

Diel movement patterns of ocean sunfish *Mola mola* off southern California

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Staff at the reserve posted photographs of the enormous fish on social media, incorrectly but understandably identifying it as an ocean sunfish (*Mola mola*), which is commonly found in seas off the US. With the exception of one documented sighting off the Netherlands in 1889, retrospectively attributed to being a hoodwinker, it has only ever been spotted in southern hemisphere waters, off New Zealand, Australia, Chile and Peru. "That's as far north as I have seen it, that corresponds to a cold water current," she said. Researchers from the University of California, Santa Barbara, collected samples from the dead fish, including one bound for Nyegaard's research. Diel movement patterns were described for sunfish, with this species diving below the thermocline during daylight hours, while nocturnal dives were confined to the surface mixed layer [33 , 34 , 39]. Vertical distribution and space use of marine predators are expected to change in relation to characteristics of the water column, and/or due to alterations in the depth preferences of prey. In this study, movement patterns of tracked sunfish provided further support that this species moves to higher latitudes in warmer months of late spring–summer in the north-east Atlantic Ocean [34], similar to the pattern found in the north-western Atlantic [37]. *M. mola* tagged in the waters off southern Portugal in February moved in northerly and westerly directions whilst the animal equipped in Irish waters in August moved southerly to the Bay of Biscay, North Spain, 959 km south of the tagging location (Fig. 4). This pattern of increased latitude in late winter to summer and

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