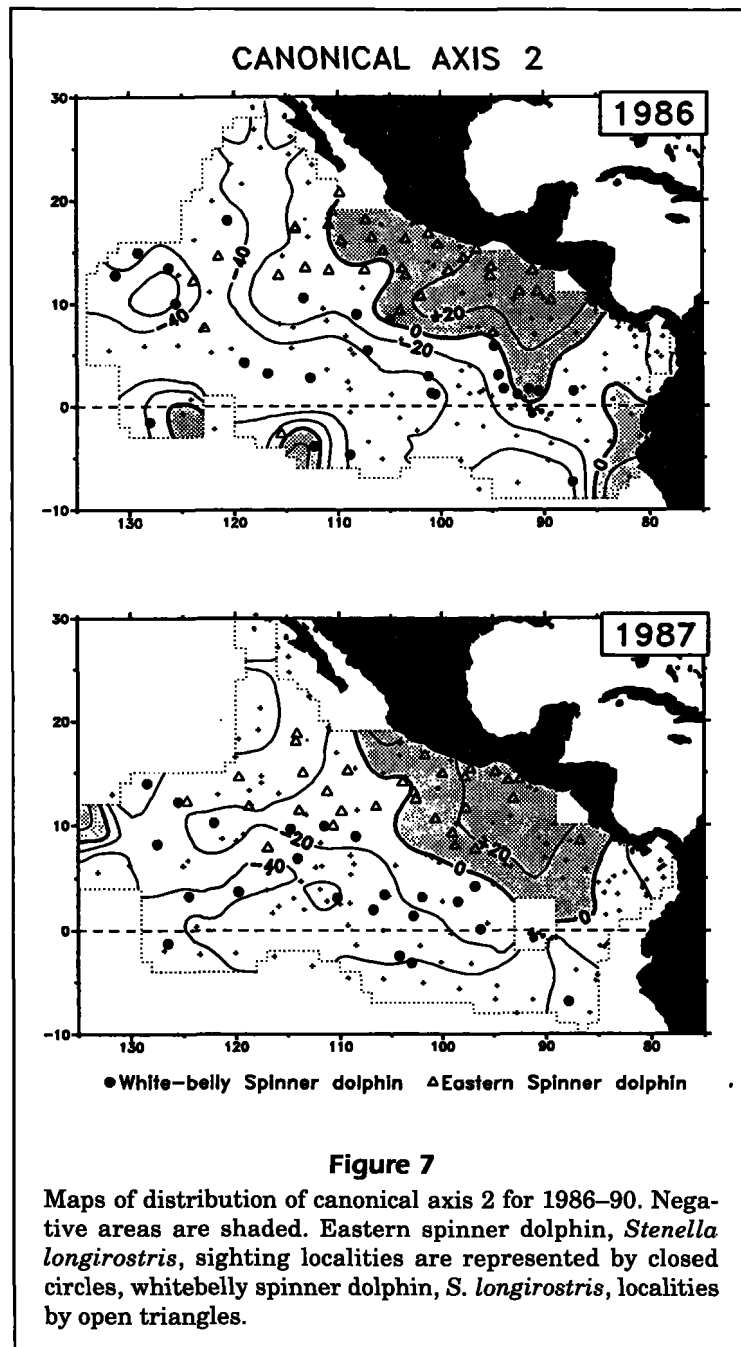
<sup>4</sup> *S. coeruleoalba*.

Other, perhaps more sophisticated approaches are possible. We present these only as examples. The most straightforward approach, involving minimal assumptions, would be to post-stratify the data for each year separately, based on the spatial distribution of CCA axis scores and the weighted mean and standard deviation of those scores for the species of interest. This would be done to improve precision of abundance estimates. Populations that have similar means and standard deviations could use common strata. For example, separate strata could be defined by using axis 1 for common and spotted dolphins.

Axis 2 could be used to provide strata for whitebelly spinner dolphins. Because we have probability distributions for the occurrence of these species along the canonical axes, we would not be limited to use just two strata but could use three or four. After the data were stratified based on the species annual habitat distributions, standard line transect methodology would be followed. This is generically similar to the post-stratification approach taken by Anganuzzi and Buckland (1989) to reduce bias in estimates of dolphin abundance from tuna vessel observer data.

