

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 2015

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

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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 (WRS) 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 2015 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 - 2015.

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. The program 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 2015, one thousand and forty-three (1043) humpback whales (*Megaptera novaeangliae*), one hundred and sixty (160) minke whales (*Balaenoptera acutorostrata*), fourteen (14) fin whales (*Balaenoptera physalus*), two (2) 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-two (82) leatherback turtles have been reported entangled in fishing gear in this region with a mortality of 25%. There have been twelve (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 2000-2012; Ledwell, Huntington and Sacrey 2013-2014).

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 2015 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 2015. 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; 2014).

Humpback Whales

Nine (9) humpbacks were reported entangled/entrapped in fishing gear in 2015 (table 1). Five of those were in snow crab and whelk pot gear in the offshore.

Several attempts were made by the WRS team and a DFO patrol vessel to get to the animal entangled off Cape St. Mary's from the 18th-29th April and one response on the 29th when a weather window allowed us to reach the animal. Unfortunately, the weather was too rough to use the small inflatable and the large DFO RHIB too noisy with the whale wild and swinging on about ¼ of a nm from the crab gear we were unable to determine how it was entangled, separate it from its escort and release the animal. The fisherman lost 50 snow crab pots and all rope and balloons. The whale either broke free and or died and sank taking the gear down. The weather was too unsettled for a second attempt and flyovers by the DFO surveillance plane plus water search by the fishing boat did not see the whale or the gear again.

A whale entangled on 3rd May in snow crab gear towed away 50 pots and all the haul up ropes and large balloons. The vessel, a super 45 footer, discovered both ends of the gear together and thought some large vessel had dragged it together only to discover when they had the ends aboard and on their pot hauler that a large humpback was entangled in it. The whale busted the pot hauler from off its bolt down on the top of the wheel house, buckled the mast of which the pot hauler was attached and violently rocked the vessel before they had a chance to cut the gear off the hauler. The animal was last seen travelling at about a knot towing all the gear, all new gear.

Both of the above entanglements caused the crews to fear for their safety as the whales were attached to the crab pot haulers when the fishermen did not know there was an entanglement event as the animals were submerged when they began pulling in their gear. This often happens and is quite dangerous especially early in the spring when the animals are returning fresh and hungry from the Caribbean. In 2002 another 45 footer was almost capsized in the Laurentian Channel with an entangled humpback that became caught in the stabilizer fish (Ledwell and Huntington 2002).

Entrapments from 7th July occurred in a cod trap. Two hits occurred with one with the animal in the pound of the trap of which the WRS responded to. This is the second entrapment of a humpback in cod traps in NL waters reported since the cod moratorium in 1992 (Ledwell et al; 2014).

A humpback towing gear was satellite tagged by tying the tag onto the gear believed to be lobster pot gear off Ingonish by DFO officers. On the 17th July this entanglement was reported to the WRS and the group was asked by DFO Nova

Scotia to respond (see northern right whale below). The whale was later tracked to St. Pierre Bank off the south coast where members of the WRS, DFO Placentia and DFO Marystown searched the area unsuccessfully during a weather break. Unfortunately, funds were not made available for the team to hire a longliner for a more detailed and lengthy search for this whale. The whale, towing a satellite tag with a stainless steel collar and a steel pipe shaft as housing for the antenna with two catching grapples attached could easily get caught in more fishing gear.

On the 13th of August there were reports of an entangled whale on St. Pierre Bank in whelk gear. On the 30th August the Centre for Coastal Studies informed WRS, from satellite transmission data, that the satellite tag, originally placed on the gear being towed by the Nova Scotia humpback, was in Fortune in a fisherman's backyard for a week. W. Ledwell contacted the fisherman who had the tag who had been in possession of it since the 13th but didn't know what it was. The fisherman believed the satellite tag to be some sort of "beacon". He and another fisherman from Harbour Breton had both strings of their 50 pot fleets of whelk gear pulled together and couldn't raise the gear to retrieve it although they did retrieve a "beacon with 2 hookers". The beacon was the Ingonish whale's satellite tag and the hookers the two catching grapples thrown to attach the tag. Although it is entered in the table as an entanglement we did not count it as one as the fishermen could not raise the weight that they had thought was equipment dropped into their gear by an oceanographic group. In our view the weight was the dead humpback which became entangled in the gear while feeding and had dragged the tag and grapples into the gear entangling it

