



The usual suspects: repeated approaches and inquisitive behavior towards boats by individual minke whales in southern Portugal

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Introduction

While baleen whales opportunistically approach vessels^(1,2), **repeated inquisitive behavior** is less frequently documented. Few reports include an **individual-based analysis of apparent curiosity**. Here we present **long-term photo-identification of common minke whales (*Balaenoptera acutorostrata*)** off southern Portugal and describe inquisitive behavior (Fig. 1) on an individual level.

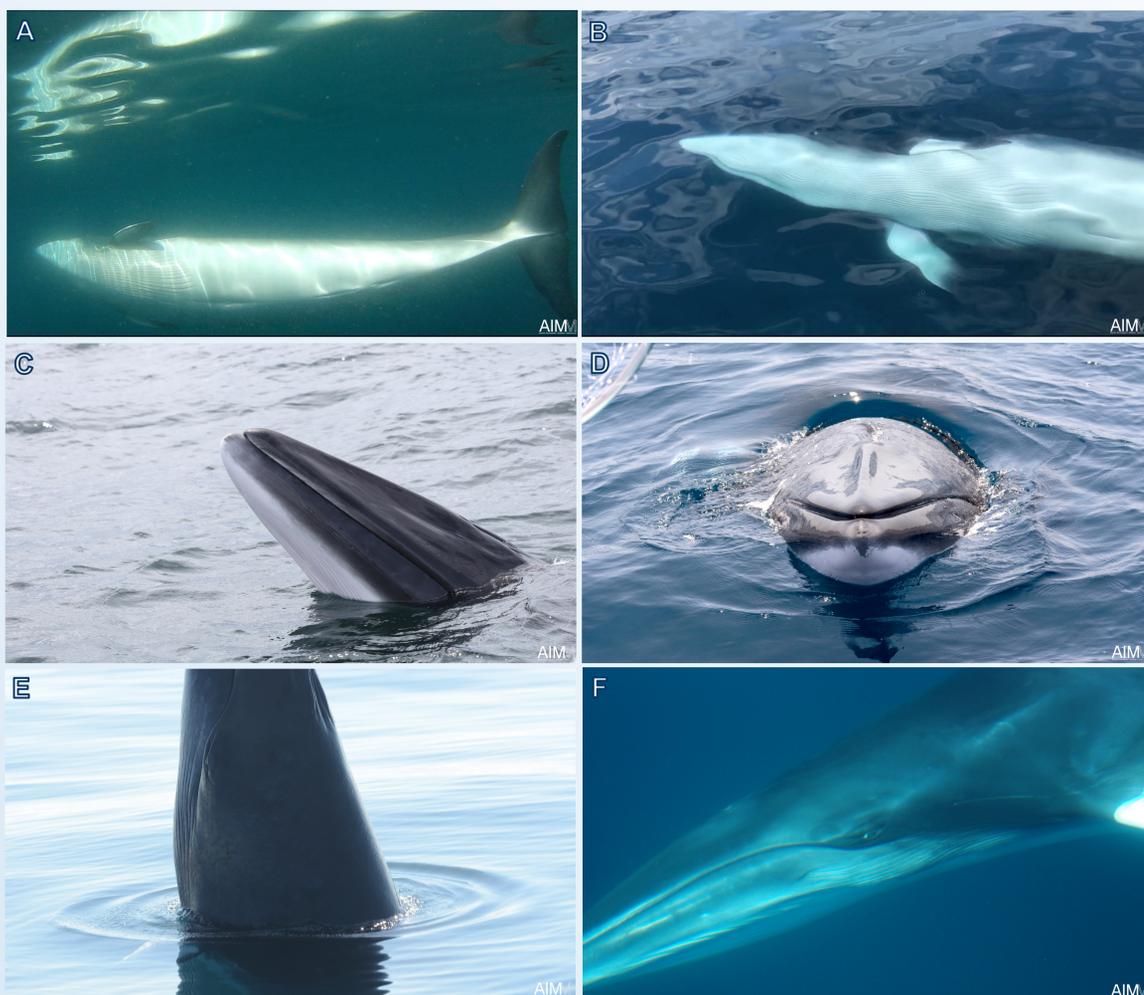


Fig. 1 – Observed inquisitive behavior of minke whales was initiated by the whale and included: **(A+B)** actively approaching, circling and crossing the still-standing vessel, turning the belly towards it, **(C–E)** spy-hopping/lifting the head out of the water for a prolonged period, **(F)** apparent observation from underwater.

