



ECS/ASCOBANS Workshop:
Scoping the development of a European marine strandings database
Sunday, 16 April 2023 09:00-13:00 CEST, O Grove, Spain



Harmonisation of stranding data and data repositories - where are we?

Results from an EU JRC survey across European stranding networks



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Stranding network surveys on macro litter ingestion / ship collisions / interactions with fisheries

In Autumn 2022 JRC launched a study on the impact of marine macro litter ingestion, ship collisions and fisheries related interactions on marine mammals and other marine megafauna. The study involved the publication, on December 7th, of a survey designed to collect information on the data collection and reporting procedures on these issues, addressed to institutions dealing with strandings in 22 EU MS.

The aim of the project was to identify the major gaps and needs for improving data collection, and the efficiency of reporting at EU level.

Surveys were designed on the EUSurvey platform and addressed to relevant stranding contact lists defined with the support of the information provided by ASCOBANS, ACCOBAMS, the IWC, ICES and the expert group of MSFD D1.

Responses provided up to March 2nd 2023 were analysed and summarized in a report.

Surveys have been kept open for further contribution and can be accessed at:

<https://ec.europa.eu/eusurvey/runner/bf1b90e3-de94-4870-905b-db8eb6e2dee4>



Responses were provided by 30 contacts from 16 MS

Responses from SN 

BE (Jan Haelters, Royal Belgian Institute of Natural Sciences),

BG (Dimitar Popov, Green Balkans NGO),

CY (Lavrentios Vasiliades, DFMR),

DE (Michael Dähne, Deutsche Meeresmuseum),

DK (Charlotte Bie Thøstesen, Fimus),

ES (9 respondents from 8 autonomous regions:

Asturias: Ramón Balsera Riesgo, regional government;

Balearic Islands, Fundación Palma Aquarium para la Protección del Medio Ambiente;

Basque Country: Cristina Claver, AMBAR Elkartea,

Canary Islands: Marisa Tejedor, CSN of the W islands and Antonio Fernandez, ULPGC;

Catalunya: Fundacion CRAM;

Ceuta: Manuel Álvaro García Díaz, Museo del Mar Ceuta;

Galicia: Alfredo López Fernández, CEMMA NGO;

Valencian community: Juan Antonio Raga Esteve, University of Valencia)

FR (Olivier Van Canneyt, Observatoire Pelagis, University of La Rochelle),

HR (3 respondents from 2 institutions: Martina Đuras, Zagreb University; Mateja Zekan and Draško Holcer, BWI),