A second possible approach, aimed at improving accuracy, would quantify the amount of habitat available within the study area each year, for each population. The simplest quantification scheme would define only two strata for each. The cut-point between strata could be the 95% limit of the population's distribution on the axis, or, less conservatively, the appropriate upper or lower quartile. More complex schemes using more than two strata could be developed, as with the post-stratification, based on additional information in the species probability distributions. The amount of any stratum available in a year could be quantified by, say, lightly smoothing and interpolating the CCA site scores (to provide values for all locations) and "sampling" the distribution with the actual cruise tracks for the year. If for example common dolphin habitat was to be defined as axis 1 > [some value], the amount of ocean sampled with axis 1 > [some value] in 1986 could be scaled as 1.0. The amount sampled in subsequent years could be scaled to the 1986 amount. The result would be a vector of values representing the amount of common dolphin habitat available within the ETP by year. This vector could then be applied to the encounter rate portion of the line transect abundance estimate for each year to account for changing availability of common dolphin habitat. If interannual differences were subsequently observed in the line transect abundance estimates, we could be more confident that they represent real changes in abundance, rather than just apparent changes due to spatial redistribution relative to sampling effort following habitat shifts.

In a separate study (Fiedler and Reilly, 1994) we applied the CCA ordination approach developed here to investigate interannual variability in abundance indices for ETP dolphins estimated from tuna vessel observer data. We calculated annual indices of habitat quality for each dolphin species targeted by the tuna fishery, for the years 1975–90, then compared these



**Figure 7**

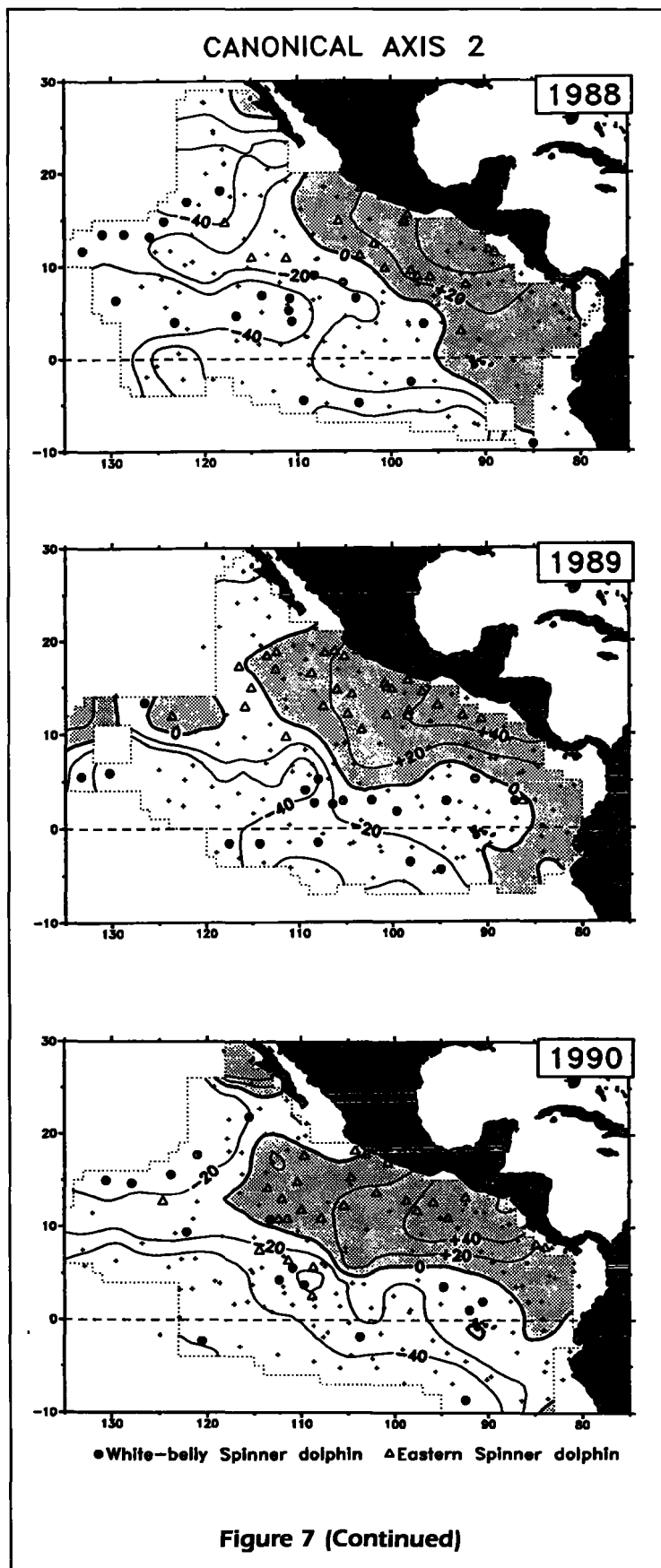
Maps of distribution of canonical axis 2 for 1986–90. Negative areas are shaded. Eastern spinner dolphin, *Stenella longirostris*, sighting localities are represented by closed circles, whitebelly spinner dolphin, *S. longirostris*, localities by open triangles.

