



NOAA
FISHERIES

Office of Protected
Resources

Marine Mammal
Health and Stranding
Response Program



Learn more about large whale
entanglement response:

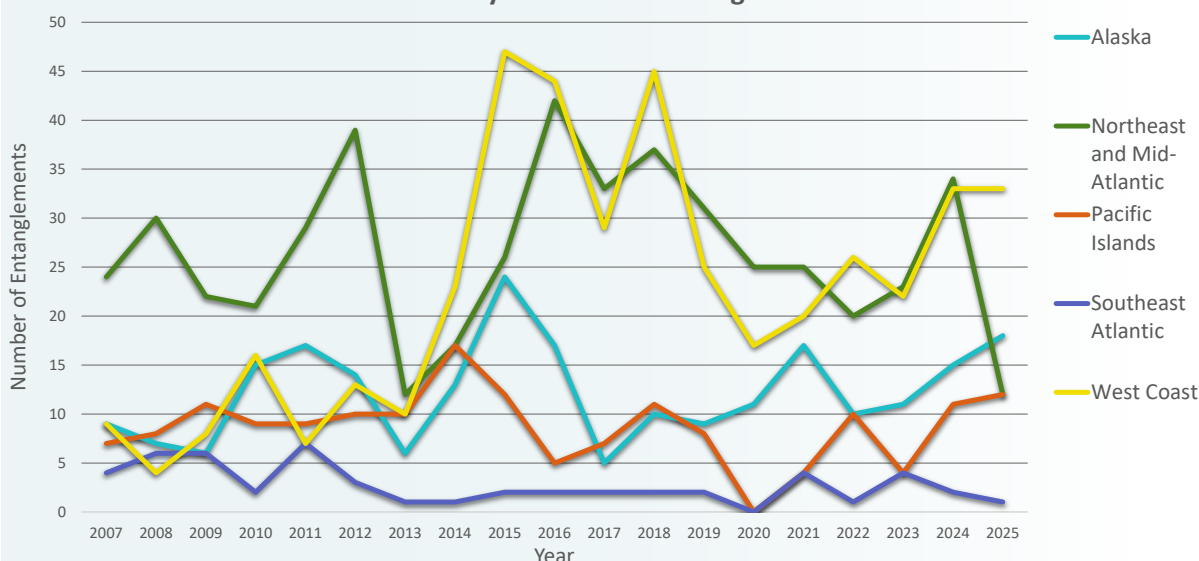


All authorized response activities
for large whales in 2025 were
covered under NOAA Permit
#24359 issued to the Marine
Mammal Health and Stranding
Response Program

National Report on Large Whale Entanglements Confirmed in the United States in 2025

In 2025, there were 76 confirmed [entangled large whales](#) documented along the coasts of the United States. Seventy cases (92 percent) involved live animals, one of these whales stranded alive while entangled and [was euthanized](#). A separate live free-swimming whale was first documented entangled in 2024 and resighted in 2025 when it received another response. The remaining six cases involved animals that were dead when initially reported. These 76 cases represent unique individual whales and do not represent multiple reports of the same individual. The 76 confirmed number is slightly higher than the average annual number from 2007–2024 ($n=72.7 \pm 20.1$; average $\pm$ one standard deviation). This report does not include reports of whales seen outside U.S. waters entangled in U.S. gear.

Confirmed large whale entanglements 2007-2025
by NOAA Fisheries region



Six species of large whales were documented with entanglements in U.S. waters: [humpback](#) ($n=65$; *Megaptera novaeangliae*), [gray](#) ($n=4$; *Eschrichtius robustus*), [fin](#) ($n=2$; *Balaenoptera physalus*), [minke](#) ($n=1$; *Balaenoptera acutorostrata*), [North Atlantic right](#) ($n=1$; *Eubalaena glacialis*), and [sperm](#) ($n=1$; *Physeter macrocephalus*), and unknown species ($n=2$; species unknown but entanglement confirmed). Humpback whales continued to be the most frequently reported entangled large whale species, and represent more than 71 percent of all confirmed large whale entanglements since 2007.