IE (Stephanie Levesque, IWDG),

IT (Sandro Mazzariol, University of Padua),

LV (Valdis Pilāts, Nature Conservation Agency Republic of Latvia),

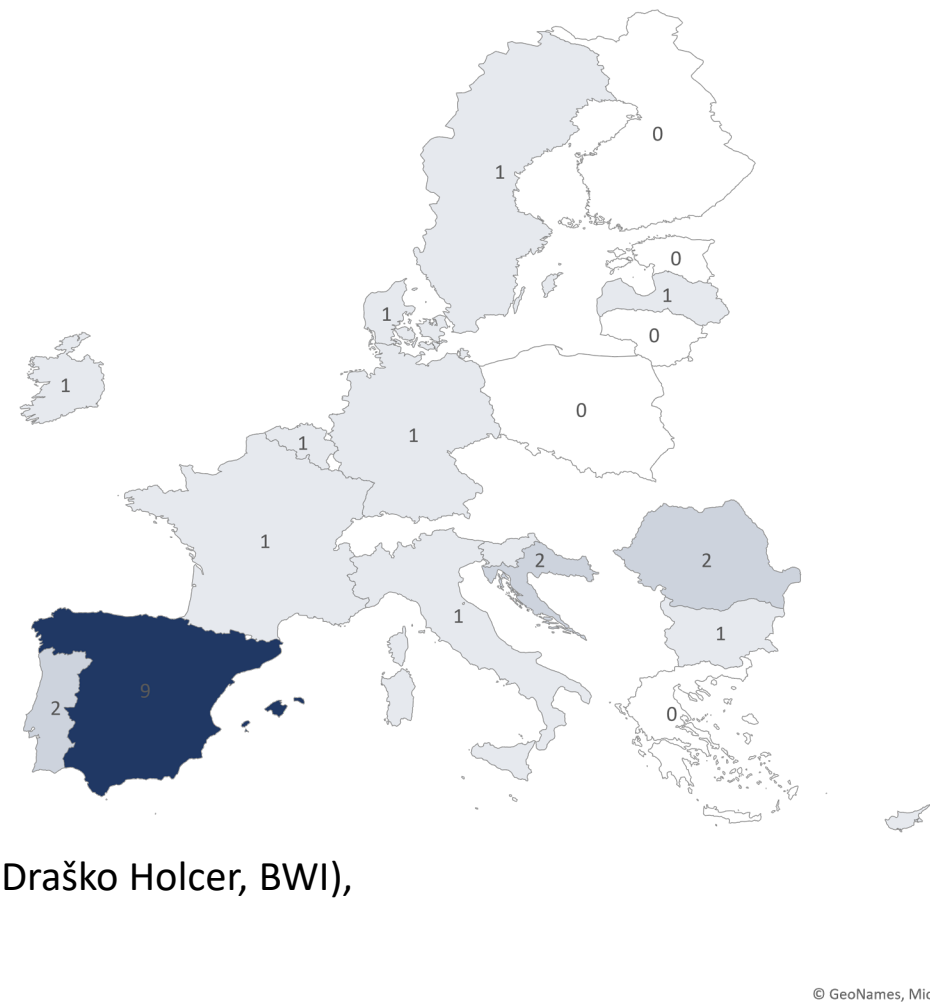
NL (3 respondents from 3 institutions: Ecomare, SoSDolfijn, University of Utrecht),

PT (2 respondents from 2 regions: Azorean Stranding Network - Regional Directorate of Maritime Policies (RACA), and Madeira whale museum),

RO (2 respondents from 2 institutions: MareNostrum NGO and the National Institute for Marine Research and Development),

SE (Aleksija Neimanis, Statens Veterinarmedicinska Anstalt),

SI (Tilen Genov, Morigenos)



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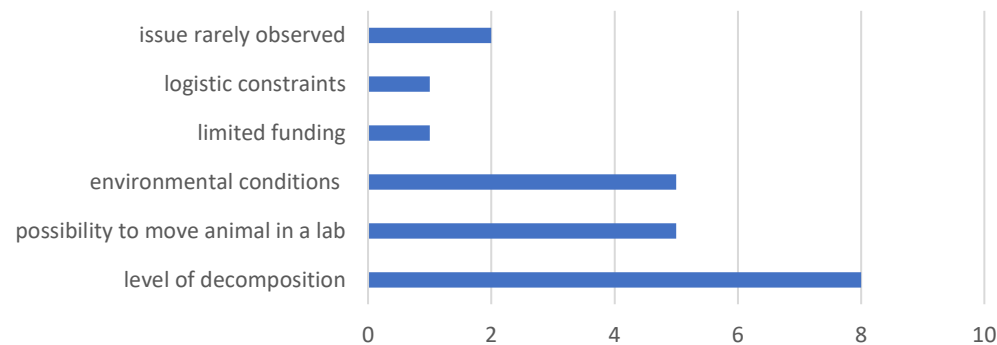
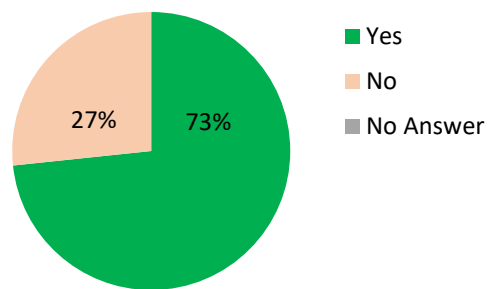
1. Data collection and limiting factors

Q1. Do you collect data regarding litter ingestion/injuries caused by ship collision/fisheries interactions on stranded animals?

