



# REPORTING AND DOCUMENTING WHALE ENTANGLEMENT

## If You Find an Entangled Cetacean

Your main goal is to properly document and report the incident, while ensuring the safety of both you and the cetacean. Never try to remove gear yourself – it is illegal and very dangerous.

Monitor the cetacean at a safe distance and immediately report the entanglement to:

B.C. Marine Mammal Response Network  
Incident Reporting Hotline

**1.800.465.4336 OR VHF CHANNEL 16 (CANADA)**

NOAA Fisheries Entanglement Reporting Hotline

**1.877.767.9425 (UNITED STATES)**

## Quick Reminders

- **If possible, monitor the cetacean until responders arrive**, or until another standby vessel is able to take over.
- **Stay a safe distance away from the cetacean**, following the marine mammal regulations and guidelines carefully avoiding the most dangerous positions directly ahead and behind the animal—to protect your vessel from becoming entangled in unseen gear attached to the cetacean. Never cross behind an entangled cetacean.
- **Keep your distance so as to not disturb the cetacean and cause it to change behaviour**—close approaches by a standby vessel will make the animal more difficult to approach for the response team.
- **Do not try to remove any gear yourself**—not only is it dangerous, but anchored animals are easier to find, and long trailing gear allows the response team to grapple and attach telemetry gear.
- **Continue to record and document information about the entangled cetacean**. Entanglements do not often result in immediate death for large whales, so the best possible outcome for the whale is to document the entanglement and allow the response team to plan an effective response.

## What to Record

### YOUR LOCATION

Latitude/Longitude coordinates if possible

### SPECIES

### TYPE OF GEAR

### HOW AND WHERE THE CETACEAN IS ENTANGLED

### CETACEAN'S BEHAVIOUR

### CETACEAN'S BODY CONDITION

### CETACEAN'S DIRECTION OF TRAVEL

### NUMBER OF OTHER CETACEANS AND VESSELS IN THE AREA

### BEHAVIOUR OF OTHER CETACEANS IN THE AREA

### SEA CONDITION

### TAKE PHOTOGRAPHS

## What to Photograph

### ENTANGLED CETACEAN AND GEAR

All in one frame

### SPECIES ID

### INDIVIDUAL ANIMAL ID

Including flukes, dorsal fin, saddle patch (for killer whales), and identifying scars

### ENTIRE BODY OF THE ANIMAL

Even if there is no gear on parts of the cetacean

### STANDBY VESSEL

### CORRECT DATE AND TIME

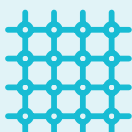
Make sure camera's settings are correct



Location



Species



Gear Type



Entanglement Configuration



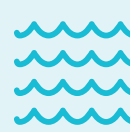
Behaviour



Direction of Travel



Other Vessels/Cetaceans in Area



Sea Condition



Photographs

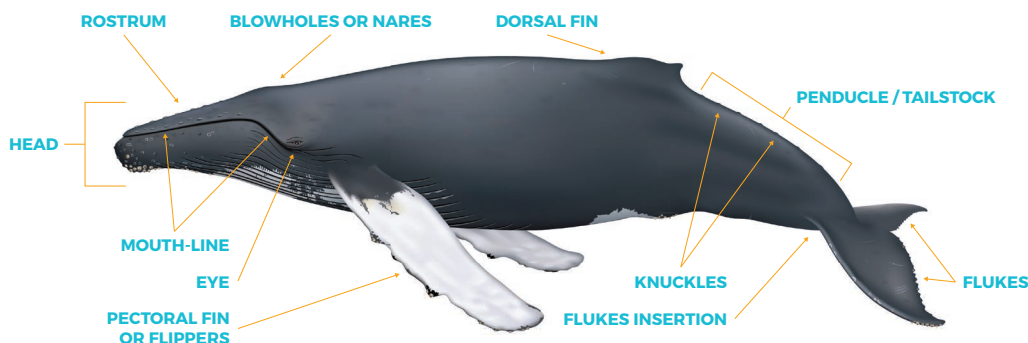
# TERMINOLOGY

Identifying the configuration and complexity of an entangled cetacean, including type and location of gear, helps responders formulate a rescue plan.

As best as possible note: the number of wrap lines around the cetacean, whether the line in each location is tight (constricting) or loose, and if the animal is swimming freely or anchored in one place.

Take note of the body condition. Does the cetacean look healthy, or thin? Does the skin appear normal for the species, or have a heavy whale louse infestation? Are there any serious injuries visible?

Use proper consistent vocabulary when describing the entanglement to ensure everyone is communicating efficiently and effectively.



## Entanglement Configuration

### WRAP

A line that completely encircles a body part.

### CONSTRICTING/TIGHT WRAP

There is no movement in the line.

### LOOSE WRAP

The line appears to be able to move.

### EMBEDDED LINE

The line has cut deep enough into the tissue of the cetacean that it may be hard to see all of it.

### TRAILING GEAR

Line or gear that trails off the cetacean.

## Camera Settings

- Start with a camera set up of **Shutter Speed=1000**, **ISO=400**, and **Aperture=9**.
- **Always review your pictures in the field.** If the image is good (i.e. right amount of light and detail for photo ID shots), this will be your setting to which you will return. If the image is not good, adjust the aperture until you are satisfied.
- **Increase the aperture** to a higher number (creating a darker image) when needing to block out some of the glare on the water – such as to capture images of gear and wounds beneath the water surface, or when shooting with the sun behind your back.
- **Lower the aperture** to a smaller number (brighter image) when you are trying to capture rope above the waterline on the cetacean, or when shooting into the sun. This will leave the cetacean properly exposed, but the rest of the frame, such as glare on the water, overexposed.
- The **shutter speed** should always stay at **1000**, but if you are working in low light conditions and are on the lowest aperture, change the ISO to 640 or 800, and reset the aperture to f-8.
- If in **fog**, select for darker images rather than lighter ones. The details of a dark image can sometimes be pulled out during post editing, but a light image has no information to be pulled out (the slate is washed clean).

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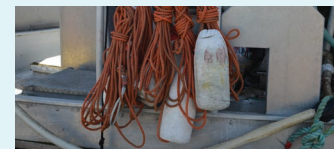


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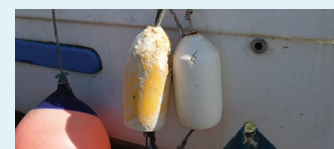
## Types of Gear



FLOATING LINE



SINKING LINE



POT/BULLET BUOY



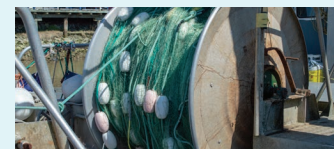
Float LINE



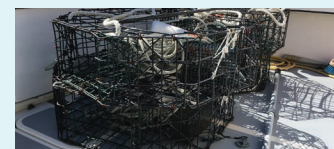
LEAD LINE



NORWEGIAN BUOY/  
SCOTCHMAN



GILLNET



CRAB TRAP



HIGHFLYER

NOAA TEACHER AT SEA PROGRAM