

Building capacity to respond to entangled large whales: the IWC whale entanglement initiative



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Human impact reduction
IWC and CCS



International Whaling Commission: Large whale entanglement initiative



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International Whaling Commission

Commission Whales Conservation & Management Scientific Research Publications

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Entanglement of Large Whales

A new area of work for the IWC is to assist countries and properly trained individuals in responding to large whales that have become entangled in fishing gear or other marine debris. Entanglement of all species of large whales can occur, at varying rates, throughout their geographical range. Such events create severe welfare issues for the entangled animal which may ultimately die. An additional, and very important consideration lies with the safety of teams tasked with attempting to free an entangled whale.

The IWC has addressed this issue by holding two international workshops in order to develop recommendations for action. The first workshop was held in 2010 in Maui, Hawaii and its report can be found [here](#). This report includes several recommendations, including to establish local response capabilities, with appropriate national authority. It developed an assessment and decision tree for structuring the response to entangled whales, and also addressed the question of euthanasia should all efforts to free an animal fail.

The report of the second workshop, held in Provincetown (USA) in 2011 can be found [here](#). This workshop was attended by representatives from every major whale disentanglement response team in the world, and its recommendations were developed by drawing on their collective experiences.

The workshop recognised the benefits that would arise from the formation of a global network of large whale entanglement response organisations, and suggested that there would be great value in the network being established under the auspices of the IWC.

Since the conclusion of the workshop the IWC's Secretariat has continued to promote the development of large whale entanglement response teams around the world by conducting a training programme, which uses the principles and guidelines, training strategy and curriculum developed by the global network at the Provincetown Workshop (Appendix E and F of the report).

[Click here](#) to be taken to our entanglement photo gallery

www.IWC.int

- **Scientific Committee**

- ✓ Human-Induced Mortality Working Group (formerly Bycatch)

- **Other Commission subcommittees and working groups**

- ✓ Whale Killing Methods & Welfare Issues
- ✓ Conservation Committee



IWC workshop to review the scope, impact and potential actions (Maui, 2010)

Participants from:

Argentina

Australia

Brazil

Canada (*Pacific and Atlantic*),

Korea

New Zealand

Norway

South Africa

USA (*Pacific and Atlantic*)



<http://iwc.int/index.php?CID=2635&cType=document>



Large whales: All species

COUNTRY	SPECIES										
	Minke	Humpback	Northern Right	Southern Right	Fin	Brydes	Gray	Sei	Bowhead	Blue	Sperm
Argentina											
Australia											
Brazil											
Newfoundland and Labrador, Canada*											
Denmark											
France											
Iceland											
Ireland											
Italy											
Japan											
Korea											
Mexico*											
Netherlands											
New Zealand											
Norway*											
Spain											
South Africa*											
Sweden											
UK											
USA*											

Shaded squares represent documented entanglements
 Empty squares represent species not reported entangled in 2003-2008

Summary of six years of large whale bycatch data from National Progress Reports submitted to the IWC Scientific Committee annual meetings (56-61), generally covering the years: 2003-2008 (2010, IWC/62/15)



Gear type?



NOAA



NOAA



NOAA



SAWDN



NOAA

Gear involved: reported to IWC

FAO GEAR TYPE

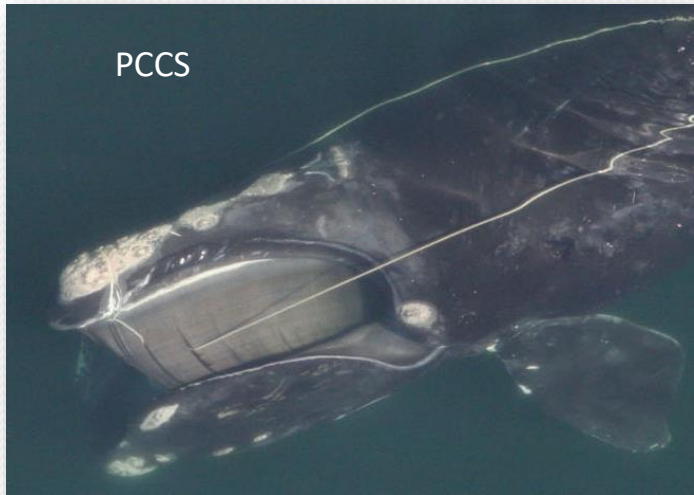
COUNTRY	SV	SX	TX	TMS	GND	GN	FPN	FPO	FYK	FSN	FIX	LLS	LLD	LL	NSC
Argentina	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Australia [†]	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Brazil	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Denmark	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
France	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Iceland [†]	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Ireland	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Italy	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Japan ^{††}	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Korea	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Netherlands	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
New Zealand	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Norway	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Spain	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Sweden	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
UK	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
USA ^{†††}	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-

