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MALFORMATION IN THE PECTORAL FINS IN FRANCISCANA DOLPHIN (*PONTOPORIA BLAINVILLE*): CASE REPORT.

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The Franciscana dolphin (*Pontoporia blainville*), a threatened small odontocete cetacean from the occidental South Atlantic Ocean, has as major conservation risk factor the accidental captures in fishing operations. A dead animal was brought to Biopesca Institute as a result of stranding and accidental captures survey at São Paulo State coast, Brazil. The specimen found in Peruíbe, Brazil, presented 4.2 kg of weight and 90.3 cm total length. Gender was not determined due to absence of genital organs as result of predation. External examination showed both pectoral fins altered in morphology, with the appearance of a sickle. The reentrance of the left fin measured about 5 cm in middle-lateral direction and 4 cm in cranial-caudal direction; in right fin the reentrance measured 5 cm in middle-lateral direction and 6.5 cm in cranial-caudal direction. Absence of most organs and advanced decomposition stage of the specimen did not allowed biological sample collection and analysis for the investigation of possible causes related to the morphological abnormality or death cause. From many studies reporting morphological abnormalities in cetacean spine, one report in free ranging animals using photo identification associated morphological alterations to congenic or acquired factors, such as neurological diseases, environmental contamination, idiopathic causes, traumatic, age and others. There is also one report about cetacean digital anomalies using fixed specimens from museums, in which polydactyly, ossified elements in the interdigital spaces and abnormal patterns of ossification were shown by radiographic images. In the present report, no radiographic exam was performed aiming to determine specific bones alterations. However, besides the abnormality found, the specimen was defined as juvenile by the comparison of total length to literature data, showing its functional adaptive capacity could be proved. More research is needed to investigate cetacean morphological abnormalities and related possible causes, mainly the relation with genetic and toxicological factors.

Keywords: Cetacean, Odontocete, Digital anomalies.