

Marine Animal entrapments in fishing gear in Newfoundland and Labrador and a  
summary of the Whale Release and Strandings program during 2004

A report to the Department of Fisheries and Oceans, St. John's, Newfoundland,  
Canada

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### Methods

The Whale Release and Strandings Program was conducted as a service to fishermen during 2004 and funded by the Department of Fisheries and Oceans. A toll-free number, accessible 24 hours, 7 days a week, was available to fishermen and the general public. This number was posted in all DFO and Coast Guard and Harbour Authority offices. In addition all core-licensed holders were sent the number stickers in March 2003. A trained crew was equipped with a 5.5 m inflatable zodiac and necessary tools for entanglements. This crew also responded to whale and leatherback sea turtle strandings.

### Summary

#### Whale Entrapments

Eighteen large whales were reported entrapped in fishing gear. Eight other large whales and one beluga were reported entrapped in fishing gear but subsequent checks on these animals proved otherwise.

Thirteen of the gear-entrapped whales were humpbacks (Table 1). Seven of those were entangled in gillnets. Three were released alive and 7 were reported towing fishing gear. Three of the humpbacks were reported gear-entrapped in the offshore in monk fish gillnets in the Laurentian Channel and one in crab gear on the tail of the Grand Banks. We flew a DFO surveillance flight targeted specifically to find one of the Laurentian Channel whales.

Five minke whales (Table 2) were reported gear-entrapped. Three and possibly a fourth died as a result of their entrapments. One minke was released after six days in a mackerel bar seine. This animal was not entangled, but rather swimming about the seine. The fisherman was allowed to retrieve mackerel while the whale was in the seine.

One killer whale was reported towing gear. A search was generated for many of those whales reported towing gear, sometimes ongoing for days and in one particular case two weeks.

## **Whale Strandings**

Sixteen stranded whales were reported to the Whale Release and Strandings Program in 2004. A Sowerby's beaked whale stranded at Western Bay in Conception Bay. An autopsy was conducted by members of the Whale Release and Strandings Group and by Dr. Jon Lien of the Whale Research Group of Memorial University. A paper is in preparation for submission to *The Osprey* on the possibility of a ship strike on this Sowerby's beaked whale.

Two northern bottlenose whales, a male and female, stranded together at Culls Harbour in Bonavista Bay. Autopsies were conducted on both by the Whale Release and Strandings and Dr. Jack Lawson of the Marine Mammal Section of DFO. Samples were retained for Dr. Merle Dalebout of Dalhousie for her work on possible genetic linkage between the Gully and Davis Strait Northern Bottlenose whale stocks. A report on this unusual stranding is in progress with Jack Lawson and Wayne Ledwell is being prepared for publication in the *North East Naturalist*

Two fin/blue whales were discovered stranded in a decomposed state. Muscle and blubber were taken to analyze for stock identity for DFO by Whale Release and Strandings, one in cooperation with river guardians in Postville Labrador

A female pilot whale live-stranded at Marystown and we received numerous calls. We directed the DFO conservation officers on how to remove the animal to deeper water. The animal later died and a necropsy was performed; samples were given to Dr. Jack Lawson

## **Leatherback Sea Turtles**

Eight leatherback sea turtles were reported to the Whale Release and Strandings program 2004. One of the two caught in fishing gear died, four were dead stranded and two were free swimming. Three of the dead stranded were females. Two were examined in the field and samples taken for the DFO and Whale Research Group. The third leatherback was brought to the Brookfield Veterinary Station in St. John's where an autopsy was undertaken.

Sightings of leatherback sea turtles were asked for in the November 2004 survey of offshore fishermen. Those results are detailed in *Appendix 1*.

## **Telephone survey**

A survey of 100 offshore fishermen fishing in the >35 foot boat category was conducted by the Whale Release and Strandings Group. The purpose of this survey was to further understand the incidental by-catch of whales in offshore fishing gear. It is suspected that fishermen catch whales in the offshore crab and net fisheries but fail to report catches as they do not see it in their economic interests due to time constraints, distances, and product shelf life. The results of this survey are detailed in *Appendix 1*.

### **Sighting Cruise**

A two-week sighting cruise was undertaken in the Labrador Sea from 15-30 May 2004. The purpose was to photo I.D. and biopsy Northern Bottlenose whales. The results of this cruise are detailed in *Appendix 2*.

### **Training workshop**

A workshop on releasing whales from fishing gear was conducted for the GREMM Institute and the Mingian Island Cetacean Study in Quebec City. This workshop was delivered by Wayne Ledwell.

