

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 2008.

Legislation

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

Reported Incidents- calendar year 2008

State/Territory	Ship Strikes numbers for 2008 (small and large cetaceans)
Queensland	1 unidentified whale – struck by large commercial vessel – fate unknown but blood in the water
	1 unidentified whale – struck by yacht – fate unknown
	1 unidentified whale – struck by pilot boat – not seen after collision
	1 humpback whale – struck by 9m rib – fate unknown
South Australia	1 pygmy right whale – injuries observed at post-mortem
Victoria	Sperm whale – beach washed – ship strike considered from injury photographs (available if requested)
New South Wales	1 humpback whale calf – carcass washed ashore with ship strike injuries visible
Western Australia	1 female southern right whale – showing healed ship strike scar – no residual effects noticed
	1 bottlenose dolphin – struck by small boat conducting line transect survey – survived
	1 whale (likely humpback) – hit by cruiser – whale fate unknown – damage to cruiser approx \$70-80,000

Management Measures

Australia, with Belgium and the United States, hosted a side event on ship strikes at the International Maritime Organisation Marine Environment Protection Committee (MEPC) October meeting. There was a great deal of interest in the topic as a new agenda item for the work program of the MEPC (an initiative co-sponsored by Australia at the previous MEPC meeting). A draft guidance document for minimizing the risk of ship strikes with cetaceans was submitted by the United States for use by IMO Member Governments in addressing the issue of ship strikes.

Australia will be working on improving management of the issue of ship strikes in our waters by utilising actions identified in the draft guidance, including:

- Information gathering (research and reporting)
- Education and Outreach (Notices to Mariners, brochures and public service announcements)
- Technological development (detection at sea)
- Operational measures (change in shipping routes, vessel reporting and speed restrictions)