

Incidental entrapments and entanglements of cetaceans and leatherback sea turtles, strandings, ice entrapments reported to the Whale Release and Strandings Group in Newfoundland and Labrador and a summary of the Whale Release and Strandings Program during 2014

A Report to the Department of Fisheries and Oceans, Canada –
Newfoundland and Labrador Region

Wayne Ledwell, Julie Huntington and Everett Sacrey
Whale Release and Strandings
Tangly Whales, Inc
244 Tolt Rd.
Portugal Cove-St. Philips, NL, A1M1R2

December 2014

Table of Contents

List of Tables	2
Acknowledgements	3
Introduction	4
Methods	6
Results and discussion	7
Education activities	11
Recommendations	11
Tables	12
References	19
Appendices	23

List of Tables

Table 1. Humpback whales reported entangled in fishing gear in Newfoundland and Labrador during 2014.

Table 2. Minke whales reported entangled in fishing gear in Newfoundland and Labrador during 2014

Table 3. Other whales reported entangled in fishing gear in Newfoundland and Labrador during 2014

Table 4-5. Leatherback sea turtles reported in Newfoundland and Labrador during 2014

Table 6. Ice-entrapped, stranded and dead floating cetaceans reported in Newfoundland and Labrador during 2014

Table 7. Miscellaneous cetaceans reported in Newfoundland and Labrador during 2014

Table 8. Other marine animals reported in Newfoundland and Labrador during 2014

Acknowledgements

We would like to thank Jack Lawson for kindly loaning us a badly needed disentanglement boat, Patricia Williams, Paul MacIsaac, Silas Jones, John Joy, Jeanine Winkle, the tour boat operators from this region who support us during rescue work, Jim Bessey, the Fisheries Officers throughout the Region who assist us gathering information with regards to entanglements and strandings and in some of the fieldwork with entangled and stranded marine animals.

We would like to thank Paul and Sandra Dolk for supporting the Whale Release and Strandings Group work by donating funds from sales of their wildlife photography to us and for standing by us during a long and difficult disentanglement off Plate Cove West. It is very much appreciated.

Thanks to the Canadian Wildlife Federation for securing funds through a Shell grant for the National Steering Committee of the Regional Marine Animal Emergency Networks of which the Whale Release and Strandings Group is a member

Thanks to the Navigator magazine for running reduced fee ads advertising the toll-free number to fishers with details of whom to call when you have or see a marine animal entrapped or stranded.

The Canadian Coast Guard Marine Traffic Centres diligently report entrapped and stranded marine animals and sightings regularly to the hot line. Thanks for the service.

Finally thanks to the fishermen of this Region who have continued to support this program throughout its long history, the success of our work releasing entrapped animals would not be possible without your continued support and participation.

Introduction

Whale Release and Strandings Group

The Whale Release and Strandings Group (Tangly Whales, Inc.) is a non-profit environmental organization responsible for the disentanglement and strandings of marine animals in Newfoundland and Labrador since 2000 and incorporated in July 2002. The organization has a board of directors. The Mission statement for the Whale Release and Strandings Group is:

- To conserve biodiversity
- To release whales from fishing gear
- To attempt to save fishing gear to the extent possible during a disentanglement
- To coordinate strandings on marine animals
- To conduct research work on marine animals
- To conduct all other work on marine animals as seen fit

From 1978 through 2014 assistance has been offered to fishers in the Newfoundland Region who incidentally have large whales, leatherback sea turtles and basking sharks entangled in their fishing gear and for live stranded marine animals. This service has been provided with cooperation from the Department of Fisheries and Oceans, Canada.

During this time period information from fishers regarding whale interactions has been recorded and monitored, included in this are the incidences of entrapments, strandings and sightings of leatherback sea turtles, sharks and 20 different species of cetaceans and have been recorded in continuous reports and summaries from 1978 - 2014.

The program, which has been run by the Whale Release and Strandings Group since 2001, plus providing one-year mentorship with the Canadian Coast Guard in 2000, uses methods for disentangling large whales from fishing gear, which were pioneered by Dr. Jon Lien (Lien 1980) and with a few modifications remain those of choice today.

The disentanglement program in use today was designed and developed for the highly rural nature of over 800 fishing communities spread over the 17,000 km coastline of Newfoundland and Labrador. The disentanglement assistance program has benefited fishers, whales, leatherback sea turtles and the people of Canada. It provides assistance to often financially stretched fishers, saving them thousands of dollars in what would be lost fishing gear and downtime if they did not have skilled support in releasing a large whale entrapped in their gear. It releases large and often endangered whales, leatherback sea turtles and basking shark from fishing gear and allows them to continue their life processes. We have the largest feeding population of humpbacks in the northwest Atlantic, with about 5,000 individuals visiting NL waters during spring, summer and fall. These whales are the basis for a large tourism industry in the region.

The program also responds to all reported live and dead cetaceans and sea turtles, as well as pack ice entrapments.