All passive (stationary or drifting) gear: (IWC/62/15)



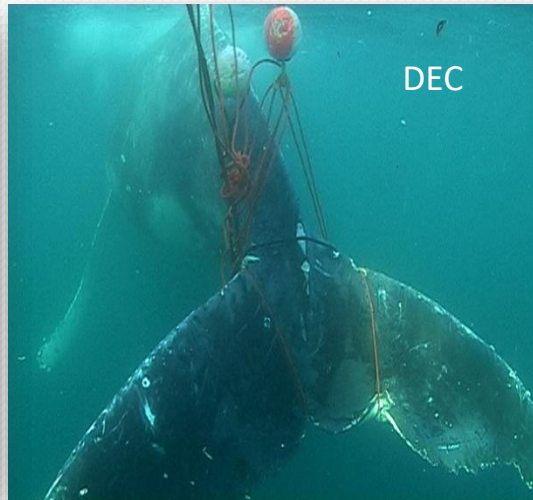
When and where reported?

W.N. Atlantic



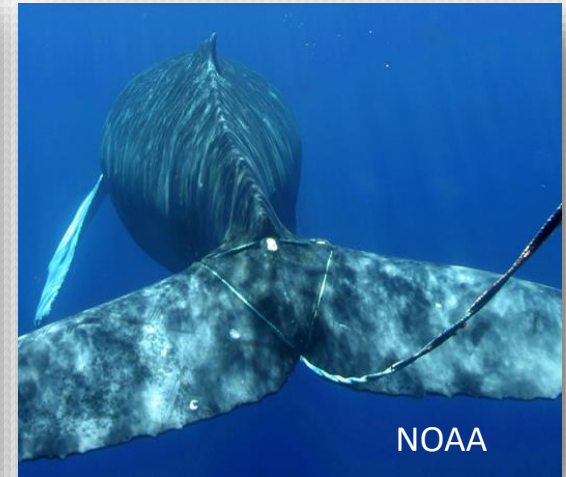
Feeding

W. Australia



Migrating

Hawaii



Breeding



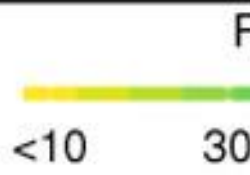
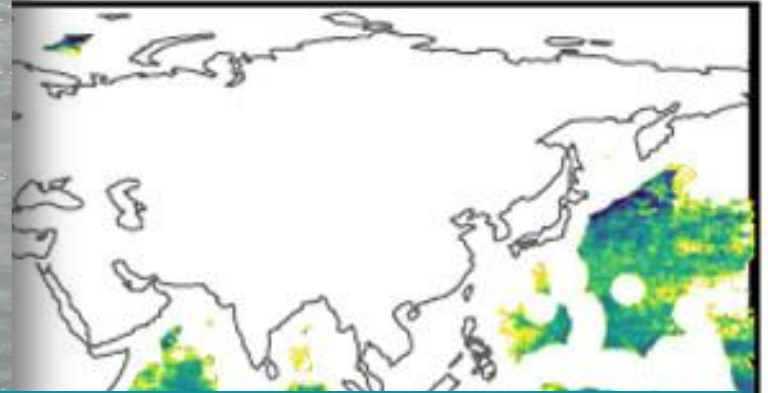
Alaska



