

Cox, T.M.; Read, A.J.; Barco, S.; Evans, J.; Gannon, D.P.; Koopman, H.N.; McLellan, W.A.; Murray, K.; Nicolas, J.; Pabst, D.A.; Potter, C.W.; Swingle, W.M.; Thayer, V.G.; Touhey, K.M.; Westgate A.J. 1998. Documenting the bycatch of harbor porpoises, *Phocoena phocoena*, in coastal gillnet fisheries from stranded carcasses. Fishery bulletin vol. 96, no. 4, pp. 727-734.

**Abstract:**

We examined 107 harbor porpoise (*Phocoena phocoena*) carcasses recovered from beaches in Maryland, Virginia, and North Carolina between 1994 and 1996 for evidence of entanglement in fishing gear. Stranded porpoises ranged in length from 102 to 128 cm, indicating that only juvenile porpoises are present in the nearshore waters of the Mid-Atlantic during winter. Of the 40 porpoises for which we could establish cause of death, 25 displayed definitive evidence of entanglement in fishing gear. Evidence of entanglement consisted primarily of line marks from nets; in four cases we were able to determine specifically that porpoises had become entangled in monofilament nets. These mortalities demonstrate the need for a directed observer program for coastal gillnet fisheries in the Mid-Atlantic.