

GOOD PRACTICE GUIDE FOR THE RELEASE OF CETACEANS CAUGHT INCIDENTALLY IN THE BLACK SEA



MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE AND FOOD

Animal release



IN GILL NETS

1. Turn off the engine and stabilize the vessel;
2. Carefully lift the net section where the animal is situated. If possible, pass two ropes (one in front of and one behind the cetacean's body). Leave the net slightly slack and use the ropes to slowly bring the dolphin closer to the vessel;
3. **First, free the animal's head and blowhole to allow it to breathe;**
4. Use an appropriate tool to cut and remove the net surrounding the body – do not pull;
5. **Take care not to cause skin damage;**
6. **Keep the body supported in the water;**
7. If the animal is in shock, cover it with a wet cloth (avoiding the blowhole);
8. **Release carefully**, if possible by slipping the body into the water, taking care not to injure it. Do not throw it!



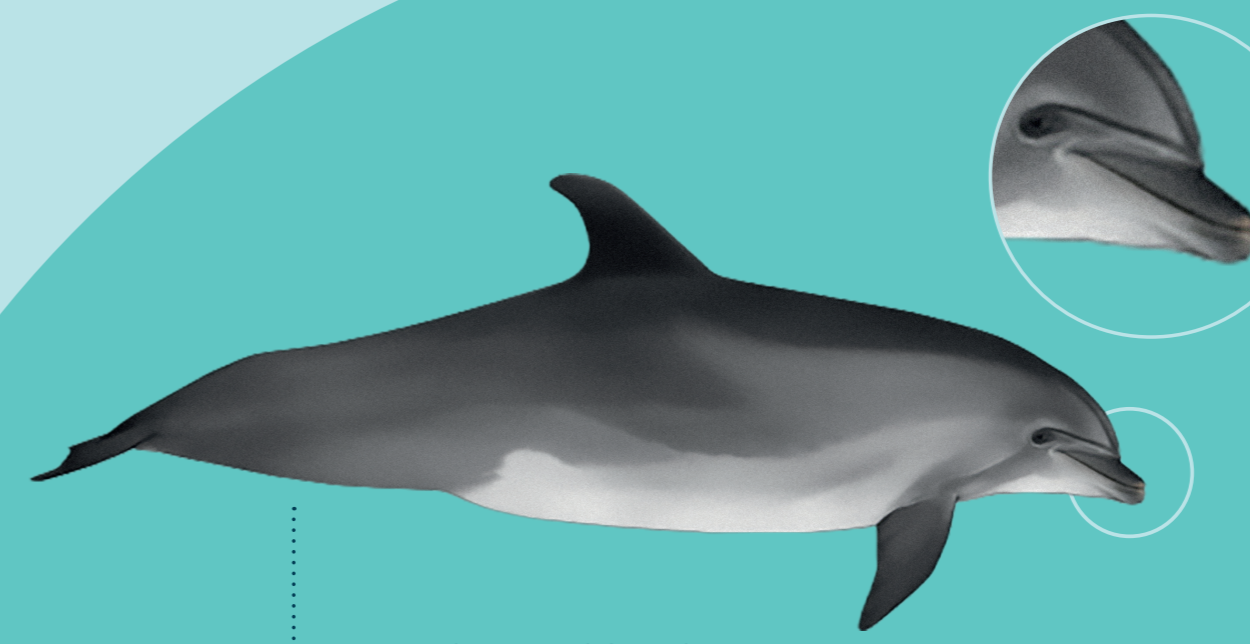
IN TRAWL FISHERIES

1. Stop trawling and locate the animal;
2. If the animal is inside the codend, open it from the bottom;
3. **Cut the net locally – without pulling or dragging** (avoid causing injuries);
4. Place the animal in the water and observe its behaviour;
5. Wait a few minutes for the animal to start moving on its own. Then, whatever its condition (active swimming, limited mobility, etc.), it should be released in accordance with national legislation.

