



Pêches et Océans
Canada

Fisheries and Oceans
Canada

MARINE MAMMAL RESPONSE PROGRAM

Incident Report for 2018



Canada

Marine Mammal Response Program: Incident Report for 2018 January-December

Overview

Between January and December 2018, there were a total of **1,360** reported incidents involving over **1,778** animals. Of the total number of incidents reported there were **937** responses. Of the total number of incidents reported, **354** were incidents involving Species At Risk Act (SARA) species (**79** incidents were listed as an unknown species; therefore, the number of incidents involving SARA species could be higher). Out of the **354** incidents reported involving SARA species, **287** of those incidents were responded to.

The types of incidents included: entanglements, close vessel approaches, harassment, collisions, live strandings, injured / sick, sightings / free swimming, dead (beached and floating), distress, shooting, and animals interacting with the public.

The types of responses included: freeing entangled whales and pinnipeds, collecting samples and performing necropsies on dead animals, reuniting stranded animals with their pods, responding to harassment calls, refloating live beached animals, monitoring sick animals, monitoring close approaches by vessels, and warming cold stunned sea turtles.

Of all the incidents reported and responded to, a few have been highlighted by our response partners:

- On August 20 2018, an entangled North Atlantic Right Whale, individual 3960, was reported by the New England Aquarium (NEAq) in the Gulf of St. Lawrence approximately 30 miles East of Miscou. Campobello Whale Rescue was contacted and Conservation and Protection (C&P) made plans to have an aircraft in the area. The NEAq team stood by the whale all evening and the whale eventually (after much thrashing around) was observed suddenly swimming off at approximately 8 knots. The NEAq team believe it is likely the whale was able to disentangle itself, due to its increased speed. The whale is a 9 year old male who was previously observed gear free during the 2018 season. This whale was resighted in 2019 off Cape Cod with no apparent gear.
- In the Newfoundland and Labrador Region, a Minke whale was entangled in a salmon gillnet that is used to capture fish that escape from salmon aquaculture farms. Most of the gear was removed and the whale was sighted moving out into the bay.
- The Department of Fisheries Oceans (DFO) and the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) responded to an emaciated and ailing three year-old killer whale (born December 2014) J50, also known as Scarlet, of the critically endangered Southern Resident population. J50 was treated with antibiotic and anti-parasitic treatment. Unfortunately, J50 has not been sighted since mid-September 2018 and is presumed dead.
- J35, an adult female Southern Resident killer whale also known as Tahlequah, carried her dead calf for 17 days. DFO and NOAA monitored her condition over this time and were unable to retrieve the calf for examination.
- The Marine Animal Research Society (MARS) received a report on October 7th of a solitary beluga near Beach Point, PEI. It was approaching and following boats but there was no indication that it was in distress or injured. This incident was monitored as social belugas can become habitually attracted to people and boats increasing their risk of harm.

Incident Numbers by Region

Please Note: Often incidents reported are for sightings of animals (no response required but information is collected) and/or are repeat reports for the same incident (each call that comes in is recorded to show the level of activity of the hotlines) which is why the number of responses is different from the number of reports received.

Pacific:

There were a total of **631** incidents reported and **599** responses performed. Of those, **243** were for SARA listed species.

Quebec:

There were a total of **295** incidents reported and **155** responses performed. Of the responses performed, **15** were for SARA listed species.

Gulf:

There were a total of **126** incidents reported and **55** responses performed. Of the responses performed, **9** were for SARA listed species.

Maritimes:

There were a total of **263** incidents reported and **107** responses performed. Of the responses performed, **9** were for SARA listed species.

Newfoundland & Labrador:

There were a total of **45** incidents reported and **21** responses performed. Of the responses performed, **11** were for SARA listed species.