

Profile - David Cayton, the APFU and Corkscrew Seal Mutilations

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The following Profile is being presented in order to familiarize U.S. readers with ongoing research being conducted on animal mutilations in the U.K. Specifically, it focuses on the work of David Cayton and his associates at the Animal Pathology Field Unit. While traditionally having investigated domestic and wild animal mutilations, recently the APFU has begun investigating sea mammal mutilations as well. Thus far their work in this new domain has centered primarily on seal mutilations.

In the U.S. the term animal mutilations is closely related to its most renowned investigator, Linda Moulton Howe. However, in the U.K. [David Cayton](#) is perhaps of comparable stature in this field of inquiry. Readers may ask, who is David Cayton? Mr. Cayton is a quiet, unassuming man with an inherent passion for investigating bizarre phenomena. He arrived to the study of animal mutilations by a circuitous route. Initially he worked as an aerospace engineer for the Engineering Research Department at Hawker Siddeley Aviation in Manchester, England. But his passion for investigation the unknown led him to take an early retirement from the aerospace industry in 1992, in order to assume a position at Quest International where he worked with the renowned British Ufologist [Tony Dodd](#). In that capacity he gained crucial retirement experience as a UFO investigator.

One of his notable contributions in this new post was his investigation of the [Milton Torres Incident](#). This Incident occurred in 1957 with an RAF's encounter with a UFO flying over East Anglia. Milton Torres was ordered to intercept the UFO because the unknown craft was violating British air space. During the encounter. Then during the encounter, Torres was ordered to shoot down the alien craft. In a 2007 re-visitation of the case, Cayton wrote a follow-up to that original article titled, *The 1957 Milton Torres Super Sabre UFO Encounter - Updated from 2007*. During his tenure at Quest International, later renamed UFO Truth Magazine, he gained privy to much of the research being conducted by his mentor Tony Dodd. In addition to examining various aspects of the UFO phenomenon, Cayton became familiar with two newly associated topics; crop circles and animal mutilations.

Following his tenure with UFO Truth Magazine, Cayton joined the [Centre for Crop Circle Studies](#) headed by Colin Andrews and spent the next 12 years investigating this phenomenon in the vicinity of Wiltshire, England. His prolonged experience investigating crop circles was recently highlighted in a RichPlanet.net documentary entitled, [Crop Circles: The Hidden Truth](#). In recognition of his outstanding service in various aspects of UFO investigation he was awarded UFO Truth Magazine's 2015 award for Services to British Ufology.

Animal Pathology Field Unit (APFU)

David Caton's concurrent endeavor, began in 1997 with the onset of unusual seal deaths accompanied by bizarre mutilations occurring along the northern shores of the U.K.. He was fortunate in being able to enlist the support of a local professor of pathology who agreed to examine tissue samples and conduct necropsies on the mutilated carcasses. Then later, in 2001 he and Phil Hoyle co-founded an investigative organization known as the *Animal Pathology Field Unit* (APFU). The purpose of the Organization was to methodically investigate animal mutilation that appeared to be of an extraordinary nature. Up to that point in time only the local police, RSPCA and press payed attention to these strange mutilations. APFU's efforts to more thoroughly investigate these events were genuinely welcome by individuals effected by the loss of livestock or pets. Over time the APFU's findings became the subject of numerous radio shows and TV interviews. Most recently various members of the APFU have participated in live interviews and debates on animal mutilations, especially in association on RichPlanet TV.

The APFU's findings are very similar to those reported by Linda Moulton Howe and other mutilation researchers in U.S.. This similarity also extends to the type animals being mutilated. Most commonly preyed upon are domesticated livestock such as horses, cows, sheep, goats, dogs and pigs, but wild animals such as deer, foxes, and hedgehogs have also found mutilated in the same manner. One particularly interesting finding uncovered by the APFU was that a number of foxes were found with a small, circular head wound at the top of their skulls which resembled large bullet holes. Upon closer examination, these holes were later found to be portals through which the animals brains were extracted. Similar wounds have also been occasionally reported in cattle mutilations in the U.S. and Australia.