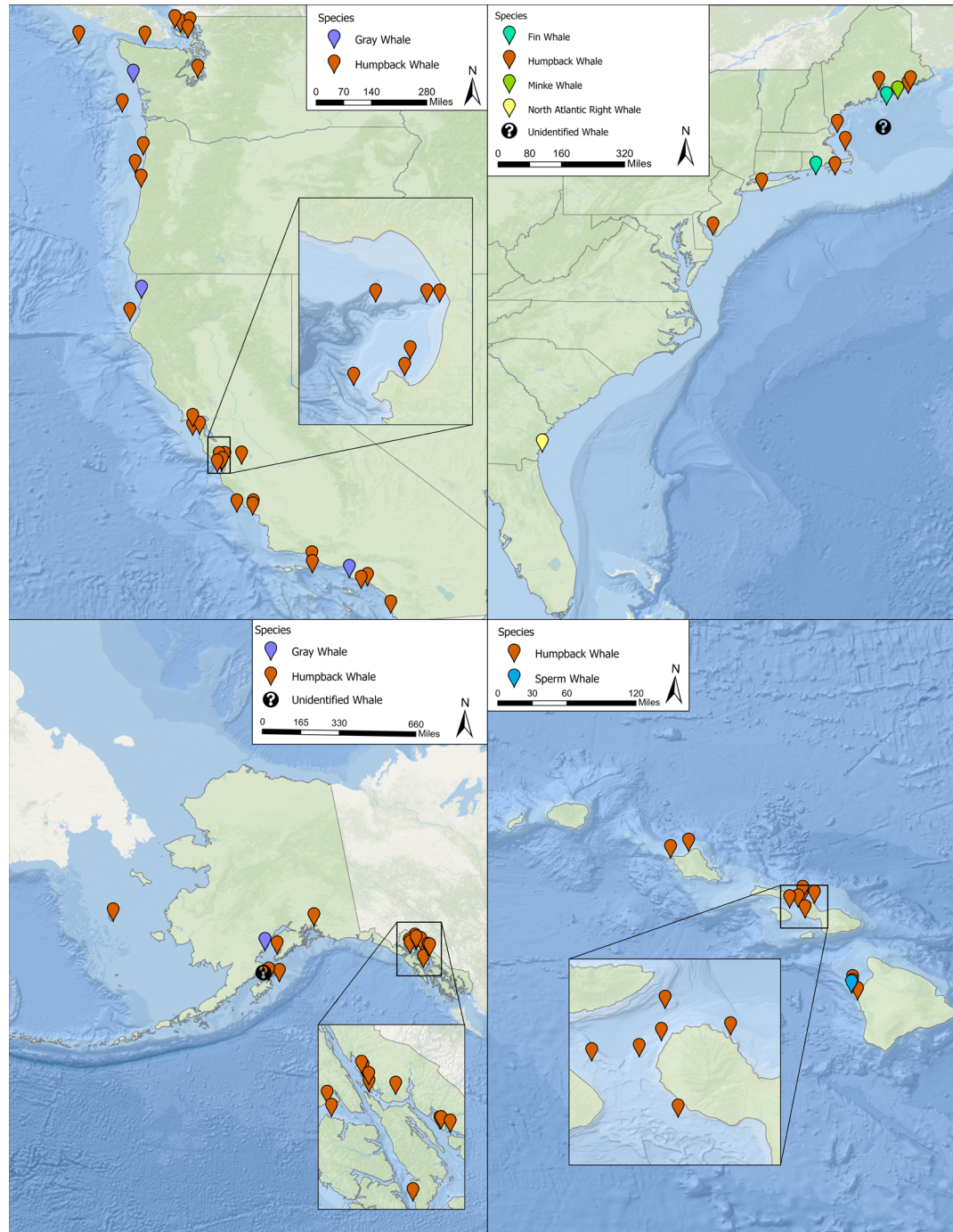
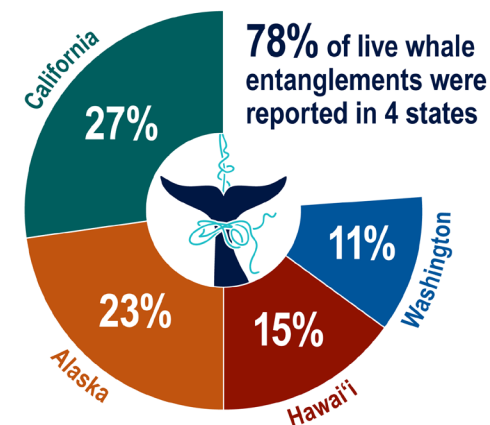
Reported Locations of Entangled Whales

