

Shepherd's Beaked Whale or Tasman Whale

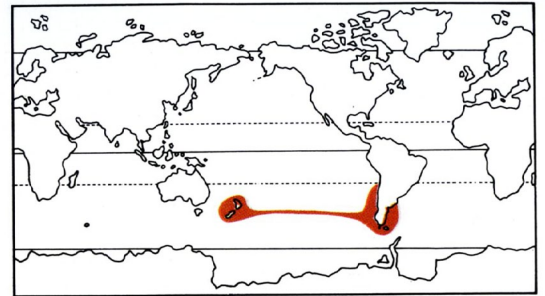
Tasmacetus sheperdi

Tasma/cetus= Tasman + cetus=whale

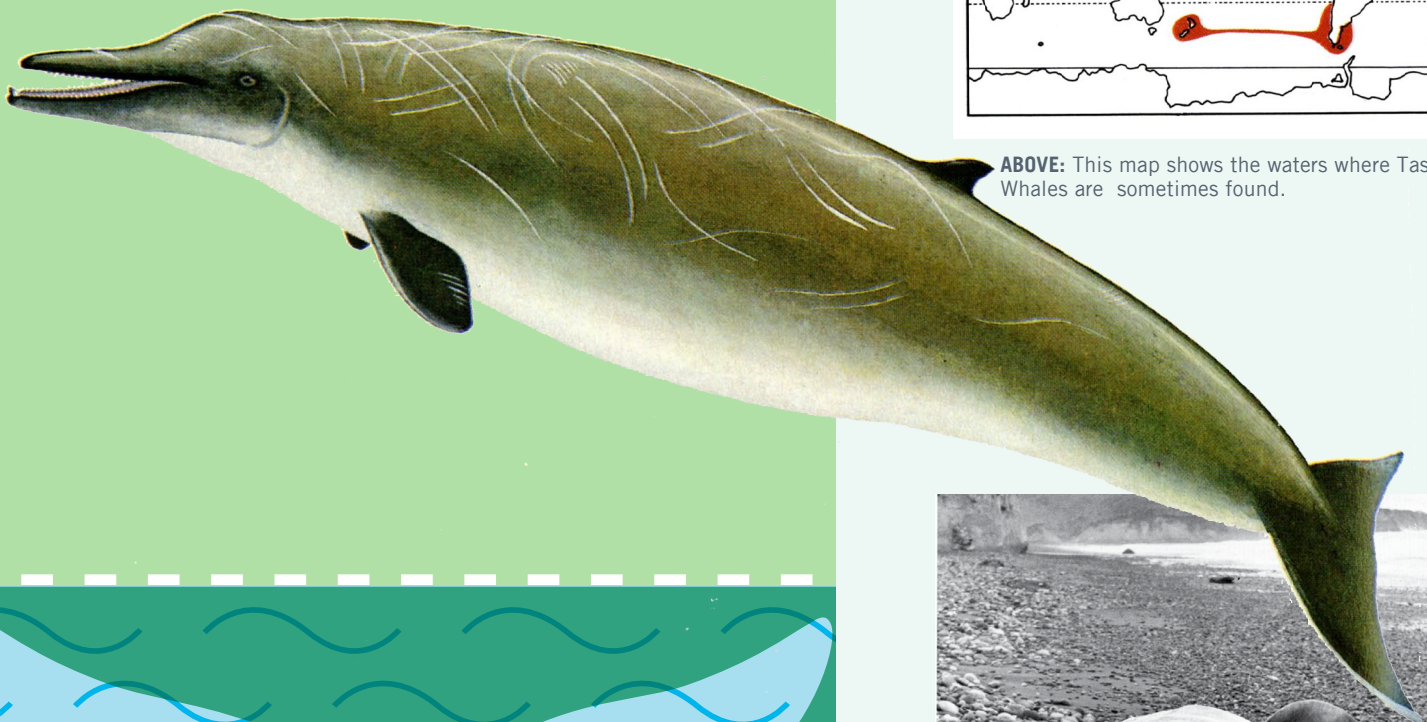
This species was unknown until 1933 when one whale was found stranded on the beach at Ohawe on the West Coast of the North Island, NZ. The skeleton was collected by G. Shepherd curator at the Whanganui Museum.

Even now it is a very rare species and nothing for certain is known about its social organisation, behaviour or reproduction. The scarcity of at-sea observations suggest that it occurs only in small groups that are difficult to detect.

It was thought that the species only lived around New Zealand but since the earlier recordings other specimen have turned up around Chile, indicating there is some connection between NZ and South America perhaps along the current of the West Wind Drift.



ABOVE: This map shows the waters where Tasman Whales are sometimes found.



Shepherd's Beaked whale (*Tasmacetus sheperdi*) at Onaero, N.Z., September 1966. Photo: Taranaki Newspapers Ltd.

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