### Discussion

Two fishermen from the survey reported whales caught in the offshore. Both of those were on St. Pierre Bank in NAFO area 3PS. One of the entanglements was reported to the Whale Release and Strandings Group. While 2% reported catching a whale in 2004, 10% had heard of someone with an entangled whale in 2004, and 12% said they had a whale caught up sometime within the last 5 years. There are 950 registered vessels active in the over 35 foot class in Newfoundland and Labrador. Based on the results of this survey it is possible that as many as 19 large whales may be entrapped in fishing gear in the offshore per year.

Since 2000, only 26% of reported gear entrapped humpback whales have been in the offshore whereas 74% of reports came from the inshore. 94% of all gear-entrapped minke whales have been reported by inshore fishermen

Seven humpbacks were reported towing fishing gear in 2004. Untrained people who release whales will let the animals go with varying amounts of gear attached. From the telephone survey, when asked what was the best way to handle a whale caught in gear offshore, 58% said cutting it out themselves and only 21% said calling or waiting for assistance. (Although when asked specifically whether calling for assistance was an option, 33% said they would call, even if just for advice over the phone/radio.). This has to do with the economics of offshore fishing. There are time factors in getting a release team offshore, and the fishermen's priority is the value and shelf life of the product onboard. Many fishermen in the survey said it was not an option to wait for assistance, as it would take too long to get to them. Releasing whales themselves from longliners, many of whom carry stabilizers, is dangerous business. Fishermen will often cut the whale loose with substantial amounts of gear and rope attached to the whales. In 2002 one humpback was cut loose with 1000m of rope and 20 crab pots attached (*Ledwell et al; 2002. Report to Environment Canada*). The majority of whales caught in the offshore are entangled in the 3PS NAFO area, in and around St. Pierre Bank. There is active use of crab and whelk pots in this area as well as gillnet fishing for cod and monkfish. Fisheries patrol boats are often active

in this area. A crew trained in disentangling whales, aboard those vessels, may be of quick assistance to fishers.

Table 1. Humpback whale entrapments in fishing gear in Newfoundland and Labrador during 2004

<b>Date</b>	<b>Area</b>	<b>Gear Type</b>	<b>Description</b>
25 June	Cape St. Mary's	Cod gillnets	Towed gear away
28 June	Tail of Grand banks	Crab pots	Cut loose with rope and crab pots attached
5 July	Fortune	Cod gillnets	Released dead
7 July	Fortune	Crab rope	Dead entangled around tail
9 July	Witless Bay	Gillnet	Towing gear and could not relocate
11 July	Ramea	Rope and large buoy	Towing gear, could not relocate
12 July	St. Lawrence	Cod gillnets	Self release from gear
15 July	St. Lawrence	Cod gillnets	Released alive
8 August	St. Pierre Bank 3PS	Monk fish gillnets	Released alive
16 August	N.W. corner of St. Pierre Bank, 3PS 46 30N, 5721W	Monk fish gillnets	15-16 nets from F.V. Intimidator 3 plus other gear. Checked area with DFO surveillance and could not relocate whale
13 July	Witless Bay	Balloons and rope	Towing gear. Reported by tour boat. Could not relocate.
19 July	Grady Run, 20 mile East of Cartwright, Labrador	Rope and buoy	Whale spotted with rope through the mouth, unable to relocate
1 October	Woody Point	Mackerel trap leader	Released alive.

Table 2. Minke whales entangled in fishing gear in Newfoundland and Labrador during 2004

Date	Area	Gear type	Description
9 August	Cape Broyle head	Black back flounder nets	Fishermen cut one of two nets from the whale. The whale swam into deeper water and died with rest of gear
19 August	Packs Harbour, north of Cartwright, Labrador 5353N 5659W	Whelk pots	Released dead
7 Sept.	50 mile off Square Islands, Labrador	Crab gear	Released dead
22 Sept	Bide Arm, Canada Bay	Mackerel seine	Released alive by fisherman
18-24 Nov	Pilley`s island Causeway, ND Bay	Mackerel seine	Released alive after 7 days

Table 3. Other whales reported entangled in fishing gear during 2004

Date	Area	Species	Description
21 June	Holyrood	Beluga	Juvenile reported as entrapped but found to be free swimming
23 June	Blackhead off St. John`s	Large whale	Reported as entrapped by Marine Institute training vessel. Closer inspection found it O.K
13 July	4631.9N, 2361W, off Cape Freels	Killer	Towing two large balloons. Unable to relocate

