

Reducing the risk of entanglement in creel ropes for marine animals



Background to this project:

The organisations involved in preparing this booklet are working together to find ways to reduce the risk of large marine animals becoming entangled in creels. This work was initiated by SCFF and our aim is to work closely with fishermen to raise awareness, improve our understanding of the issues and develop practical solutions.

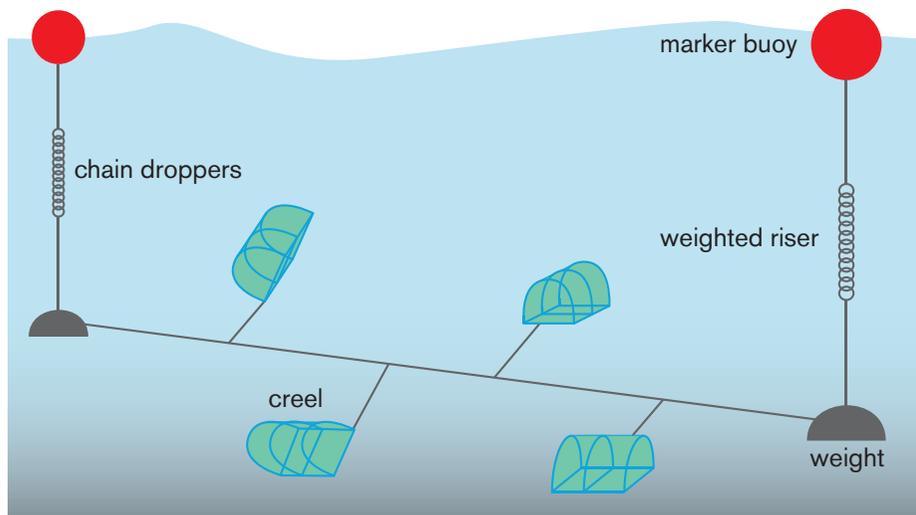
This booklet is the first step towards achieving these goals.

More information on entanglement and strandings can be found at: www.strandings.org or www.bdmlr.org.uk

This best practice guide is supported by:



Set-up to reduce the risk of entanglement



Setting Creels

- 1 **Set riser length** to water depth (suggested set-up in picture above)
- 2 Use a **weighted rope** on the riser
- 3 **Minimise** soak time
- 4 Only set creels when **actively fishing**
- 5 Immediately report **all** incidents of entanglement (phone numbers on back)

***Aim:** To reduce excess rope in the water column to minimise the risk of entanglement in riser line.*

Encountering an entanglement:

- Remember your own safety when approaching a wild animal. Large whales are extremely powerful and very unpredictable. **NEVER** get into the water
- Look for buoys and lines, moving or unusually clumped near an animal
- Seek advice from BDMLR before attempting a rescue. Cutting an animal free could result in partial disentanglement that may put the animal at risk in the longer-term

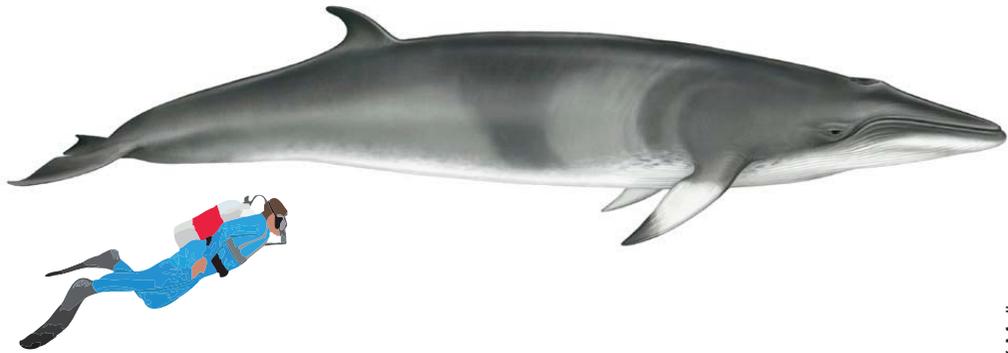
Aim: Report all entanglements to improve knowledge and influence future guidance

Key information to relay and record:

- **Take photos** wherever possible (remember your phone has a camera)
- **Location** of animal: record coordinates
- **Description:** species, size, injuries, presence of tags
- **Condition:** alive, mobile, injured, inactive, if dead is it fresh or decomposing

Aim: To pass on as much information about the animal as possible to aid rescue or improve knowledge and guidance.