In 2025, large whale entanglements were first reported and confirmed off the coast of 11 states. Nearly 79 percent (63 cases) of all confirmed live whale entanglement reports were observed off the coast of four states, all in the Pacific:

- 27.6 percent off the coast of California
- 23.7 percent off the coast of Alaska
- 15.8 percent off the coast of Hawai'i
- 11.8 percent off the coast of Washington

Monterey Bay, California and Southeast Alaska continued to be areas where many confirmed large whale cases were initially reported. Cape Cod Bay and Massachusetts Bay have historically been areas where many confirmed large whale cases were initially reported; however, in 2025, only 5.3 percent of cases were first confirmed in these areas.

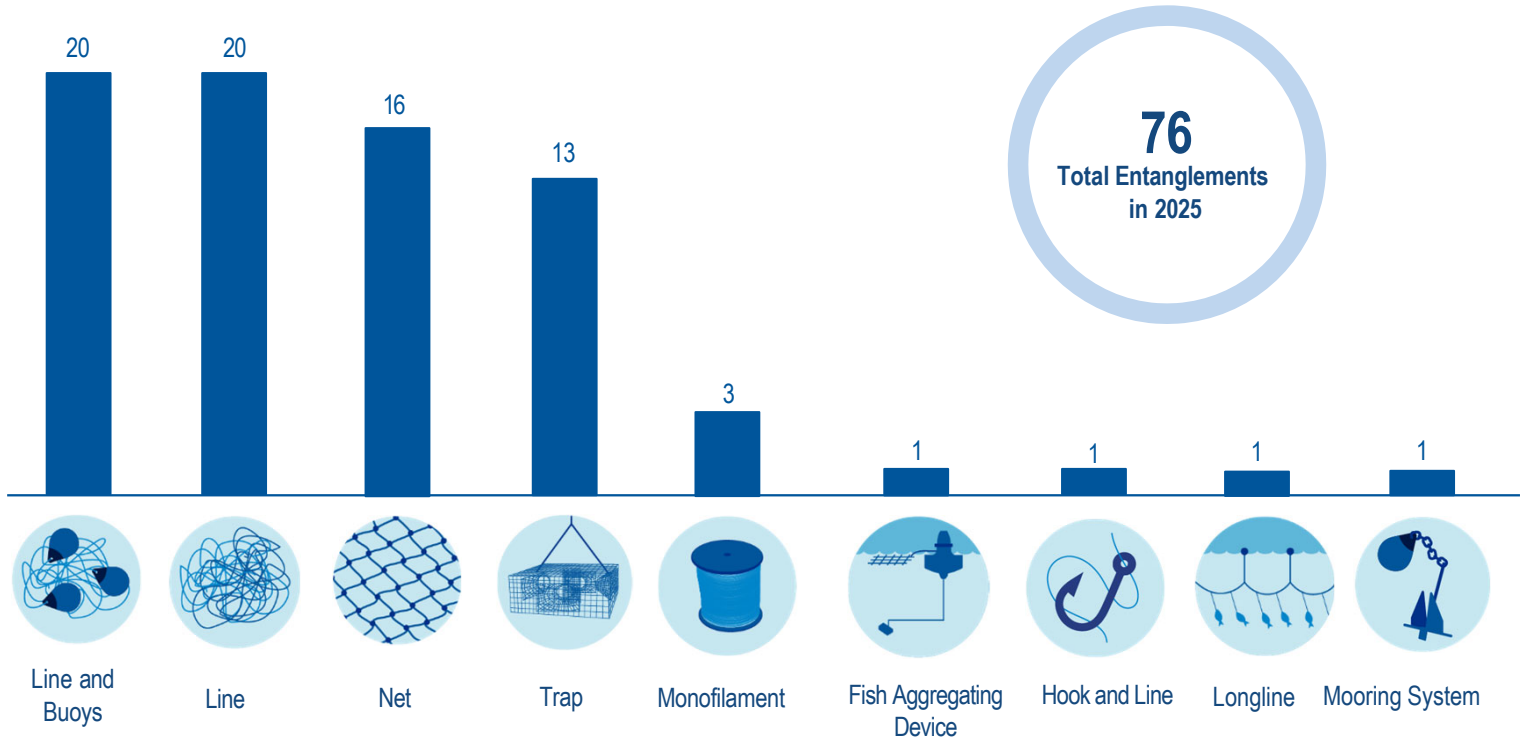
No entangled large whales were confirmed in the U.S. Caribbean or Pacific Island territories in 2025.



