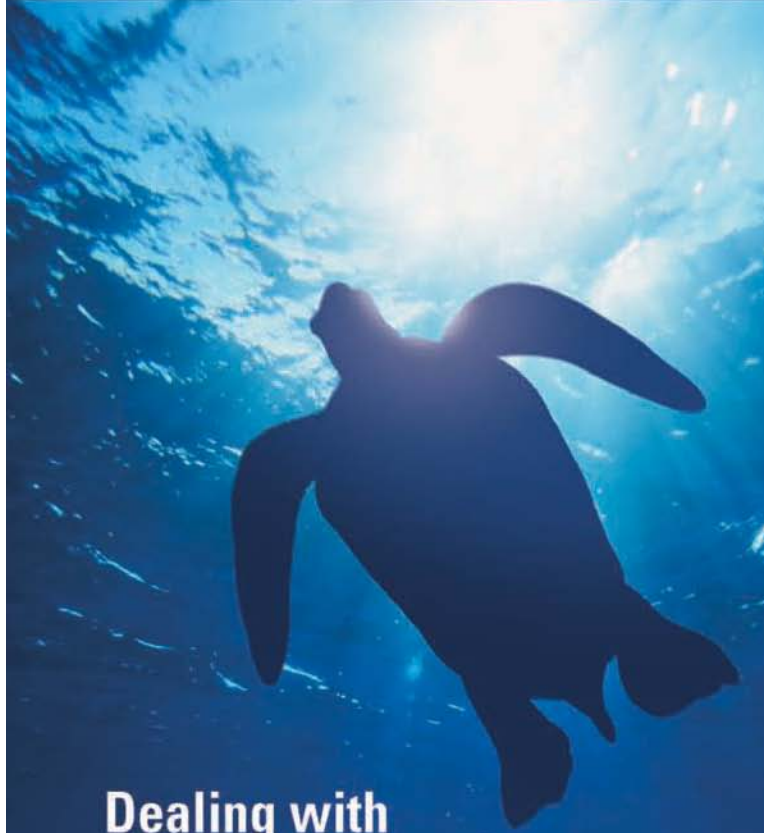




Fisheries and Oceans
Canada

Pêches et Océans
Canada



**Dealing with
Leatherback
Turtle Entanglements
in Newfoundland
and Labrador**



Canada

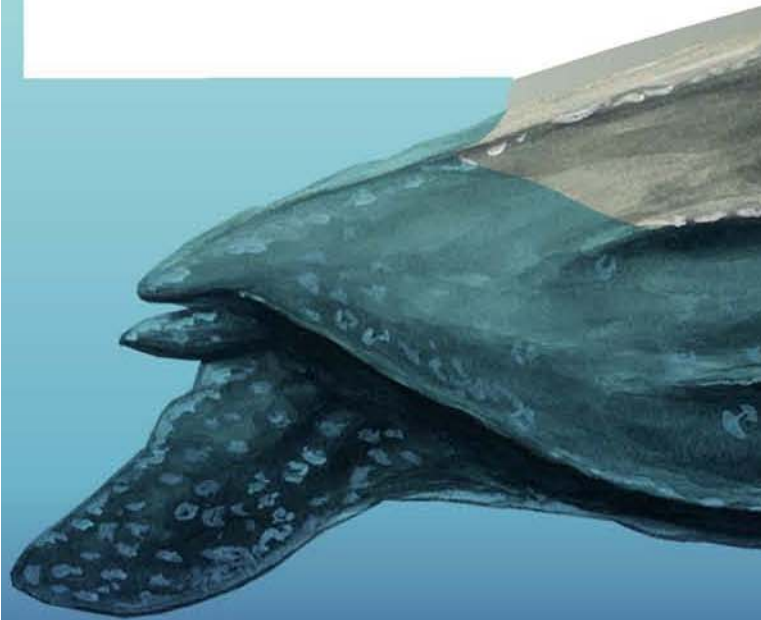
The leatherback turtle is one of the world's largest reptiles. They are powerful and efficient swimmers that can cover enormous distances.

In Newfoundland and Labrador's coastal waters, leatherback turtles can be seen during the summer and early fall as they swim close to the surface to feed on jelly fish. Most sightings occur in southern Newfoundland.