S. Africa



Hawaii



Sperm whales in coastal FADs made of debris Guadeloupe: 2013 and 2016



*Caroline Rinaldi and Renato Rinaldi
SC/65b/ HIMo2, 2014, Bled, Slovenia*



Long line



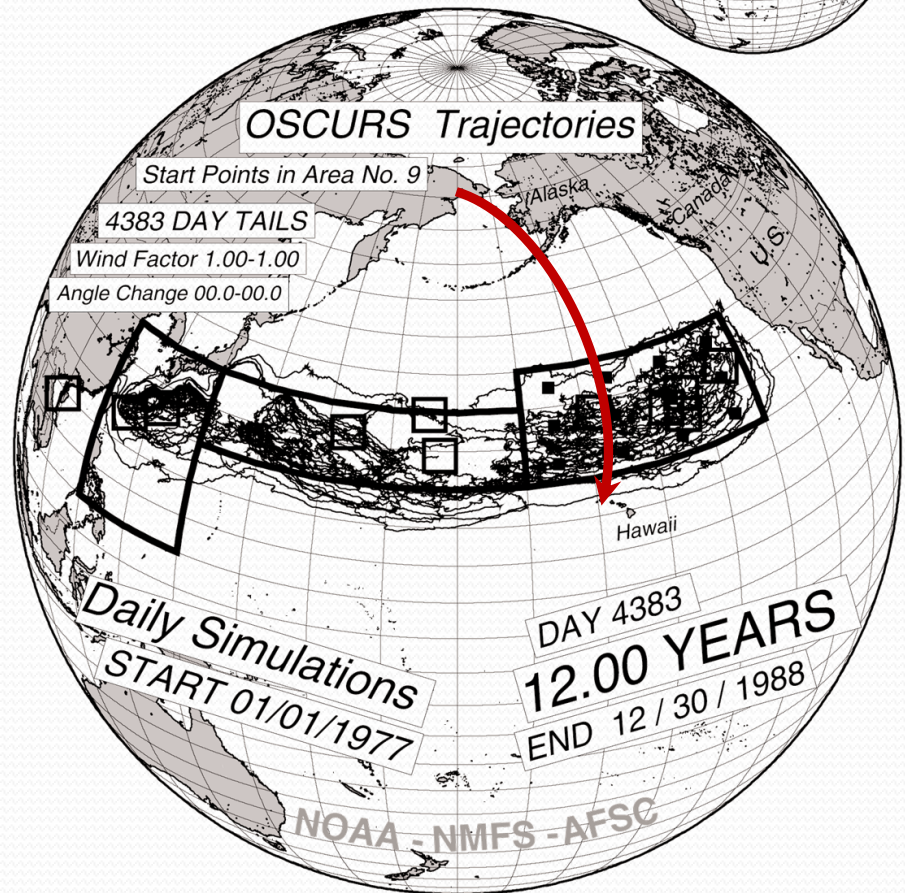
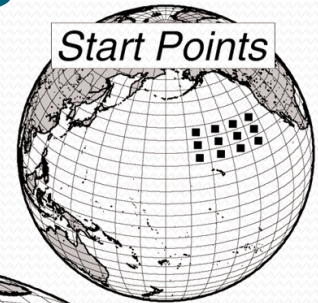
Marine Debris



<http://iwc.int/pwoatiomd2013>

Debris?: while migrating?

Area 9 Eastern Garbage Patch?



IWC Workshop: Maui, 2010

Convened by: Australia, Norway and USA



<http://iwc.int/index.php?cID=2635&cType=document>

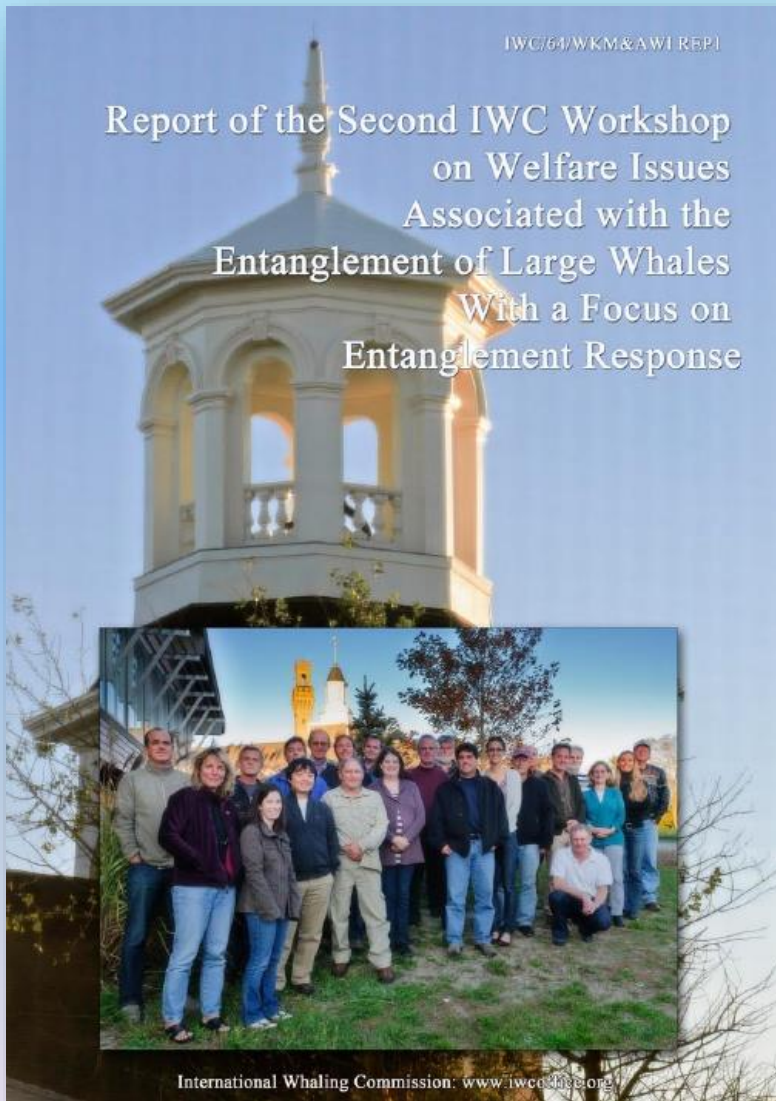
- **Agreed** the issue occurs wherever whales and passive gear overlap
- **Agreed** that the frequency is widely and often severely under-estimated
- It is a **welfare and conservation** issue
- **Recommended:**
 - Better data collection
 - Prevention
 - **Capacity building**



