

Whale Sounds and Migration

By John Hancox

Fifty Members and their guests assembled on Wednesday 28 July to listen to Doug Cato present a fascinating account of whale sounds and the migration of humpback whales up and down the east coast of Australia. The talk covered more than 50 years of history from whaling operations at Tangalooma and Byron Bay up to the present time.



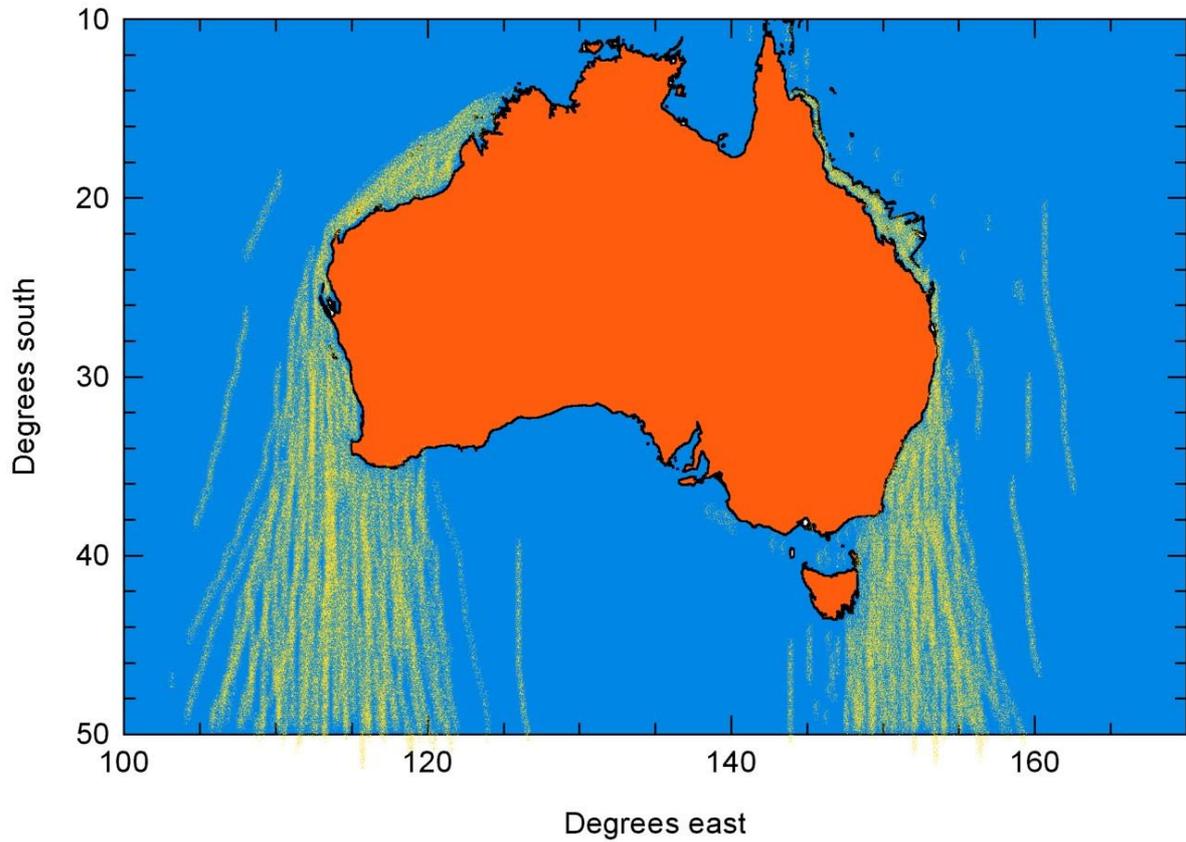
Doug Cato, left with John Hancox, right.

Doug is a world-renowned expert on whale sounds and associated acoustic activities, and he gave the audience a special treat with recordings of sounds from dolphins and humpbacks. We learned about the difference between baleen and toothed whales and their distinct social habits.

The good news is that whale numbers have been increasing consistently at a rate of 10.5% per year and that numbers are now estimated to be approximately 30,000. It is likely that even more whales populate the west coast.



Slide from Doug Cato's presentation: Diagrammatic representation of humpback migrations



Teams of volunteers count the whales from Point Lookout on North Stradbroke Island where whales come closest to the coast as they migrate north and south from Antarctica to the Whitsunday Islands.

The next Cruising Division gathering will be on Wednesday 26 July to hear Michael Molesworth regale us with tales from the Clipper Round the World Challenge for Corinthian sailors. Save the date!