Minke whales

Two (2) minke whales (table 2) were entangled in fishing gear in 2015. One of those animals was discovered dead in snow crab gear caught between the pots in 340 meters of water wester'd of the Funk islands on the north east coast. The animal was caught through the mouth and around the peduncle. The fisherman who reported it said they were catching wolffish (many of those young ones) in almost every pot.

The other minke or minke whales were entangled and self-released from a cod trap leader in St. Brides. It is not uncommon for this to happen with cod traps. Prior to the cod moratorium fishermen often witnessed a whale making a clean cut through the twine.

Other entangled whales/northern right whale

The Whale Release and Strandings Group (WRS) received a call for assistance on the morning of July 17 from the Nova Scotia Department of Fisheries and Oceans to disentangle a humpback that had been tagged with a satellite tag off Ingonish Cape Breton (table 3). WRS responded driving across the island of Newfoundland with the disentanglement boat and gear arriving in Cape Breton the morning of the 18th July. A decision was made together with a member of the

Marine Animal Response Society (MARS) and two DFO officers to load the disentangling inflatable aboard a DFO patrol vessel to pursue the animal which had now moved further north towards Newfoundland.

At 1 p.m. on the 18th a right whale was spotted 25 nm off Cape Breton entangled in snow crab gear and towing an A-1 faded poly buoy with lettering HB 33 and with an orange and black Styrofoam float attached trailing approximately 180 meters behind the animal. Steaming around the animal, using mask and snorkel, it was determined the animal had a double wrapping of 25mm poly steel rope around the peduncle with no gear through its mouth or around the pectorals. While pulling from the poly buoy the team discovered they could not raise the weight midway to the animal and decided to slow the animal by keggering it using A-5 balloons. The whale was now moving quickly out of the area towing the disentangling team along with it. Reaching into the rope using a pole with one of the WRS knives attached from the inflatable one cut was made cutting the ropes releasing the gear from the whale and letting the animal go gear free. It was discovered from Photo ID that the animal was Right whale 3120 named "White Cloud". The gear the animal was towing was a snow crab pot of the large type used in the Maritimes. The pot was pulled to the surface but the DFO officers made a decision to leave it not to bring it aboard.

Leatherback sea turtles

A female leatherback live stranded at Parsons Pond on the Great Northern Peninsula on the 22nd September (table 4). The animal was refloated and pushed back out twice but strong tides and shallow water in the area may have caused it to re strand. The WRS together with the Rocky Harbour DFO, a local provincial large animal vet and local people cleared an area of the boulder beach. They used a net bag designed for towing small whales and sea turtles and brought the turtle to deep water using a soft bottom inflatable. The animal was held to the boat's side and its breathing was monitored until it was released approximately a mile off shore in deep water. The animal swam on strongly. The turtle with a carapace curved length of 157 and 101 width was flipper tagged Can 187 by the WRS team. This is the second such live stranding and successful release whereby a leatherback was carried out to deep water in NL waters. The other occurred at Lobster Haed Cove on the Great Northern Peninsula on Thanksgiving day 2003 (Ledwell et al; 2003). Both of those events were preceded by strong winds in the areas. An event whereby a leatherback was discovered ashore at Lead Cove in Bonavista Bay and successfully re orientated back to sea over a heavy boulder beach while the animal was still awash occurred in 2012 (Ledwell and Huntington 2012).

Two (2) leatherbacks (table 5) were reported released gear free by fishers from whelk and cod gillnets in 2015.

