HUMAN INDUCED CETACEAN MORTALITY IN THE ADRIATIC SEA

Duras Gomerčić, Martina (1), Galov, Ana (2), Gomerčić, Tomislav (3), Lucić, Hrvoje (4), Škrtić, Darinka (5), Ćurković, Snježana (6), Vuković, Snježana (7) and Gomerčić, Hrvoje (8)

(1,4,5,7,8) Department of Anatomy, Histology and Embryology, Faculty of Veterinary Medicine, University of Zagreb, Heinzelova 55, 10000 Zagreb, Croatia; martina.duras@vet.hr (2) Department of Animal Physiology, Faculty of Science, University of Zagreb, Rooseveltov trg 6, 10000 Zagreb, Croatia (3) Department of Biology, Faculty of Veterinary Medicine, University of Zagreb, Heinzelova 55, 10000 Zagreb, Croatia

Acknowledgments
This research was funded by:
- Ministry of Science, Education and Sport of Republic of Croatia (Project No. 0053317)
- Gesellschaft zur Rettung der Delphine, Munich, Germany
- The State Institute for Nature Protection, Croatia
with annual permits of Croatian authorities.

Introduction
- human induced mortality can impact the population dynamics of small or localized cetacean populations
- bottlenose dolphin (Tursiops truncatus) - only resident cetacean species in the Adriatic Sea
- estimated population size: 250 animals

Materials and methods
- from October 1990 till November 2008 - post-mortem examinations were performed on 158 cetacean carcasses found in Croatian part of the Adriatic sea

Results
- cause of death was determined in 57.6% of cases

- human induced mortality:
  - higher in resident (bottlenose dolphin) species - 62.3%
  - lower in nonresident species - 27.3%
  - in bottlenose dolphins - bycatch - 59%
    - larynx strangulation with gillnet parts - 28%
    - gun lesions - 5%
    - physical traumatic injuries - 5%
    - blast trauma? - 3%

Fig. 1: Study area, Croatian part of the Adriatic Sea is marked red

Fig. 2. Cetacean species examined

Fig. 3: Human induced mortality in the bottlenose dolphin

Fig. 4: Human induced mortality ratio