

Three decades of harbour porpoise reproduction at the German coast

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Introduction

Results

The harbor porpoise (*Phocoena phocoena*) is one of the three top predators at the German coast. They are affected by different anthropogenic influences such as chemical pollutions, fisheries, shipping and offshore-constructions^{1,2,3}. Those effects can lead to depletion of populations due to changes in reproduction success. Like most other mammals, harbor porpoises undergo distinct phases towards sexual maturity, which makes them especially vulnerable to anthropogenic impacts. The present study gives an overview of the last three decades of reproductive capacity of stranded and by-caught harbor porpoises collected at the German coast.







Fetus, neonate (Neo.), juvenile (Juv.) and adult (Ad.) female harbor porpoises were collected between 1992 and 2022. For the detection of different reproductive parameters the uteri and ovaries from 363 harbor porpoises were macroscopically investigated ^{4,5}. Corpus luteum (CL), Corpus albicans (CA), tertiary follicle, scars and pregnancy were recorded.

Total	Age group					Water			Findings		
	Fetus	Neo.	Juv.	Ad.	n. d.	North Sea	Baltic Sea	n.d.	CA	CL	Scars
363	5	51	152	153	2	187	172	4	71	85	54
n d · not determined											



> Negative effects on population



- Significant positive correlation between weight and corpora, weight and all findings, weight and age groups
- Ovary weight seems higher during molting and breeding season
- Among the dead animals the majority was immature

- Detection of mature individuals easier
- Long-term reproductive data can be used effectively

to detect population changes



poster to go

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⁵Grygar I. et al. 1997. Volume of luteal tissue and concentration of serum progesterone in cows bearing homogeneous corpus luteum or corpus luteum with cavity. Anim Reprod Sci 49:77-82.

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