

KEEPING WHALES FREE FROM FISHING GEAR

Entanglement in active or lost fishing gear poses a major threat to whales in British Columbia. You can help make a difference.

All fishing gear, including ropes and nets, can pose a threat to whales. Gear can wrap around a whale's body, tail, fins, and/or its mouth, affecting its ability to feed, travel, or breathe. Gear entanglements can cause injury or death to whales as well as a high cost to fish harvesters due to loss of their gear and catch.

If you are planning to go trap fishing, here are some ways you can help prevent whale entanglements.



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Whale entanglements can go undetected and unreported in British Columbia's vast coastline. By being aware of these best practices you can help reduce injury and death of marine mammals, such as the Grey Whale and Humpback Whale.

Visit www.bewhalewise.org and www.mersociety.org for more info on reducing impacts to marine mammals from anthropogenic threat.

Refer to the BC Sport Fishing Guide for the latest info on fishing regulations, area closures, and responsible fishing practices:
<https://www.pac.dfo-mpo.gc.ca/fm-gp/rec/index-eng.html>



WHAT TO DO IF YOU SEE AN ENTANGLED WHALE



1 Do not attempt to disentangle the whale
You could injure yourself or the animal.



2 Report any live injured, distressed, or dead whales immediately
to the DFO 24/7 Incident Hotline listed below.



3 Stay with the animal until an authorized responder or someone who can track the whale, arrives
Maintain the minimum required approach distance.²



4 Take photos and/or videos of the entangling gear and the whale
Photos can provide useful information about the individual and the nature of the entanglement.

¹ Marine Education and Research Society (MERS). [n.d.] Entanglement. Retrieved from MERS website:
<https://www.mersociety.org/entanglement>

² 100m distance from most whales, dolphins and porpoises; 200m if an animal is in resting position or with a calf. At-risk killer whales require more distance. Keep 200-400m away from all killer whales. Regulations may vary by area or timing of year, see the DFO website for latest info: <https://www.dfo-mpo.gc.ca/species-especes/mammals-mammiferes/watching-observation/index-eng.html>



Report marine mammal incidents to
1-800-465-4336



VHF Radio
Channel 16



Or email DFO.ORR-ONS.MPO@dfo-mpo.gc.ca



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DID YOU KNOW?

The threat of entanglement is so great that preliminary research found nearly 50% of all humpbacks sampled in B.C. have scarring indicating that they have been entangled.¹

Grey Whales and Humpback Whales are two of the most commonly entangled whale species in the Pacific Northwest. From spring to fall these whales spend a lot of time in shallow coastal waters, making them especially prone to interactions with fishing gear, especially traps.

WHILE FISHING...

Avoid setting gear when whales are near

See a blow? Wait for a whale to pass or find another spot to set your gear. It's the law to keep distance from marine mammals while fishing.



Reduce excess line

Adjust rope lengths between fishing gear and buoys.



Check current and tide tables before fishing

Add weights to your gear to avoid it drifting away.



Use proper buoys, avoid styrofoam blocks or plastic jugs

This can reduce the chance of gear loss and harm to whales.

Clearly mark your buoys with your name and phone number, or vessel registration number, as required. If found, lost gear can be returned to you.



GENERALLY...

Dispose of your end-of-life fishing gear responsibly

and try and clean up any debris you find especially plastics.



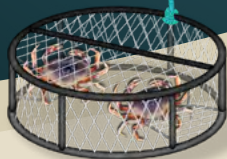
Report marine mammal incidents, including whale entanglements

to the DFO 24/7 Incident Hotline 1-800-465-4336.



Educate yourself and others

on how to reduce marine mammal incidents due to human activities.

