



Poster 244:

**Anatomopathological findings on harbour porpoises (*Phocoena phocoena*)
stranded in Galician coast, NW, Spain**

Xabier Pin¹, Raquel Puig^{1,2,4}, Alfredo López^{1,3}, Pablo Covelo¹, Uxia Vázquez¹, Mónica González¹, Jose Martínez¹, Manuel Arbelo³, Eva Sierra³, Antonio Fernández³

1. CEMMA (Coordinadora para o Estudo dos Mamíferos Mariños)
2. Centro Atlántico de Investigación de Cetáceos, Instituto Universitario de Sanidad Animal y Seguridad Alimentaria (TUSA), Universidad de Las Palmas de Gran Canaria (ULPGC)
3. Instituto Universitario de Sanidad Animal y Seguridad Alimentaria (TUSA), Universidad de Las Palmas de Gran Canaria (ULPGC)
4. Instituto de Investigaciones Marinas (IIM-CSIC)
5. Departamento Biología/CESAM, Universidad de Aveiro

» japipin@yahoo.es

The coast of Galicia constitutes one of the areas with the greatest biodiversity in the North Atlantic Ocean. The local population of harbour porpoise (*Phocoena phocoena*) belongs to the meridionalis ecotype, proposed as a new subspecies with their own genetic identity. According to ICES this population constitutes a Management Unit. It is classified as "Endangered" by the Spanish legislation. Recent studies on dynamics of Iberian harbour porpoise indicate a possible short term collapse within the next 20 years. In order to determine the pathological findings and the possible cause of death of this sensitive population in Galician waters, stranded harbour porpoises has been studied for more than thirty years (1990-2021). In this period, 144 were necropsied following standardized protocols. In order to have a wide view of the sanitary condition of the population, individuals of both sexes and all the physical development categories were included. Macroscopically, bycatch related lesions were detected in 38,3% (55/144) of the studied animals (i.e., skin cuts and impressions producing by fishing nets, amputations, tracheal edema, emphysematous lungs, multifocal haemorrhages, fresh prey in stomach, lymph on thoracic duct, intravascular bubbles on blood and lymphatic vessels). Parasitic bronchopneumonia with intralesional nematodes was a common finding. In addition, some individuals presents lesions related with live stranding (i.e. skin abrasions, acute skeletal and myocardial muscular fibre degeneration), and interspecific traumatic event (i.e., rake marks, hematomas). Due to advance decomposition status of individuals, only samples of 15 individuals were suitable to carry out histopathological studies. Histopathological analyses were carried out in blind trial. Microscopic examination of the samples allow us to confirm macroscopical findings, the presence of other pathological process, and to better understand the sanitary status of the individuals. Specifically in cases suspicious of bycatch, histological examination was crucial to exclude other possible pathology responsible of the stranding.