

Short communication

Haliphron atlanticum (Cephalopoda, Alloposidae) caught in Skjøråfjorden (64°N), Norway

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In late autumn 2000 a large female specimen of the alloposid cephalopod *Haliphron atlanticum* Steenstrup, 1861 was caught at approximately 100 m depth in a fjord in central Norway. This is the fourth record from Norwegian waters. Despite only a few records from northern areas, the four specimens reported in Norwegian waters suggest that *H. atlanticum* have a more northerly distribution than previous records should indicate.

Key words: Cephalopoda, *Haliphron*

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Introduction

Haliphron atlanticum Steenstrup, 1861 is a large, gelatinous alloposid octopod. Females may reach a total length of 2 metres, the male 0.3.

Specimens of *H. atlanticum* have been found in gut contents of sperm whales in the North Sea believed to have been feeding in Arctic waters before migrating south. Several species of cephalopods are important in the diet of sperm whales, among them *H. atlanticum* (Clarke & Pascoe 1997; Santos et al. 1999). This suggests that the species might not be uncommon in offshore waters in the Norwegian Sea and the North Sea. It is, however, not common that specimens are reported caught alive in trawl nets, and information from new records is valuable (Collins et al. 1997).

According to Collins et al. (1997) the adults of *H. atlanticum* are thought to be benthic while the juveniles are pelagic. Unlike other cephalopod species occurring in Norwegian waters, this species is not mentioned by Muus (1959). The type locality of *H. atlanticum* is in the East Atlantic Ocean at 38°N, 34°W (CephBase 1998-2002) west of the Azores. The species has been recorded from world-wide areas.

The first records of *H. atlanticum* in Norwegian waters were reported by Willassen (1986) based on two specimens found in 1983 and 1984. A dead specimen was found on the shore in the Fanafjord south of Bergen (western Norway), and a living specimen was caught in a trawl at 210 m depth in Lofoten (northern Norway). A third specimen was caught live in the fjord Sjøna

(Helgeland, Nordland) at 200 m about the same time (Willassen 1986). As far as we know the present record reported here is the fourth specimen found on the Norwegian coast.

Material

A specimen was reported caught in a trawl net in Skjøråfjorden, Roan, Sør-Trøndelag (64° 06'N, 10° 12'E) at approximately 100 m depth 23 November 2000.

The specimen was a female, and was measured to a total length of 96 cm with broken arm-tips. It was broken in two parts, making it difficult to get other accurate measurements. Total weight when the specimen arrived at the Museum was 8.5 kg. The body was soft and gelatinous, a reddish colour with a white ring around the black beak, and irregular rows of pale suckers. The specimen was fixed in formaldehyde and preserved in ethanol, its general condition is poor. It is deposited at NTNU, Museum of Natural History and Archaeology.

Discussion

An account of the distribution and biology of *H. atlanticum* is given in Willassen (1986). The fact that this species is found in Norwegian coastal waters, and that it is frequently found in the diet of sperm whales feeding in Arctic and northern boreal waters (Santos et al. 1999), suggests that the species is fairly eurythermic (Willassen 1986). Willassen suggested that the shelf area on the Norwegian west coast supports dense populations of *Haliphron*.

It is possible that the specimens of *H. atlanticum* have been transported to the coastline by inflow of water from the North Atlantic Current mixing with the Norwegian Coastal Current. This was demonstrated with a mass occurrence of the siphonophore *Apoemia uvaria* (Lesueur) along the Norwegian coast coinciding with strong inflow of North Atlantic Water (Båmstedt et al. 1998). Similar instance has been reported several times for *Salpa fusiformis* (Cuvier) (Brattström 1972).

The dead specimen reported by Willassen from Fanafjorden near Bergen was found in May. Two of the reported specimens were found in November, the one in Lofoten (at 68°N; Willassen 1986) and the specimen from Skjøråfjorden reported in this paper. The last specimen was caught in April in the fjord Sjona (at 66°N; Willassen 1986). These three specimens were caught in trawls at depths of 100-210 m.

As reported from studies of the diet of sperm whales (Clarke & Pascoe 1997, Santos et al. 1999) *H. atlanticum* seems to be common in northern waters. When Willassen (1986) reported three newly found specimens in Norwegian waters it was the first records of this species north of 42°N. This suggest that *H. atlanticum* has a more northerly distribution than previous records should indicate.

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Sammendrag

Blekkspruten *Haliphron atlanticum* (Cephalopoda, Allopeidae) fanget i Skjøråfjorden (64°N), Sør-Trøndelag

I november 2000 ble det rapportert om et funn av blekkspruten *Haliphron atlanticum* Steenstrup, 1861 i Skjøråfjorden, Sør-Trøndelag. Individet var tatt i trål og ble fraktet til NTNU, Vitenskapsmuseet der det er oppbevart i dag. Funnet er det fjerde i norske farvann av denne arten. Basert på opplysninger fra litteraturen der rester av *H. atlanticum* er funnet i mageprøver fra spermhval i nordområdene, og funnet av fire individer av arten langs norskekysten indikerer at den har en mer nordlig utbredelse enn tidligere antatt. Det er sannsynlig at individer blir transportert inn til norskekysten med innstrømming av atlantehavsvann som blander seg med den norske kyststrømmen, slik det er rapportert om for andre organismer.

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