

Response to Marine Mammal Incidents

RELEASE

- Release at high tide and when the surf is not too strong.
- Select a site that is deep enough with no physical barriers.
- It may be necessary to herd with a boat, use underwater noise, or tow the animal into deeper water to facilitate release.
- Let the animal swim on its own if the conditions are right.
- Monitor for two hours if released successfully.

CAUGHT IN FISHING GEAR

- Coordinate the release effort with the owner of the fishing gear involved.
- Approach the animal cautiously, making sure no additional injury nor stress is given.
- Make sure that the animal can breathe properly.
- Study how to untangle the animal from the net or enclosure before executing the release.
- It may be necessary to cut the net to release the animal.

IN THE SHALLOWS

- Secure the animal in waist-deep water.
- Acclimatize or let the animal get used to the condition before release.
- Make sure that the animal is upright and the blowhole/nostril is above water.
- Position the animal facing the open sea. In rough waters, the animal should face the shore.
- The animal should be observed to surface and breathe on its own before release.

BRING TO THE WATER

- Always use a stretcher when moving the animal.
- Never tie or pull the fins and tail.
- If the animal cannot be released, consider on-site rehabilitation or euthanasia.

STRANDED DEAD ANIMAL

- Retrieve the animal and bring to a secure place.
- Perform necropsy to determine the cause of death.
- Collect tissues and other samples for analysis, including the whole skeleton.
- Bury the animal or dispose at sea.

ON THE BEACH

- Check vital signs and assess the animal's condition to decide on the next steps.
- Keep shaded and protected from the sun.
- Keep wet using towels over the body (except fins, head, blowhole, tail) and pour sea water except on the blowhole/nostrils.
- Keep comfortable by digging holes around the flippers and removing rocks from under it.
- Keep the animal calm by making sure the site is quiet, away from crowds and domestic animals.
- Keep sand away from the blowhole/nostrils and eyes.

REMINDERS

- Report any incident to the nearest DA (cetaceans) or DENR (dugong) offices before taking action.
- Collect as much information as possible from the marine mammal.
- Use standard data sheets.
- Submit an incident report to the DA-BFAR or DENR-BMB.
- DO NOT MEDICATE THE ANIMAL
- DO CONTROL THE CROWD
- ALL MARINE MAMMALS ARE PROTECTED IN THE PHILIPPINES
- CAUTION: SOME DISEASES ARE TRANSMISSIBLE TO HUMANS

COLLECT THE SKELETON

- Remove the flesh and internal organs from the carcass.
- Wrap the carcass in a fine-meshed plastic net.
- Bury the carcass at least 1m deep.
- Retrieve and clean the bones after a year for research or educational display.