The purpose of the assistance is: (1) to assist fishers in releasing whales from fishing gear, thus decreasing downtime and damage to fishing gear. The length of time a large marine animal is entrapped in fishing gear is directly correlated to greater gear damage and loss of income due to the gear not fishing properly or at all (Lien 1983), (2) to release entrapped marine animals as quickly and safely as possible to allow them to continue their life processes, such as feeding, migrating, mating, rearing its young and so on, (3) to communicate with fishermen and communities about marine animals, including species at risk, habitat protection, and (4) to add to the scientific knowledge of cetaceans, leatherback sea turtles and sharks that inhabit Newfoundland and Labrador waters.

Fish harvesters have come to realize that calling a government sponsored program offers them a faster and more efficient alternative to dealing with a gear-entrapped animal than attempting a release on their own. Fishers and untrained persons who take whales out of gear often leave large amounts of fishing gear on the animal perhaps because they do not look underwater to see all the gear that is on the entrapped animal. Whales caught in crab gear that are cut loose by fishers and other untrained persons are often released with vast amounts of rope and pots still attached (Ledwell and Huntington 2001, 2002, 2006). This provides more opportunity for whale re-entrapment and more gear damage. Also this allows the animal to move from the vicinity in which it was entrapped and be difficult to relocate, and/or difficult to catch in order to remove the gear still on it. A timely response by experienced personnel results in the removal of most if not all gear from the animals, less gear damage and fishing downtime, particularly important to the economically marginalized inshore fishers.

From 1979 to 2014, one thousand and thirty four (1034) humpback whales (*Megaptera novaeangliae*), one hundred and fifty eight (158) minke whales (*Balaenoptera acutorostrata*), fourteen (14) fin whales (*Balaenoptera physalus*), two right whales (*eubalaena glacialis*), one bowhead whale (*balaena mysticetus*) and eighty seven (87) unknown large whales were reported entrapped in fishing gear in Newfoundland and Labrador.

Eighty (80) leatherback turtles have been reported entangled in fishing gear in this region with a mortality of 25%. There have been 12 leatherback turtle strandings with 10 of those being dead animals reported in the region. Two live animals were rescued and returned to sea.

Entrapments, strandings and sightings of other cetaceans either unusual to the area or under study or animals free swimming but in poor health and marine animals such as sea turtles, sharks, walrus have also been documented (Lien 1994; Ledwell and Huntington 2000-2013).

From 1992 to 2000 funding for a marine animal release program was varied and at times non-existent.

The most common types of fishing gear associated with entanglements in this region currently includes gillnets (cod, herring, mackerel, lumpfish, flounder, monk, skate and turbot) snow crab pots, whelk pots, toad crab pots, box traps (caplin, cod, herring, mackerel and squid), unspecified and illegal gillnets, ropes/buoys and moorings. In other words, most types of fishing gear have the potential to incidentally catch whales and they do. In recent years fishing effort in Newfoundland and Labrador has shifted offshore. This shift in gear has led to an increase in the number of offshore entrapments reported and offshore entanglements have primarily involved snow crab and whelk pot gear.

Methods

Whale, leatherback sea turtle and basking shark entanglements in fishing gear and strandings and sightings of marine animals were reported to the Whale Release and Strandings Program in 2014 by calling an advertised toll free number (1-888-895-3003) which can be accessed 24 hours a day seven days a week year round. A trained release team responds by providing suitable, safe advice or sending expert personnel to the site for needed assistance. The trained crew is equipped and ready to deploy immediately with an inflatable zodiac and necessary specialized tools for disentanglement of whales, leatherback sea turtles and basking sharks. The objective of each disentanglement is the safe, clean release of the whale or other marine animals from the fishing gear and minimal or no damage to the fishing gear involved in the entanglement. The disentanglement crew also responded to whale and leatherback sea turtle strandings. Calls concerning entanglements, strandings and dead floating animals were also forwarded to the group by DFO Conservation Officers, Coast Guard Centers, fishers, Royal Canadian Mounted Police (RCMP), Crime Stoppers and the general public. Fisheries and Oceans Canada funded the program in 2014. Additional funding was provided through Habitat Stewardship Program (HSP) Environment Canada, the Community Sector Council NL Student Work and Services Program (SWASP), NL Department of Advanced Education and Skills Student Summer Employment Program (SSEP), and the community of Portugal Cove-St. Philip's.

Results and Discussion

Results of the Entrapment Assistance Program from previous years have been summarized in annual reports to Fisheries and Oceans and the Newfoundland and Labrador Department of Fisheries (Lien 1980; Lien and Aldrich 1982; Lien et al. 1982; 1983; 1984; 1985; 1986; 1987; 1988; 1989; Lien 1990; 1991; 1992; 1993; 1994; 1995; 1996; Ledwell, Huntington and Lien 2000; Ledwell and Huntington 2001; 2002; 2003; 2004; 2005; 2006; 2007; 2008; 2009; Ledwell, Huntington and Kelly 2010; Ledwell and Huntington 2011; 2012; Ledwell, Huntington and Sacrey 2013).

Humpback Whales

Eighteen (18) humpbacks were reported entangled and entrapped in fishing gear in the NL region in 2014 (Table 1). Seven (7) of those animals were entangled in snow crab gear, five (5) in caplin trap gear, (5) were towing a variety of fishing gear and one (1) died in a cod trap.