The physical characteristic of animal mutilations found in both the U.S. and U.K. are: (1) extreme exsanguination (removal of blood) at the mutilation site, and later confirmed to extend throughout the by necropsies, (2) excision of the eyes, ears and tongue, as well as the extraction of the animals sexual organs, (3) evidence that internal organs were extracted from the animal through small, circular, portals in the skin; these portals were cauterize in a laser-like fashion along the outer ridge of the incision, and (4) occasionally, evidence of high impact trauma to the bones and torso indicative of the body being dropped from a considerable height.

Some members of the APFU have conducted night long vigils in hopes to determining the cause of these mutilations. The regions surveilled were located in remote areas where livestock congregate at night. While unsuccessful, they frequently observed and photographed strange nocturnal lights resembling orbs or UFOs in the vicinity. Unfortunately, despite the observer's presence, these surveillances did not deterred mutilations from occurring.

By reason of the following points, the APFU concluded that mutilations were UFO related: (1) lack of tracks or any other evidence of human or predator involvement near the mutilated animal, (2) inability to deter ongoing mutilations through careful surveillance, (3) evidence of highly skilled organ extractions during necropsies, (4) persistent reports of UFO activity at mutilations sites, (5) ubiquitous distribution of similar mutilations throughout the world, (6) lack any adequate official investigation or explanation for the mutilations other than natural predation or cult related ritual sacrifices, and (7) the lack of an alternative scientific hypothesis that would account for all aspect of the phenomenon.

Corkscrew Seal Mutilations

At the end of the first decade of the new millennium David Cayton and the APFU became involved in an entirely new type of mutilation visited upon the U.K.. These mutilations were so bizarre that it mystified even seasoned veterinarians. The APFU's focus now turned to the investigation of sea mammal mutilation, particularly to those inflicted upon seals. It should be noted from the outset that many of the images shown below are both graphic and repulsive to those uninitiated in the subject. They are only being shown to illustrate important features necessary to understand the bizarre nature of the subject matter being presented below.

In the U.K. this new phenomenon began in 2008 when in 52 seals washed up dead off the its northern coastline. While beach spotters frequently find dead seals washed up along the shoreline, this new crop of seals were all mutilated in a similar way. Each bore a strange, spiral-like excisions across their torsos. Dave Thompson, head of Scotland's *Marine Management Organization* (MMO), immediately noted that these seal deaths were entirely different from anything seen before. Necropsies performed by the MMO determined that the seals were all mortally injured by a long spiral cut that began at the base of the seal's skull and spiraled around the animal's torso to its caudal flippers. The cut was uniform in deep cutting through the seal thick blubber but ending before contact with the inner fascia separating the blubber from the internal organs. In view the appearance of these wounds, the press soon dubbed the phenomenon "Corkscrew Mutilations."



Figure 1: A typical “corkscrew” mutilated seal corpse showing a classic spiral wound. Collected in the Eden estuary in St. Andrews Bay, Scotland in July 2009. - credit: Marine Management Organization (MMO)



Figure 2. Close-up of a segment of the spiral wound above showing a clean cut through the seal’s blubber ending before penetrating the body’s inner fascia. - credit: Marine Management Organization (MMO)

To Thompson’s MMO research group, it seemed evident that a mechanical device of great force was required to inflict such a wound. A ship’s propeller seemed the most likely cause. These propeller spins at a high rate of speed in a circular motion to move the water. However, that hypothesis wasn’t without flaws. The first was that a ship pro-

propeller produces a well recognized acoustical signature that is easily recognized by sea mammals. One would think the seals would immediately recognize the sound represented to approach of danger and seek to avoid its approach. A second is marine experts easily recognize that propeller blades of sea craft produce a single slashing wound when coming into contact with sea mammals, not the spiral pattern noted on the mutilated seals.

