

# Campobello Whale Rescue Team



Photo: Center for Coastal Studies

## Fishers Helping Fishers Rescue Whales

### About Us

The Campobello Whale Rescue Team (CWRT) of the Canadian Whale Institute (CWI) is an organization of fishers, scientists and conservationists. They have firsthand knowledge of maritime waters, fishing gear and whale behaviour.

- Team members are trained in the use of specialized equipment to disentangle large whales from fishing gear, and to work with weir owners to release entrapped whales.
- The CWRT is licensed and permitted by Fisheries and Oceans Canada (DFO) to disentangle whales in the Maritimes, Gulf of St. Lawrence and Quebec. We work in coordination with DFO, the Marine Animal Response Society (MARS), and the Réseau québécois d'urgences pour les mammifères marins (RQUMM) in partnership with Équipe de Desempêchement du Golfe (EDG).
- The CWRT provides training for fishers and mariners interested in the program.
- The CWRT is a member of the Canadian Coast Guard Auxiliary and is trained in marine search and rescue.



Entrapments in weirs are not usually lethal to large whales if they can be released in a timely manner. (Photo: Moira Brown)

### Why is there a need for a response capability?

The CWRT is committed to responding to entanglements out of concern for the whales and the fishers.

Rope entanglements can inflict injury that compromises the whale's health, limits their ability to feed, socialize, migrate and in the case of females, their capacity to reproduce. Severe entanglements can lead to the death of the whale.

Whale entanglements are expensive for fishers because of lost gear, lost catch and lost time.



CWRT and EDG partners train regularly to enhance teamwork and skills. (Photo: Moira Brown)



The CWRT works from small rigid inflatable boats, often many miles from shore. (Photo: Nick Hawkins)

### Goals

- Support the fishing industry and encourage stewardship of whales among fishers, mariners, government and the public.
- Increase public awareness of the efforts to reduce the adverse effects of whale entanglement, including active prevention of entanglements through various means.

### How?

- Encourage the fishing industry and other mariners to report whales in distress.
- Maintain whale rescue teams in New Brunswick to provide a timely response in the Canadian Maritimes and Quebec waters, to assess, document and when possible, safely rescue the animal.



Joe Howlett, one of the founders of CWRT, freeing a severely entangled North Atlantic right whale. (Photo: Jerry Conway)

### What to do if you see an entangled whale.

- Report:
  - in the **Canadian Maritimes**, please call **MARS** at **1-866-567-6277**
  - or **Canadian Coast Guard** on **VHF** channel **16**
  - in **Quebec** waters, please call **RQUMM** at **1-877-722-5346**
- **Stand by the entangled whale** if possible, until the CWRT arrives on scene.

The CWRT will respond immediately; weather and time of day permitting. Once on scene, the CWRT will assess and document the entanglement, and will attempt to disentangle the whale if it can be done in a safe manner.
- **Never try to disentangle the whale yourself.** Do not cut trailing ropes and buoys from the whale. Doing so can greatly hamper the rescue effort. You can help support our mission. A tax-deductible contribution to the Canadian Whale Institute will help the Campobello Whale Rescue Team rescue entangled whales.

You can help support our mission. A tax deductible contribution to the Canadian Whale Institute will help the Campobello Whale Rescue Team rescue entangled whales. Donations can be made through Canada Helps. <https://www.canadahelps.org/en/charities/canadian-whale-institute/>. Or you can mail a cheque or money order to: Canadian Whale Institute, 16 Herring Cove Road, Welshpool, New Brunswick E5E 1B6 Canada.



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