Supplementary Material

Vessel strike of whales in Australia: The challenges of analysis of historical incident data

David Peel\*, Joshua N Smith, Simon Childerhouse

**\* Correspondence:** Corresponding Author: david.peel@csiro.au

**Supplementary Table 3.** Example of Historical reports

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Date** | **Report** |
| 15/12/1872 | “**SHIP ATTACKED BY A WHALE.** An unusual, though by no means unprecedented, occurrence (says the Newcastle Chronicle) is reported by Captain Lockyer, of 'the barque King Oscar. His account of it is much as follows : — The barque sailed from Hobart Town for this port on the 12th inst, and on the 15th, when thirty miles to the eastward of Cape Howe, sighted a large sperm .whale, distant about 309 yards, and proceeding in - the same direction. The monster fish remained in company some considerable time — four days, it is said —and, finally, it was seen to lift its head out of the water and make a furious dash at the vessel, striking her with tremendous force, and careening her over several streaks. Those who felt the shock compare it to the striking of a vessel on a rock, so violent was it. The pumps were at once sounded, but at first it was supposed that no material damage was done ; subsequent soundings showed, however, that the barque was making water at the rate of six inches an hour, and this she continued doing up to date of arrival, the 26th instant. The King Oscar will not repair hare, but, taking alight freight to Melbourne, will there receive a thorough overhaul, and have all damage made good. ! " |
| 1889 | “**A WHALE IN THE GULF**. As the steamer James Comrie was coming from Kangaroo Island a few trips ago she collided with a large whale between Cape Jarvis and Yan-kalilla. The shock at first startled the passengers, but on looking astern the cause was at once discovered, and owing to the propeller striking the whale the water was crimson with blood. After lashing the water for a few seconds the whale made off at a great rate. Captain Henderson states that the shock was very perceptible, and as the steamer passed over the fish the blades of the propeller were felt to strike it twice, the engines being partly stopped by the collision.” |
| 1894 | “**Collision With a Whale**. A novel and exciting incident occurred on a recent voyage of the steamer Titus, from Melbourne to Newcastle. The Titus returned here this morning, when the chief officer, Nicholson, reported that when the vessel was about 10 miles north of Wollongong she suddenly ran into a large whale with such force that the Titus was nearly thrown on her beam ends. The jerk was so severe that all on board believed that the vessel had bumped on the bottom. Captain Turnbull would have endeavoured to secure the monster, but the steamer had too much way on, and a southerly gale was blowing at the time. The whale was watched for some time as it whirled and lashed the waves in its dying struggles; finally it sank in a sea covered with blood.” |
| 1/1903 | “The Norwegian barque Barossa, which arrived last night from Eureka, when in the vicinity of Lord Horne Island, felt a shock of earthquake. On the following day, while bowling along at nine knots an hour, the barque collided with a whale, cutting the monster in two. The impact dented a plate in the bows of the vessel. “ |
| 1/1905 | “**A REMARKABLE FISH STORY**. An extraordinary incident occurred during the trip of the departmental steamer Governor Musgrave to the west coast last week. Though the story has the ring of romance in it, it is vouched for by Capt. Weir, the master of the steamer, the President and wardens of the Marine Board, and other official gentlemen who accompanied the vessel. Seated in the Governor Musgrave's saloon at dinner on Thursday, January ]2, the party were all at once startled by a heavy shock, which hurried them to the deck, expecting to discover that the vessel had struck either a rock or floating wreckage. The engineer rushed from below to see what was the matter. He reported that though the engines were sluggish in their movements, there was no visible evidence of anything being wrong with the machinery- Nor was there any indication on deck of what had caused the unwonted shock, and the members of the party returned to the saloon and finished the meal from which they had been so rudely disturbed. Various opinions regarding the cause of the disturbance were hazarded, and the general belief was that it was the result of an earthquake shock. However, on regaining the deck, the steamer was still labouring along as though in distress, and it was decided to stop the engines, and make a more careful investigation, for fear some accident had befallen the propeller. Anxious eyes were cast astern, and then it was noticed that a great fish had become jammed between the propeller and the rudder post. The larger portion of the centre of the fish had been cut to pieces by the propeller blades, but the tail projected over the starboard side for a distance of 12 ft., and the head about 6 ft. on the port side. Capt. Weir at once ordered a boat to be lowered, with a view to clear away the obstacle, but just as the crew had slackened up the falls the object cleared itself, dropped astern, and sank. The incident was remarkable, and even to such old salts as Capts. Gibbon and Dingle unprecedented in their experience. How the fish, which must have been 18 ft in length, became foul of the propeller in the way it did remains a mystery. These on board hold divergent opinions concerning the species of fish which was the cause of all the trouble. Some are inclined to think it was a shark, but Capt. Weir believes it to have been a fish of the cetaceous order, probably a grampus. The encounter occurred while the Governor Musgrave was steaming south-east on the homeward route, west of Olive Island, and off Streaky Bay. “ |
| 11/1934 | **Liner Strikes Whale at Sea** - Sydney Friday. The liner Wanganella which arrived in Sydney from Melbourne, struck a whale yesterday afternoon near Montague Island. The monster, which appeared to be asleep on the surface was killed. |
| 1952 | **Ship kills whale.** The British freighter La Estancia reached Melbourne yesterday, claiming to be the first ship ever to have harpooned a whale with her propellers. She hit the full-grown whale five days ago in a gale in the Bight. The ship was apparently undamaged. Third Officer Derek Wright, who was on the bridge at the time, said: "The whale was only, 50 feet off the starboard bow when we sighted him. "He was asleep" "He was awash, with heavy seas breaking over him. There was no movement, so he must, have been asleep. "I put the wheel to star-board to throw the stern of the ship out of his way, but it must have been too late." Captain M. Dodds said the whale briefly threshed its head and tail out of the water and then disappeared, apparently mortally injured. "I have been 22 years at sea, but I've never heard of a ship's propellers striking a whale like that before," said Captain Dodds. |

****