The humpback released on the 9th of June was heavily anchored from towing both ends of a string of crab pots together and the only option for releasing the animal gear free was to employ a longliner with lifting power enough to raise the gear such that we could work at getting the gear from out of its mouth and around its peduncle. This was accomplished after 2 days of working on this difficult entanglement. This practice of using larger fishing vessels and other large ships to assist in raising heavy gear to allow the release group to get the gear off the animals is a technique designed and used frequently in the disentanglement of large whales over the years in our waters, especially with whales entangled in deep water in snow carb gear where neither the release group nor the whale can raise the whale's body enough to allow the gear to be removed.

From 30 June to 1 July four (4) humpbacks were entrapped in caplin traps in 2 adjacent communities in Conception Bay. The WRS group took two of those animals out on the 29th and were in the process of steaming towards the third when it self released. A 4th humpback was reported in the same cove the next morning entrapped in the same fisherman's second caplin trap. Those animals were heavily entangled in the doorways of two of the traps and two of those traps were put out of commission due to both the whale towing everything together and damage caused by the release group in getting them out. A fifth humpback from the 25th of June had towed snow crab pots and rope into the moorings of a caplin trap in the same cove and became entrapped. The fishermen cut it out and let the animal go with gear remaining on it.

A humpback was discovered dead in the side wall and doorways of a cod trap in Gooseberry Cove, Trinity Bay, that was set to capture cod for a grow-out operation. The WRS group was called to help get the animal out of the trap due to the amount of gear wrapped around it, heavy moorings, lead ropes and large

diameter ropes involved. Throughout the years of the program this is part of the service offered fishermen so that they can get their gear back fishing again.

A humpback entrapped in the mooring frame of a herring net in Plate Cove West on the 7th of July was hog tied through the mouth, around its side pectoral fin and peduncle with 6 different sized poly buoys attached tight to the side pectoral fin. It took the group 5 hours to finally get all the gear off the animal and it travelled 5nm from the site of the initial entanglement. The whale was released gear free. The gear was retrieved and given back to the fishermen. The release was photographed by a professional photographer in an adjacent boat. One month after the release the same whale was seen in the area with deep gashes consistent with propeller wounds.

Various attempts were made to try and grapple other humpbacks towing tight wraps of rope around their bodies but due to not being able to relocate the animals or deteriorating weather conditions or animals that were too active those attempts were unsuccessful.

Minke whales

One female minke (Table 2) whale was discovered drifting in Harbour Grace Harbour. Reported as a humpback the Whale Release and Strandings group visited the animal and took samples. From a cut and rope burn on the peduncle and chafing at the jaw line it appeared the animal was in contact with fishing gear. We were unsuccessful in tracking down reports of an entangled whale in the area.

Other entrapped whales

A small fin whale (Table 3) was discovered dead in snow crab gear off the west coast. The animal was dead at depth in 90 meters and the longliner had difficulty initially lifting the animal to break it free. The whale was hog tied caught through the mouth and around the peduncle and close to the pots. This is the first report of an entangled fin whale in this region since 1990 and brings the number of fin whales reported entangled in fishing gear in the Newfoundland region to fourteen (14) (Lien et al; 1979, 1980, 1987).

A northern right whale was reported dead drifting with fishing gear wrapped around it on the Grand Banks (Table 3). This is the second right whale reported entangled in fishing gear in this region although it is uncertain where the entanglement around this particular animal originated from. The whale was photographed from plane only. The only other report was a right whale entangled in a cod trap in St. Mary's Bay in 1984 (Lien et al; 1984).

A small to medium sized whale was reported in distress, injured and also with gear on it in Holyrood on 8 September. The animal was reported close to shore by several people. The Whale Release and Strandings Group had boaters check

the area but the animal wasn't relocated and species ID was not confirmed but thought to be either a small minke or pilot whale.

Leatherback sea turtles

A 162 cm female leatherback sea turtle (Table 4) was discovered dead stranded at Cape Onion on the Great Northern Peninsula on the 26th of August. The turtle was tagged nesting on the Grand Riviere nesting beach, Trinidad on the night of 18 March 2009. She was fitted with two metal flipper tags, T47949 that we found and T50706 that was not on the turtle when found.

The turtle was necropsied by W. Ledwell. The animal had the remains of a plastic bag in its gastro intestinal tract. A walled off pouch of material constituting foreign bodies was discovered at the juncture of the large and small intestine. Dr. Laura Rogers a Newfoundland and Labrador provincial veterinarian described it as a penetration of the gut wall allowing foreign material and bacteria to contaminate the abdominal cavity. Similar walled off pouches have been discovered in necropsied leatherbacks in NL, as was the case in the Griquet leatherback in 2009 (Ledwell and Huntington, 2009).

Strandings

Blue whales

Heavy pack ice in the Gulf of St. Lawrence in the spring of 2014 resulted in high mortality for endangered blue whales (Table 6). On March 24th 3-4 large dead whales and probable live animals were sighted off Cape Anguille in heavy pack ice. DFO helicopter surveys on the 30 March confirmed 7 dead large whales and 6 April confirmed 9 dead blue whales and 3 live whales (which were in loose pack ice). On the 18th April 3 dead blue whales were pushed ashore in Trout River and Bonne Bay. The Trout River whale was claimed by the Royal Ontario Museum (ROM) even though there was a push by locals to keep the skeleton in the area. The Bonne Bay whale is claimed by Memorial University Of Newfoundland and Labrador and transported to the ROM, even though there was an offer to clean and preserve this skeleton locally.

