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(5) Abstract title:	WHAT IS THE BIRTHRATE OF LONG-FINNED PILOT WHALE (<i>GLOBICEPHALA MELAS</i>) IN THE STRAIT OF GIBRALTAR?
(6) Abstract:	<p>Since 1996 abundance, trend, survival rate, spatial distribution, diet and conservation issues have been studied on the resident long-finned pilot whales (<i>Globicephala melas</i>) in the Strait of Gibraltar. However no previous studies focused on mother-calf associations to estimate pilot whale's birth rate, a critical parameter for the reproduction and the population dynamics of the species. The objective of this study was to calculate the inter-birth interval for the population of long-finned pilot whales in the Strait of Gibraltar. Distinction was done between inter-birth interval and inter-calving interval for viable calf (where both calves survived at least one year). A total of 122 potential mother-calf pairs were identified between 1999 and summer 2006 with photo-identification techniques. Up to 26 mother-calf pairs (13 mothers) were finally used to calculate the inter-calving interval because of the strict conditions to confirm a potential mother-offspring pair and the low number of females having two calves in the period. The mean inter-birth interval was found to be 3.6 years (range 1-7) while the mean inter-calving interval for viable calf was 4.5 years (range 2-7). The percentage of females giving birth each year was therefore calculated to be 27.8% using the inter-birth interval and 22.2% using the viable calves' interval. These values were lower than the results of studies realized on pilot whale carcasses from the Faroe fishery. This study provides for the first time the inter-birth interval for live pilot whales in the Strait of Gibraltar.</p>
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