



REPORT ON ACCOBAMS CETACEAN NECROPSY TRAININGS

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This document will be available only in electronic format during the Meeting.*



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Under the auspices of ACCOBAMS, a marine mammal necropsy training has been organized by the department of Comparative Biomedicine and Food Science, (University of Padova, Italy) and the Department of Veterinary Pathology (University of Liege, Belgium), in collaboration with the Laboratory of Applied Bioacoustics LAB (Universitat Politècnica de Catalunya, Spain), the UMS Pelagis, Centre de Recherche sur les Mammifères Marins (University of La Rochelle, France) and the Cre.Di.Ma - Centro di Referenza per la Diagnostica sui Mammiferi Marini (Istituto Zooprofilattico Sperimentale Piemonte, Liguria e Val d'Aosta, Torino, Italy).

The main goal of this workshop was to train experts biologists and veterinarians from the different ACCOBAMS countries on the European Best Practice Document on cetaceans' postmortem investigations and tissue sampling in order to gain information on possible threats for cetaceans' conservation. For this reason, the objective of the workshop was :

- (1) to train experts on cetaceans necropsy procedures, data collection and tissues sampling ;
- (2) to encourage harmonization to allow regional analysis and interpretation;
- (3) to use new technologies to develop and to apply the concept of teleneecropsy and the on-line consultancy of marine mammal health specialists.

The workshop was subdivided in four sessions:

- (1) A 2-days online marine mammal postmortem investigation webinar using a videoconferencing system (June 28-29, 2021) and an on-line evaluation (July 5, 2021);
- (2) A series of asynchronous lessons between July and August with an on-line evaluation (within September 15th, 2021);
- (3) Online necropsy demonstrations (September 27-29 and 28 October 2021 respectively from Liege and Padova necropsy room);
- (4) A 3-days face-to-face marine mammal postmortem workshop in February (22-24, Padova) and in March (22-25, Liege) 2022.

The workshop was open to veterinarians and specialists in animals' health involved in marine mammal research, with a maximum of 40 participants.

To reach the objective, the aim of the different sessions of the workshop was to improve the participants' proficiency in:

- (1) Dissection and sampling procedures on marine mammals;
- (2) Concepts and procedures of medical pictures and teleneecropsy;
- (3) Anatomy and gross pathology of marine mammals;
- (4) Skull morphology, extraction and fixation of the cetacean inner ear;
- (5) Conservation and political issues: ACCOBAMS and ASCOBANS

1. June webinar

The marine mammal necropsy workshop webinar session was organized using videoconferencing system.

Necropsy

- *Dissection and sampling: protocol, telenecropsy and on-line necropsy demonstration.* (Subdivision in short sessions): Dabin W., Levy E., Quievy A., Mazzariol S., Jauniaux T.

Other investigations

- *Basic anatomy and physiology:* Graic J.-M.
- *Principles of study and sampling of the hearing apparatus and associated structures in toothed whales:* De Vreese S.
- *Ear extraction and fixation protocol and benefits of inner ear analysis:* Morell M.
- General discussion
- *Main causes of death and threats for cetaceans: postmortem findings interpretation, sampling and diagnosis:* Bycatch, Marine litter ingestion and evaluation, Infectious diseases, Noise, ...: Mazzariol S. & Jauniaux T.
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2. Asynchronous teachings

These short webinars were released in the month of July and the attendants could look at them within August 2021.

- *Principles of tissue sampling and tissue bank :* Centelleghé C.
- *logistics, safety and carcass disposal:* Mazzariol S.
- *large whales postmortem investigation:* Mazzariol S. & Jauniaux T.
- *Studies on micro-plastic and marine litter categorization:* Fossi MC
- *Modeling cetacean movements based on vertebral morphology: another way to use postmortem data:* Gillet A.
- *Context of noise pollution and effects on marine fauna.* André M.

3. Online necropsy demonstration

Demonstrations of cetacean's necropsies have been organized from Padova and from Liege (September 27-29 and October 28, 2021), using videoconferencing system. Multiple cameras provided (1) general view of the necropsy, (2) details of the organs and (3) view of the pathologist in charge of the post-mortem examination. Such system demonstrates the interest of telenecropsy and the on-line evaluation of experts.

4. Face-to-face marine mammal postmortem workshop

Two sessions were organized, February 27 to 29, 2022 for Padova and from March 12-14, 2022, for Liege.

4.1. Padova

The Padova's workshop was organized in the Veterinary College in the AGRIPOLIS Campus (Legnaro, PD, Italy). Participants came from non-French speaking countries and the meeting was organized in English. The workshop was organized in a theoretical session summarizing the basic necropsy protocol and the relevant diagnostic framework and also visiting relevant laboratories involved in ancillary investigations; in a hands-on training of one day with 5 dolphins; finally, in the last morning doubts were clarified and cases discussed to achieve a final diagnosis. Furthermore other relevant cases were presented and discussed, including histopathology.

Participants to the Padova session

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4.2. Liege

The Liege's session was held at the Veterinary College on the Sart-Tilman campus (ULiège, Belgium). All participants originated from French speaking countries and the meeting was organized in French. Morning sessions were dedicated to theoretical and technical presentations while afternoon sessions were dedicated to a necropsy done by participants.

Participants to the Liege session

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*special session in July, 12-14, 2022

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