

# Campobello Whale Rescue Team



## Fishermen Helping Fishermen Rescue Whales

### Goals

- Support the fishing industry and encourage stewardship of whales among fishermen and those making a living on the water.
- Increase public awareness of the efforts to reduce the adverse effects of whale entanglement.

### How?

By providing a whale disentanglement and release program in Quebec and the Maritimes.

- Encourage the fishing industry and other mariners to report whales in distress.
- Maintain a whale rescue team to provide a timely response to assess, document and, if possible, release the whale from entangling lines.

### Why is there a need for a response capability?



Using a fixed knife attached to a pole to cut lines wrapped around the head of a humpback whale.

Whale entanglement in fishing gear is a global problem. The Campobello Whale Rescue Team (CWRT) is committed to responding to this issue in our region because of concern for the whales and our fishermen. Entanglements are expensive for fishermen because of lost gear, as well as the cost and time to repair and replace damaged gear. Whale entanglement generates considerable public concern. Fishermen recognize this and want to do their part to mitigate the problem through whale disentanglement and release programs.



Entrapments in weirs are not usually lethal to large whales if they can be released in a timely manner.

Entanglements can range from minor to severe and are sometimes lethal for the whale. In many cases, whales break free of the gear and survive the entanglement. However, entangling lines that remain on the whale can compromise its health, ability to feed, socialize, to migrate and survive.

The CWRT, in association with the Marine Animal Response Society (MARS) and Fisheries and Oceans Canada (DFO), will respond to whale entanglements and entrapments in Quebec and the Maritimes. To report marine animal emergencies, please call the MARS at **1-866-567-6277** or the Canadian Coast Guard on **VHF channel 16**.

### The Process

Entanglements reports are relayed to the Campobello Whale Rescue Team (CWRT).

- **Do not try to disentangle the whale yourself. Do not cut trailing lines and buoys from the whale. The entangling gear is used by the team in the whale rescue attempt.**



Entanglements like this one can cause serious injury and mortality to whales. The CWRT were able to save this whale.

- The CWRT will respond immediately; weather and time of day permitting.
- It is critical that the reporting vessel stand by the entangled whale if possible.
- Once the CWRT arrives on scene, the entanglement will be assessed and documented.
- The CWRT will attempt to disentangle the whale if it is feasible and safe.

### About Us



Safe whale entanglement response operations require team work, "look out for your buddy" is the principle guiding our efforts.

The Campobello Whale Rescue Team of the Canadian Whale Institute, formed in 2002, is an organization of fishermen and biologists. They have firsthand knowledge of Maritime waters as well as fishing gear and whale behaviour.

- Team members are trained in the use of specialized equipment to disentangle large whales from fishing gear and work with weir owners to release entrapped whales.
- The CWRT is licensed and permitted by DFO to disentangle whales in the Maritimes and Gulf of St. Lawrence and by the U.S. government for responses in U.S. waters.
- The CWRT provides basic training for others interested in supporting the program.



The Campobello Whale Rescue Team celebrates a successful whale disentanglement.

You can help support our mission. A tax deductible contribution to the Canadian Whale Institute will help the Campobello Whale Rescue Team rescue entangled whales. Donations can be made through Canada Helps. <https://www.canadahelps.org/en/charities/canadian-whale-institute/>. Or you can mail a cheque or money order to: Canadian Whale Institute, 16 Herring Cove Road, Welshpool, New Brunswick E5E 1B6 Canada.



CANADIAN WHALE INSTITUTE

Additional photographs provided by the New England Aquarium and Center for Coastal Studies.