While the MMO's set about investigations which type of propulsion system was responsible, corkscrew mutilated seals continued washing up with increasing frequency along the U.K.'s northern shorelines. Between 2008-2010 their numbers reached the point of alarming for both environmentalist and investigators alike.

When the phenomenon reach the attention of David Cayton and the APFU, efforts to investigate the mutilations began in earnest. Cayton's relationship to Steve Bexton, an RSPCA veterinarian working on behalf of the MMO, provided him with a number of photographs of mutilated seals, including the ones above in figures 1 and 2. Regarding that particular necropsy, Bexton remarked to Cayton the extreme difficulty of cutting cleanly through the tough seal skin in one continuous smooth cut without penetrating the inner fascia (personal communication). That finding was not lost on the MMO. It only strengthened their resolved to find the precise mechanical device that caused these wounds. In the meantime Cayton began to run across a number of familiar land type wounds showing up in the seal photos passed down to him.

These wounds had been well documented by the APFU and served as defining markers for animal mutilation cases. Could corkscrew seal mutilations be caused by the same agency responsible the ongoing global epidemic traditional animal mutilations? Two specific types of mutilations came to mind. The first included skull stripping along with circular cores on the bodies of dead seals from which internal tissue and organs could have been removed (Figures 3 & 4 below). The other was the finding of occasional, purposeful decapitations (Figure 5 below).

A similar decapitation occurred in late January 2010. The BBC reported that a number of decapitated seals were found at near a seaside resort in Scotland. Below is a quote of the original announcement:

"A group of grey seals have been found beheaded on a beach at a Tyneside seaside resort."

"The RSPCA said five seals, three of which were decapitated, were found dead at Whitley Bay on Monday morning. A spokesman said all of the seals were juveniles, with the eldest thought to have been no more than a year old and the youngest just a few weeks."

"One of the seals had been tagged as part of a study by the Sea Mammal Research Unit in St Andrews, Fife."



Figure 3: Head strip of all flesh to the cervical vertebrae. - credit: David Cayton



Figure 4: Same seal as shown above with 3 circular portals through which internal organs were removed. - credit: David Cayton



Figure 5: Decapitated seal severed at the cervical vertebrae. Note the near cut were the other skin has shrunk away. - credit David Stuart

By that time it had already become evident to MMO researchers that the majority of the dead carcasses turning up on the shoreline were either females or young juveniles. The shortage of mature males suggested a possible selective bias in the fatalities. Why would this be so if a purely mechanical device be responsible? Would not the blades of some nautical ship mutilated the seals indiscriminately produce random age and sex casualties.

Through a long working association with Tony Dodd, David Cayton had previously learned that between 1991-1992 a group of grey seals had been found decapitated along the shores of the Orkney Islands north of Scotland. Necropsies of these seals revealed that their heads had been severed at precisely the same location at the base of the skull without any visible injury to the surrounding bone. The event challenged any natural explanation at the time, however, it had retreated from public attention with the passage of time. The question that arose in Cayton's mind when confronted with the 2010 decapitation was this; where the recent seal mutilated in the same manner as those reported by Tony Todd?

