

Researchers say new species of beaked whale found off Mexico

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Researchers looking for an elusive species of beaked whale said Wednesday they think they have found another new, previously unknown species off Mexico's western Pacific coast.

Dr. Jay Barlow, a retired adjunct professor at the Scripps Institution of Oceanography, said Wednesday the beaked whales both look and sound different from the approximately 23 other known species.

The team was sailing with the Sea Shepherd Conservation Society in mid-November, in hopes of identifying the source of an unidentified acoustic signal. That signal had been associated by other researchers with Perrin's beaked whale, a species that has only been seen when dead individuals wash up on shore.

Suddenly three of the new beaked whales actually swam up near the Sea Shepherd ship and were filmed and recorded. Barlow said he is confident they were not Perrin's beaked whales.

Barlow said that "we saw something new. Something that was not expected in this area, something that doesn't match, either visually or acoustically, anything that is known to exist."

Barlow said researchers took three [water samples](#) in the vicinity of the animals in hopes of getting an "environmental DNA sample from their sloughed skin cells," that will be submitted for laboratory analysis as soon as feasible.

That might help determine whether it is a new species; researchers hope to mount another trip next year to see if they can find both the new [beaked whales](#) and Perrin's beaked whale.

Beaked whales are smaller than many other [whales](#), have a sort of beaked, dolphin-like nose. Their habits are little known because they dive to great depths.

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