

NMFS No: E03-23	Date First Observed Entangled: 1/27/2023
Location First Observed Entangled: 7.8 NM southeast of Surf City, NC	Latitude/Longitude First Observed Entangled: 34° 20.7' N, 77° 25.2' W
Initial Movement (Anchored/Free): Free-swimming	Status: Disentangled
Sighting prior to entanglement: 5/26/2022	Re-sightings Post-entanglement: 1/29/2023
Whale Biology: Live right whale #1218, "Argo", adult male	
NMFS Serious Injury/Mortality Determination: TBD	

Event Description:	
1/27/2023	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Clearwater Marine Aquarium Research Institute (CMARI) aerial survey located, reported and documented the entangled whale. With assistance from the SC aerial survey team responders from Duke University attempted to attach a telemetry buoy but were unsuccessful. A more advanced response team from GA and FL traveled late in the day to be in the area for a possible response the following day. 	
1/28/2023	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The CMARI aerial survey located the whale again approximately 10 miles from the where it was sighted the day before. A response team comprising of GA DNR, FL Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission and Duke University launched with multiple vessels and were able to obtain underwater footage and attach telemetry for a response the next day. 	
1/29/2023	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The CMARI aerial survey located the whale further south than the previous day with assistance from the telemetry and conducted a full disentanglement operation including the recovery of nearly all the gear. 	

Description of Gear on Whale as Reported:	
During Initial Sighting: Multiple wraps of line on the peduncle and fluke with what appeared to be 1-2 traps dragging a very short distance behind.	Subsequent Descriptions: Nearly fully embedded line on the peduncle leading to a twist of line just left of the center of the fluke and with partially crushed wire mesh traps.

Description of Wounds/Condition:	
During Initial Sighting: Overall very poor condition with significant entanglement trauma on the fluke. Fluke use was minimal and the whale appeared to be swimming with its pectoral flippers.	Subsequent Descriptions: Severe embedded entanglement trauma on the peduncle. Overall, thin and very poor condition. Whale appeared to avoid using its fluke for propulsion.

FISHERY INTERACTION GEAR ANALYSIS			
NMFS No.	E03-23	Gear Recovered (y/n)	Yes
Date Set	Unknown – DFO investigating	Date Lost	Unknown – DFO investigating
Line Diameter	½”	Gear Part	Ground line and traps
Fishery Mark Recovered/Documented	Yes	Fishery Mark Origin and Color	Purple trap tags for LFA 33
Target Species	Lobster	Location of set	Unknown – DFO investigating
Gear Type	Canadian lobster – Area 33		
<u>Gear Description:</u>	24 fathoms of ½” floating ground line was recovered. Two partially crushed 12 gauge blue wire mesh trap of 48” X 15” X 24” in size were recovered. Each trap had a purple trap tag with LFA 33 and fisherman identification.		
<u>Comments:</u>	Canadian DFO was consulted with this analysis and the marks are consistent with Canadian lobster – Area 33 off of Nova Scotia. No buoy line was present. The exact distance between the traps was not measureable due to multiple disentanglement cuts being made. The 32 on the purple trap tag is not part of the area identification. Canadian DFO analysis can be found here .		
<u>Conclusions:</u>	Whale was entangled in floating ground line of a Canadian lobster trawl from Area 33 off of southern Nova Scotia, Canada.		



E03-23 image – Recovered gear on day of retrieval.



E03-23 image – Recovered gear separated for measurement.



E03-23 image – Recovered trap tag.