Locations of all confirmed live and dead large whale entanglements in U.S. waters in 2025. **Note that whales may be observed and reported either close to or far from where the entanglement occurred, as they have been known to travel great distances while entangled.**

Sources of Entanglements

Approximately 46 percent (n=35) of confirmed entanglement cases were verified as involving commercial or recreational fishing gear. The remaining cases (n=41) involved line that could not be directly attributed to a fishery or other source. Although various marine industries use gear in the ocean, one of the most common sources of line is commercial or recreational fishing. It is likely some of the cases involving line that could not be identified to a specific source were related to fishing activities.

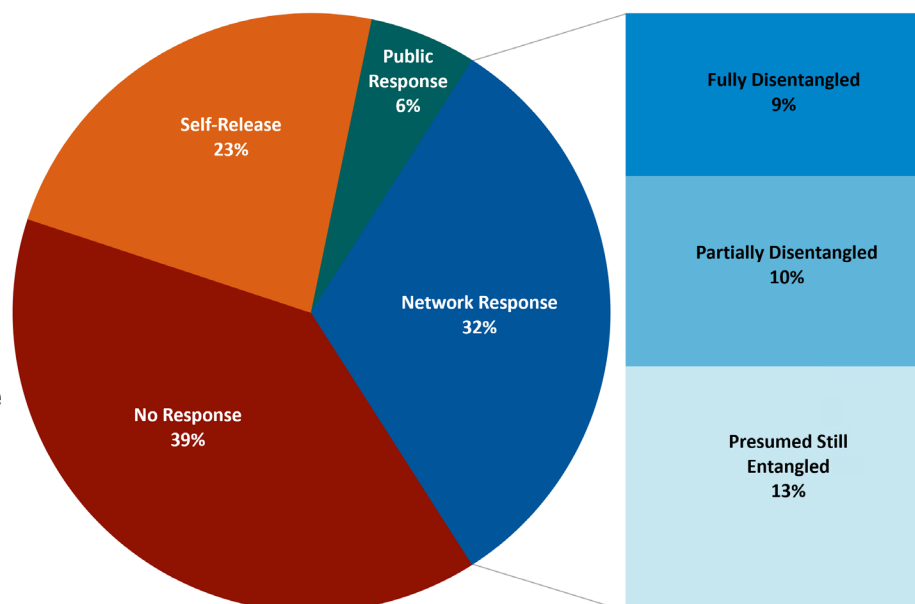


Rescue Operations to Disentangle Large Whales

Nationwide, there were 84 authorized [National Entanglement Response Network](#) team leaders, and they were widely distributed geographically.

Network teams mounted responses to a minimum of 33 whales initially reported alive and not stranded that resulted in the full or partial disentangling of 13 individual animals. Separately, 16 whales were documented to have self-released from their entanglement. Additionally, four whales were disentangled by members of the public.

For 36 cases, the Network was unable to mount a response due to the animal's remote location (e.g., the whale was too far offshore) or unsafe conditions (e.g., reports were received late in the day or during bad weather). These whales are presumed to still be entangled.





U.S. Secretary of Commerce
Howard Lutnick

Under Secretary of Commerce for
Oceans and Atmosphere
Neil Jacobs, Ph.D.