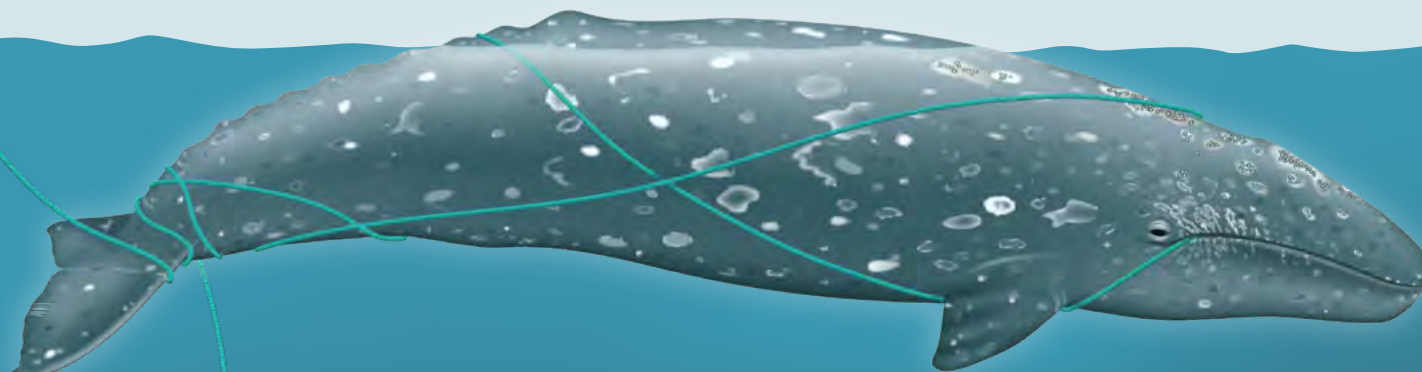


WHAT SHOULD YOU DO IF YOU SEE AN ENTANGLED WHALE?

Report entangled whales immediately to initiate a marine mammal response. Reporting incidents, such as vessel strikes, entanglements and other disturbances, can help save an animal's life and provide useful data to help address future threats to marine mammals.

Whales in distress can be unpredictable, making disentanglement very dangerous. Keep your distance and do not attempt to disentangle the whale, for your safety and the safety of the animal.

Removing entangling fishing gear is a complicated process as not all the gear may be visible at the surface. As shown below, if only the visible portion of floating rope at the surface is removed, the animal still faces serious risk from the rope stuck in its mouth and wrapped around its tail. Moreover, trailing or visible gear at the surface is important for authorized responders to attach gear for the disentanglement, or attach tags, so that the entangled animal can be tracked to enable an effective and safe response.



Incorrectly executed disentanglements can further distress and injure an animal. If you see an entangled whale, or other marine mammal, the best action you can take for your safety and the safety of the animal, is to report the incident immediately so authorized responders can initiate a response. Authorized responders have specialized skills, equipment, training, and experience which allow them to effectively assess the entanglement, ensuring that gear is removed in a way that maximizes the whale's chance of long-term survival.

HOW TO REPORT INCIDENTS INVOLVING MARINE MAMMALS

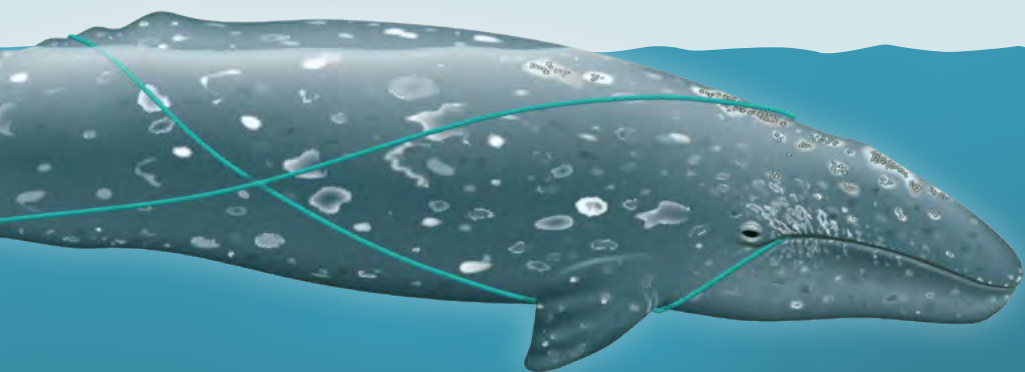
Keep this flyer in an accessible location when needed for entanglement reporting.

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Reporting of collisions or accidental contact between vessels or fishing gear and marine mammals is mandatory under Canada's *Marine Mammal Regulations*.

REPORT WHALE ENTANGLEMENTS



1 Do not attempt to disentangle the whale yourself



2 Report any live injured, distressed, or dead whales immediately



3 Stay with the animal, maintaining a safe distance¹



4 Take photos and/or videos of the entangled gear and the whale

¹ Refer to brochure section: "What to do if you see an entangled whale" for minimum distance regulations.



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