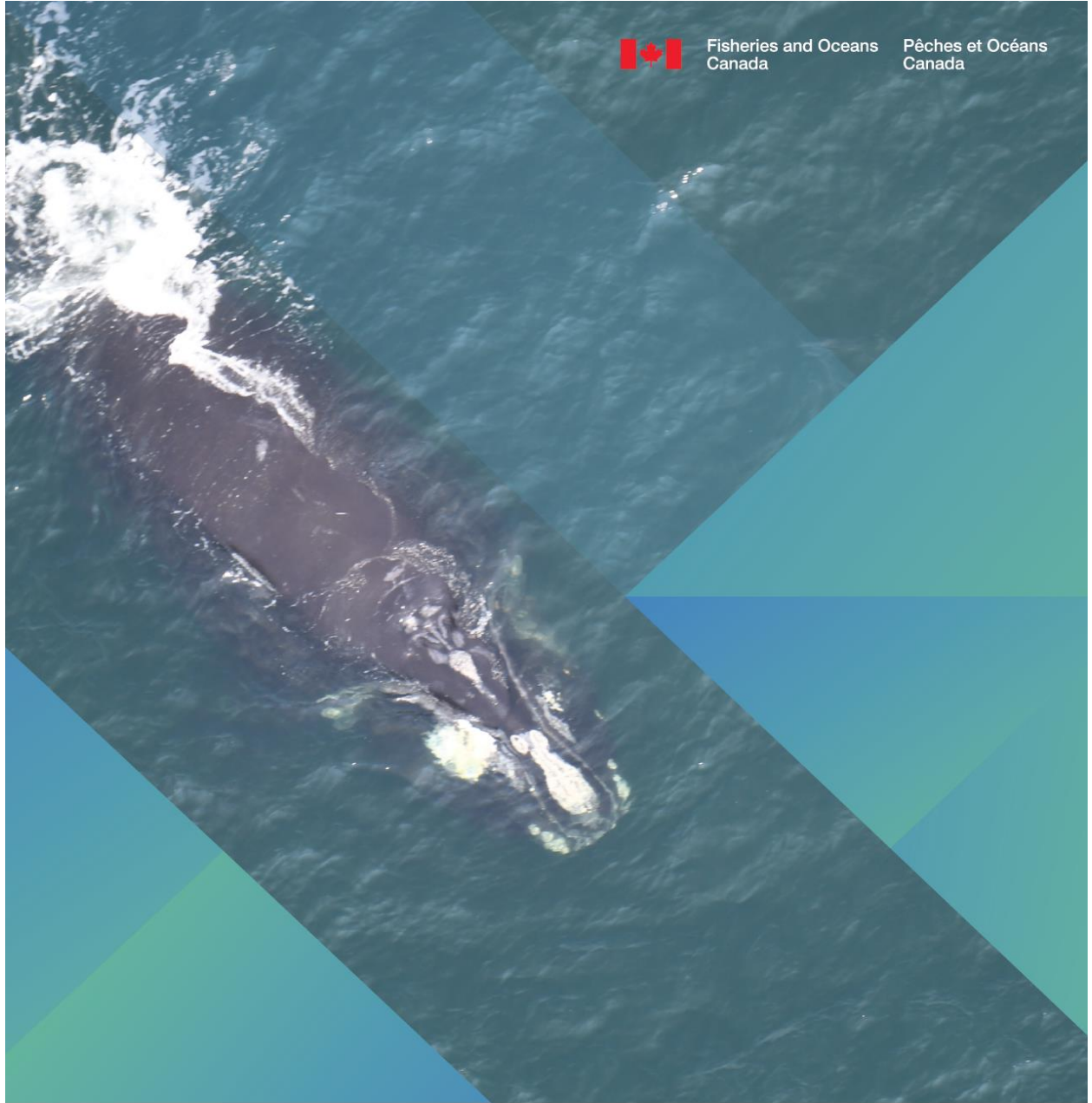




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Recovered Gear Analysis of North Atlantic Right Whale Nimbus Eg #3812

Photo Credit: DFO Science Aerial Survey Team

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Gear Recovered from North Atlantic Right Whale Nimbus Eg #3812

Executive summary

Georgia Department of Natural Resources response team removed gear from Nimbus Eg #3812, a 15-year-old male, approximately 13 miles east of Jekyll Island, Georgia, on January 20, 2023 (Figs. 1-2). Analysis of recovered gear was jointly undertaken by DFO and U.S. National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) on April 18, 2023. Three occurrences of interlaced segments of orange and yellow twines existed on the same section of rope along the length of the recovered rope. This is consistent with Canadian Snow Crab Fishing Area 12 coloured gear markings for buoy lines and does not match any US gear markings.