Principles and Guidelines

2nd Workshop, Provincetown, 2011

- **Human safety first**
 - Training
 - Do **not** get in water
 - Protocols and techniques
- **Animal Welfare**
- **Contribute to prevention**
 - Standard data collection
- **Increase public awareness**
- **Authorization by relevant Government Agency**



IWC/64/WKM&AWIREP1, Annex E

<https://iwcoffice.org/best-practice-guidelines-for-entanglement-response>



Process for IWC endorsed training

- **Provide overview of issue and training to relevant authority, upon request from Country or civil society**
- **Work with Government to identify key regions in country and appropriate trainees using consensus criteria**
- **Conduct two day training, using consensus curriculum**
- **Evaluate trainees and identify possible apprentices**
- **Add country to Global Network**



Theoretical: Classroom (day one) and practical: sea (day two)



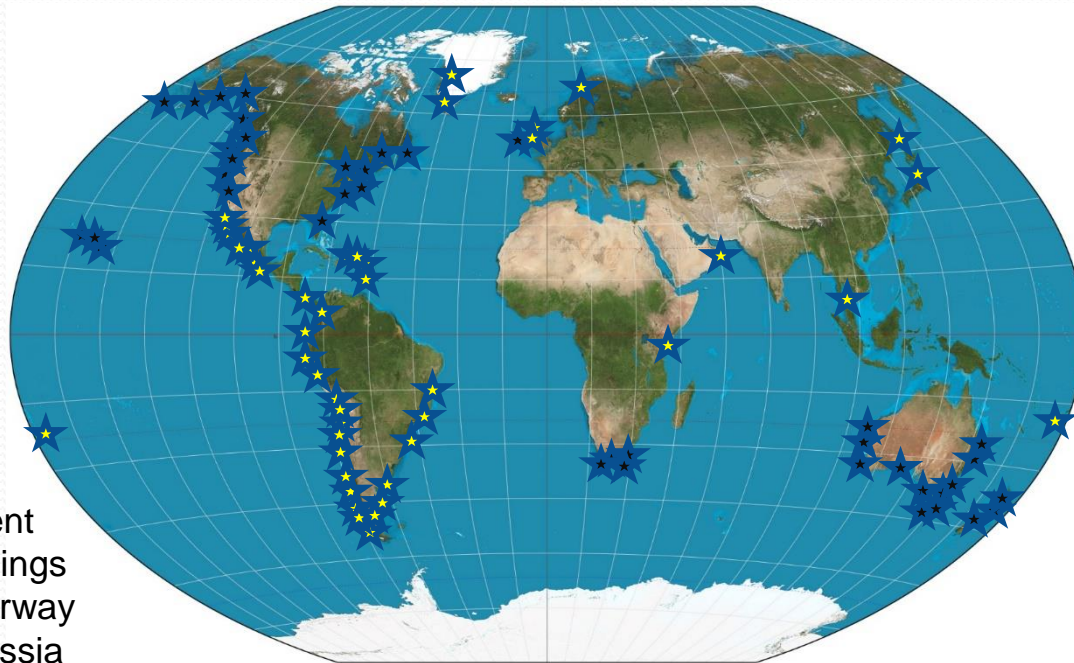
~1200 trainees from 34 countries



Including training in the South Pacific with SPREP: July, 2014



Primary teams in the IWC Global Whale Entanglement Response Network (to date)



- ★ = Pre-existing teams
- ★ = IWC trained teams

- Recent Trainings
- Norway
 - Russia
 - Kenya
 - Scotland
 - Argentina

- Planned Trainings
- Italy
 - Iceland
 - Reunion
 - Colombia
 - Costa Rica

Criteria for prioritizing trainings

- **Human Safety:** Are well-meaning but un-trained people currently responding with dangerous techniques?
- **Conservation:** How endangered is the whale population and how significant is the entanglement impact?
- **Animal Welfare:** How many whales are likely to benefit from developing a response network?
- **Socioeconomic impact:** How much impact do entanglements have on the affected fishers?
- **National support:** Has the country requested or sanctioned the training?
- **Added impact:** Does the training fit into and/or encourage other productive initiatives?



Support for training from:

Intergovernmental Organizations



Governmental Organizations



Non-Governmental Organizations

