



### **Assessing welfare and survival in stranded cetaceans: Round 1**

This study aims to gather expert opinion on the factors that are likely to affect the welfare and survival of stranded cetaceans, and to identify indicators that may be used to evaluate their welfare state and likelihood of survival. You have been identified as an expert in the field of cetacean biology, strandings and/or animal welfare. We would therefore like to invite you to participate.

Cetacean strandings are global phenomena that have been occurring for centuries. Research suggests that these events are occurring more frequently due to climate change and anthropogenic activities. Costly and logistically challenging attempts to 'rescue' live stranded cetaceans are often undertaken. Yet there is limited information regarding the success of such efforts, and the effects of stranding and human intervention on both the welfare and survival of individuals remain poorly understood.

To address this knowledge gap, this research project implements the Delphi technique, which uses iterative questionnaires to build consensus from expert opinion. *In the first-round experts answer open unstructured questions, and these are then reviewed in the second round. The reviewing of answers is crucial to the success of a Delphi survey.* Therefore, there will be at least two online questionnaires to complete. The first questionnaire asks you to identify key factors that may affect the welfare and survivorship of stranded cetaceans, as well as to suggest observable/measurable indicators that might be suitable to assess welfare state and likelihood of survival at cetacean strandings. The information gathered will be used to inform the design of the second questionnaire which will follow approximately 2 weeks later. Together, these data will provide the first stage in validating potential indicators of cetacean welfare and survival in the context of strandings.

This study is being undertaken as part of Rebecca Boys' PhD project and the findings will be used in a peer-reviewed publication as part of Rebecca's PhD thesis. A summary of the project findings will be made available to all participants.

No IP addresses or data identifying individual participants will be collected. Data collected about your region, area of expertise and current field of work will be used to examine trends in answers provided. The anonymised data will be stored in a password-protected computer for up to 5 years after the end of the study.

You are under no obligation to participate. Beginning the first questionnaire implies your consent to participate. You can choose not to answer some questions. There are 15 questions and it should take approximately 20 minutes to complete. It must be completed by Friday 26<sup>th</sup> February 2021.

This project is being undertaken by Massey University PhD student Rebecca M Boys under the supervision of Prof. Karen A Stockin, Dr Emma L Betty, Dr Mat Pawley (School of Natural and Computational Sciences) and Assoc/Prof. Ngaio J Beausoleil (School of Veterinary Sciences). We thank you for your time in considering the invitation.

Please contact us if you have any questions about the project

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This project has been evaluated by peer review and judged to be low risk (Notification number: 4000023382). Consequently, it has not been reviewed by one of the University's Human Ethics Committees. The researchers named above are responsible for the ethical conduct of this research.

If you have any concerns about the conduct of this research that you wish to raise with someone other than the researcher(s), please contact Prof Craig Johnson, Director, Research Ethics, telephone (0064) 06 356 9099 x 85271, email [humanethics@massey.ac.nz](mailto:humanethics@massey.ac.nz)

### **Assessing welfare and survival in stranded cetaceans: Round 2**

This study aims to gather expert opinion on the factors that are likely to affect the welfare and survival of stranded cetaceans, and to identify indicators that may be used to evaluate their welfare state and likelihood of survival. You have been identified as an expert in the field of cetacean biology, strandings and/or animal welfare. We would therefore like to invite you to participate.

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To address this knowledge gap, this research project implements the Delphi technique, which uses iterative questionnaires to build consensus from expert opinion. *In the first-round experts answer open unstructured questions, and these are then reviewed in the second round. The reviewing of answers is crucial to the success of a Delphi survey.* The first questionnaire asked you to identify key factors that may affect the welfare and survivorship of stranded cetaceans, as well as to suggest observable/measurable indicators that might be suitable to assess welfare state and likelihood of survival at cetacean strandings. The information gathered was used to inform the design of this second questionnaire. Together, these data will provide the first stage in validating potential indicators of cetacean welfare and survival in the context of strandings.

This study is being undertaken as part of Rebecca Boys' PhD project and the findings will be used in a peer-reviewed publication as part of Rebecca's PhD thesis. A summary of the project findings will be made available to all participants.

No IP addresses or data identifying individual participants will be collected. Data collected about your region, area of expertise and current field of work will be used to examine trends in answers provided. The anonymised data will be stored in a password-protected computer for up to 5 years after the end of the study.

You are under no obligation to participate. Beginning the questionnaire implies your consent to participate. You can participate in the second questionnaire even if you did not complete the first questionnaire. You can choose not to answer some questions. There are 18 questions and it should take approximately 30 minutes to complete. It must be completed by Friday 16<sup>th</sup> April 2021.

This project is being undertaken by Massey University PhD student Rebecca M Boys under the supervision of Prof. Karen A Stockin, Dr Emma L Betty, Dr Mat Pawley (School of Natural and Computational Sciences)



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