

# GOOD PRACTICE GUIDE FOR FISHERS: reporting and disentangling large marine animals caught in creel gear



SCOTTISH  
ENTANGLEMENT  
ALLIANCE

## Encountering an entanglement

SEA are working together with fishers to identify ways to reduce entanglements without threatening livelihoods.

Marine animal entanglements can have significant impacts to both the animals and fishermen involved. Documentation is key to prevention and so it is important that every Incident is reported.

If you encounter an animal entangled in your fishing gear please report this, even if the animal is dead. This information not only improves our understanding of entanglements, but valuable data can be obtained from each incident about the health of both the species involved and the wider marine environment.

Any information you choose to share will be treated sensitively, positively and confidentially.

### TO REPORT AN ENTANGLED ANIMAL OR FOR ADVICE AND ASSISTANCE

PLEASE CALL THE  
**SCOTTISH ENTANGLEMENT ALLIANCE (SEA)**  
PARTNERS ON:  
**07746 634757**

OR CONTACT HM COASTGUARD ON:  
**VHF CH. 16**

## What will happen when you report an entanglement?

**You will be asked for details including:**



Date and time found.



Location.



Description of the animal  
and if its alive or dead.



Description of the  
entanglement configuration.



Photos and/or video  
of the incident.



If you require any  
assistance.

We can dispatch a trained disentanglement team to assist you if required, and may be able to put you in contact with other fishers in your area who have undertaken specialised disentanglement training.

[www.scottishentanglement.org](http://www.scottishentanglement.org)

## Disentangling an animal

We strongly advise against attempting to disentangle a live animal yourself without first seeking advice. However if you choose to do so please consider the following key points:

- Your safety and that of your crew and boat is paramount. Help is available.

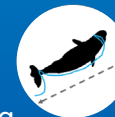
- **DO NOT** get into the water. These are wild animals and can be very dangerous and un-predictable.



- **DO NOT** approach the animal directly from behind or head on, and keep noise to a minimum to prevent any further distress.



- Assess the entanglement and identify where and how the animal is caught e.g. around the tail and/or fins, through the mouth etc., before cutting any gear.



- Disentangle from head to tail, cutting any anchoring lines last.
- Ensure all gear is removed from the animal and retrieved.
- **If in any doubt, call for assistance.**
- Report the incident to the **Scottish Entanglement Alliance (SEA)**.

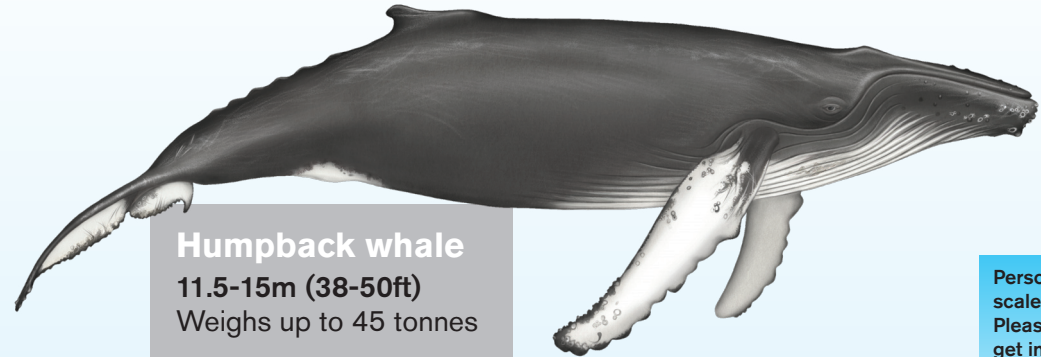
# Species most likely to be encountered entangled in Scottish waters



## Basking shark

6.7-8.8m (22-29ft)

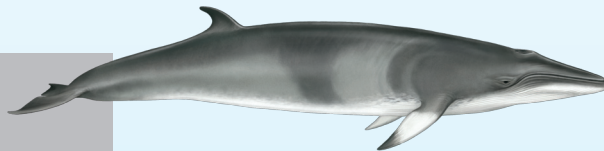
Weighs up to 1.9 tonnes



## Humpback whale

11.5-15m (38-50ft)

Weighs up to 45 tonnes



## Minke whale

7-8.5m (23-28ft)

Weighs up to 10 tonnes

## Leatherback turtle

Up to 2m (6.5ft)

Weighs up to 0.6 tonnes



Illustrations © WDC/Lucy Molleson

Person for scale only. Please DO NOT get in to the water with an entangled animal.



## Common misconceptions:

### 1 The animal is in immediate danger

If they can reach the surface to breathe, whales and other large marine wildlife can survive for several hours or even days entangled.

### 2 Cutting as much as possible is better than nothing

Entanglements can have lasting impacts on an animal's ability to swim, feed and reproduce, and a single line left on the animal can still lead to death.

### 3 Whales are gentle giants

Whales and other large marine wildlife are unpredictable and you should never assume that they know you are there to help

**Useful kit to have on board:** Boat hook; bait knife; grapple; spare buoys, rope and weights; binoculars; phone camera; dive mask.

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Any information you share will be treated sensitively, positively and confidentially. New mandatory requirements for commercial fishers to report marine mammal bycatch and entanglement to the Marine Management Organisation (MMO) have recently been introduced.

For more information please visit <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/marine-mammal-bycatch-reporting-requirements>

This guide was developed by the **Scottish Entanglement Alliance (SEA)**, a partnership which aims to better understand interactions between large marine animals and static fishing gear, support fishermen to mitigate these risks, and promote responsible fishing practises in Scottish inshore waters.

For more information please visit [www.scottishentanglement.org](http://www.scottishentanglement.org)