



Data on four delphinidae species stranding in the Gulf of Hammamet (Central Mediterranean): recent findings from 2019 to 2021

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Introduction

Cetaceans stranding provides fundamental information in understanding population dynamics and abundance of these endangered species. Most common cetacean species inhabiting the Mediterranean Sea were found stranded in Tunisian Coasts. In this note we report stranding in the Gulf of 10° 11° 12° 12° 13° 13° 14° Hammamet from February 2019 to March 2021.

Materials and Methods

In Tunisia, Cetacean stranding is monitored through a national stranding network (RNE: Reseau National d'Echouages) established by the Institut National des Sciences et Technologies de la Mer (INSTM) since 2004. Three teams are involved to monitor all Tunisian coasts from the North to the South. The study area, Gulf of Hammamet, is situated in the center of Tunisian waters (Fig. 1). It is monitored by the RNE team of the centre region that moves to the stranding site whenever alerted. Whenever possible, the fresh dead animals are transported to the sea turtle rescue center at INSTM of Monastir to perform a necropsy. We are also interested in stranding events reported by social networks.



Fig 1. Stranding locations in the Gulf of Hamammmet. Red stars indicate *Tursiops truncatus* individuals; Yellow star indicates *Delphinus delphis*, grey star indicates *Grampus griseus* and the bleue one is *Stenella coeruleoalba*

Results and Discussion

Nine stranding dolphins belonging to four delphinidea species were recorted during the study period (Fig. 2). *Tursipos truncatus* represents the main stranding species with 06 individuals being reported (66,6%). Only one specimen of the following species were found: *Stenella coeruleoalba, Grampus griseus and Delphinus delphis*. Each of them represents the second record in the study area since the creation of the stranding network . Even though they are considered common species in the Mediterranean, they are very rare in the study area as well as in the other Tunisian waters.

Fig 2. Dolphin species stranded in the studied area

Detailed data for each dolphin are given in table 1. Necropsy was performed on four individuals, and showed death by drowning in two cases. These findings confirm that bottlenose dolphin is the most abundant species in Tunisia.

We acknowledge the use of Maptool programme to draw the map (www.seaturtle.org/maptool)



4	22-06-2019	Grampus griseus	Teboulba	310	-	Advanced decomposition
5	09-09-2019	Tursiops truncatus	Sousse	300	F	decomposed
6	09-08-2020	Tursiops truncatus	Bekalta	-	-	fresh
7	25-08-2020	Tursiops truncatus	Teboulba	210	-	Advanced decomopsition
8	01-03-2021	Tursiops truncatus	Mahdia	295	F	fresh
9	03-03-2021	Delphinus delphis	Hammamet	205	F	fresh

 Table 1. Data on delphinidea stranding in the Gulf of Hammamet from 2019 to mars 2021

 TL: total body length, F: female, M: male







06-02-2019

08-02-2019

27-05-2019

1

2

3





