

Marion Island Killer Whales

2006-2009





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Preface

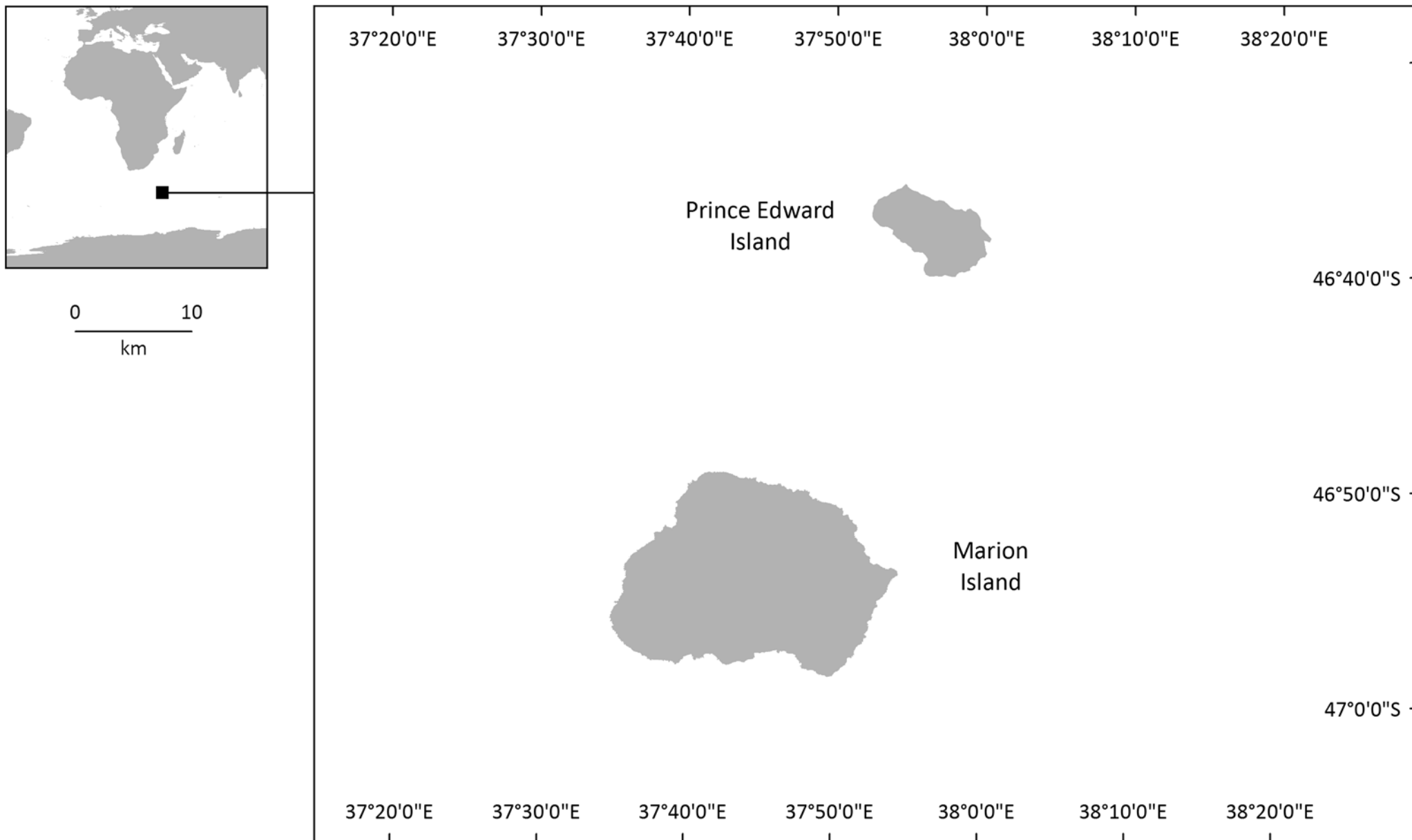
Killer whales have been studied opportunistically at Marion Island since 1973, however systematic studies were only initiated in 2006. Killer whales occur year-round in the inshore waters at Marion Island - often within metres of the shore - where they hunt elephant seals, fur seals and penguins. Their abundance peaks from September to December, linked with the seasonal occurrence of their prey. Their diet is poorly known and their movements when they are not sighted at Marion Island are completely unknown.

Killer whale research at Marion Island is conducted by the University of Pretoria's Mammal Research Institute and forms a new part of the 26 year old Marion Island Marine Mammal Programme

This catalogue was compiled from shore-based observations made from April 2006 to April 2009. Individuals are identified based on characteristics of their dorsal fin and saddle patch and each individual is assigned a unique alphanumeric identifier: the first letter indicates **M**arion Island; the second letter indicates adult **M**ale, adult **F**emale, or **U**nknown age-sex class; and a three digit number, which is unique to each individual regardless of age-sex class (*i.e.*, it does not change if an individual is re-assigned to a different age-sex class).