The southwest coast of Newfoundland provides a natural trap for ice entrapments of blue whales where pack ice pushing south through the Gulf of St. Lawrence is forced off the land by the jutting Port au Port peninsula resulting in open water in St. Georges Bay. A resulting westerly wind traps any cetaceans forcing the ice onshore (Lien et al; 1989). From 1974-1992, 34 blue whales were ice entrapped on the south west coast. The nine ice entrapped blue whales from this year represent the first reports since 1992. With estimates of fewer than 250 mature blue whales in Atlantic Canada (COSEWIC 2012), this known loss, the largest in the records, is severe and also interesting that there were at least 12 blue whales transiting the gulf this past spring.

White-beak dolphins

Upwards of 40 white beak dolphins were killed by pack ice in an event at Cape Ray on the south west coast of the island on the 16-17 February (Table 6). Pack ice is considered natural mortality for white beaks in the Newfoundland and Labrador region.

There were various other reports of live mass and single strandings of white beaks (Table 6) in the Stephenville Crossing area during the spring and summer of 2014.

Bowhead

A 7-8 meter badly decomposed male bowhead was discovered at Cape Bonavista on the 2nd of May. The animal was in too dangerous a place with rough water to conduct proper pathology although baleen was taken and tissue for genetics. This represents the 3rd recorded dead stranded bowhead in Newfoundland, all similar length animals (Ledwell et al; 2007).

Northern Bottlenose

A northern bottlenose whale was reported to DFO Marine Mammals St. John's on the 16th June (Table 6). Subsequent various efforts by the WRS and DFO were unable to verify the report and relocate the animal.

Miscellaneous cetacean and other animal sightings

Bowhead

A bowhead whale calf ~4 meters (Table 7) was in the lower Trinity Bay area from the 6-14 August. The animal was in very shallow water often rolling in bull kelp and reported entangled once when locals saw it with kelp around its body. The Whale Release and Strandings Group visited the animal various times, once shepherding it out of New Harbour as it appeared to be unable to transit a shoal area at the entrance to the harbor. This was accomplished by using a small inflatable. The second report was in the Deep Bight area where the animal was reported as entangled. It was the same bowhead with kelp draped over its body. The animal moved across the bay to Greens Harbour where it was breaching and again responded to by the WRS group to alert locals to avoid boat traffic around the whale. The only entangled bowhead in reported in NL was a bowhead calf entangled and died in a boat mooring in Leading Ticks in 2008 (Ledwell and Huntington, 2008).

Northern Right whale

A northern right whale was reported and photographed in St. Anthony Bight on the 9th September (Table 7). Photos were sent for possible identification to the New England Aquarium. Two right whales were photo identified in NL waters in 2013 (Ledwell et al; 2013)

Other marine animals sighted

Walrus

From the 19 July -2nd September an adult Walrus was seen hauled out in various places from St. Philip's in Conception Bay to Bay Bulls on the southern shore.

Education activities

Stickers advertising the assistance program were sent to all Harbour Authorities, all DFO, Canadian Coast Guard, Crime Stoppers, coastal municipal offices, SPCA, Humane Society, media outlets and outdoor marine adventure companies throughout the region as well as to groups and fishers who requested them. An ad was also placed throughout the year in the fisheries trade magazine – The Navigator.

The Whale Release and Strandings Group helped organize the fourth “whale days“ at Cape Spear and participated by displaying a full minke whale skeleton and life size humpback canvas rollout as part of their “bones, barnacles and baleen” educational presentations. A full size replica of a leatherback sea turtle was also displayed. The event was highly successful.

The Group also carried out various presentations to kids in the St. John's area with the “bones, barnacles and baleen” theme.

At the stranding and necropsy of the dead stranded leatherback sea turtle at Cape Onion, fishermen and other community members learned about Marine Conservation and Species at Risk in the province of Newfoundland and Labrador. They observed and helped with the necropsying the animal (that had been tagged in Trinidad and Tobago) and found a plastic bag in its gastro intestinal tract.

Recommendations

Recommendation 1. Funding agreements should be in place and funds available before entrapment season begins. Agreements need to be established that are assurances to provide support to an organized program over a period of years. Programs that do not have these assurances will be very difficult to maintain and staff on an on-going basis (Lien 2004).

Recommendation 2. All vessels in the Newfoundland region should have the toll free number stickers onboard alerting them who to call when they have an entrapped whale or see an entrapped whale or leatherback sea turtle. By having

the toll free number visible in the wheelhouse fishers may decide to call for expert advice when they have or see a whale or leatherback entrapped and not attempt to cut animals free and leave them with large amounts of gear attached which may cause the animal to die or become re-entrapped. This situation can be at least partially avoided if boats have the entrapment assistance hot line number easily visible onboard and upon calling can be advised on the proper release procedures or be advised that a release team is available to attend to the entanglement. This may lessen the number of whales or sea turtles each season swimming around with large amounts of snow crab and other gear attached. See Appendix I for toll-free sticker.