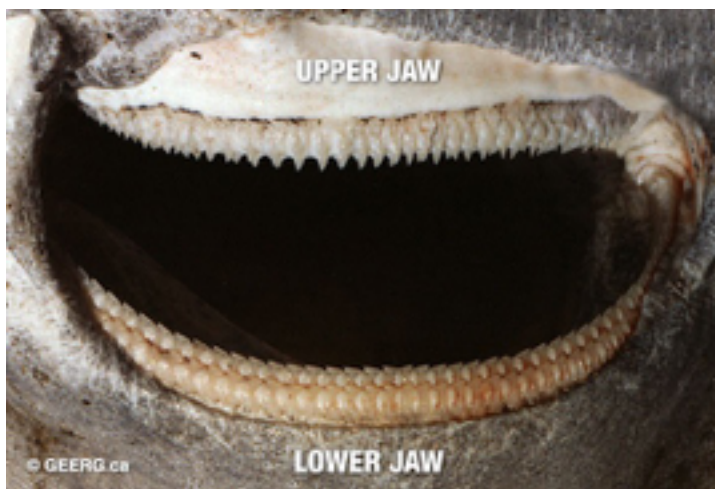
In the midst of these events came a stunning announcement by Zoe Lucas and Lisa Natanson from across the Atlantic. The authors announced in the 2010 *Proceedings of the Nova Scotian Institute of Science* that they had determined the source of these corkscrew mutilations. These researchers examined nearly 5,000 seal deaths categorized by either slash or corkscrew cuts from Sable Island between 1993 and 2001. According to the authors, the culprit of the slash type of wound was the white shark, but the vast majority (98%) of corkscrew wounds were inflicted by the Greenland shark. Their conclusion were based on the analysis of wound patterns, tooth fragments, and marks on the victim's bones. The seal population studied was that of the isolated Sable Island National Park located approximately 100 miles East of Nova Scotia, Canada.



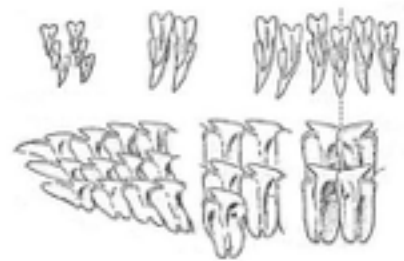
Figure 6: The telltale corkscrew wound pattern that Zoe Lucas observed thousands of times on Sable Island between 1996 and 2001. Note that this mutilation differs from that in Figure 1 in that the spiral does not extend to the caudal flippers and that the fascia underlying the seal blubber has been breached down to the rib cage. - credit Zoe Lucas



Figure 7: Greenland Shark (*Somniosus microcephalus*) “tiny head” - credit Jeffrey Gallant



(LEFT) Jaws of a Greenland shark from the St. Lawrence Estuary. Image © GEERG



(ABOVE) Greenland shark dentition. Image: Fishes of the North Western Atlantic

Figure 8: Jaw & teeth of a Greenland shark - credit GEERG

Since [Sable Island](#) is seal sanctuary protected by the Canadian government, no commercial vessels are allowed too traffic in the shallow water where the seals feed. In addition, its remote location in the Atlantic lies far from commercial traffic. Those factors ruled out the possibility that the mutilated seals were the victims of mechanical causation but Sable Island was a prime location for natural predation. The Canadian's long and exhaustive study squarely contradicted Thompson's theory. Suddenly, the St Andrew's team had to re-evaluate their own evidence.



Figure 9: Location of Sabel Island. credit: Google maps



Figure 10: Sable Island National Park Reserve. - credit: Google maps

Since predation was the prime suspect, Canadian researchers focused on which shark species could be held accountable. Based on the type of wounds found on the mutilated seals, it was determined that two species of sharks were suspect. Seals with slashes and bite marks were attributed to come from white shark based on the nature and size of the wounds.

During their investigation some new and unique features were discovered about the Greenland shark which led Lucas and Natanson to determine that it was responsible for the corkscrew mutilations. Chief among them was that the Greenland shark has a saw-like upper jaw teeth that produce sharp, serrated cuts. Their teeth and jaws were unlike those of other sharks or orcas. The second discovery was that Greenland sharks were not limited to deep water scavenging as previously thought. Their investigations revealed that Greenland sharks were also prowling the shallow water of inlet bays. These two findings were key to their conclusion that Greenland sharks were indeed responsible for 98% of Sable Island's corkscrew mutilations.