15 July	Woody Point		Large whale reported lob-tailing with gear on it by tourist
18 July	English Harbour East, F.B		Large whale reported gear entrapped. Checked the area but could not relocate. Suspect it not to be entrapped
22 July	Brownsdale, T.Bay		Large whale not moving close to gear. Area checked and suspect non-entrapment
23 July	Outer Cove		2 humpbacks not moving around gear. Area checked and suspect non-entrapment
27 July	Newmans Cove T. Bay		Humpback reported entrapped. A check by a fisherman found it not entrapped
28 August	Bishops Cove, C.Bay		Whale, turtle suspected gear entrapped. Area searched negative. Suspect basking shark

Table 4. Leatherback turtle entrapments and sightings reported in Newfoundland and Labrador during 2004

<b>Date</b>	<b>Area</b>	<b>Description</b>
25 July	Ramea	Free swimming
28 August	Gannet Islands, Lab.	Released dead from crab gear. Rope around flipper, close to buoy. LBT reported 3m
16 September	Leading tickles, ND Bay	Self release from gillnets
25 September	4636.5N, 5223W, 30 mile E. Cape Race	Small LBT free swimming sighted by W.Ledwell
7 October	Champney's Cove West, T.Bay	300kg. female LBT dead stranded. Examined and cast made at veterinary center in St. John's
11 October	Point May, Burin Penn.	Dead stranded, examined and samples taken by W.Ledwell
26 October	St. Lawrence, Burin Penn	Dead drifting, unable to relocate

12 Nov	Picadilly, Port au Port	1.2 m Severely decomposed. Examined and samples taken by W. Ledwell
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Table 5. Stranded cetaceans reported in Newfoundland and Labrador during 2004

Date	Area	Species	Description
1 June	Branch	Fin	17 m long in advanced decomposition. Examined by W. Ledwell. Skeleton collected by Green Bay emerald Zone
10 June	Flat Bay St. Georges	White-sided dolphin	Rescued and taken to deep water
16 June	Western Bay, C.B.	Sowerby's beaked	Dead stranded Examined by W. Ledwell, Jon Lien. Skeleton collected
14 July	Pine Cove, the Straits	Humpback	Dead stranded, skeleton collected by St. Anthony business
14 July	Main Brook, N.E. coast	Beluga	Dead, severely decomposed
22 July	4620N, 5603W, Gulf St. Lawrence	Northern Bottlenose	Dead drifting, reported by CCGS Hudson. Pictures sent
10 August	Culls Harbour, B. Bay	Northern Bottlenose	2 NBW live stranded and died. Examined by W. Ledwell and Jack Lawson. Skeletons retained
18 August	Cape Pine		Dead whale drifting
21 August	Great Island, S.Shore		Large dead whale. Believed to minke from Cape Broyle 9 August
26 August	Marystown	Long-finned	Live stranded and

		pilot	died. Examined by W.Ledwell. Skeleton retained
13 Sept	Postville, Lab	Bowhead or fin	Muscle and blubber sent to J.Lawson for DNA
21 Sept.	Port aux Basques	Long-finned pilot	3 m pilot dead stranded
27 Sept.	Bide arm, Roddicton	Minke	7 m minke dead stranded. Possibly the 22 Sept. minke released alive from seine
3 October	5115N, 5702W, New Faroe	Humpback	Dead drifting
13 October	Englee, N. Penn		16 m dead drifting
7 Nov.	Pilley's Island, ND Bay	Humpback	7 m severely decomposed on beach

Table 6. Other cetaceans reported in Newfoundland and Labrador during 2003

<b>Date</b>	<b>Area</b>	<b>Species</b>	<b>Description</b>
1 June	4638N, 5223W-off Cape Race	Killer	One large male swimming
Mid-June	Fox Harbour, Lab.	Killer	5 Killers sighted with one large male present
9 July	5042N, 5332W – off N.E. coast		17 m dead and drifting
16 July	Point Amour, Straits	Killers	9 killer whales reported by DFO One large male present
21 July	15 mile off Witless Bay	Killers	5 killer whales reported by crab boat
25 July	Ramea	Killers	6 killers cruising
8 August	Battle Harbour	Killers	3 killer whales reported by DFO Carthwright
6 December	Davidsville	Dolphin	Dead stranded