Table 1. Humpback whales reported entangled in fishing gear in Newfoundland and Labrador during 2014

Date	Area	Gear type	Description
Mid-May	Off Cape St. Francis, Conception Bay	Snow crab	Whale discovered dead in gear on bottom caught through the mouth and around the tail in 188 meters
30 May	14nm off Catalina, north east coast 482770N, 523846W	Snow crab	Whale discovered dead in the gear
1 June	17nm off Catalina, northeast coast	Snow crab	Whale cut loose with gear and staff attached. Animal later found dead
9 June	Upper Island Cove, Conception Bay	Snow crab	Animal released alive and gear free by Whale Release and Strandings team from 38 crab pots and 9/16 poly steel rope. Whale was hog tied by two ropes and into a jumble of multiple wraps around the tail
17 June	Banquereau Bank in position 450967N, 584242W	Snow crab	Heading northeast slowly. Seen again in same area 24 hours later. WRS mobilized to respond. DFO Surveillance flights unable to relocate animal
21 June	Downing Basin	Snow Crab	Cut out of gear by fishermen with

			haul-up rope and balloons attached
25 June	Jobs Cove, Conception Bay	Snow crab/ Caplin trap	Whale cut out of caplin trap moorings by fishermen. Fishermen took 2 crab pots, mooring grapnel and rope off animal. Whale still towing approximately 55 meters 9/16" in rope
30 June	Western Bay, Conception Bay	Caplin trap	Whale heavily entangled in doorways of caplin trap and released alive and gear free by members of the Whale Release and Strandings Group. Trap left with heavy damage
30 June	Western Bay, Conception Bay	Caplin trap	Whale seen entangled in caplin trap leader by members of the WRS. Animal self released while members of the Whale Release and Strandings Group were steaming towards it
30 June	Jobs Cove, Conception Bay	Caplin trap	Released alive and gear free by Whale Release and Strandings group. Whale was caught in leader close to doorways with rope and twine in mouth and around it's head
1 July	Jobs Cove, Conception Bay	Caplin trap	Whale released alive and gear free from doorways and side of caplin trap. Animal heavily entangled with netting around its tail, rope in its mouth and rope and twine around side pectoral fin. Release took 6 hours. Animal evasive and wild.
7 July	Plate Cove West, Bonavista Bay	Herring net frame	Whale released gear free by Whale Release and Strandings Group. Whale had rope through its mouth and hog tied to its side pectoral fin with multiple wraps and a poly buoy plus 3 wraps around its tail. Whale very aggressive. Disentanglement chase for 5nm where we finally got the last of 6 poly buoys of gear off of its pectoral fin and out of its mouth
7 July	Elliston, Bonavista Bay	Large poly buoy	Swimming in harbor with 4-5 other humpbacks. Buoy thought to be from snow crab gear. We arrived late evening after releasing the Plate Cove whale and were unable to find the animal.
13 July	Bay Bulls harbour,	Slight rope with small	Checked out 17 humpbacks in the area but were unable to locate this

	Southern Shore	Styrofoam buoy	animal. Had help from all the tour boats in the area.
14 July	Off Tors Cove, Southern Shore	Same animal from 13th	Whale from 13 th July resighted and during attempt by WRS the weather conditions deteriorated and attempt called off. Very difficult to catch up to the animal which was fluking and seemed to be feeding.
19 July	Off Tors Cove, Bauline South	Same animal from 13th	Located animal but due to small amount of rope still attached and the active behaviour of the whale WRS were unable to get a catching grapple into the rope. 8 hours in search and rescue attempt.
22 July	Aquaforte Bay, Southern Shore	Rope	Whale reported by fishermen with tight rope wrap around body and moving slow. Whale Release and Strandings searched for the animal with the assistance of a 20 meter longliner all day on 23 but were unable to relocate the whale.
24 July	Gooseberry Cove, Trinity Bay	Cod trap	10 m male humpback dead in the trap. Whale Release and Strandings Group took the animal out as fishermen called for help in getting it out of the doorways in the trap.
5-6 August	Great Island, Southern Shore	9/16" rope	Spent both days trying to get tight wrapped rope from around the animals back and side fin. Suspect whale from 22 nd July. We were unsuccessful due to the animal not allowing us to get close to it
13 August	St. Anthony	Towing rope	Pictures seemed to show whale with rope through its mouth. The team from the Whale Release and Strandings responded, searched the area in worsening weather conditions but were unable to relocate the animal

Table 2. Minke whales reported entangled in fishing gear in Newfoundland and Labrador during 2014

Date	Area	Gear type	Description
13 June	Harbour Grace, Conception Bay	unknown	840 cm dead stranded male with cuts into peduncle and chafing at jaw line

			indicating possible previous entanglement
--	--	--	---

Table 3. Other whales reported entangled in fishing gear to the Whale Release and Strandings Group in 2014

Date	Area	Species	Description
13 May	10 nm off Rocky Harbour	Approximately 10m fin whale	Whale dead in snow crab gear. Animal died at depth in 90 meters caught through the mouth and around tail in 9/16" poly steel rope
4 September	Grand Banks 445296N, 554301W	Northern right whale	Dead floating with fishing gear wrapped around it
8 September	North Arm, Conception bay	Unknown	Small whale spp; reported entangled and injured

