

Re-sighting of “P118”, an adult male orca, near Vesteralen, northern Norway in 2012

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The 'P' group of orca, found off Northern Norway became one of the most sought-after groups of orca when their acoustic recordings were matched to that of a young female orca captured off the Netherlands (Vester and Samarra, 2011). Despite the matches, the group had not been photographed since 2005.

Animals in the P pod are shown in Appendix 1. Included in the group is an adult male who is registered in the Ocean Sounds Norwegian Killer Whale Catalogue as P118 (Figure 1). He was resighted at least once in 2005 (Figure 2), but not photographed since then, until June 2012 (see details below).



Figure 1. “P118” photographed in 5th November 2005 inside Tysfjord carousel feeding on herring. Unknown photographer from Orca-Tysfjord whale watching.

On the 22 June 2012, Arctic Whale Tours, whilst conducting a commercial whale watching tour, encountered a group of orca. CI [posted the images online](#). A subsequent encounter on 27 June 2012, also resulted in photographs by CI being [posted online](#). The images were compared to the identification images of P pod, by [Schwarz-Weisse-Giganten](#). A match was made to P118, who was observed on both days (Figure 3 & 4).

No other members of group P were apparently photographed. However, orca were seen on four days prior to the first resighting of P118 (i.e., on the 8, 13, 15 & 21 June) as well as one day between (26 June) and one day following (28 June) the most recent resighting (CI, Arctic Whale Tours, unpublished data). It

appeared that these orcas were feeding on herring and it is likely, given the spread-out nature of the groups that not all individuals were photographed.

Sightings during summer months are often correlated with occurrence of herring schools close to land (Simila et al 1996). During the northern hemisphere winter seasons of 2010 and 2011, large herring schools came close to shore in Vesteralen. Orcas were observed feeding on the herring, including offshore from the village of Stø, the proposed site of rehabilitation and release for Morgan. Orcas were also spotted inside the Andfjord (<http://www.arcticwhaletours.com/> and <http://www.whalesafari.no/>).

This re-sighting of a group member of group P118 who has a close acoustic match to Morgan, along with sightings of orcas in areas close to shore in Vesteralen, indicate the proposed site to rehabilitate and release Morgan is not only suitable, it is a highly desirable location to increase her chances of integration back into her native population.



Figure 2. "P118" photographed 19th November 2005 inside Tysfjord carousel feeding on herring with the rest of group P. © Heike Vester / Ocean Sounds.



Figure 3. “P118” photographed 22.6.2012 accompanying unknown group of orcas (but different than 27.6.2012). © Camilla Ilmoni / Arctic Whale Tours.



Figure 4. “P118” photographed 27.06.2012 accompanying unknown group of orcas (but different than 22.6.2012). © Camilla Ilmoni / Arctic Whale Tours.

REFERENCES

VESTER, H. & SAMARRA, F. I. P. 2011. Comparison of Morgan’s discrete stereotyped call repertoire with a recent catalogue of Norwegian killer whale calls. Henningsvær, Norway: Ocean Sounds.

APPENDIX 1. P POD.

Meet Morgan's extended family:

P-Pod

Photo credits Heike Vester

<http://www.ocean-sounds.com>

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Morgan



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P113



P114



P117



P118



P119



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