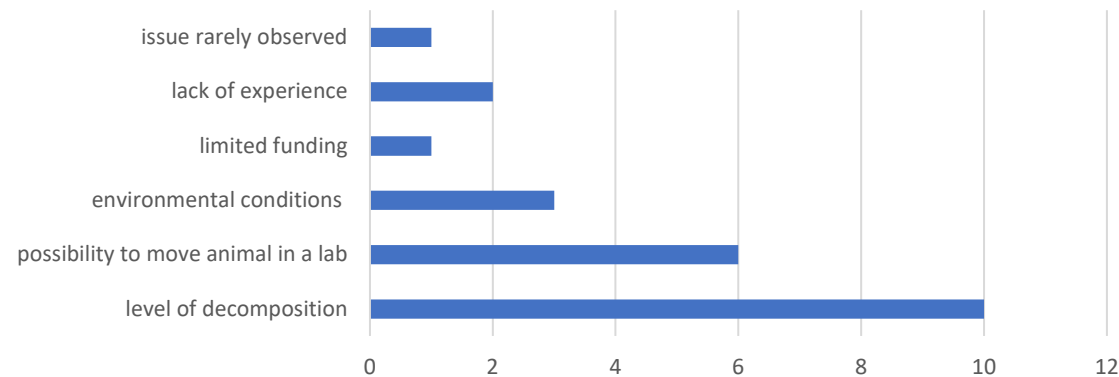
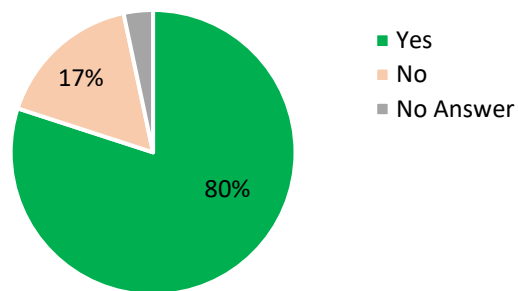
1.1. If yes, on what percentage of animals?

1.2. If not (or not always), why, and, what are the limiting conditions?

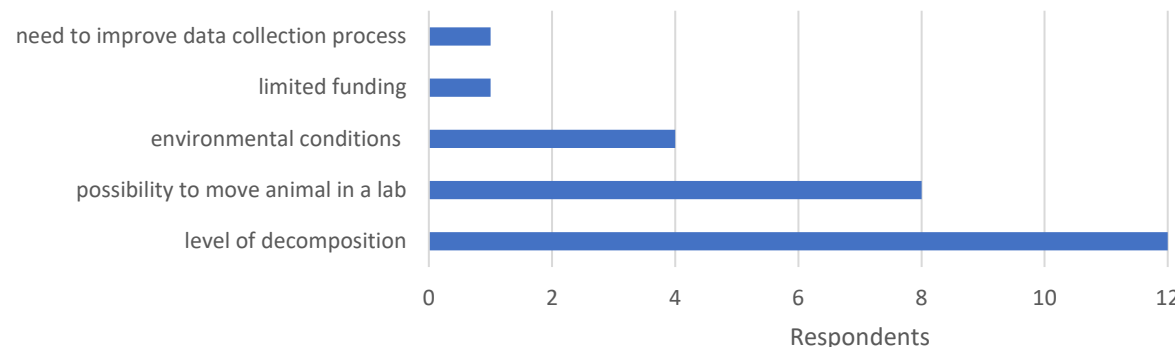
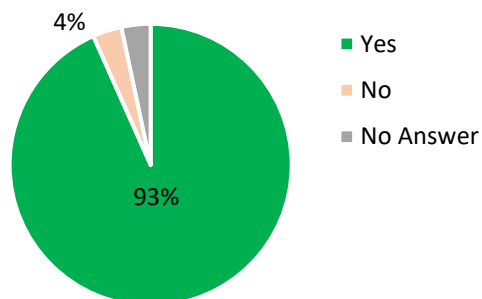
Marine macro litter ingestion