Table 4. Leatherback sea turtles reported stranded in Newfoundland and Labrador during 2014

Date	Area	Description
26 August	Cape Onion Northern Peninsula	162 cm female turtle dead stranded. Necropsied by W. Ledwell. Plastic bag in gastro intestinal tract. Provincial vet report completed on intestinal lump and included in Appendix

Table 5. Leatherback sea turtle sightings reported in Newfoundland and Labrador during 2014

Date	Area	Description
3 July	Off Port aux Basques	Free swimming
4 October	Off Bauline East, Conception Bay	Free swimming approx. 3-400 kgs. Seen by W. Ledwell

Table 6. Ice entrapped, stranded and dead floating cetaceans reported in Newfoundland and Labrador during 2014

Date	Area	Species	Description
8 Feb	Kippens, South West coast	2 white-beak dolphins	Seen alive. DFO Stephenville called WRS.

			Died in heavy pack-ice
16-17 March	Cape Ray, South West coast	Approximately 40 white beak dolphins	Alive in heavy pack ice and all died. Weather snowing, windy and cold. Animal welfare calls from all over world media plus individuals
24-30 March	Off Port aux Basques	9 blue whales	9 adult blue whales killed by heavy pack ice
30 March	Off Port aux Basques	3 blue whales	Seen by DFO helicopter survey alive in loose pack ice
4 April	Biscay Bay, Southern Shore	10m male sperm	Animal live stranded and died
18 April	Trout River- Bonne Bay area	3 blue whales	Dead ashore in pack ice. Maybe same animals from 24-30 March
29 April	Marches Point, Bay St. George	~10m male sperm	Dead stranded. Carcass very fresh
2 May	Cape Bonavista	7 to 8m male bowhead	Dead stranded. Carcass very decomposed. Baleen collected
21 May	Daniels Harbour, Northern Penn	Fin whale	Whale from 13 May drifted ashore. Confirmed by fisherman who cut it loose
10 June	Long Island Tickle, Exploits	Humpback	Whale alive and being forced through the Tickle in heavy pack ice and strong current
13 June	Change Islands	Pilot	Dead onshore. All colouration sloughed off animal. Dead for few weeks
16 June	Stephenville Crossing	Northern Bottlenose	Reported to Jack Lawson/DFO but WRS was unable to track down the animal
18 June	Cape Ray area South West coast	Newborn white beak	Fresh dead on beach
25 June	Fischels South West coast	4 white beak dolphins	Dead stranded in advanced decomposition on beach
13 July	Stephenville Crossing	White beak dolphin	Live stranding. Carried out by DFO fisheries officers on consult with W. Ledwell
13 July	Back Bay St. Georges South West Coast	7 white beak dolphins	Live stranding. Pushed back out by locals. Animals said to swim away
14 July	Stephenville	7 white beak	Stranded at high tide.

	Crossing	dolphins	Fisheries officers carried 6 out by atv/komitik on consult with W. Ledwell. One dead. Very hot temps
16 July	Off Cape Broyle Head, Southern Shore	5 m female humpback	Humpback calf freshly dead with no sign of entanglement. Inspected by members of the Whale Release and Strandings Group
16 July	Gut bridge, Stephenville Crossing	White beak dolphin	Live stranding. Animal carried out with air boat from Barachois Search and Rescue crew at night
2 August	Lamaline, Placentia Bay	Male humpback	Freshly dead. No sign of fishing gear entanglement
28 August	Pound Cove, Great Northern Peninsula	5 white sided dolphins	3 discovered dead and 2 pushed back out in strong sea on consult with W. Ledwell. The 2 others were dead by morning
2 September	Cougar helicopters 470992N, 505961W (between St. John's and Hibernia platform)	Large whale spp?	Dead floating
31 October	Strait of Belle Isle 5140N, 5613W	Large whale spp?	Dead floating

Table 7. Miscellaneous cetaceans reported in Newfoundland and Labrador during 2014

Date	Area	Species	Description
16 June	Kellys Island, Conception Bay	Narwhal	Photographed by dive team hanging close to an iceberg
18 June	Downing Basin, Grand Banks 4700N, 5550W	10-12 killer whales	Surrounding 2 humpbacks that were protecting a small calf. The large male killer had an orange/grey side patch
22 June	Bay Bulls, Southern Shore	Killer whales	Group off Bay Bulls

9 July	Sackville Spur, Grand Banks	Blue whale	Close to seismic ship
14 July	Middle Arm	Beluga	Solitary, social juvenile beluga. People petting it. Encouraged them not to interact with the animal
6-14 August	New Harbour, Deep Bight, Greens Harbour in Trinity Bay	Approximately 4 m Bowhead calf	Animal reported entangled, stranded and unusual behaviour. Whale Release and Strandings crew responded various times, once shepherding the animal out across the shoals at New Harbour, another for an entanglement report as the whale had bull kelp across its back and another for letting people in the area know to watch out for the animal. The whale eventually disappeared
6 September	Newmans Cove, Bonavista Bay	beluga	Sighted just out side harbour
8 September	Mary's Harbour, Labrador	beluga	Solitary, social juvenile beluga in harbor interacting with locals
9 September	St. Anthony	Northern right whale	Free swimming. Pictures sent to New England Aquarium for possible I.D
11 September	Lewisporte	beluga	Solitary social beluga in harbor by wharf

