

PHENOMENON
1794 William Scoresby Journal

1794 The 31st May

The Mate J. Kearsley struck a Fish that run out all the lines took down the boat to an unknown depth. The fish coming up to blow was struck a second time and killed. Which when in the act of dying she appeared to be sinking which is not customary however I having a grapnel bent to a line hove it over the Fishes tail and very luckely hooked it at the same time takeing a turn round the boats bollard. The Fish continuing to sink down had very near taken away the Boat which was hangin gunwail in. I supposing that the reason of it was the sunk boat must have been at the bottom caused us emediately to Keep the Fish by sinking the bight of a Line below her which while in the act of doing the harpoon that was fast to the sunk boat tore out it's hold from the Fish and the [???] hooked Lashed the bight of the line caused the Fish to rise to the surface the strain to bear upon the other boat which I suppose was not less than 15 hundred weight as after 3 boats was lashed together & the line rove in snatch blocks it was as much as 25 men could haul to tune of Oatmeal[#] when the boat was pulled up to the surface she hung near the same weight as before as such we hung her aboard and after she was hoisted in on deck we also found all the paint forsed of the wood in large sheets and the boat planks which was wainscot & only two years old was as completely filed with water in every pore as if it had been at the bottom of the sea ever since Noah's flood –also a drogue (that contained about a cubical foot of the lightest fir wood that was in the boat whilst immerged in the water) happened to fall overboard afterwards & sank like a stone: and the Boat rendered useless which we condemned She had not been at the bottom from all appearances.

[#]By this song the smuggling cutters set up the Peak of their mainsails