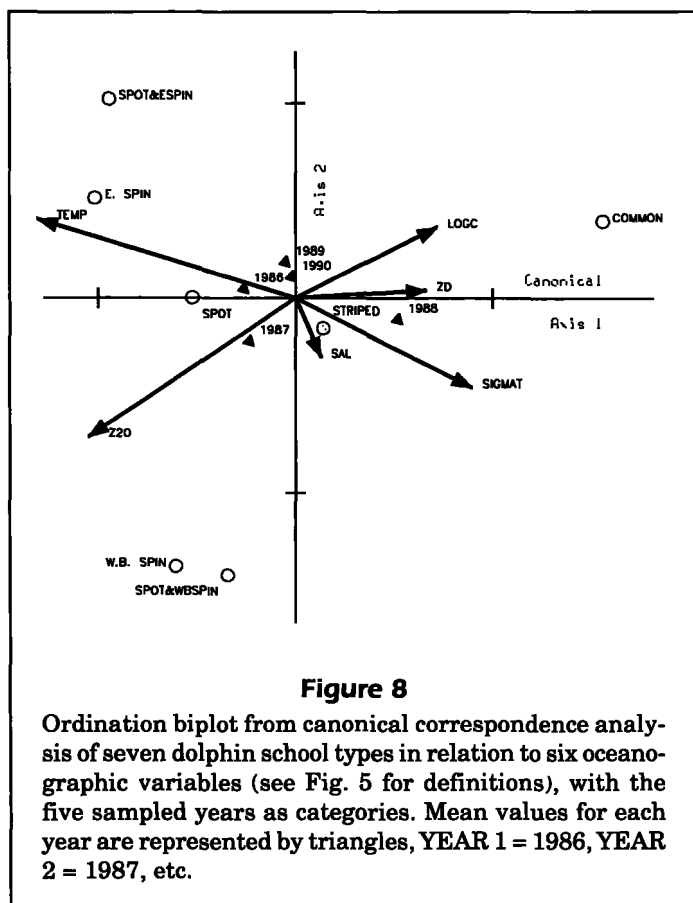
habitat indices to Anganuzzi et al.'s (1991) abundance estimates. We used a subset of three environmental variables from those used here, to enable use of existing, large data bases on oceanography of the ETP, to allow computation of environmental axes for years prior to 1986. We found that, for some species, environmental variability does appear to influence abundance estimates made from tuna vessel observer data. We are now working on using environmental data to reduce error in dolphin abundance estimates derived from both research vessel and tuna vessel sightings data. Gerrodette et al.<sup>1</sup> applied the results of this study in a preliminary attempt to account for movements in and out of the study area when estimating total abundance of dolphins.

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<sup>1</sup> Gerrodette, T., P. C. Fiedler, and S. B. Reilly. 1991. Including habitat variability in line transect estimation of abundance and trends. NOAA-NMFS Admin. Rep. LJ-91-37.





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