Ship collisions



Interactions with fisheries



2. Use of specific protocols

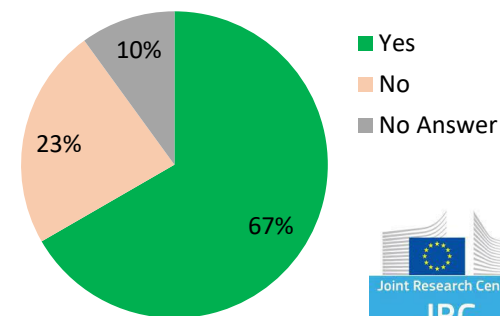
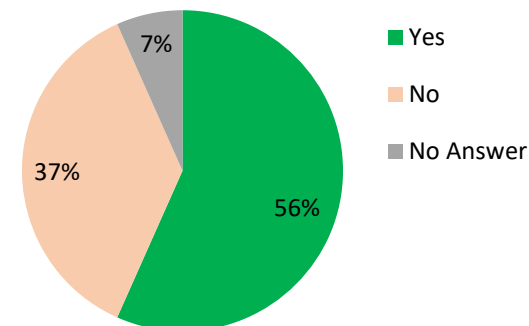
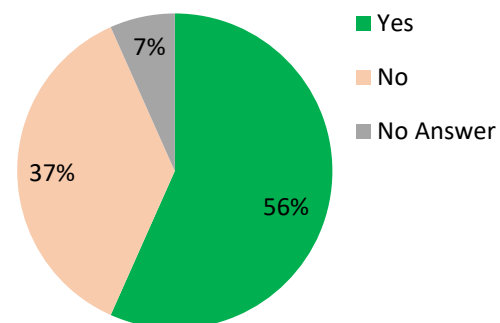
Q2. During necropsies, do you follow a specific protocol for the assessment of litter ingestion/ship collisions/fisheries interactions?

2.1. Is that a national or common protocol?

2.2 What are the minimum data collected?

2.3 If not, why?

Tot respondents = 30			Marine Litter Ingestion	Ship Collisions	Fisheries interactions
<i>Use of specific protocols</i>					
Yes	Common	ACCOBAMS/ASCOBANS	5	7	5
		MSFD / INDICIT	3		1
		Other	3	4	4
	National		2	3	4
	Regional		2	2	3
	Local		1	1	3
No			11	11	7



3. Use of specific repositories

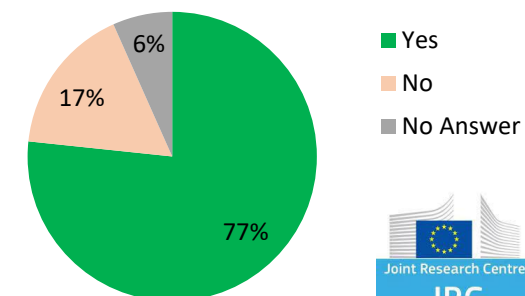
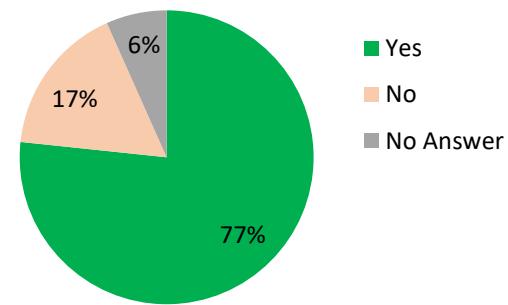
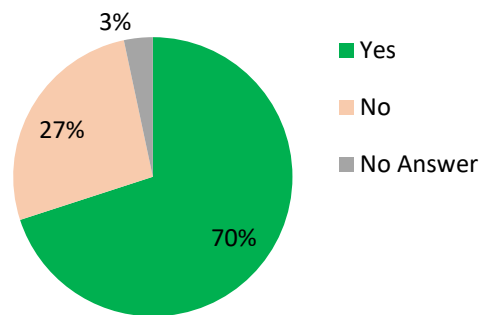
Q3. Do you record your data in a specific repository?

3.1 Is it local, national, regional, or shared with other institutions?

3.2. Is it publicly available? If yes, could you provide a link?

3.3. If not, why?

Tot respondents = 30		Marine Litter Ingestion		Ship Collisions		Fisheries interactions	
<i>Use of specific repositories</i>							
Yes	Shared	IWC		8		2	
		MEDACES		2		3	
		Other	3		2		3
	National		6		7		7
	Regional		4		2		4
	Local		9		7		9
No			8		5		5



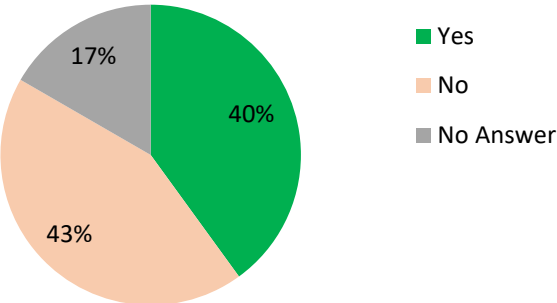
4. Availability of published metadata

Q4. Are you aware of, and could you provide, the national/regional estimates of species and individuals affected by this issue?

