

# VOLUNTARY CODE OF CONDUCT FOR FISHERMEN WORKING NEAR WHALES

*I recognize that I share the oceans with whales and some of these whales are highly endangered. When whales are entangled or entrapped in fishing gear, the whales are at risk but I may also suffer economically. Most whale interactions with fishing gear occur from May through December in the Maritimes, but the whales themselves are seldom seen.*

## I CAN HELP PROTECT BOTH WHALES AND THE FISHING INDUSTRY BY DOING THE FOLLOWING:

- Learn as much as possible about whales and their behaviours to help understand how fishing gear affects whales.
- To prevent collisions with whales when traveling to and within fishing areas:
  - Do not assume whales will get out of the way
  - Avoid areas with whales or alter course away from whales, if possible
  - Post a bow watch, particularly during reduced visibility; and if safe, slow down
- If stopping to watch whales, keep a safe distance (100+m) to prevent disturbing the whales, and should others stop, make sure the whales are not crowded.
- Avoid conflicts between whales & fishing gear by:
  - Being alert to the presence of whales & relaying this information to others
  - Not commencing to fish or setting or hauling gear when whales are in the area
  - Removing gear, if possible, when whales move into an area or adapting fishing gear with suggested "whale safe" modifications including reducing the amount or type of rope
- Release whales caught in fixed traps such as herring weirs by making a partial or complete opening in the netting away from shore for the whales to swim through.
- Work with technicians, biologists, fishing associations and others, to improve fishing gear and fishing practices, and therefore, minimize entanglements. This may include:
  - Developing plans to deal with large numbers of whales in fishing areas
  - Keeping up to date with new modifications in fishing gear, suggesting alternatives, and testing these if approached to do so
- Supporting research and conversation efforts to protect whales can ultimately let me have a voice in the work and protect my livelihood at the same time.

**WHAT TO DO IF YOU FIND AN ENTANGLED WHALE.**

**If you are in the Maritimes, call 1-800-565-1633 or relay the report through Coast Guard Radio.**

*Stay with the whale, if possible, until help arrives.*

1-877-722-5346 (Quebec)

1-888-895-3003 (Newfoundland & Labrador)

**Canada**

Government of Canada Habitat Stewardship Program  
for Species at Risk



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