

# Migration of Antarctic Minke Whales to the Arctic

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## Abstract

The Antarctic minke whale (*Balaenoptera bonaerensis*), and the common minke whale found in the North Atlantic (*Balaenoptera acutorostrata acutorostrata*), undertake synchronized seasonal migrations to feeding areas at their respective poles during spring, and to the tropics in the autumn where they overwinter. Differences in the timing of seasons between hemispheres prevent these species from mixing. Here, based upon analysis of mitochondrial and microsatellite DNA profiles, we report the observation of a single *B. bonaerensis* in 1996, and a hybrid with maternal contribution from *B. bonaerensis* in 2007, in the Arctic Northeast Atlantic. Paternal contribution was not conclusively resolved. This is the first documentation of *B. bonaerensis* north of the tropics, and, the first documentation of hybridization between minke whale species.

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