Table 7. Seals reported in Newfoundland and Labrador during 2004

<b>Date</b>	<b>Area</b>	<b>Species</b>	<b>Description</b>
6 February	Pier 5 St. John`s	Grey	Hauled put at the Oceanex terminal
9 April	Outer Cove	Hooded	Hauled out
20 May	Mount Carmel	Harp	Hauled out
28 May	Witless Bay		Hauled out

Table 8. Other marine animals reported in Newfoundland during 2004

<b>Date</b>	<b>Area</b>	<b>Species</b>	<b>Description</b>
2 June	Fortune	Sturgeon	Caught in monk nets
10 Sept.	Argentia C.N. terminal	Sunfish	Free swimming
20 Sept.	Mary`s Harbour, Lab	Mako shark	2.5m dead in herring nets
Summer fishing season	Canada Bay, N.Penn	Sunfish	12 sunfish sighted by fisherman Frank Carney
9 Nov	Twillingate	Sunfish	2 Dead stranded
5 December	Colliers, C. Bay	Giant Squid	Dead Stranded

## Appendix 1

### Telephone Survey of Offshore Fishermen, November 2004

#### Overview

One hundred offshore fishermen fishing in the >35 foot boat category were surveyed by telephone in their homes by the Whale Release and Strandings Group in November 2004. The purpose of this survey was to further understand the incidental by-catch of whales, sharks, and turtles in offshore fishing gear. Additional information about the extent of fishermen's knowledge about the Release and Strandings Program, willingness to call for assistance in freeing a whale from their gear, and sightings of leatherback sea turtles was gathered.

Fishermen were selected randomly. The biggest challenge was to get a hold of people; it was often necessary to phone people back several times and/or continue down the list until 100 interviews were successfully completed. The most effective times of day to reach people were 12:30-1:30 PM and 6:00-7:00PM. Only three people, when reached, declined to participate in the survey.

#### Results

- When asked if they are aware of the Whale Release and Strandings Program:
  - 77% said yes
  - 11% said somewhat
  - 12% said no
- When asked who they would contact if they had a whale or other unwanted marine animal caught up in their gear:
  - 30% said they would call DFO/Fisheries
  - 29% said they would call the Program / the toll-free # / Wayne Ledwell
  - 20% said they would call Jon Lien / the University / the Marine Institute
  - 13% said they wouldn't know whom to call
  - 8% said they would not call anybody
- When asked if they had the phone # for the Release and Strandings Program:
  - 44% said yes, they had the toll-free # (93% of whom have it up in their boat)
  - 39% said no
    - 9% said they thought they had it "somewhere" but weren't sure where
    - 8% said they would know where to get it (e.g., through DFO or the University)
- When asked if they had any whales, sharks, or turtles caught up in their gear this year:
  - 93% said they didn't have anything caught up in their gear this year
  - 5% said they had one or more sharks caught up
  - 2% said they had a whale caught up

- Only one person reported using the Release and Strandings Program this year
- When asked if they had heard of anyone else getting any whales, sharks, or turtles caught up in their gear this year:
  - 89% said no
  - 10% said yes (whale)
  - 1% said yes (shark)
- Of the 11 cases re: knowing about someone else with a whale/shark caught up:
  - 6 said no, they didn't believe the Program was contacted
  - 3 said they did not know whether or not the Program was contacted
  - 2 said yes, they believed the program was contacted
- When asked whether they had caught up any whales, sharks or turtles in their gear in the last 5 years:
  - 76% said no
  - 12% said yes, whale(s)
  - 12% said yes, shark(s)
- When asked what would they do / what is the best way to get whale out of gear offshore:
  - 58% said they would cut it out themselves
  - 21% said they would call for assistance
  - 18% said they didn't know
  - 3% said it wasn't an issue for them b/c of the type of gear they used
- When asked if it was an option to wait / call for assistance:
  - 33% said they would definitely call, for assistance and/or advice
  - 28% said they would not call (b/c they could do it themselves, it was too far out, they had time limits and couldn't wait around, etc.)
  - 17% said they would call only if they couldn't cut it out themselves
  - 11% said it depends (on weather conditions, time factors, condition of the whale)
  - 11% said it was not an issue for them, as the type of gear they used (shrimp trawls, crab pots) was not dangerous for whales
- When asked about sightings of leatherback turtles:
  - 52% said they had never seen one
  - 37% said yes, not this year, but other years
  - 5% said yes, this year
  - 6% said yes, this year and other years