A manuscript on fishery interactions with leatherbacks in Atlantic Canadian waters was accepted for review:

Hamelin, K., James, M., Ledwell, W., Huntington, J., Martin, M; Fishery interactions with leatherback sea turtles in the Continental Shelf waters of Atlantic Canada. 2015. Biological Conservation (*in press*)

Strandings

A 467 cm female Sowerby's beaked whale, *Mesoplodon bidens*, live stranded at Fogo on Fogo Island on the evening of July 21st (table 7). Fishermen reported a "different" whale behaving strange in the morning on the adjacent fishing ground. Described as dolphin looking but bigger and going in circles around the boats. The same afternoon a whale was observed swimming fast towards shore in the causeway. The animal stranded, violently thrashing on the heavy jagged rock shore. Pushed back several times it re stranded and died. The Whale Release and Strandings Group was contacted 7 p.m. on the evening of the 21st and asked the caller to secure the animal after having identified it. WRS team members arrived on the morning ferry to Fogo and conducted a gross necropsy on the rocks of the same morning/afternoon.

Sowerby's necropsy results

There was no scarring except what looked con specific to indicate net entanglement or predation. A protrusion evident on the right dorsal rib cage where broken thoracic rib tips were discovered together with bruising of the right lung. This may have been associated with the animal's thrashing during stranding. Crushed and broken caudal chevrons were discovered during flensing. The entire carcass was flensed and checked for broken bones.

A pus like secretion in the uterine area could possibly be pycnotera related

The animal had no erupted teeth

Fish otoliths and eye lenses were found in the gut along with a small plastic bottle cap (coke bottle size).

Tissue taken: Skin, Muscle, Heart, lung, liver and kidney

Right eye was collected as was the uterus and gut

The town of Fogo took control of the skeleton for future mounting

All samples are stored for analysis at the marine mammal section of the Department of Fisheries and Oceans St. John's NL

Morphometrics available upon request to the Whale Release and Strandings Group 709 895 3003.

True's beaked

A True's beaked whale, *Mesoplodon mirus*, was discovered dead stranded on the 7th February at Point Lance in St. Mary's Bay. This is the first record of a True's beaked whale in NL waters. Necropsy was conducted at the Provincial Veterinary Brookfield Research Station. Results of the necropsy are available from the marine mammal section of the Department of Fisheries and Oceans

Miscellaneous cetacean sightings

We received 2 reports of entangled and sick looking humpbacks in the Trinity area in 2015 (table 7). On checking on those animals we discovered that they were not entangled but one was covered in cyamids, a condition more akin to humpbacks in tropical areas. It's the first we have seen of a humpback in this condition in NL waters. The second report involved a humpback with an extremely necrotic tail fluke and peduncle with skin hanging and sloughing off it. It was determined through photo examination and consultation with entanglement colleagues that this was the result of an entanglement although there was no evidence of gear left on the animal.

A solitary social beluga took up residence in Grates Cove on the tip of the Conception Bay Peninsula during the fall of 2015 (table 7). It was a difficult management issue as it received much media coverage and although the public for both theirs and the safety of the animal were encouraged not to interact with the animal many people did including a local dive company. This is an ongoing management concern here as solitary social belugas show up pretty much every year and educating the public towards interaction or non-interaction with the animals is a constant. Other reports of solitary social belugas are listed.

Cuvier's beaked

A Cuvier's beaked whale, *Ziphius cavirostris*, was photographed south of the Grand Banks outside the 200 nm limit on the 25th July by Jon Joy from WRS. This is the first record of a Cuvier's reported here and extends the known northward range of this species. A note is being prepared for the Osprey, the Newfoundland Natural History Societies Journal

Education activities

Disentanglement training

Three disentanglement training sessions were conducted with 24 NL fisheries officers in the fall of 2015. Wayne Ledwell and Julie Huntington of Whale Release and Strandings and Paul Cottrell of DFO conducted the three day exercises providing fisheries officers basic training in assisting the WRS to conduct disentanglements.

Outreach

The Whale Release and Strandings Group attended the NL Harbor Authorities annual meeting the fall of 2015 and presented to the group. A WRS display booth was set with posters of leatherback sea turtles available, disentanglement stickers available and educational whale and sea turtle material on display. W. Ledwell gave a presentation on WRS activities as it pertains to Harbour Authorities involvement as first line relayers of information re marine animals entangled or in other trouble.

