



Poster 245:

Stranded cetaceans provide an evidence of ongoing interactions with fisheries in Galician waters

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Bycatch is the most reported anthropogenic threat for cetaceans worldwide. Although some observer programmes could suggest a sustainable situation regarding interaction with cetacean species in European waters, some estimates based on strandings highlight a very concerning situation, at least for common dolphin (*Delphinus delphis*) and harbour porpoise (*Phocoena phocoena*). Galicia is located at the Northwest of Spain, and holds one of the major fishery fleets of Europe, with up to 4,000 boats. Of them, 93% practice minor or artisanal fishery, which officially reports low interaction rates. However, almost 500 boats use extractive fishing nets, such as trawls and longlines. With almost 1,500 km of coast, Galician is the scenario of more than 220 cetacean strandings yearly. The aim of this study is to approach the prevalence of bycatch in different cetacean species due to external evidences on stranded cetaceans. For that, we retrospectively review the stranding reports and photographs of stranded cetaceans with conservation codes 1-3 in the last thirty-two years [1990-2021]. Thus, 2,367 cetaceans of 12 species were included, an average of 74 individuals per year. At least, 41.4% of the studied cetaceans presented lesions compatible with bycatch (i.e., skin cuts, net impressions, amputations of the dorsal fin, caudal flukes or peduncle). Regarding species, we found evidences of fishery interactions on 50.6% of studied common dolphins, 39.0% of Risso's dolphins (*Grampus griseus*), 38.2% harbour porpoises, and 26.9% of the bottlenose dolphins (*Tursiops truncatus*). These numbers could be higher, as external lesions are not always present in bycaught cases. At least, 14 minke whales (*Balaenoptera acutorostrata*), 2 humpback whales (*Megaptera novaeangliae*), 1 Blainville's beaked whale (*Mesoplodon densirostris*), and 1 True's beaked whale (*Mesoplodon mirus*) presented evidences of chronic entanglements. In conclusion, long-term series of strandings data indicates the persistence of these fatal encounters in Galician waters.