

gave me valuable assistance. More whales have been seen on the coast, and we may yet succeed in getting a complete skeleton. I would suggest that it might be desirable to send a printed circular to the Long Island keepers requesting them to give the matter their special attention.

WASHINGTON, *February 5, 1885.*

**26.—NOTICE OF THE CAPTURE OF A MALE PYGMY SPERM WHALE
—KOGIA BREVICEPS—AT KITTY HAWK, NORTH CAROLINA.**

By FREDERICK W. TRUE.

The Commission may well congratulate itself upon the receipt by the Smithsonian Institution of a male pygmy sperm whale. The occurrence of this rare and interesting species in the Atlantic was made known for the first time by the capture of a specimen somewhat more than a year ago at Spring Lake, New Jersey. This first specimen was a female, and one can, therefore, understand the gratification those interested in the study of the Cetacea feel in receiving, as a second specimen, one of the opposite sex. The species is by no means well known, but of the few specimens captured the majority have been females. If I am not at error in my opinions, the male has been described as an animal of a genus and species distinct from the female.

The circumstances which attended the acquisition of the new specimen are set forth in the following letter addressed to Professor Baird by Mr. James R. Hobbs, keeper of the Kitty Hawk Life-saving Station, Sixth District, North Carolina, and dated January 1, 1885:

"I am sorry I was unfortunate with the fish, but I was determined to secure it. It came ashore during a gale of wind and a high tide and was badly chafed. On the next morning we had a snow storm. The fish came ashore $2\frac{1}{2}$ miles north of the station, and the patrol informed me that it was a porpoise. Accordingly, I sent three men with horse and cart for it, but as one of them had to hold the horse and the other two could not put it in the cart, they returned without it, and reported that it was a blackfish 9 feet long. The men pulled the fish upon the shore, and I had it covered with a light sail. On Sunday the gale abated, and I succeeded in carrying home the fish, which I identified as a pygmy sperm whale. While the whale was on the beach the sail blew off of its head, and the birds picked out one of its eyes. I did not get your telegram until the afternoon of Sunday. The gale detained the boat that runs here, so I boxed the specimen up and carried it in a small boat a distance of 5 miles to a fish-boat, and shipped it to Elizabeth City. I hope you will receive it all right. Like all other fish of its kind, handling causes the skin to peel off as the skin of a potato. This whale was badly skinned up.

"Surfman T. N. Sundlin (No. 5) found the fish. All of the labor has been done free of cost.

"I am an old sailor, and have been in nearly every sea, excepting the Arctic Ocean and the Red Sea. I am well acquainted with fish, but have never seen a bone-shark on this coast, though there may be some. But I have caught in my bluefish nets hundreds of switch-tails and man-eaters, as the sailors call them."

The specimen which we owe to the enterprise of Mr. Hobbs and his crew is about 9 feet in length, and appeared to be adult but not old. The skin as he states was badly abraded, and hence it was impossible to determine its original color. Two characters of the specimen attracted my special attention. In the upper jaw near the anterior end were four slender curved teeth, similar to those of the lower jaw, but smaller. These did not occur in the female previously received, but two teeth were said to be found in a similar position in a specimen from India, described by Sir Richard Owen* under the name of *Euphysetes simus*.

On account of the presence of teeth in the upper jaw, and in consideration of the presence of some other apparently important characters, Dr. Gill erected a separate genus, *Callignathus*, for the specimen in question. †

After an examination of the type specimens and study of the literature, however, I am inclined to agree with Professor Flower that the specimens thus far acquired represent but a single species which is probably cosmopolitan in range.

The second character which attracted my attention upon making a preliminary examination of the specimen was the peculiar position of the genital opening. This orifice is situated anterior to the line of the front margin of the dorsal fin, while in the dolphins I have examined it is almost as near the vent as the same opening in the female.

The stomach contained only the beaks and eyes of cuttle-fish and a great quantity of nematoid worms. A large number of larval cestoid worms, apparently of the genus *Phyllobothrium*, were found encysted in the integuments of the back, especially about the dorsal fin.

It is my intention to publish a somewhat extended account of the genus *Kogia* as soon as circumstances permit. A considerable number of specimens of the genus have been accumulated in different parts of the world. It appears to be somewhat common about Australia. The type-specimen described by De Blainville is in the Museum d'Histoire Naturelle, Paris. The National Museum possesses, in addition to the male and female mentioned above, a foetus, and a mandible from Mazatlan (type of *K. Floweri*).

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*Trans. Zool. Soc., London, vi, 1866, pp. 87-116.

†Amer. Naturalist, iv, 1871, p. 16.