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 fifth annual “Whale Day” 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 fiberglass 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.

Habitat Stewardship Program and leatherback sea turtles

The Whale Release and Strandings program received funding from the HSP program to deliver an awareness and educational program through the community libraries to communities on the south and north east coasts in 2015. Presentations included anatomy parts of leatherbacks as skull, fin, esophagus, a life size canvas cutout, posters delineating knowledge gained throughout work in NL on leatherbacks including tagged individuals. An accompanying talk was given by Mr. Ledwell during each of these events which was carried by provincial media including television

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 fishers 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.

Recommendation 3. Because of the dangers inherent in fishing boats encountering entangled large whales in their fishing gear in snow crab gear on the offshore fishing groups need to be advised by an experienced disentanglement group on procedures to lessen gear loss and protect lives. There is a need here in NL to have dedicated large vessel support when large whales are entangled in fishing gear in offshore areas so as: 1. The animals can be released safely and effectively, 2. Gear can be saved so as it is not cut and left as lost gear and or left being towed around by a whale further creating suffering to it, and 3. For the safety of fishing crews.

Table 1. Humpback whales reported entangled in fishing gear in Newfoundland and Labrador during 2015

Date	Area	Gear type	Description
19 – 29 April	4619438N, 5447257W. 40nm off Cape St. Mary's	Snow crab	Entangled in 40 crab pots. Towed gear away. WRS response
3 May	450648N, 553888W. 120nm from Lords Cove Placentia Bay	Snow crab	15m wild whale almost capsized longliner. Towed away all fleet: 50 pots, new 5/8 polysteel rope, haul ups and balloons
5 May	Wester'd end Green Bank 4607N, 5707W	Snow Crab	Entangled in 50 pot fleet. Crew released the animal
29 May	New Harbour. Trinity Bay	Herring nets	WRS responded. Whale self-released tearing up nets and carrying away twine around head. Fisherman reported losing other herring nets to possible humpbacks in area
7 July	St. Brides, Cape St. Mary's	Cod trap	Entangled in side wall of trap. Self-released with twine draped over head
8 July	St. Brides, Cape St. Mary's	Cod trap	Whale in pound of same trap from 7 July trap. WRS responded but animal self-released on arrival of team
15 July	462687N, 565328W. St. Pierre Bank	Whelk pots	Towed away 50 pots, anchors and haul ups. "Those whales can tow a string of those 50 pots of whelk gear with the anchors and haul-ups as if they were trout bobbers" Wayne Miller
17 July – 13 August	Ingonish, Cape Breton, Nova Scotia	Lobster rope and float maybe	Whale towing gear and satellite tag by NS DFO. WRS asked to respond and did. Whale moved out of range while

		other gear	being pursued by WRS team, MARS and NS DFO
13 August	462987N, 565328W. St. Pierre Bank	Whelk pots	Ingonish satellite tag retrieved entangled in whelk whelk gear towed together from two fishermen. Two sets of 50 pots with haul ups and anchors and balloons all jumbled together. The fishermen could not raise the gear but did retrieve the tag from it. It is highly suspicious possibly the whale was dead and could not be raised
29 July	Harbour Round Green Bay	Caplin trap	Released by fishermen from leader of trap. Whale still in area with gear on head and around tail area. WRS responded and searched area but were unsuccessful in relocating animal

Table 2. Minke whales reported entangled in fishing gear in Newfoundland and Labrador during 2015

Date	Area	Gear type	Description
7 July	West of Funks 502.2N, 5329.6W	Snow crab	Dead when discovered caught through mouth and around peduncle at depth in 340m. "Lots of catfish (wolfish) caught in pots"
7 July	St. Brides, Cape St. Mary's	Cod trap	Went through the leader 3 times "going through the leader like a rabbit through the woods" Gerald Dalton

Table 3. Other whales reported entangled in fishing gear to the Whale Release and Strandings Group in 2015

Date	Area	Species	Description
17 July	25nm off Cape Breton Nova Scotia	Northern right	Right whale 3120 "White Cloud" released gear free from snow crab gear by WRS team

Table 4. Leatherback sea turtles reported stranded in Newfoundland and Labrador during 2015

Date	Area	Description
22-23 September	Parsons Pond Great Northern Peninsula	Animal live stranded multiple times and returned and carried out to deep water by WRS, DFO and locals. Animal flipper tagged Can 187 by WRS

Table 5. Leatherback sea turtle sightings reported in Newfoundland and Labrador during 2015

Date	Area	Description
3 August	Off Cavendish Trinity Bay	Free swimming

Table 6. Leatherback turtles reported entangled in fishing gear in 2015.

