

Country Report on Ship Strikes

Submitted by the Government of Australia to the Conservation Committee

Background

This paper is a summary of ship strikes on cetaceans and the associated issues and legislation in Australian waters for the calendar year of 2009.

Legislation

Under Australia's national environmental legislation, the *Environmental Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999*, ship strikes involving cetaceans in Commonwealth waters, whether resulting in injury or death, must be reported. State governments have similar reporting requirements.

Reported Incidents- calendar year 2009

State/Territory	Ship Strikes numbers for 2009 (small and large cetaceans)
Queensland	1 humpback whale – struck by fishing vessel – fate unknown – whale swam away bleeding heavily.
South Australia	1 fin whale – possible ship strike injuries observed at post-mortem.
	1 inshore bottlenose dolphin – possible ship strike injuries observed at post-mortem.
Victoria	1 blue whale – carcass washed ashore with possible ship strike injuries visible.
New South Wales	1 southern right whale calf – report of ship strike with a calf reported initially – carcass then washed ashore with severely impacted upper jaw and cranium.
	1 undetermined delphinid – carcass washed ashore with possible ship strike injuries visible.
Western Australia	1 humpback whale – crew of a private recreational fishing vessel reported striking a whale – fate of whale unknown
	1 humpback whale – struck by Navy vessel – observed floating with blood and no movement afterwards. Presumed dead.
	1 bottlenose dolphin – washed ashore with possible ship strike injuries visible.

Management Measures

The Australian Government is working on improving the management of ship strikes in its waters with reference to actions identified in the United States' guidance document for minimising the risk of ship strikes, endorsed by the Marine Environment Protection Committee (MEPC) of the International Maritime Organisation (IMO), at its meeting in July 2009. As a first step, the Australian Government is gathering information to assess the risks and impacts of ship strikes on cetaceans in Australian waters. This information will help to inform a National Ship Strike Reduction Strategy.