

6.6 Large Whale Entanglement Response Program

This appendix presents sections of WAC 220 applicable to testing commercial fishing gear. This information is not intended to present all laws and regulations pertaining to commercial salmon fishing. More information can be found at:

<https://www.fisheries.noaa.gov/west-coast/marine-mammal-protection/west-coast-large-whale-entanglement-response-program>

Over the last few years, NOAA Fisheries has responded to an increasing number of large whale entanglements reported to the West Coast Marine Mammal Stranding Network and Large Whale Entanglement Response Network. Large whales periodically become entangled in active or derelict fishing gear, or other ropes/lines/chains in the marine environment. Some whales that become entangled are able to shed the gear on their own. However, other whales may be unable to shed the gear and can carry it for days, months, or even years. Whales that are entangled can suffer from injuries, infection, and wrapping that can impair their ability to feed or swim. The drag from the gear or debris can cause whales to expend more energy to swim, can make it harder for them to feed, and can result in starvation.


What to do in the case of a Large Whale becoming entangled:

- Prompt reporting is the best way to help entangled whales. Please stay with the whale as long as it is safe to do so.

- Safety First! Because whales in distress may act unpredictably, do not closely approach the animal. Never attempt disentanglement or to remove any gear without training and authorization.

- Video or photos showing the entangling gear can be helpful for our efforts to reduce these entanglements in the future. Please collect and provide video or photos to NOAA Fisheries, but remember to stay at least 100 yards from the whale, and beware that lines in the water could snag your vessel.

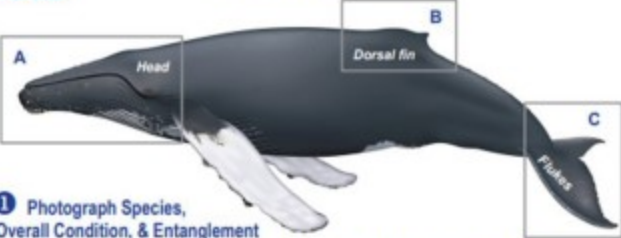
Do NOT attempt to disentangle a whale yourself!



Large Whale Entanglement Photo Documentation Checklist

Humpback whale

Entanglement Reporting Hotline:
1-877-SOS-WHAL or
1-877-767-9425



- 1 Photograph Species, Overall Condition, & Entanglement**
 - Head (Box A above)
 - Flukes, especially underside if raised (Box C above)
 - Side view of dorsal fin (Box B above)
 - Any part of the body where the entanglement or gear may be present
- 2 Photograph Fishing Gear**
 - Buoys (and other gear if present)
 - Lines on the body
 - Netting if present
 - Other gear if present
 - Tags (color, numbers, and letters if present)
 - Trailing lines including the distance from the whale
 - Line Markings - colored sections of line if present
- 3 Submit the photos and identifying information**

Email photographs to wcr.entanglement@noaa.gov. Underwater documentation can also be obtained but only by trained large whale entanglement responders.

Camera Specifics
A high quality camera (Single Lens Reflex (SLR) for example) is ideal to document an entangled whale as it results in higher resolution. A cell phone can also be used if that is the only option.

Entangled whales are unpredictable and dangerous.
Keep a safe distance. Do not approach the whale.
Watch for lines in the water that may entangle your boat.

Learn more about the West Coast Large Whale Entanglement Response Program:
www.fisheries.noaa.gov/west-coast/marine-mammal-protection/west-coast-large-whale-entanglement-response-program