During this same period of time Thompson's St Andrew's group had studied more than 70 dead seals recovered from Scotland, Ireland and northern England. One of Thompson's research assistants, Joseph Onoufriou, made small wax models of seals and fed them into a scale model of a ducted propeller. He found that the marks on the wax seals were similar to the wounds on the real seals. They also had that same 35-degree angle of cut. Those results convinced the St. Andrews team that their initial hypothesis was correct. In consequence, the Scotland group concentrated their efforts on finding which type of propellers were most suspect. From these investigations it was determined ducted propellers that spin inside a short tube were the logical culprit. These ducted often referred to as Kort Nozzles or ducted azimuth thrusters, after the British company that makes some of them. They are typically found on tugboats and other powerful vessels that service oil rigs or offshore wind farms. But unfortunately, ducted propellers are not commonly found operating in shallow waters. Thompson's crew next began checked the shipping records against the location of where seals had washed up with corkscrew wounds.



Figure 11: Ducted azimuth thrusters - credit: Google images

Unwilling to defer to the two major competing research groups on either side of the Atlantic, David Cayton published, *A dubious explanation for unusual corkscrew injuries to large numbers of seals during 2009 & 2010 in Norfolk and Scotland* (2015) advancing his own view, namely that the wounds he observed appeared to be intentional and purposefully carried out with remarkable skill. His pursuit of this view eventually led to the termination of the MMO's collaboration with the APFU. An order was issued, presumably from the Department for Environmental, Food & Rural Affairs (DEFRA) to halt any further communication between Steve Bexton, the MMO's veterinarian, and David Cayton. It would appear that DEFRA feared negative press over Cayton's views would muddy the waters over their own investigations.

Thompson weighed the Lucas's and Natanson's evidence against his own data and decided that Greenland sharks could not have caused the corkscrew wounds observed in the U.K. For one thing, the water around the British Isles in July, which averages 63 degrees F. That is 20 degrees warmer than the temperatures proffered by Greenland sharks. But his group's ducted-propeller hypothesis wasn't perfect either. It was hard to imagine what would cause a number of seals to swim so close to a noisy propeller that they would get sucked into the intake near the ship's hull. Despite his reservations, con-

cern about the harbor seal decline was so strong that in April 2012 Scotland and the United Kingdom issued official advice to the shipping industry to avoid using ducted propellers near seal conservation areas and during seal breeding season.

The Greenland shark hypothesis wasn't entirely free of criticism either. In an article by Jeffrey Gallant of the *Greenland Shark and Elasmobranch Education and Research Group* (GEERG), Gallant argued that "the only confirmed bite wound pattern for the Greenland shark is circular....the corkscrew wound simply does not fit with the known feeding pattern of the Greenland shark...The Greenland shark does leave a trademark wound on its victims but this most certainly isn't it." He also found fault with the observations that many corkscrew mutilated seal deaths showed no evidence of being eaten which would defeat the purpose of predation. Gallant defends Thomson's hypothesis that the cause of the corkscrew wounds is probably mechanical. He subtly added, "human activity is yet again the likely cause of these needless deaths."

The latest contenders for determine the true cause of corkscrew seal mutilations now reverts back to Thompson's St. Andrews group at the MMO. In an article published by Andrew Brownlow and Joseph Onoufriou et al. (2016) the authors suggest that the corkscrew mutilation culprits are mature male grey seals who cannibalize immature pups. Their hypothesis is base on documented visual and photographic evidence of the observation a mature grey seal killing an cannibalizing an immature pup of the same species. The following description is derived from their report of the mutilation:

"The male seal then proceeded to bite the back of the neck and simultaneously pull back with its head while pushing away with his fore flipper. This cause the skin to tear along a length of approximately 20 cm. and caused the blubber layer along the line to tear or detach from the underlying musculature. The study male then proceeded to eat the blubber by forcing his lower jaw under the lip of the tear, biting down on the skin ad then pulling back from the wound before swallowing. The process of tearing using neck muscles levered against the flipper continued intermittently for 41 minutes unstressed with period of chewing off sections of blubber. Several small sections of blubber and skin became detached and were swallowed whole."