**Table 1. Details of Sharks and Whales Caught-up in 2004**

<b>SHARKS CAUGHT 2004</b>	<b>DETAILS</b>
St. Brides	Fishing monkfish at 3 and 0, 54-30 line, western side using monknets; caught 7 basking sharks, were dead, presumed caught at bottom, was at 250-300 fathoms, the deepest he was before; been out since '94 and first time he's caught them, so assumes it has to do with the depth
Jackson's Cove	one dead shark; east of the Funks; crab gear
Calvert	in early August had 2 sharks, grey-brown, one 12 ft., one 6-7 ft., alive, in shrimp trawl, cut gear and let it slide out of grid before took the gear aboard, 50 N 50 W
Grand Bank	had 2 Mako sharks, dead, in gillnets, 30 fathoms, St. Pierre's Bank; (get Mako sharks on a regular basis, a few each year)
Burgeo	this year and every year get some sharks in shrimp trawl, some alive, some dead, for live ones just chop the gear off: Burgeo Banks
<b>WHALES CAUGHT 2004</b>	<b>DETAILS</b>
Rose Blanche	had live humpback, 3PS 60 or so miles out, 30 fathom water, gillnet, called the Program last week of August, don't know what happened with it, wants his nets back and/or is worried about ghost nets out on the water
Garnish	a live (humpback?) whale caught up in whelk pots, end of Sept/beginning of Oct, St. Pierre Banks, 65-70 miles out, 25 fathoms, biline hooked around his tail, were hauling in pots, whale started to pull, was worried for the safety of his men and didn't want to lose more gear off the deck, so cut him out; whale went away with biline, buoy, ancho and a # of pots; didn't contact anyone, was angry about losing gear

**Table 2. Details of Sharks and Whales Caught-up in the last 5 years**

<b><i>SHARKS CAUGHT in the last 5 years</i></b>	<b><i>DETAILS</i></b>
Burin	had a basking shark 3 years ago, dead, using gillnets, 45 N latitude, 54-40 W
Port Hope Simpson	last year had 3 basking sharks, alive, in shrimp gear, off St. Anthony about 80-100 miles; turn them around so they slide back through the grid of the gear, can't haul them aboard
Reef's Harbour	3-4 basking sharks tangled in crab gear, at depth of 140 fathom, drowned
Bonavista	had 4 basking shark in 2002, turbot/gillnets, caught at the bottom, drowned, noted it in fishing log for DFO
La Scie	had a shark last year, shrimp trawls, 200 miles offshore from La Scie, alive when pulled up, took a while to cut him free, was dead by the time he slid out grid
Conception Bay	had 3 dead sharks last year, cod gear, St. Pierre Banks, rolled up in the gear, cut them out himself, didn't contact anyone
Lawn	last year had 2 little blue sharks, alive, in gillnets, St. Pierre Bank, cut them out & let them go
St. Barbe N	two years ago had a few sharks (about 6 ft long, darkish w/ white bellies), dead, got tangled up in shrimp trawl, south of Point Rich, 35 miles out; they might tow the net for 4 hrs, no way to know the sharks are there
Lance au Loup	no sharks this year but last year had several sharks, dead, 130-160 lbs and greyish (brings in the carcasses - gets 25 cents a lb for them), in gillnets, 35-40 mile off Cowhead, 180-190 fathom; in the several years before that lots of fellas were catching sharks, seemed like every other day
Burgeo	this year and every year get some sharks in shrimp trawl, some alive, some dead, for live ones just chop the gear off: Burgeo Banks
Garnish	last yr and the yr before had quite a few sharks, big ones, usually alive, in cod nets and monknets, they just cut them loose
Port au Choix	last year, had a shark or 2, dead, in shrimp gear, 7-8 mile outside Port au Choix
<b><i>WHALES CAUGHT in the last 5 yrs</i></b>	<b><i>DETAILS</i></b>
St. Mary's Bay	can't remember too well over five years, may have had 1 or 2 dead whales, they just cut them clear
Southern Shore	in 2000 had a small dead humpback, tail of the Grand Banks, crab gear; only had a turn of the rope on its tail but caught up about 15 fathom from the end of the pot and have weights on the rope so there's no slack; no marks on the whale whatsoever; reported it to the Coast Guard b/c it stayed afloat after they cut it loose

