Correction of at-surface abundance of harbour porpoises in West Greenland based on detection to 1 m depth.

By

M.P. Heide-Jørgensen, Greenland Institute of Natural Resources

Satellite-linked-time-depth-recorders have been used for deriving correction factors for whales that are surbmerged during aerial surveys. The dive data from the satellite transmitters are collected from a pressure transducer that measures the time (1 s sampling rate for Greenland harbour porpoises) at certain depth intervals. To avoid drift of the pressure transducer the 0 m surface readings are calibrated from the conductivity switch that instantly records when the animal is at surface but it does not record the 'time the animal is dry'. The 0 m depth readings relies entirely on the depth transducer.

SC/20/HP7 presents an estimate of the at-surface abundance of harbour porpoises in West Greenland in 2007. The estimate corrected for the fraction of porpoises outside the surveyed area was 14,129 (cv=0.37).

Teilmann (unpubl. data presented at the meeting) provided data on the proportion of time spent at 0, 0-1 and 1-2 m depths for one porpoise instrumented with a time-depth-recorder during the summer period and during daylight hours in Denmark (Table 1).

Table 1. Proportion of time (%) spent at three depths for a porpoise from Denmark, and for two porpoises tracked by satellite in Greenland. *) indicate that the value was calculated based on the proportion of time in depth categories for the Danish harbour porpoise. CV indicated in parenthesis.

Depth	Denmark	Greenland
0 m	4,68	5,14 (0.13)
0-1 m	36	28 *)
0-2 m	54,6	42,4

The value for the time at 0-1 m depth with a cv of 0,13 was used to correct the at-surface abundance estimate to derive a totally corrected abundance estimate of 50.461 (95%CI 24.043-105.904, cv=0,39).

This correction factor assumes detection on the trackline down to 1 m depth but the assumption is not entirely applicable to the aerial survey (West Greenland in 2007) and the attained abundance estimate is probably negatively biased.