

SC/A17/NP/16

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entanglements in the Mexican Pacific  
(2004-2017)

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INTERNATIONAL  
WHALING COMMISSION

# Report on the humpback whale entanglements in the Mexican Pacific (2004-2017)

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Between 2004 and 2017 a total of 97 reports of rorquals in the coasts of the Mexican Pacific including the Gulf of California, of these, 95 correspond to humpback whales (*Megaptera novaeangliae*), one to fin whale (*Balaenoptera physalus*) and one to Bryde's whale (*Balaenoptera edeni*).

The entanglements of humpback whales have been recorded in 12 localities: 1) San Felipe (2); 2) Bahía de los Ángeles (2); 3) San Carlos (1); 4) Loreto Sur (3); 5) Mazatlán (9); 6) Bahía de la Paz (3); 7) Guasave (1); 8) Los Cabos (20); 9) San Blas y Guayabitos (5); 10) Bahía de Banderas (33); 11) Manzanillo (12); and the coasts of Oaxaca (4), (Figure 1).

The age and sex in the entanglements were: 67 adults (sex unknown), three young whales (sex unknown), eight mothers with calves in which the entanglement was only in the mother, 14 calves, and three mothers with calves in which both were entangled.

The 95 reports on humpback whales include 42 released animals, 45 were not released because of different reasons (They were not found, there was no death threat to the animal, or the weather conditions were bad) and there is one report in which the result is unknown.

In 6 of the 95 entanglements the whales were reported died, 4 in Manzanillo (2 adults, one juvenile and one calf), 1 in Guasave (adult); and one in San Felipe (adult).

The fishing gear involved in the entanglements were: gill nets or parts of gill nets of various mesh sizes with 51 reports; ropes and buoys with 25 reports; nylon lines from sport and commercial fishing with two reports; crab traps from other countries with two reports; steel cable with one report; and the entanglement device is unknown for the other 14 events.

Base on the interest to help these whales, in 2006 the first training course on disentanglement was conducted in Mexico and in 2012 the Entanglement Whale Assistance Net (RABEN) was created, which follows the protocols established by the International Whaling Commission for the attention of entanglement animals. There are currently 15 teams and more than 180 people trained to answer to these events.

The numbers of entanglement reports in Mexico have been increasing, the possible reasons are an increase in the whale populations, the increase in the fishing effort and because there are more people reporting these events (Table 1).

## ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

The information on the entanglement reports in this report is from the Entanglement Whale Assistance Net Mexico (RABEN) <http://rabenmexico.org/> and from the NGO Sea Shepherd Conservation Society for the two cases in San Felipe, Baja California. <http://www.seashepherd.org/>.



Figure 1. Localities of the entanglements of humpback whales.

Table 1. Number of entanglement reports in Mexico from 2004 to 2017.

Year	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017
Reports	3	2	4	1	5	6	7		6	9	9	15	14	6