
Country Report on Ship Strikes: Australia

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 2007.

Legislation

Under Australia's national legislation, *Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999*, ship strikes on cetaceans in Commonwealth waters, whether resulting in injury or death, must be reported.

Reported Incidents- calendar year 2007

State/Territory	Ship strike statistics (small and large cetaceans)
Queensland	1 humpback whale – Northern Great Barrier Reef – struck and killed by fast ferry
	1 humpback whale- Central Great Barrier Reef – collision with tourist vessel – no visible injuries or changes to whale behaviour
	2 humpback whales (cow and calf) – Central Great Barrier Reef – both whales observed with propeller cuts – swimming normally
	1 dolphin – stranded dead with serious head trauma attributed to boat strike
Tasmania	1 humpback whale – live animal observed with severe trauma from propeller strike – photos taken – fate unknown
South Australia	1 sperm whale – carcass showed large gash on the back of the whale suggesting ship collision

Management Measures

In response to the ship strike of a blue whale near Fremantle Port, Western Australia (refer IWC59 CC4), the Fremantle Port Authority has initiated an education campaign for Port users to raise awareness of the apparent increase in the number of blue whales using the area and the potential for ship strikes.

In April 2008, Australia co-sponsored with Belgium and Italy, the successful proposal to add measures to prevent ship strikes on cetaceans to the work program of the International Maritime Organisation (IMO), Marine Environment Protection Committee. The aim of the work is to develop an IMO guidance document for use by IMO Member Governments in addressing the issue of ship strikes. Finalisation and implementation of this document will require continuing international collaboration, and cooperation between environmental and shipping agencies within countries (in Australia, the Department of the Environment, Water, Heritage and the Arts is working with the Australian Maritime Safety Authority).