

identified wherever possible. From a total of 233 cetaceans stranded in the Canary Islands (1999-2005), in 59,23% of the cases a morphological diagnosis was done, in 56,22% an etiological diagnosis could be established and, finally, we were able to classify 51,07% within natural or anthropogenic pathological entities. Etiopathologically, 62,32% of the 138 studied cetaceans were diagnosed as natural (i.e. non-anthropogenic) pathological entities that included infectious diseases, neonatal pathology, intra- and interspecific interactions and typical mass strandings. Another 33,33% of cases were diagnosed as anthropogenic entities including fishing interaction (by-catch), atypical mass-stranding linked to naval exercises, ship collisions, and other anthropogenic-related pathology. A cause of death could not be ascribed in only 4,35% of the 138 animals examined.

M03 HUMAN-INDUCED CETACEAN MORTALITY IN THE ADRIATIC SEA

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Human influence on cetacean mortality is evident in many regions. Some human-cetacean interactions which result in high cetacean mortality, like by catch, can even impact the population dynamics of small or localized cetacean populations. The Adriatic Sea is inhabited by only one resident cetacean species - the bottlenose dolphin. There are no data on the population size, but it is estimated that there are around 250 bottlenose dolphins in the Croatian part of the Adriatic Sea. We studied the incidence and nature of human induced mortality of cetaceans stranded in the Croatian part of the Adriatic Sea from October 1990 till November 2008. Post-mortem examinations were performed on 158 cetacean carcasses consisting of 127 bottlenose dolphins (*Tursiops truncatus*), 18 striped dolphins (*Stenella coeruleoalba*), seven Risso's dolphins (*Grampus griseus*), four Cuvier's beaked whales (*Ziphius cavirostris*) and two fin whales (*Balaenoptera physalus*); while the cause of death was determined in 57.6% of cases. Human induced mortality was higher in the resident bottlenose dolphins (62.3% animals) than in the non-resident cetaceans (27.3% animals). In bottlenose dolphins, by-catch was the most prevailing human induced cause of death (22 animals), followed by larynx strangulation with gillnet parts (12 animals), gun wounds (4 animals), physical traumatic injuries (3 animals) and presumed blast trauma caused by dynamite fishing (2 animals). Human induced mortality in the non-resident cetaceans was represented by bycatch (4 animals) and physical traumatic injuries (2 animals).

Conservation measures likely to mitigate the problem of human induced cetacean mortalities remain to be identified and implemented.

M04 AGE- AND SEASONAL-DEPENDENT NUMERICAL VARIATIONS OF STRANDED STRIPED DOLPHIN (*STENELLA COERULEOALBA*) IN SICILY

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Variations in cetaceans stranding number are related to population consistency and/or to stressful factor which can act on populations. Age-dependent variations are usually considered as a marker of the presence of specific stress factors of pathogenic, toxicological or antropogenic origin. Seasonal-dependent variation are connected to use of habitat or movement of populations. Striped dolphin is widely diffused and abundant in Mediterranean Sea and has proved to be highly sensitive to infectious factor, e.g. Morbillivirus epidemics in the 90s, and contaminants. In the last three years stranding data collected at Centro Recupero Fauna Selvatica e Tartarughe Marine of Comiso, Sicily, seemed to underline an increase in the number of death young striped dolphins and the aim of the paper is to verify if there is any significant difference in years. Data collected directly in the centre from 2005 till September 2008 were compared with those available in Italian Stranding Database (<http://www-1.unipv.it/cibra/spiaggiamenti.html>) concerning Sicily from 1986 till 2004. From the two databases a 1.5 m length was retained as threshold to discriminate between adults and juveniles and the number per year were converted as relative percent values. Obtained data seems to confirm starting hypothesis as while during the period 1986-2004 mean number of young stranded dolphins was smaller than that of adult (4.6/year vs. 7.8/year respectively), from 2005 till 2008 an opposite trend was observed (9.75/year vs. 3.25/year). Excluding the great number of stranding observed in 1991 due to the *Morbillivirus* infection, affecting adults in particular, did not change results. Strandings are concentrated in the period from May to September with no significant variations between years. From collected data there seems to be a real changing in the age-dependent number of stranding and a special effort is prepared to verify next year the possible reason of such a large number of death animals.

M05 NON-SPECIFIC CHRONIC REACTIVE HEPATITIS IN CETACEANS STRANDED IN THE CANARY ISLANDS

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