Port de Grave	had a live humpback in a gillnet 3-4 years ago at Baccalieu Tickle; the net was at 12-14 fathoms, 2 nets together, 100 fathoms stretched out, whale could get up to the surface to breathe; called the Release Program and they freed the whale
Grand Bank	had a live whale (thinks it was a humpback) 4-5 years ago, in gillnets/monkfish gear, 90-120 fathoms, St. Pierre's Bank, caught up around tail, whale brought nets up, cut nets off on both ends, not sure if all the twine came off, lost his tags, reported it to DFO afterwards
Bonne Bay	5 yrs ago, had humpback, outside Rocky Hr, alive, cod nets, in his mouth and around his nose, cut him out and he went on his way; did not contact anyone, just noted it in his log book: story: 2 weeks after releasing the humpback, was out of Kelly in 180 fathom water, a whale came up beside the boat as night is falling, stayed by all night as they were pulling in their gear, followed them part way back in the next morning, blowing, then eventually disappeared; is SURE this was the same whale: thinks they're the gentlest, loveliest creatures
Rose Blanche	gets an odd porpoise, odd whale every year, releases them himself
Seal Cove	4 and 5 years ago, had humpbacks and lots of sharks (big, blue), in gill nets, around the St. Pierre banks and inshore, usually alive, just take a knife and cut them out, though it spoils the net you have no choice; never contacted the Program, everyone always gets them out themselves
Baine Harbour	3 years ago, had a live whale (thinks it may have been a humpback), caught up in crab pots, tangled up around the tail, in 3PS - 30 miles out; it was late in the evening and he had crab on board, so he went in, went back out 2 days later (the next day he couldn't go back out b/c it was blowing too hard) with the boys to help him but the whale was gone with about 33 pots presumably still attached; at this point he contacted Fisheries to report it
Harbour Breton	last year, had a "gigantic" whale caught up in crab pots (it was pulling a 44 ft longliner broadside, to give you some idea of how big it was); it almost overturned the boat, they were saved when the rope snapped, St. Pierre Banks 80-90 miles out, talked to Jon Lien about it after the fact
Port Saunders	have purseines all along the West Coast; get a scattered whale here or there over the years, but just weigh it down and let the whale swim out
Cowhead	yr before last, had "quite a big" whale caught up in turbot gear, 35 miles out from Cowhead, water was quite rough, so couldn't get a good look where on the whale the gear was caught up, just pulled it in close to the boat twice and cut it off the best they could, lost one net, didn't report it to anyone. ALSO: get occasional sharks in their trawls, just cut them out and they swim off

Savage Cove	year before last, late May, had a small dead whale caught up in shrimp net, so decomposed could hardly recognize it, off Point Rich, didn't report it to anyone
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**Table 3. Details of Sharks and Whales Caught-up by Others in 2004**

<b><i>OTHERS sharks 2004</i></b>	<b><i>DETAILS</i></b>
St. Brides	knows of some fellows using turbot gear who were complaining of having lots of basking sharks; [on June 1, first day going out, saw a whale (maybe a humpback) with rope and balloon on the tail, most likely from a crab pot]
<b><i>OTHERS whales 2004</i></b>	<b><i>DETAILS</i></b>
St. John's	knows of a whale getting caught in gillnets off Cape Broyle; knows they called the Release Program for assistance
Twillingate	early summer, crabbing offshore about 120 miles NE of Twillingate, knows of a couple of boats that brought up drowned whales snarled up in rope; don't know if they called the Release Program, did contact Coast Guard to alert them of bodies afloat
Bonavista	heard of fellows who had a small whale caught in their crab pots, dead, 80 miles out, near Shoal Page(?)
Rose Blanche	everybody up that way gets an odd whale, odd porpoise every year with the nets, handles them themselves
Seal Cove	yes, heard-tell of some, generally going everyone using the gillnets get a few whales or sharks each year, everyone gets them out themselves
Conche	did hear-tell of a whale caught up in Englee/Boyd Arm area, doesn't think they called Program, doesn't know what happened with it
Burgeo	last year heard of people getting whales in crab gear; whale got away, fellas lost gear, didn't contact Program
Morbonne Bay	heard of a live whale caught just below Rocky Harbour, purseine, they freed it by weighting down net; doesn't know if they contacted the Program
Port Saunders	heard of a whale in a trap in Bonne Bay, off Norris Point, Sept or Oct, thinks whale ended up getting out itself; doesn't know if they contacted the Program
Garnish	heard of a whale getting caught up this year, in crab pots, alive, on St. Pierre Banks, believes they did contact the Program but doesn't know what happened with it