Table 8. Other marine animals reported in Newfoundland and Labrador during 2014

Date	Area	Species
19 July	Portugal Cove Conception Bay	Adult walrus sunning on rock
2 August	Cape Spear	Adult walrus in the water and on

		shore. Same animal from 19 July probably
18 August	Foxtrap marina, Conception Bay	3 m Greenland shark dead on beach
2 September	Bay Bulls	Walrus sunning itself on the rocks

References

Benjamins, S., Ledwell, W., Huntington, J., Davidson, A. Assessing changes in numbers and distribution of large whale entanglements in Newfoundland and Labrador Canada (July 2012). *Marine Mammal Science* (28:3, 579-601)

Ledwell, W., Huntington, J, Sacrey, E. 2013. Incidental entrapments in fishing gear and strandings reported and responded to by the Whale Release and Strandings Group in Newfoundland and Labrador and a summary of the Whale Release and Strandings Group during 2013. A report to the Department of Fisheries and Oceans, Newfoundland and Labrador Region

Ledwell, W. and J. Huntington. 2012. Incidental entrapments in fishing gear and strandings reported and responded to by the Whale Release and Strandings Group in Newfoundland and Labrador and a summary of the Whale Release and Strandings Group during 2012. A report to the Department of Fisheries and Oceans, Newfoundland and Labrador Region

Henry AG, Cole TVN, Garron M, Hall L, Ledwell W, Reid A. 2012. Mortality and Serious Injury Determinations for Baleen Whale Stocks along the Gulf of Mexico, United States East Coast and Atlantic Canadian Provinces, 2006-2010. US Dept Commer, Northeast Fish Sci Cent Ref Doc. 12-11; 24 p. Available from: National Marine Fisheries Service, 166 Water Street, Woods Hole, MA 02543-1026

Ledwell, W. J. Huntington and Nick Kelly. 2011. Incidental entanglements of cetaceans and leatherback sea turtles during 2010-2011 in Newfoundland and

Labrador and a summary of the Whale Release and Strandings Group activities. A preliminary report to the Department of Fisheries and Oceans, Canada. 31 March 2011

Ledwell, W, J. Huntington. 2010. Whale, leatherback sea turtle and basking sharks entrapped in fishing gear in Newfoundland and Labrador and a summary of the strandings, sightings and education work during 2009-2010. A preliminary report to Fisheries and Oceans Canada March 31, 2010

Benjamins, S., and Ledwell, W. Vagrant sociable monodontids in Newfoundland and Labrador, Canada. Oral presentation at the workshop 'Protection and management of solitary sociable cetaceans' at the 22nd Annual Conference of the European Cetacean Society, Egmond aan Zee, the Netherlands, March 2008

Ledwell, W, J. Huntington. 2007. Incidental entrapments in fishing gear gear reported in 2007 in Newfoundland and Labrador and a summary of the whale Release and Strandings Program. A Report to the Department of Fisheries and Oceans Canada – Newfoundland and Labrador Region. January 2007

Ledwell, W., Benjamins, S., Lawson, J. J., Huntington, (2007) The Most Southerly Record of a Stranded Bowhead Whale, *Balaena mysticetus*, from the Western North Atlantic Ocean. Arctic, 60:1

Ledwell, W, J. Huntington. 2006. Whale and leatherback sea turtles incidental entrapment in fishing gear in Newfoundland and Labrador and a summary of the Whale Release and Strandings Program during 2006. A Report to the Department of Fisheries and Oceans, St. John's, Newfoundland and Labrador, Canada

Ledwell, W, J. Huntington. 2005. Whale, leatherback sea turtle and basking shark entrapments in fishing gear in Newfoundland and Labrador and a summary of the Whale Release and Strandings Program during 2005. A report to Fisheries and Oceans, St. John's, Newfoundland, Canada

Ledwell, W, J. Huntington. 2004. 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

Lien, J. 2004. Guidelines for Assistance Programmes fo Marine Animals in Distress: A National Approach. Report provided to the SARCEP Marine Animal Working Group of Regional SARA Coordinators

Ledwell, W, J. Huntington. 2003. Whale entrapments in fishing gear reported during 2003 and a summary of the whale release and strandings program in

Newfoundland and Labrador. A preliminary report to the Fisheries and Oceans, Canada

Ledwell, W, Reid, B, Huntington, J. (2003) Leatherback Turtle (*Dermochelys coriacea*) Stranding and Release at Lobster Head Cove October 11-13, 2003. *The Osprey*, 34:4, St. John's, Newfoundland

Ledwell, W, J. Huntington. 2002. Whale entrapments in fishing gear and a summary of the marine animal disentanglement assistance program in Newfoundland and Labrador during 2002. A report to the Habitat Stewardship Program of Environment Canada

Ledwell, W, J. Huntington, J. Lien. 2001. Whale entrapments in fishing gear, strandings and sightings of marine animals and summary of the entrapment program during 2001- Newfoundland region a report to the Habitat Stewardship Program of Environment Canada

Ledwell, W, J. Huntington, J. Lien. 2000. Whale entrapments in fishing gear and other marine animal Incidental entrapments during 2000. A report to the Department of Fisheries and Oceans- Newfoundland and Labrador Region

