Comparative anatomy of the larynx of the minke whale, *Balaenoptera acutorostrata* and the pygmy right whale, *Caperea marginata*.

by

Desray Reeb

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Abstract

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Supervisor: Dr P. B. Best
Mammal Research Institute
Department of Zoology
University of Pretoria
Pretoria

Abstract

The laryngeal apparatus of *C. marginata* is described for the first time and proves to be entirely different from that of any mysticete so far described, especially in the position of the laryngeal sac which is separate from the tracheal rings and lies to the right of the animal. Massive ontogenetic development of the sac in adult males is demonstrated, far greater than that seen in a series of two juvenile and two adult *B. acutorostrata* also examined. Histological analysis of the laryngeal sacs of both *C. marginata* and *B. acutorostrata* shows the walls to be highly muscular, well innervated and vascularised, indicating an active organ. Coiled blood vessels and nerves found in *C. marginata* support the theory that in this species the sac undergoes extensive expansion and contraction, and a possible association with the unique thoracic structure of the species is suggested. The roles of the laryngeal sac and arytenoid cartilages in mysticete sound production are discussed.
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