

**Entrapments in Fishing Gear and Strandings in Newfoundland
and Labrador Reported to the Entrapment Assistance Program
During 1995.**

A Report to the Department of Fisheries and Oceans and
the Newfoundland and Labrador Department of
Food, Fisheries and Agriculture.

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by

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Summary

Because of the closure of the fishery, and reduction of fishing effort in waters of Newfoundland and Labrador there were fewer entrapments of whales and sharks in inshore fishing gear compared to previous years. Twenty-one humpback whales and 4 minke whales were reported entrapped in gear. Two reports of large whale entrapments were received from outside of Newfoundland and Labrador. There were 4 large sharks reported entrapped. A total of 7 strandings reports and 1 ice entrapment incident occurred.

Introduction:

Results of the Entrapment Assistance Program from previous years have been summarized in annual reports to the Department of Fisheries and Oceans and the Newfoundland and Labrador Department of Fisheries (Lien 1980; Lien and Aldrich 1982; Lien et al. 1982; 1983; 1984; Lien, Walter and Harvey-Clark 1985; Lien et al. 1986; Lien, Papineau and Dugan 1987; Lien, Ledwell and Nauen 1988; Lien, Ledwell and Huntington 1989; Lien et al. 1990; 1991; 1992a; 1994; 1995a). The program has now operated for the past 17 years.

During 1995 the Entrapment Assistance Program operated using methods similar to those of previous years (Lien 1994). The program was widely advertized by a variety of publications, through Fisheries and Oceans field offices, by Nfld./Lab. Dept. of Fisheries field workers and local media.

Fishermen could call a 24-hour, toll-free phone service operated by Memorial University of Newfoundland for advice and assistance with large whale and shark problems. If assistance was needed, a crew was dispatched to help remove the entrapped animal as quickly as possible. Calls were received which reported a variety of problems in addition to the entrapment of whales and sharks. These calls included marine mammal strandings, ice entrapments of cetaceans and unusual sightings.

Results of the Entrapment Assistance Program During 1995

There were a total of 48 calls reporting cetaceans requiring assistance during 1993. Twenty-one of these calls involved gear entrapped humpbacks; 4 were concerned with entrapped minke whales. In addition, there were 7 cetacean strandings and 1 ice entrapment reported.

Of the 21 humpbacks reported, 1 died (4.8%) during the entrapment (Table 1). Most entrapments occurred in blackback flounder nets (54%) or lumpfish gillnets (18%); several entrapments occurred with codtraps (14%) which were being used in the sentinel fishery. Minke whales ($n = 4$) were caught in lumpfish or blackback flounder nets; 1 died as a result of entrapment (Table 2). Two whales entrapped in gear were reported to the Entrapment Assistance Program outside of Newfoundland and Labrador waters: one was a right whale in the Bay of Fundy; the second was a humpback near the Turks and Caicos Islands in the Caribbean. In these cases Advice regarding release procedures was given via telephone.

One ice-entrapped humpback was reported in Brownsdale TB in late April. Ice around the animal was stabilized and it was used for physiological and behaviour studies. After a weeks confinement pack ice cleared; local people indicate that the whale escaped alive.

There were a total of 7 cetacean strandings reported (Table

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nets

Table 1: continued

Date	Gear	Location	Details of entrapment
11 Aug.	Blackback nets	Bay de Verde	Released.
20 Aug.	Blackback	Smith's Hbr.	Released.
15 Oct.	? nets	Red Bay, Lab.	Towed gear off.

Table 2: Minke whales reported entrapped in fishing gear during 1995.

Date	Gear	Location	Details of entrapment
3 July	Lump nets	Trout River	Released.
5 July	Lump nets	Straitsview	Released.
1 Aug.	Flounder nets	Bay de Verde	Released.
9 Aug.	Blackback nets	Bonavista	Dead

Table 3: Other cetacean entrapments reported.

Date	Location	Details of entrapment
1 May	Brownsdale, TB	Ice entrapment of humpback. Studied for one week. Believed to have survived when ice cleared.
24 Aug.	Bay of Fundy, NB	Right whale towing net. Towed gear off.
3 Dec.	Turks & Cacaos Is.	Humpback with heavy line encircling body. Multiple sightings for period but last seen towing gear.

Table 5: Unusual marine mammal sightings reported during 1995.

Date	Location	Sighting details
19 June	Bay of Islands	8 orcas chasing seals.
16 Sept.	Fogo Is.	Hooded seal ashore. Died.
20 Dec.	Tilting, Fogo Is.	3 Hooded seals ashore. Finally left alive.
20 Dec.	Hampton, WB	Humpbacks in and just off harbour apparently feeding on arctic cod.
22 Dec.	Island Hbr., Fogo Is.	Two humpbacks feeding on herring very close to beach. Stayed until Dec. 25.
22 Dec.	Stag Hbr., Fogo Is.	Dog hooded seal ashore.
26-30 Dec.	Seldom, Fogo Is.	Humpbacks near shore feeding on herring.
28 Dec.	Fogo, Fogo Is.	Humpbacks very near shore feeding.
6 Jan.'96	St. Lunaires/ Griquet	Capelin spawning on beaches. Many humpbacks feeding near beach.

Table 6: Sharks reported to the Entrapment Assistance Program during 1995.

Date	Location	Species	Details of report
13 July	Branch, SMB	Blue	2.5 m. Caught in a lump net.
14 July	Colliers, CB	Basking	6.7 m male. Caught in a herring net.
9 Aug.	Southern HDR., PB	Basking	3.6 m. in flounder nets.
17 Aug.	Charlottetown, Lab.	Blue	Several caught in salmon nets.