

Key outputs from WGMME 2019 relating to common dolphins

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Strandings and bycatch in Bay of Biscay

February–March 2017: mass stranding event of 793 cetaceans on French Atlantic coast. 84% were common dolphins.

Using reverse drift modelling, two main mortality areas were identified with strongly positive links to French midwater pair trawlers, Spanish otter bottom trawlers and French Danish seiners targeting hake and sea bass.

3,690 common dolphins (95% CI = 2,230-6,900) were estimated to have died in total.

The numbers of stranded bycaught animals recorded indicates that a dedicated bycatch observer/Remote Electronic Monitoring programme is required for relevant fisheries.

Portugal's SafeSea and Life+ MarPro projects



Systematic annual aerial surveys began in 2010 with the SafeSea project and continued annually until 2015 in the LIFE+ MarPro project (Vingada and Eira, 2018).

Common dolphin one of the most abundant species recorded: 45 179 (CV = 0.24)

Bycatch estimates for Portuguese waters from MarPro
Purse seines fleet: 0.64% of the common dolphin population
Bottom trawl fleet: 0.92%
Deepset longlines: 0.10%
Beach seine fleet: 0.06%
Polyvalent fleet: 7.34%

Bycatch reference points – Iberian Peninsula

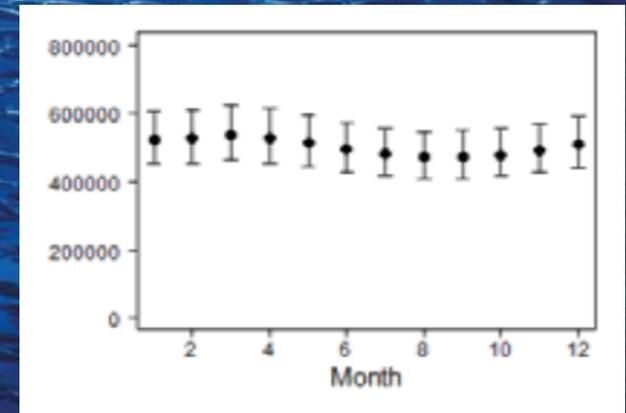
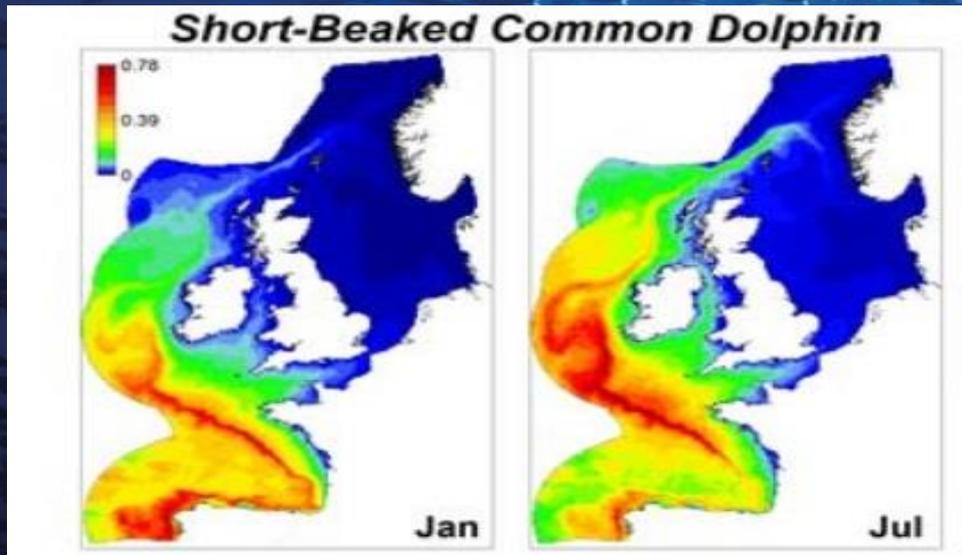
Saavedra (2018) estimated bycatch limit reference points for common dolphin populations inhabiting the Iberian Peninsula using a minimum realistic ecosystem model implemented with GADGET.

A bycatch threshold of 1.4% of the best available abundance estimate for suggested, noting that the calculated confidence limits indicate that the bycatch limits should be reduced to 0.7% for common dolphins to be precautionary.

Irish ObSERVE project and SCANS-III

Irish ObSERVE results (Berrow *et al.*, 2018; Rogan *et al.*, 2018a): Densities of short-beaked common dolphins were much higher during winter than summer

Marine Ecosystems Research Programme (MERP) has combined these results with other data collected between 1978 to 2018



Other work....Marine litter

SPAIN: Microplastics were investigated in the stomachs of 35 common dolphins stranded along the Galician coast of the Iberian Peninsula during 2005–2010 (Hernandez-Gonzalez *et al.*, 2018). Common dolphin would have a 94% probability of having microfibrils in the stomach contents.

UK: Marine debris in digestive tracts of 50 individuals, 16 of which were common dolphins (Nelms *et al.*, 2019). Microplastics detected in all animals. Macroplastic (green netting) was recorded from the forestomach of a juvenile common dolphin.