Date	Area	Description
Mid July	St. Pierre Bank	Released alive and gear free from whelk pot gear
End July	Burin	Released alive and gear free from cod gillnets

Table 7. Ice entrapped, stranded and dead floating cetaceans reported in Newfoundland and Labrador during 2015

Date	Area	Species	Description
7 February	Point Lance, St. Mary's Bay	True's beaked	Dead stranded and confirmed through necropsy as a True's
30 March	Kelligrews Conception Bay	Dolphin species	Dead ashore – been dead for awhile
13 April	Cape Ray	6 white beaked dolphins	6 white beak dolphins ice entrapped and died and pushed ashore
29 April	Newman Sound Terra Nova National Park	humpback	Freshly dead female 7m animal pushed in with ice
11 May	Hunts Island Burgeo South Coast	blue	Dead drifting
21 July	Fogo, Fogo Island	Sowerby's beaked whale	467cm female Sowerby's live stranded and died. Necropsied by WRS team. Skeleton flensed by WRS and collected by town of Fogo
1 August	North end Bell Island Conception Bay	humpback	Dead drifting in advanced decompensation
6 August	Magdalena Islands	Northern right	Advanced state of decompensation. Pictures sent to WRS for identification
14 August	Backside Pond	minke	In advanced decompensation.

	Park Trinity Bay		No evidence of gear entanglement
14 August	Portugal Cove South	Dolphin species	~2m skeleton
27 August	Eddies Cove East Great Northern Peninsula	humpback	Dead on beach
31 August	Bauline East Southern Shore	sperm	Large fresh dead drifting. Sent info to J. Lawson, DFO

Table 7. Miscellaneous cetaceans reported in Newfoundland and Labrador during 2015

Date	Area	Species	Description
20 June	New Perlican, Trinity Bay	beluga	Solitary social animal in and around wharf
7 July	Trinity	humpback	Animal infested with cyamids. Reported to be entangled but determined by WRS to be not entangled
31 July	Trinity, Trinity Bay	humpback	Whale with severe necrotic tail and peduncle with skin sloughing off. Determined by WRS to be not entangled but on consultation with colleagues determined possible condition to be result of an entanglement
25 July	South of 200 nm limit off the Grand Banks	Cuvier's Beaked Whale	Free swimming (Jon Joy)
Week 10 August	Nain, Labrador	beluga	Solitary social animal in harbour
31 August	Grates Cove, Conception Bay	beluga	Solitary social animal interacting with locals, divers for much of the fall.
3 December	St. Pierre	Killer whale	5-6 m female killer whale dead stranded and necropsied by St. Pierre scientists. Calf discovered inside.

Table 8. Other marine animals reported in Newfoundland and Labrador during 2015

Date	Area	Species
19 January	Mobile, Southern Shore	Seal hauled out with lots of blood around it
21 January	Quidi Vidi, St. John's	Seal hauled out on ice pan in gut. Appeared injured
22 January	Torbay	Seal with injury across back (multiple calls)
23 January	Glovertown	Seal up fresh water river- long ways from ocean
26 January	Bay Roberts, Conception Bay	Injured seal
8 February	Carbonear, Conception Bay	Seal in trouble on ice "is this Newfoundland" asked caller
8 February	Harbour Grace, Conception Bay	RCMP called re injured seal 30 m from water on road
15 August	Carters Lane, Conception Bay	Large seal bleeding. Called in by RNC who had called everywhere until they reached us. Was very appreciative to hand off call

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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.



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