The Prince Edward Islands

Subantarctic Marion Island (46°54'S, 37°45'E) is the larger (296 km²) of a pair of islands comprising the Prince Edward Islands group. It is situated in the southern Indian Ocean, some 2,000 km south east of Cape Town, with the nearest landmass being the Iles Crozet - approximately 1000 km to the east at similar latitude. The interplay between the Antarctic Circumpolar Current and the prominent bottom topography of the South West Indian Ridge results in productive turbulent water masses around the Prince Edward Islands, sustaining the large breeding populations of seals and seabirds. The Islands are South Africa's only Special Nature Reserve.



Individuals



MF001
"Halfmoon"



MF002
"Linus"



MF003



MU027
MF002's calf, born in 2008





MF004
"Dot"



MM005



MU024
"David" MF004's calf, born in 2008



MF006
"Harriet"



MM007
"Max"



MM008



MF009



MM010





MM011
"Michael"



MF012



MF013

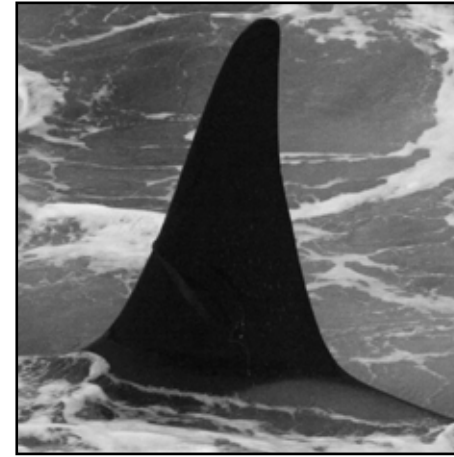


MF014
"Scratches"





MF015



MM016



MF017



MF018





MM019



MF020



MU021



MF022
Calf born in 2008

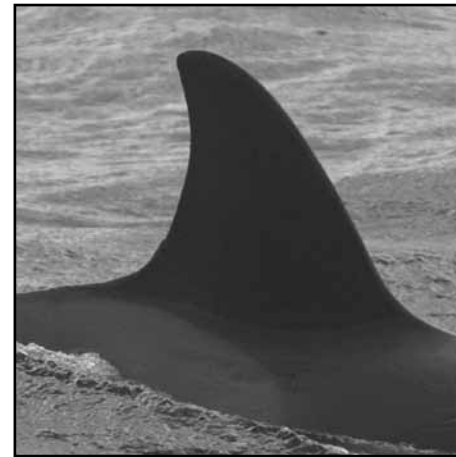




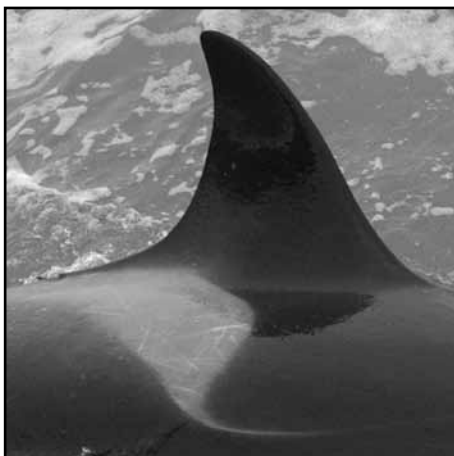
MF023



MU025



MU026
"O'Neill"



MU028

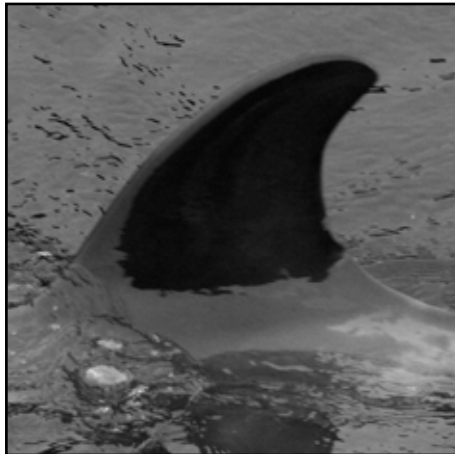




MF029



MF030
"Top Notch"



MU034
MF029's calf, born in 2008



MF031
"Bent"





MF032



MF033



MF035



MF036
"Rake"





MF037

Thank you

Chris Oosthuizen
Cheryl Tosh
Thomas Mufanadzo

Overwintering and relief SANAP expeditioners

Mammal Research Institute
South African National Antarctic Programme
Department of Environmental Affairs
National Research Foundation

