

<b>NMFS No: E04-23</b>	<b>Date First Observed Entangled: 2/09/2023</b>
<b>Location First Observed Entangled:</b> 33.2 NM southeast of Nantucket Island, MA	<b>Latitude/Longitude First Observed Entangled:</b> 40° 42' N, 69° 51' W
<b>Initial Movement (Anchored/Free):</b> Free-swimming	<b>Status:</b> Partial disentanglement
<b>Sighting prior to entanglement:</b> 7/28/2022	<b>Re-sightings Post-entanglement:</b> None
<b>Whale Biology:</b> Live right whale #4545, adult female	
<b>NMFS Serious Injury/Mortality Determination:</b> TBD	

<b>Event Description:</b>
<p>2/09/2023</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>NOAA Fisheries Northeast Fisheries Science Center (NEFSC) aerial survey located and documented the free-swimming whale. No response was mounted due to distance from shore and time of day.</li> </ul>
<p>3/28/2023</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The Center for Coastal Studies (CCS) response team relocated the whale in Cape Cod Bay and immediately initiated a disentanglement operation. The entanglement configuration changed significantly since the first sighting and was now clearly a serious life-threatening entanglement. Despite daylight quickly being lost the response team managed to attach telemetry and remove approximately 200 feet of line and a buoy.</li> </ul>
<p>4/04/2023</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Poor weather prevented an immediate response but the CCS response team was able to conduct another disentanglement effort on April 4 using the telemetry and aerial support to relocate the whale. Significant floatation and drag was added to aid the response team but the nature of the entanglement continued to prove difficult at removing. The whale also proved extremely evasive and reacting to the drag in unexpected ways that often changed the entanglement configuration. Eventually a grapple parted the trailing line with all the drag and the whale sped up with much of the lethal portion of the entanglement still remaining and telemetry no longer attached. The operation was eventually called off due to worsening weather.</li> </ul>

<b>Description of Gear on Whale as Reported:</b>	
<b>During Initial Sighting:</b> Single line trailing out of the right side of the mouth and at least 3 body length before sinking to depth.	<b>Subsequent Descriptions:</b> Two tight body wraps partially embedded with line off the right flank and trailing 300-400' and leading to depth.

<b>Description of Wounds/Condition:</b>	
<b>During Initial Sighting:</b> Overall the whale appeared relatively normal with nothing significant noted.	<b>Subsequent Descriptions:</b> Partially embedded lines on the body. Overall condition was noticeably different from first sighting with paler skin.

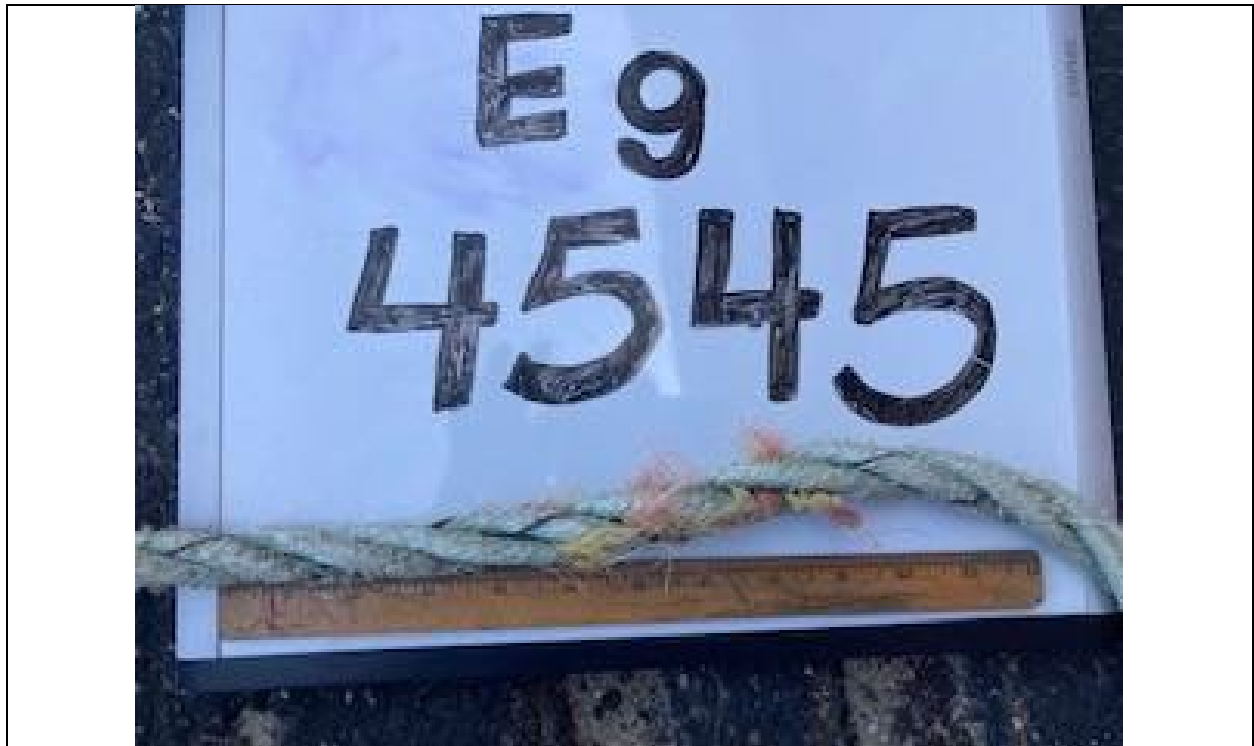
<b>FISHERY INTERACTION GEAR ANALYSIS</b>			
NMFS No.	<b>E04-23</b>	Gear Recovered (y/n)	Yes
Date Set	Unknown	Date Lost	Unknown
Line Diameter	5/8"	Gear Part	Buoy line and buoy.
Fishery Mark Recovered/Documented	Yes	Fishery Mark Origin and Color	Canadian orange and yellow
Target Species	Snow Crab	Location of set	Unknown
Gear Type	Canadian snow crab – Area 12		
<u>Gear Description:</u>	<p>53 fathoms of 5/8" line was recovered with 33 fathoms being green float line with yellow tracer and the remaining 20 fathoms being green beaded leaded sink line with black tracer. The transition from float line to sink line is seamless with no knots or splice. The line overall was twisted upon itself (mainly near the recovered polyball) and the line was clearly stretched in a number of places making the length recovered approximate.</p> <p>Three sets of orange and yellow fishery identification marks were present in the line with the length of the recovered marks being 3.5, 5, and 5.5 inches respectively.</p> <p>A deflated LD 2 polyball was recovered with the numbers 145 painted on it.</p>		
<u>Comments:</u>	<p>Canadian DFO was consulted with this analysis and the marks are consistent with Canadian Snow Crab – Area 12 in the Gulf of St. Lawrence. No known U.S. fishery has a similar color schemed fishery identification mark. The legal season for Canadian snow crab in 2022 was from April 13 to June 30.</p> <p>Canadian DFO analysis can be found <a href="#">here</a>.</p>		
<u>Conclusions:</u>	Whale was entangled in the buoy line of a Canadian snow crab trap from Area 12 of the Gulf of St. Lawrence.		



E04-23 image – Recovered gear separated for measurement.



E04-23 image – Beaded lead in sink line.



E04-23 image – Fishery identification mark.



E04-23 image – Fishery identification mark.