NAMMCO

STRANDING RESPONSE NETWORK

Presented to Council 28 (2021). Council concluded that the guidelines function as a point of reference for the Member Countries to apply when/if relevant.

BYCELS developed these guidelines based on existing stranding response networks. BYCELS reviewed existing protocols and guidelines on sampling of stranded animals and recommended that Member Countries use the most recent recognised protocol. Attention was drawn to the 2019 ASCOBANS report "Best practice on cetacean post-mortem investigations and tissue sampling".

HOW TO REPORT, WHAT TO REPORT AND WHERE TO STORE THE STRANDING DATA

ORGANISATION
- Define relevant coordinating/leading authority (unit and contact person (Ministry/Directorate/Research Institute)) - where to call

It is recommended that the leader/coordinator is a veterinarian or experienced biologist who will be able to assess the situation in order to initiate relevant action (euthanise, possible sampling, who should respond and to what)

- Identify coastal areas (management areas) and volunteer units within each area

Suggestions for volunteers: local zoological/ornithological/nature/animal welfare organisations.

Member Countries to identify possible NGOs or interested persons to be volunteer in the network. Training courses should be arranged for the network of volunteers.

If sampling is required, suitable equipment should be stored at sites identified by the member countries.

HOW TO REPORT A STRANDING ALIVE OR DEAD FROM THE POINT OF VIEW OF THE PERSON FINDING THE ANIMAL(S)

To be widely distributed!! Local police station, NGO's local newspapers, radio stations etc, municipality,

Important to remember when approaching a live stranded animal:

- Approach the animal calmly and carefully. Keep away from the tail!
- People, dogs and wild animals should be kept at a distance.
- Do not move the animal by pulling on its fins or tail.
- Call coordinator who will ask for further information such as:

Stranding both alive and dead
- Location and date
- Species and sex
- Overall length

- Condition of the animal
- Contact details should further information be needed

Based on this information the Coordinator will decide on further action.

Live strandings: information will be forwarded to relevant task force (as a rule large whales will be euthanised if possible).

Dead strandings / after euthanisation: Sampling according to protocol relevant to the size of the animal or coordinator gives instructions about sampling and further processing of the samples (pathological investigations).

Necropsy and sampling procedures should be performed according to standardized international protocols as far as possible – e.g., ASCOBANS best practice on cetacean post-mortem investigations and tissue sampling.

WHO KEEPS THE DATA – DATABASE

Consider and identify unit to collate all data from stranded animals - repository for a stranding database.

Consider joining an existing database (e.g. ASCOBANS, IWC)

Should existing national databases be displayed on www.nammco.org?

DEVELOP TRAINING AND INFORMATION MATERIAL FOR STRANDING NETWORK VOLUNTEERS

Use existing materials available online (IWC, ASCOBANS, The Scottish Marine Animal Stranding Scheme). A 1-page information sheet exists in Greenland.