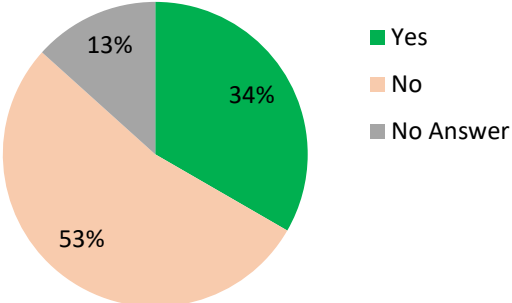
4.1 Are these metadata published in scientific articles, reports, and/or available elsewhere?

4.2. Could you provide a link or relevant reference?

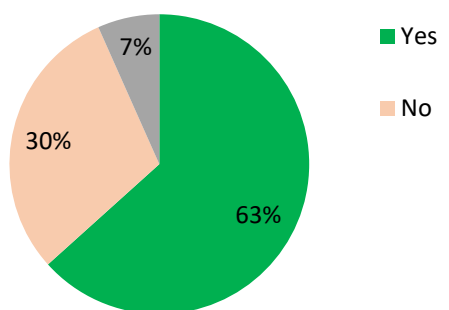
Marine macro litter ingestion



Ship collisions



Interactions with fisheries



Annual reports of strandings are produced by several MS and available online: BE (www.marinemammals.be), DK (<https://fimus.dk/>), FR (<https://www.observatoire-pelagis.cnrs.fr/>), IE (Levesque et al, 2022: <https://oar.marine.ie/>) IT (<https://www.izsplv.it/>), RO (Mare Nostrum Annual report), SE (<https://www.sva.se/>; <https://www.dataportal.se>).

General information on stranding research is available for NL (<https://www.uu.nl/en/research/strandings-investigation>), while other respondents (ES, IE, IT, NL) indicated the link to specific webpages where data can be accessed, or references to relevant publications.

Main gaps and needs identified:

- **Non-homogeneous reply.** Not all stranding networks provided feedback to the surveys: in several cases, the contacts addressed did not respond, which led to a scarce coverage of information, especially within the BAL region.
- **Non-homogeneous performance of necropsies.** The level of implementation of stranding networks, and relative capacities in terms of human and economic resources, is not homogeneous, which leads to a varying proportion of animals assessed with complete necropsies in each MS and region. **Improved coordination of the activities of stranding networks** across EU MS is recommended to guarantee the collection of relevant information.
- **Limited use of protocols.** While around 60% of respondents make use of specific protocols for the assessment of stranded animals, the existing common guidelines and protocols are adopted and followed in a limited number of MS. The institutions in charge of performing the necropsies should be encouraged to **follow existing protocols** (i.e., ACCOBAMS/ASCOBANS protocol) and use the same reporting format.
- **Limited use of common data repositories.** Institutions often store data in local repositories and sporadically report to national authorities, RSC or relevant international agreements. Even where common databases exist, the level of reporting is scarce. Common repositories would allow the joint analysis of data and the assessment of the incidence of these and other issues at EU level.
- **Limited coordination.** MS and regional organisations should **improve coordination and resourcing of stranding networks**, to support the development and implementation of joint methodologies to improve data collection, and encourage the exchange of information and data. **International workshops at EU level** would facilitate such exchange and allow the identification of main actors and initiatives implemented, to avoid the duplication of efforts both in research and in the development of mitigation measures.

Within the next MSFD GES meeting, JRC will ask WG GES **to encourage the development of an EU-level coordinated network of stranding networks, with harmonised protocols and data reporting**, which is already being discussed by ACCOBAMS, ASCOBANS and IWC.