**Table 4. Sightings of Leatherback Sea Turtles**

<b>This year</b>	<b>Last year</b>	<b>2-5 years ago</b>	<b>6+ years ago</b>
one, around 90 miles off from Rose Blanche	one, last year in St. Lawrence harbour	one, a couple years back, around Holyrood	one, 8-10 years ago, in Fortune Bay, 3PS area 11
great big one, in early September, out towards Marystown	three or four, off Cape St. George	dead one came ashore in Rocky Harbour 3 years ago	caught one in his gear in the mid-90s, dead, 12 miles off entrance to Trinity Bay
one, outside of Seal Cove, Hermitage Bay	a couple, 5-6 miles off St. Lawrence	one, 2 years ago in 3PS	one, off Conche, about 14 years ago
three, out a ways from Burgeo Bank	one, off St. Bride's	have seen a good many in Placentia Bay over the last 5 years	one, many years ago in Belle Isle Straits
two, off St. Pierre Bank in June	two, off Fermeuse	two big ones, 2-3 years ago, 50 miles NE of Cape Bonavista	one, off Cape St. Francis in 1998
one, outside of Back-of-the-Worm- South Coast (and several more over the last few years)	one, right off Burin	some, a couple of years ago, in Bay Bulls and Southern Grand Bank	dead one in gear 15 years ago (3PS)
one or two, 30 miles off Baccalieu	one, off Fancy in Fortune Bay	one, 3-4 years ago, 130 miles off from St. Mary's Bay	one, 10 yrs ago in Rodricton
one, off Ferryland	one, off Ferryland	two, 2 years ago, off Cape Race	one, years ago, on the beach at Western Bay
two, in Trinity Bay	a couple, off Holyrood	one, 2 years ago, 37 miles off Cowhead	one, years ago, in the Funk Islands area
one, 25 miles out from Lawn (has seen 1 or 2 each year for the last few years)	two, 100 miles out SW from Cape St. Mary's (seen a few in this area every year for the last few years)	seen several over the last 5 years on the South, when out fishing tuna	one, caught up in gear in '95, in Gulf Stream 43N
one, in August, near Fermeuse	one, on the beach in Rocky Harbour	one, 4-5 years back, in Trinity Bay	some, many years ago, Trinity Bay
a couple, in July, off St. Bride's		two, 2 years ago off Torbay	one, 20+ years ago, (Port de Grave)
heard of one, caught up in gear this fall, around Cartwright		one, a few years ago, in St. Mary's Bay	one, caught in his gear back in the 80s (Eastport)
			one, many years ago (Cook's Harbour)
			one, in the 80s (Carbonear)
			one, 25 years ago, caught in his gillnet (Savage Cove)

**Appendix 2**

*CETACEAN AND SEAL SIGHTINGS DURING THE 2004 CCGS  
HUDSON OCEANOGRAPHIC CRUISE OF THE LABRADOR SEA  
AND THE ORPHAN BASIN*

**15-30 MAY 2004**

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## Method

This cruise was conducted as part of a long-term project to study physical and biological parameters of the Labrador Sea by the Bedford Institute of Technology from Halifax, Nova Scotia. A member of the Whale Release and Strandings group was onboard to photo identify and biopsy the northern bottlenose whale (*Hyperoodon ampullatus*). Results would be helpful in determining population structure of this whale with reference to a much smaller population of the northern bottlenose in the Gully off the Scotian Shelf. The ship worked from the Scotian shelf through the Cabot Strait to Hamilton Bank and on to Cape Desolation, Greenland. From Greenland the ship sailed to the Orphan Basin on the Grand Banks and onto St. John's, Newfoundland. The Labrador Sea leg started at shelf edge of the Hamilton Bank to position 6033.47N 4814.18W (8 N.M. from Cape Desolation). Sighting effort was continuous from the bridge by the officers on watch. In addition approximately 6 hours of coverage each day was conducted outside on the deck. The bridge is 12m from the deck with the capability to observe 6.8 nautical miles with the naked eye on either side and in front. A Bushnell 8x42 330 ft fov @ 1000 yds was used. The ship worked day and night steaming to and spending from one to five hours on various previously designated stations. Additionally a tract of 400 miles round trip was undertaken for an emergency. This began at position 58 29N 5031W on 23 May to Hamilton Bank and back to position on 24 May. A crossbow with sampling arrows and equipment was carried for biopsies.