Lien, J., Todd, S., and Pittman, D. (1996) Entrapments in fishing gear and strandings in Newfoundland and Labrador reported to the entrapment assistance program during 1995. Report to the Department of Fisheries and Oceans and the Newfoundland and Labrador Department of Food, Fisheries and Aquaculture

Lien, J., Pittman, D., Hood, C., Richter, C., Borgaard, D., Marques, F., and Todd, S. (1995) Entrapments in fishing gear and strandings in Newfoundland and Labrador reported to the entrapment assistance program during 1994. Report to the Department of Fisheries and Oceans

Lien, J. 1994. Entrapments of large cetaceans in passive inshore fishing gear in Newfoundland and Labrador (1979-1990). Reports of the International Whaling Commission, Special Issue 15: 149-157

Lien, J., Pittman, D., Mitchell (1994) Entrapments in fishing gear and strandings in Newfoundland and Labrador reported to the Entrapment Assistance Program during 1993, and preliminary reports on "alarm" tests, development of alarm technology, humpback whale surveys and education programs. Report to the Atlantic Fisheries Adjustment Program, St. John's, Nfld., 14 March, 15 pp

Lien, J., Barney, W. Ledwell, W., Todd, S., Stevick, P., Huntington, J., Seton, R., and Curren, K. (1992) Incidental entrapment of marine mammals by inshore fishing gear reported in 1992, some results of by-catch monitoring, and tests of acoustic deterrents to prevent whale collisions with fishing gear. Preliminary report to Fisheries and Oceans

Lien, J., Barney, W., Verhulst, A., Seton, R. (1991) Entrapments and strandings reported to the Entrapment Assistance Program during 1991; and a test of "Whale Alerts" to prevent whale collisions with fishing gear. Preliminary Report to Fisheries and Oceans

Lien, J., Huntington, J., Ledwell, W. and Huntsman, T. (1990) Whale entrapments in inshore fishing gear and a summary of the Entrapment Assistance Program in Newfoundland and Labrador during 1990. Report to Fisheries and Oceans, 31 December, 19 pp

Lien, J., G.B. Stenson and P.W. Jones. 1989. Ice entrapments of blue whales, (*Balaenoptera musculus*), in Newfoundland, (1978-1987). Unpublished manuscript

Lien, J., Ledwell, W. and Huntington, J. (1989) Whale and shark entrapments in inshore fishing gear in Newfoundland and Labrador. Report to the Newfoundland and Labrador Department of Fisheries and the Department of Fisheries and Oceans - Newfoundland Region, 10 January, 14 pp

Lien, J., Ledwell, W. and Nauen, J. (1988) Incidental entrapments in inshore fishing gear during 1988: A preliminary report to the Newfoundland and Labrador Department of Fisheries and Oceans - Newfoundland Regions, 15 December, 30 pp

Lien, J. (1988) Problems of Newfoundland fishermen with large whales and sharks during 1987 and a review of incidental entrapment in inshore fishing gear during the past decade. *The Osprey*, 19 (1) 30-38: 19 (2) 65-71

Lien, J., Papineau, J., and Dugan, L. (1987) Incidental entrapments of cetaceans, sharks and marine turtles in inshore fishing gear reported during 1987 in Newfoundland and Labrador. Report to the Department of Fisheries and Oceans - Newfoundland Region and the Newfoundland and Labrador Department of Fisheries, 30 December, 42 pp

Lien, J., Breeck, D., Pinsent, D., and Walter, H. (1986) Whale and shark entrapments in inshore fishing gear during 1986: A preliminary report to Fisheries and Oceans, St. John's, Nfld., 33 pp

Lien, J., Walter, and Harvey-Clark, C. (1985) Whale and shark entrapments in inshore fishing gear reported during 1985. Report to Fisheries and Oceans - Newfoundland Region, 21 pp

Lien, J., Dix, L., Lee, E. and Walter, H. (1984) Whale and shark entrapments in inshore fishing gear during 1984. Report to Fisheries and Oceans, 21 pp.

Lien, J., Staniforth, S., Fawcett, L., Vaughan, R., and Dong, J.(1983) Whale and shark entrapments in inshore fishing gear during 1983. Report to Fisheries and Oceans, 26 pp

Lien, J., Dong, J., Baraff, L., Harvey, J., and Chu, K. (1982) whale entrapments in inshore fishing gear during 1982: A preliminary report to Fisheries and Oceans Canada, St. John's, Newfoundland, 20pp

Lien, J. and Aldrich, D. (1982) Damage to inshore fishing gear in Newfoundland by sharks and whales during 1981. CAFSAC WP/82/104, 46 pp. September, 36 pp

Lien, J. (1980) Whale collisions with fishing gear in Newfoundland. Report to Fisheries and Oceans Canada - Newfoundland Region, 31 December, 316 pp

Appendix I

WHALE AND TURTLE NOTICE

1-888-895-3003

If you have a **WHALE** or **TURTLE** or basking shark (live or dead) caught in your fishing gear, call this toll-free number and a trained crew will respond to assist you. If you see any whales, turtles or dolphins (live or dead) on a beach, please call. Should you see any leatherback sea turtles please call.