



Department of Marine Resources

For Immediate Release

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New State-wide Marine Animal Reporting Hotline

The Maine Department of Marine Resources is pleased to announce an important new partnership with participating members of the Maine Strandings Network – College of the Atlantic, University of New England, and New England Aquarium – in the development of a state-wide hotline number to report stranded, dead, entangled, or beached marine animals along the entire Maine coast.

The Maine Whale Hotline, originally developed by the Maine DMR in 2002 to receive reports of live, dead, stranded or entangled whales, has been expanded to include reports of all whales, stranded or dead seals, dolphins, porpoises, and entangled sea turtles along the coast of Maine.

With one phone call, reports of these many marine animal species are now directed to the various authorized responding organizations, including the COA's Allied Whale, UNE's Marine Animal Rehabilitation Center, NEAq's Strandings Program, NOAA Fisheries Strandings Program, Provincetown Center for Coastal Studies' Whale Disentanglement Program, and the Maine DMR.

All of these agencies will continue to offer their direct phone numbers, but are also now incorporated into a single toll-free response hotline for use by the general public. Day and night, calls are either answered by an operator or routed automatically by selecting from the menu of options.

The new toll-free state-wide Maine Marine Animal Reporting Hotline, formerly known as the Maine State Whale Hotline, is: 1-800-532-9551.

The hotline directs callers first by species (whale, seal, dolphin/porpoise, or sea turtle), then by region (southern Maine coast from Kittery to Rockland, and eastern

Maine coast from Rockland to Canada). Whale reports are further directed by type of sighting – whether the whale is alive, swimming, entangled, dead or beached – as no fewer than five organizations are designated response authorities for the various whale sightings.

Funding for the creation and implementation of the Maine Marine Animal Reporting Hotline is provided by the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation and NOAA Fisheries.

For more information about the Maine Marine Animal Reporting Hotline, please contact Laura Ludwig at the DMR, (207) 633-9513 or view the script at the DMR's website, www.maine.gov/dmr.