



British Divers Marine Life Rescue Large Whale Entanglement Awareness

BDMLR Emergency Hotline: 01825 765546
(Out of Office hours: 07787 433412)
HM Coast Guard: VHF Ch. 16

Whales can become accidentally entangled in fishing gear and other man made materials. While this type of incident is rare and often not immediately fatal to the animal in question, these entanglements can hinder the recovery of endangered whale populations. British Divers Marine Life Rescue - Large Whale Disentanglement Team (BDMLR-LWDT) has been trained in large whale disentanglement techniques by the Provincetown Centre for Coastal Studies (PCCS) in the United States of America. BDMLR is the only organisation in Europe that is trained and experienced in disentangling large whales, and holds the only set of large whale disentanglement rescue equipment in Europe. It is vital that any entangled whales are reported immediately to BDMLR or HMCG to protect these critically endangered whale populations.

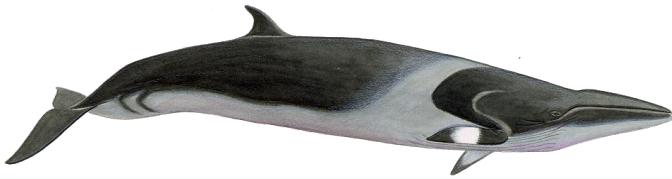
What to look for, what to do (and not do) and what to expect:

- Look for Buoys and lines, moving or unusually clumped near a whale.
- Determine what species of whale is involved (see reverse). Do not approach the whale, stay at least 400m distance from the whale.
- Call **01825 765546** or relay through **HMCG (VHF Ch. 16)** if whale is entangled.
- Please provide the following information: Position, Species (or best description), behaviour, description of gear and entanglement and your contact details.
- You may be requested to stand by the whale or help track it on a voluntary basis.
- A vessel or aircraft will be despatched to assess the situation, transport the LWDT and stand by if required.
- The LWDT may attach a satellite telemetry buoy and VHF transmitter to locate the whale for future rescue attempts, if a disentanglement cannot be conducted immediately due to sea state, weather & light conditions or availability of correct resources.
- **Do not attempt to disentangle the whale yourself.** Initial instincts to cut the whale free can actually make it more difficult for the LWDT to locate the animal and carry out an effective rescue. Removal of large amounts of gear can make it almost impossible for the LWDT to capture the animal if free swimming. **Entering the water with an entangled whale is extremely dangerous and must never be attempted under any circumstances.**
- Remember that large whales are extremely powerful and very unpredictable, especially if they feel threatened or are frightened by your presence

KEEP THIS NOTICE ON YOUR BOAT !

Species at risk of entanglement likely to be encountered in UK waters

Minke Whale (Up to 8.5m in length, weighing up to 8 tonnes)



Features: Sickle Shaped dorsal fin, white bands on flippers, no visible breath spout, rarely lifts it's tail.

Distribution: Pelagic species but can be found in all UK waters, often close to shore.

Humpback Whale (Up to 16m in length, weighing up to 37 tonnes)



Features: Mostly black with long white flippers, bumps on head and distinctive variably sized dorsal fin. Usually lifts large V-shaped tail when diving. Distinctive black & white pattern underneath.

Distribution: Pelagic species but can be found in all UK waters.

Sei Whale (Up to 19.5m in length, weighing up to 28 tonnes)



Features: Greyish, sleek whale, with tall curved dorsal fin. Often confused for a Fin whale. Has darker underside and throat grooves than a Fin whale.

Distribution: Pelagic species but can be found in all UK waters.

Fin Whale (Up to 27.3m in length, weighing up to 74 tonnes)



Features: Greyish/black, sleek whale, with tall curved dorsal fin. head lighter on right side, rarely lifts tail. Distinctive white underside and throat grooves.

Distribution: Pelagic species, mainly found on the South & West coast of Britain, but occasionally spotted in North Sea.