Minke whale



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Minke whale

Size

Length: 7-8.5m (23-28ft)

Weight: Up to 9 metric tons (10t)

Behaviours

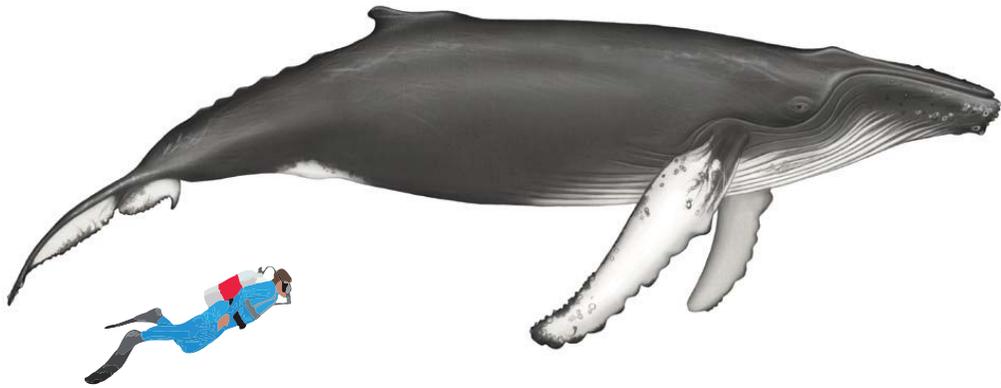
Feed on wide variety of fish (herring, cod and sandeels)

Can be seen at surface feeding beneath flocks of seabirds

Dive times are typically 10 minutes

Usually does not produce a visible blow

Humpback whale



© WDC/LUCY Mollison

Humpback whale

Size

Length: 11.5-15m (38-50ft)

Weight: 23-40 metric tons (25-45t)

Behaviours

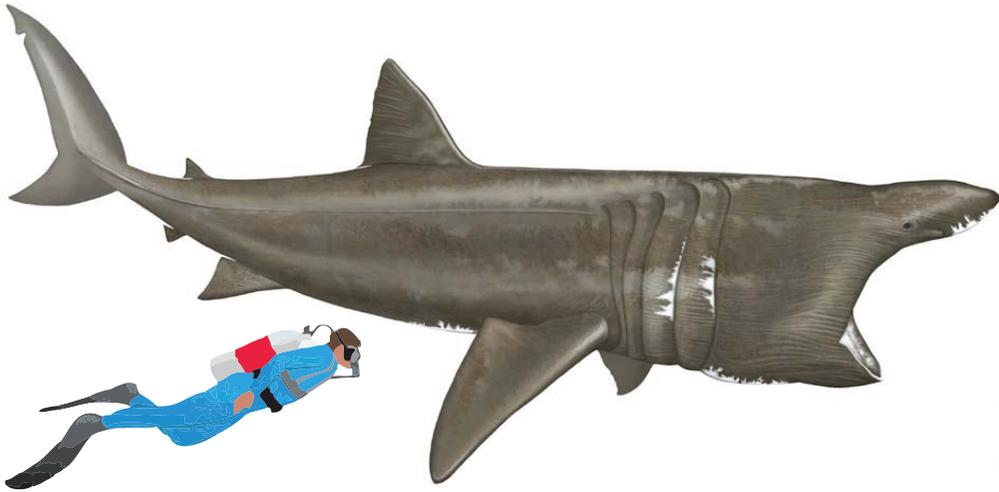
Feeds on young schooling fish such as sandeels, herring and mackerel

Often seen lunge feeding

Dive times are typically around 5 minutes

Typically raises tail (fluke) when diving

Basking shark



©WDC/LUCY Mollison

Basking shark

Size

Length: 6.7 to 8.8m (22-29ft)

Weight: c. 2 metric tons (1.9t)

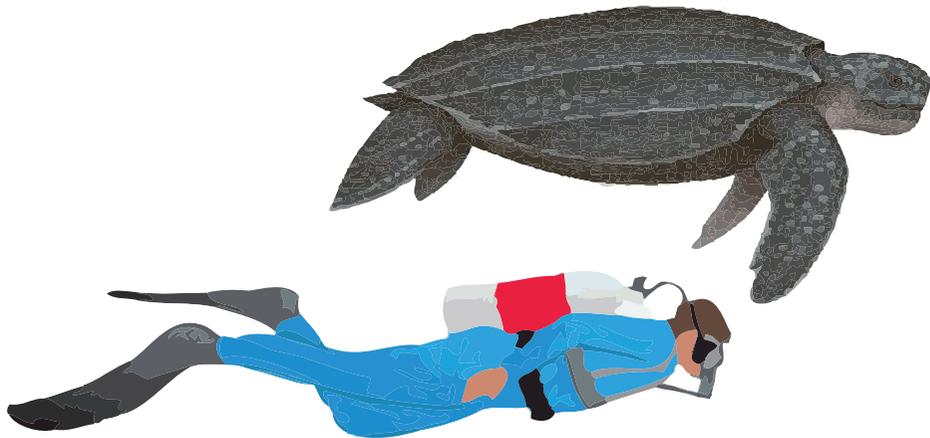
Behaviours

Feeds on zooplankton (small copepods, fish eggs, larvae)

Feeds by swimming with mouth open

Dorsal fin and tail fin can protrude from the water, can look like two sharks following each other

Leatherback turtle



Leatherback turtle

Size

Length: up to 2m (6.5ft)

Weight: up to 600kg (1320 lbs)

Behaviours

Feeds on jellyfish

Summer visitor to Scottish waters

Commonly seen at the surface,
and can look like an upturned saucer.

Head protrudes from the water

Reporting entanglements:

For **live** animals contact

British Divers Marine Life Rescue **01825 765546**

Outside office hours **07787 433412**

or **HM Coast Guard: VHF ch. 16**

For **dead** animals report to

Scottish Marine Animal Stranding Scheme **01463 243030**

Outside office hours **07979 245893**

or **strandings@sruc.ac.uk**