## Results

A total of five northern bottlenose whales (*Hyperoodon ampullatus*) were sighted, one off the Hamilton Banks and a group of four off Cape Desolation, Greenland. Both sightings occurred when the ship was stopped with instruments in the water on station. The whales were very close to the ship and swam around the hull for about 20 minutes. Ten humpback whales (*Megaptera novaengliae*), 12 fin whales (*Balaenoptera physalus*), about 70 long-finned pilot whales (*Globicephala melaena*) and one minke whale (*Balaenoptera acutostrata*) were sighted. Three large unidentified large whale spouts were observed at distances of approximately 5 miles from the ship. Three other unidentified medium sized whales were sighted. Approximately 700 seals were sighted either swimming in the Strait of Belle Isle or on pack ice in the area of the Hamilton Banks. All the medium sized and beaked whales were sighted when the ship was stopped on station. All large whales were sighted when the ship was moving between stations. Pictures were taken during both sightings of the northern bottlenose whale. No biopsies were taken

<b>DATE</b>	<b>SIGHTING POSITION</b>	<b>SIGHTING EFFORT</b>	<b>WEATHER</b>	<b>RESULTS</b>
15 May Bedford Basin		N\A	N\A	N\A
16 May Scotian shelf 43 11N 62 6W		N\A	HEAVY FOG ALL DAY	NO
17 May Gulf St.Lawrence 4454N 6027W TO 4639N 5929W	4512.86N 6013.27W	0600-1930	CLEAR 10-15 KNOTS	10 HUMPBCKS 12FINS 1 MINKE 1 SMALL UNIDENTIFIE D (Canso Bank)
17 May	Gulf St. Lawrence 4533.8N 5954.12W		CLEAR	I Large whale, possible fin
18 MAY CABOT STRAIT 4901N5907W TO 5046.7N 5736.8W	5006N 5818W	ALL DAY	CLEAR	APPROX 150 SEALS SWIMMING IN HERDS
18 MAY	5006N 5818W			1 FIN OR BLUE@ 2-3MI ~400 SEALS SWIMMING IN HERDS
19 MAY BELLE ISLE	5256N 54507W	1200-1900	INTERMITTE NT FOG	141 SEALS ON HEAVY PACK ICE *5 GREYS
20 MAY HAMILTON BANK	5507.06N 5405.2W	ALL DAY	CLEAR WIND 25NW	NORTHERN BOTTLENOSE DEPTH 1050M Greenish brown, around ship on station for 15 min. 3 pics taken
21 MAY	5607.4N	ALL DAY	20-25SW ALL	3 PILOT

	5306.9W		DAY-CLEAR	WHALES 1 LARGE WHALE BY RADAR
22 MAY	5658.49N 524.63W	ALL DAY	10 KNOTS WEST-CLEAR	1 small unidentified whale-200m distant
23 MAY 5832N 5033W		ALL DAY	CALM CLEAR	Vessel return toward St. Anthony for med-evac. Track 189°
<b>DATE</b>	<b>SIGHTING POSITION</b>	<b>SIGHTING EFFORT</b>	<b>CONDITIONS</b>	<b>RESULTS</b>
23 MAY	5528.5N 5235.9W	ALL DAY		1 large whale spp~3 mile distant
24 MAY morning			Strong 35-40 wind	Return to Greenland line
24 May 2004 1800	5829.78N 5031.12W	1400-2100	10-30 CLEAR	~15 pilots, males, females w/calves Depth at bottom 3600m
25 May	End position		Windy-heavy seas	No effort
26 May to 6032.47 N 4814.18W surface temp 1°C	6022N 4827W	All day	35 a.m 15-20 p.m Clear	1 unidentified medium sized whale spp. Depth 766m *
26 May	6018N.05N 4834.63W			4 bottlenose whales (1 large and 1 calf) Depth 2125 m- just beyond shelf. Whales circled ship

				twice at 2115 hours
27 May	5829.71N 4816.98W		CLEAR	1 medium sized beaked whale spp.
28 May				In transit to Orphan basin
29 May Orphan Basin	5035.24N 4548.74W		CLEAR	~50 pilot whales-mixed herd of large and small whales @ 0735. Depth 3672m
30 May				In transit St. John's, NL

\*larval squid were picked up in plankton net on three occasions on Greenland side of the shelf

### *Discussion*

Sightings of the northern bottlenose whale occurred just beyond the shelf in on both sides of the Labrador Sea. This is consistent with previous sightings of this whale by scientists and crew over the past 10 years. Sightings vary but are always found when the ship is on station. It is suspected the bottlenose is curious and attracted to noises generated by the ship. A dedicated effort to locate this whale should follow the Labrador shelf north into the Davis Strait and down the Greenland Shelf side. Periodic stops should accompany any survey. This would allow the whale time to locate the ship.

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