Since 2003, leatherback turtles in Canada have been designated as an endangered species under the national Species at Risk Act. The Act protects leatherback turtles by making it illegal to kill, harass, capture or harm them in any way. The law also forbids anyone to possess a turtle - or any part of one - whether dead or alive.

In Canadian waters, incidental catches in fishing gear are the main cause of mortality for leatherback turtles. Once entangled in fishing gear, in ropes or other floating debris, they can have trouble swimming or feeding, or they can become incapable of surfacing to breathe. While many fish harvesters are careful to release trapped leatherbacks, some turtles drown before help arrives, while others suffer injuries that may kill them even after release.

In Newfoundland and Labrador, an organization called Tangly Whales works with the DFO National Marine Mammal Response Program to document incidences of entangled marine mammals and leatherback turtles, and assists with their release when possible. Tangly Whales provides a 24/7 telephone hotline service and can be reached at 1-888-895-3003.



The Newfoundland and Labrador Regional Office of Fisheries and Oceans Canada (DFO) also tracks sightings of marine mammals and leatherback turtles. Dr. Jack Lawson is our research scientist specialist and can be reached by e-mail: whalesighting@dfo-mpo.gc.ca



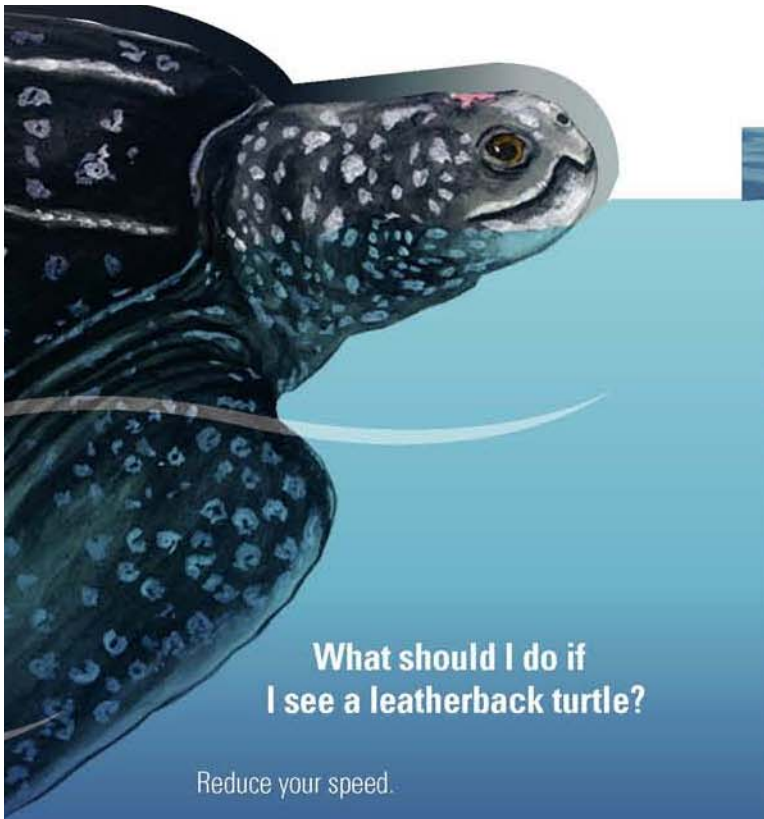


What should I do if I encounter or entangle a leatherback turtle?

If you encounter a leatherback turtle in your fishing gear, determine how it is entangled and clear the ropes or other materials from the animal as quickly as possible.

Do not tow the leatherback turtle, and try to release it without any gear attached.

If you can not release the turtle, please call 1-888-895-3003 for help from Tangly Whales.



What should I do if I see a leatherback turtle?

Reduce your speed.

Call your local DFO office and let us know the date, time and location of the leatherback turtle.

Take photographs or video.

Email this information to Dr. Jack Lawson,
Research Scientist, at Fisheries and Oceans Canada
(Newfoundland and Labrador Region):

whalesighting@dfo-mpo.gc.ca

For more information about leatherback turtles:

www.dfo-mpo.gc.ca

Search "leatherback turtles" under Aquatic Species
at Risk and/or Underwater World Publications.

For more information about Tangly Whales:

www.newfoundlandwhales.net