



Circular Communication to Commissioners, Contracting Governments
and Members of the Scientific Committee
IWC.ALL.382

New CMS Technical Series publication: Guidelines for the safe and humane handling and release of bycaught small cetaceans from fishing gear

This Circular draws attention to the publication of Guidelines for the safe and humane handling and release of bycaught small cetaceans from fishing gear. This document has been published as part of the CMS Technical Series, accessible on the CMS website at <https://www.cms.int/en/publications/technical-series>. We encourage Contracting Governments to share this document within your networks including with relevant fisheries management organisations, agencies and stakeholders.

Experts associated with the CMS Scientific Council, the ASCOBANS¹ Advisory Committee, the ACCOBAMS² Scientific Committee and IWC Expert Panels for Bycatch, Entanglement Response and Strandings have peer-reviewed the publication, and these guidelines were endorsed by the IWC Scientific Committee at its meeting in May 2020 (SC68B).

The guidelines were financed by the World Wildlife Fund (WWF) and are intended to help fisheries managers at any level, as well as others working with fisheries, to improve sustainability with best-practice methodology on the safe and humane handling and release of small cetaceans accidentally caught in fishing gear. They include two-page fishery-specific guides than can be printed and laminated for use on board fishing vessels.

The IWC Secretariat is joining with the CMS and WWF in presenting these guidelines to the forthcoming meeting of the Working Party on Ecosystems and Bycatch of the Indian Ocean Tuna Commission. We will continue to explore future opportunities to disseminate these guidelines and we would appreciate any suggestions.

Please contact the Secretariat@iwc.int with any comments or suggestions.

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Executive Secretary

c.c. Accredited observers to the IWC

¹ Agreement on the Conservation of Small Cetaceans of the Baltic, North East Atlantic, Irish and North Seas, www.ascobans.org

² Agreement on the Conservation of Cetaceans of the Black Sea, Mediterranean Sea and Contiguous Atlantic Area, www.accobams.org