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OFFICIAL BUSINESS

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What You Can Do

NOAA Fisheries' [Marine Mammal Health and Stranding Response Program](#) acknowledges the critical roles first responders and [Network partners](#) play in our response to entangled large whales. The Network relies on reports of entangled whales from the public. If you encounter a whale that may be entangled, please contact your local network immediately via the 24/7 regional hotline or contact the United States Coast Guard on VHF CH-16 and keep a safe and legal distance from the animal. If you can stay with the animal at a safe distance until responders arrive, this will best help the animal and response team.

Region	Phone Number
Maine through Virginia	866-755-NOAA ((866) 755-6622)
North Carolina through Texas and the Caribbean	877 WHALE-HELP ((877) 942-5343)
California, Oregon, and Washington	877-SOS-WHALE ((877) 767-9425)
Alaska	(877) 925-7773
Hawai'i	(888) 256-9840

Information Needed When Reporting

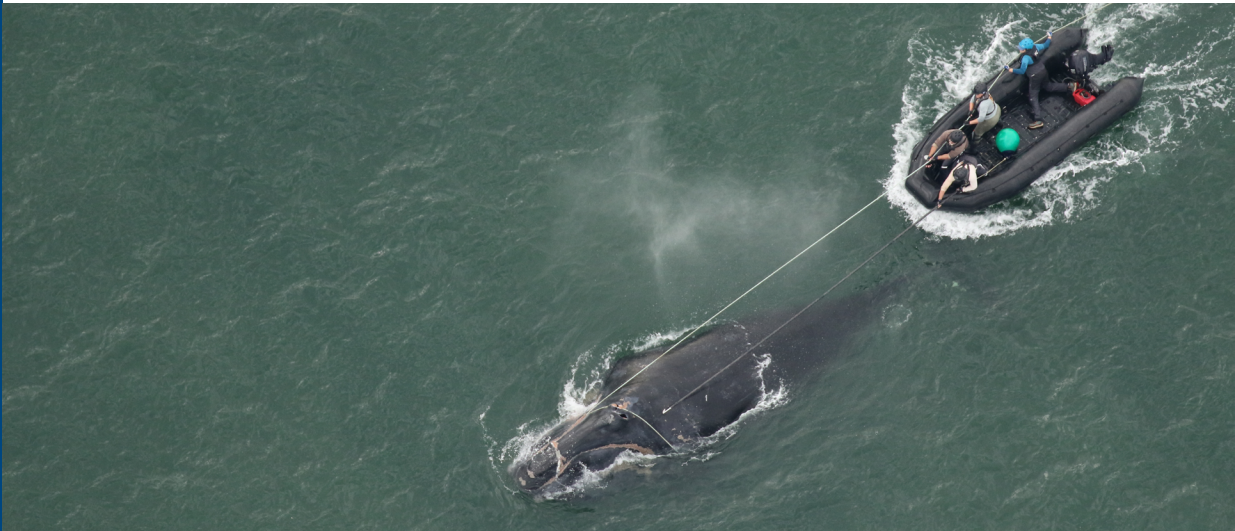
1. Location of the animal
2. Detailed description of the entangling gear or debris
3. Location of the entanglement on the animal
4. Direction and speed the whale is traveling, and whether it is solitary or with other whales
5. Behavior of the whale
6. Species of the whale, if known
7. Approximate size and condition of the whale
8. Photos and videos

Photo or Video Documentation

Photos or videos from a safe and legal distance (note that regulations apply to certain species and areas) can provide valuable information to entanglement response teams.

Let Qualified Experts Respond!

Attempting to remove an entanglement is extremely dangerous because whales are unpredictable. Entanglement response in the United States should only be [conducted by members of the Network](#) who have been trained and authorized by NOAA Fisheries.



Responders from Georgia Department of Natural Resources use a specialized knife to safely cut gear on a North Atlantic right whale off the coast of Georgia in December 2025. Credit: Clearwater Marine Aquarium Research Institute, taken under NOAA permit #24359. Aerial survey funded by NOAA Fisheries and Georgia Department of Natural Resources.