Figure 12: Corkscrew-like wounds of a juvenile grey seal resulting from being killed and partially eaten by an adult male on the Isle of May in December 2014 - Credit MMO

Needless to say, the above incident would appear to be a rogue event. While it's true that the majority of corkscrew victims are females and juveniles, the sheer number of victims being found on the beaches would require a large number of males to have simultaneously been involved in a slaughter. This new hypothesis would also require that the same cannibalistic behavior be shared by seal colonies at multiple locations, even oceans apart.

The images presented in Figure 12 above illustrate an important aspect of the corkscrew phenomenon; the wide variation in corkscrew cuts being reported. Note how differently the corkscrew wounds appear in Figures 1-2, 3-5, 6 and 12. Not surprisingly, each represents a different hypothesis of the causal agency. Perhaps an opinion once expressed by Zoe Lucas is worthy of more consideration. That opinion is that there is some underlying disposition for the seal's blubber to tear away from the fascia in a spiral fashion no matter what the cause whether it be mechanical, predatory, cannibalistic, or even by sentient intervention.

At this point it would certainly be a gift to readers to declare which group ultimately proved triumphant. In all honesty that cannot be done at the present time. Each hypothesis presented above has caused a reconsideration of the problem. It is worthy to note

that after a long and arduous investigation, the MMO has finally concluded that ducted nozzles were not responsible for the corkscrew mutilations. Even Lucas is re-examining her rich collection of mutilation data for new clues pertaining to additional causation. And, while David Cayton has expressed a willingness to accept the probability that some mutilated seals were caused by predation based on wound type, he maintains he is convinced that mutilation resembling classic mutilation wounds are suggestive of alien intervention. He feels the purpose of these strange mutilations is to detect PCBs or other mutagens in the seal's blubber, liver and other internal organs. Lastly, the newfound evidence of male induced cannibalism is certainly worthy of further investigation.

Concluding Remarks

Though I am not privy to any evidence collected by the St Andrews group in Scotland or the Canadian researchers on Sable Island, I suspect that a common link exists between the seal mutilations being reported on both sides of the Atlantic. However, my impression is that each group has focused too narrowly on cause of spiral mutilations without giving enough consideration to all aspects of the problem. There appears to be a wide range in variation in corkscrew wounds, enough to encompass both the Greenland shark, white shark and St Andrews incident of rogue seal cannibalism. But little or no attention has been given to the question of seal decapitations or to the bizarre circular apertures in the victims' skin observed by the APFU. To arrive at a more complete understanding of seal mutilations will require greater collaboration between all three groups mentioned above. Each group has different talents and resources to contribute, but in the end all relevant observations must be accounted for. In addition to the remarks mentioned above, a resolution should account for the bias towards female and juvenile victims and an explanation for the widespread distribution of these mutilations.

In closing, I wish to give special acknowledgement of David Cayton and to other members of the APFU: Phil Hoyle, Mike Freebury, Robert Hulse, Joe Fleury and most recently David Stuart. Unlike their professional counterparts, these individuals have labored freely and at times with great personal sacrifice to document the animal mutilation phenomenon. Bias against their findings should not prejudice the validity of the evidence they have so carefully collected. Often their quest to do so has been hampered by limited resources, official hindrances, misrepresentation by the press and, in many cases, by personal harassment. Unfortunately, the findings of the APFU have largely been neglected by the public because the existence of UFO's and aliens has been vehemently rejected by social authorities. I for one feel they should be given greater social and scientific credibility.

I also wish to commend [Richard D. Hall](#) for his tireless efforts to promote the findings of the APFU and to alert the public of hindrances to the investigation of unorthodox topics being exercised by some social authorities.

As an individual who shares a belief in the authenticity of many controversial phenomena, I and others stand in respectful admiration of David Cayton and the APFU organization. We your colleagues honor your service to truthful inquiry.

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