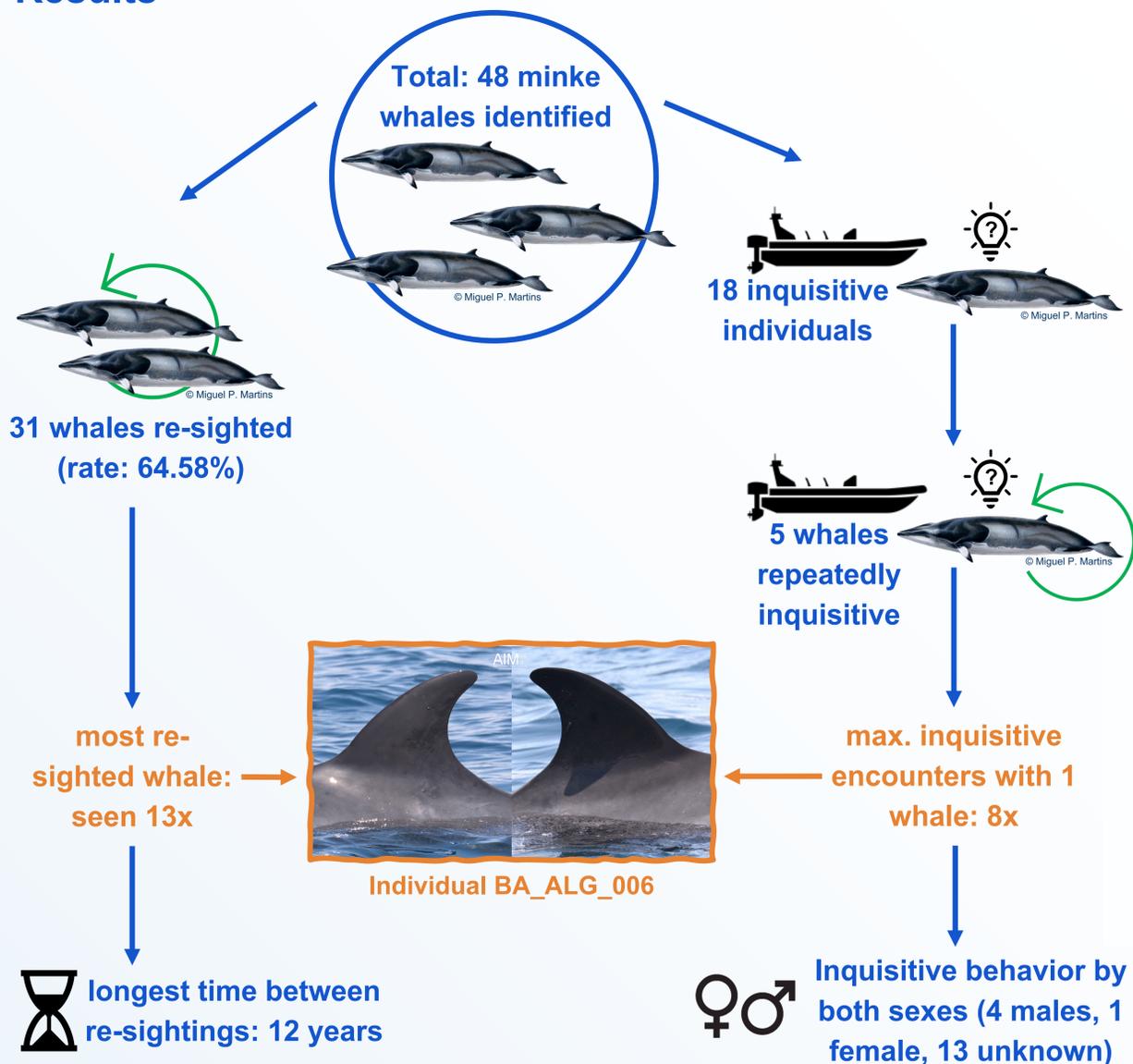
Methodology

Pictures, underwater footage, and behavioral data were collected during dedicated and opportunistic boat-based surveys between 2011 and 2024. This included **response towards the vessel** (evasive, indifferent, approach).

Acknowledgements

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Results



Discussion and Conclusion

We highlight the **long-term presence and inquisitiveness** of individual minke whales off southern Portugal. The continued interactions of few animals raises **management concerns**. These individuals may suffer from **increased vessel exposure** and its implications due to intense whale-watching activities in this area⁽³⁾. Further investigating the minke whales' apparent curiosity may aid in **identifying and addressing unevenly distributed anthropogenic pressure**.

References

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Video here!