Conclusion of gear origin: Canadian Snow Crab Area 12 (southern Gulf of St. Lawrence).

Event details

- **ID and/or Date:** January 20, 2023
- **Event type** (stranding, death, disentanglement): Disentanglement in U.S. waters
- **Species:** North Atlantic right whale
- **Last seen gear free:** August 8, 2022 in the Gulf of St. Lawrence.
- **Status:** Partial disentanglement on January 20, 2023. Observed gear free on March 10, 2023 by New England Aquarium aerial survey team.
- **Conclusion of gear origin:** Canadian Snow Crab Area 12 (southern Gulf of St. Lawrence).
- **Active or ghost gear:** CFA 12 fishing season spans April to June. The sighting of Nimbus gear free on August 8, 2022 in the Gulf of St. Lawrence implies the entanglement occurred in lost, discarded or abandoned fishing gear that may have been in the water since 2020.
- **Harvester submitted lost gear report:** No identifying information found on gear but lost gear reports have been submitted for CFA 12.

Recovered gear

- **Buoys:** None
- **Traps:** None
- **Buoy line:** Greater than 90 m of rope (Fig. 3) comprised of straw coloured sink (negatively buoyant) and float (positively buoyant) rope with the float rope connected to a section with knots and two short lengths of rope. The beaded lead sink rope with black tracer had diameter 5/8 inch and the float rope with red tracer had diameter 11/16 inch. The transition between sink and float rope was uniform and was made during manufacturing as there was no splice (Fig. 4). Light green 3/4-inch float rope made up the knotted section and two short rope lengths with frayed ends (Fig. 5) presumably comprising the trap bridle and connecting rope.

- **Line markings:** Three occurrences of interlaced segments of orange and yellow coloured twines on the same section of rope exist along the length of the buoy line (Figs. 6-8). The orange twine was of a different construct than the yellow twine, being thicker and circular in diameter compared to the flattened yellow twine. These markings ranged from 15-30 cm in length and were in various states of unravelling and fraying. One was approximately 37m up from the bridle, followed by another 24m later and the last one was 27m after that. A single occurrence of interlaced green twine was present approximately 10 m from the bridle section and possibly acted as a gear alert marker. This notifies the crew during hauling that the emerging trap is not far from surfacing. DFO Eastern Canada Mandatory Colour Scheme has CFA 12 identified as yellow and orange. Other than the isolated green gear alert marker, there was no third colour of twine, which in some other CFAs is required on the section of rope immediately adjacent to the first two colours.

Contact with harvester

No identifying information found on gear but lost gear reports have been submitted for CFA 12.

Related information

- [DFO Eastern Canada Mandatory Colour Scheme for non-tended, fixed gear fisheries](#)
- [NOAA Gear Marking for Northeast Lobster/Jonah Crab Trap Pots](#)
- [NOAA 2023 Gear Analysis Report on Nimbus](#)

Photos of inspected gear



Fig. 1. Gear removed from Nimbus on January 23, 2023, including a knotted section with two short frayed lengths of rope. Photo credit: Georgia Department of Natural Resources



Fig. 2. Orange and yellow twines interlaced along the same section of rope. Photo credit: Georgia Department of Natural Resources



Fig. 3. Gear removed from Nimbus laid out in the NOAA Gear Warehouse in Narragansett, Rhode Island on April 18, 2023.



Fig. 4. Transition from float to sink rope, no occurrence of a splice.



Fig. 5. Knotted section with two short sections of frayed 3/4-inch rope connected to float rope.



Fig. 6. First occurrence of orange and yellow twines interlaced on the same section of rope.



Fig. 7. Second occurrence of orange and yellow twines interlaced along the same section of rope.



Fig. 8. Third occurrence of orange and yellow twines interlaced along the same section of rope.