IN DALYAN STATIC NETS

1. Remain calm and give the animal some time to get used to the situation;
2. **Make an exit** by lifting or loosening the net;
3. Do not block or obstruct its escape route;
4. Gently guide the animal without chasing it;
5. If it does not exit, loosen the net further;
6. Wait for 1–2 minutes – it often exits on its own;
7. **Do not bring the animal on board unless it is entangled.**

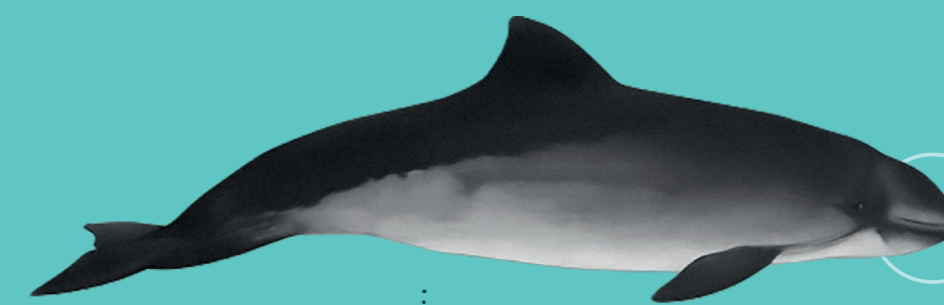
Cetacean species in the Black Sea



BOTTLENOSE DOLPHIN
Tursiops truncatus ponticus
Body Length from 1,9 m to 2,5 m (max. 3,3 m)



COMMON DOLPHIN
Delphinus delphis ponticus
Body Length from 1,5 m to 1,8 m (max. 2,2 m)



HARBOUR PORPOISE
Phocoena phocoena relicta
Body Length from 1,3 m to 1,5 m (max. 1,6 m)



Actions to avoid

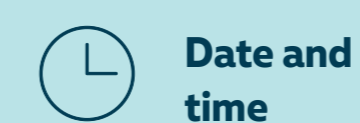
- × **DO NOT grab the animal by its tail or fins.** This can cause serious injuries;
- × **DO NOT pull the animal forcefully out of the net.** Risk of internal injuries
- × **DO NOT use hooks, ropes or metal tools.** They may cut or further entangle the animal. Ropes may only be used as an auxiliary tool in releasing from gillnets;
- × **DO NOT block the blowhole.** This is the animal's only way to breathe;
- × **DO NOT leave the animal exposed to direct sunlight or out of the water, and do not use flash photography unless absolutely necessary.** This causes severe stress;
- × **DO NOT cut the net aggressively.** Work carefully to avoid injuries;
- × **DO NOT forget to record any bycatch of marine mammals in your fishing logbook.**



Reporting Incidental Catches

- In every case of bycatch, regardless of whether the animal is released alive or dead;
- Every cetacean bycatch must be recorded in the fishing logbook;
- When a dead animal is found at sea or on the shore;
- In cases of injury, vessel strike, or a stranded animal on the beach.

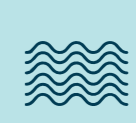
INFORMATION TO REPORT



Date and time



Location (GPS coordinates)



Depth (if possible)



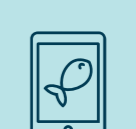
Type of fishing gear



Species (if possible)



Condition of the animal (if possible)



Photos and short description (if possible)

Contacts



Executive Agency for Fisheries and Aquaculture (EAFA) 112 or signal@iara.government.bg

Ministry of Environment and Water (MoEW) +359 2 940 6000 +359 2 940 6128

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Executive Agency „Maritime Administration“ (EAMA) 0700 10 112

Single European Emergency Number 112



IMPORTANT!

Incidental catch is **NOT** considered an infringement but must be recorded and reported!

Acknowledgement

This publication uses and adapts materials from FAO, GFCM and ACCOBAMS for educational and informational purposes.

The content is primarily based on the Good practice guide for the handling of cetaceans caught incidentally in Mediterranean fisheries (FAO & ACCOBAMS, 2018)* and on materials developed under the CetaByM project.

We thank the General Fisheries Commission for the Mediterranean (GFCM), including the BlackSea4Fish Project and the GFCM Black Sea Technical Unit, for their guidance and technical support.

The views expressed do not necessarily reflect the positions of FAO, GFCM or ACCOBAMS.

References: *FAO & ACCOBAMS, 2018. Good practice guide for the handling of cetaceans caught incidentally in Mediterranean fisheries. Rome. <https://openknowledge.fao.org/handle/2050.0014283/ca0015en>

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