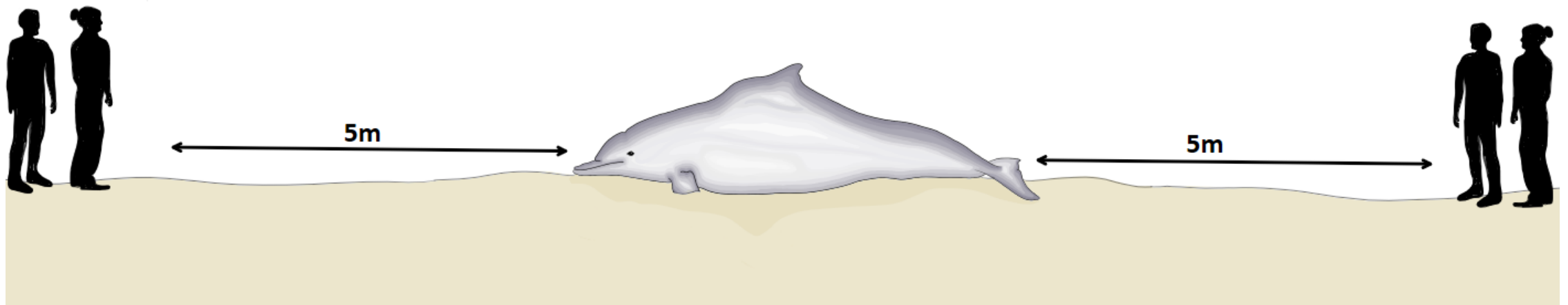


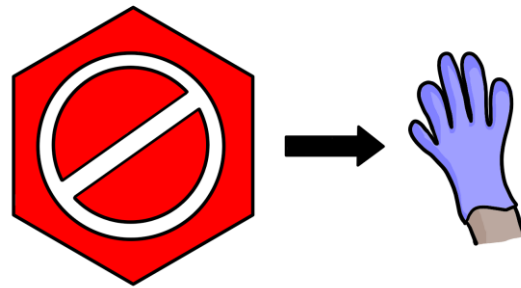
Basic Sampling Protocol for Stranded Marine Mammals

1. Initial Assessment

1. Use reported information to locate the carcass.
2. Maintain crowds at a safe distance (minimum 5m).

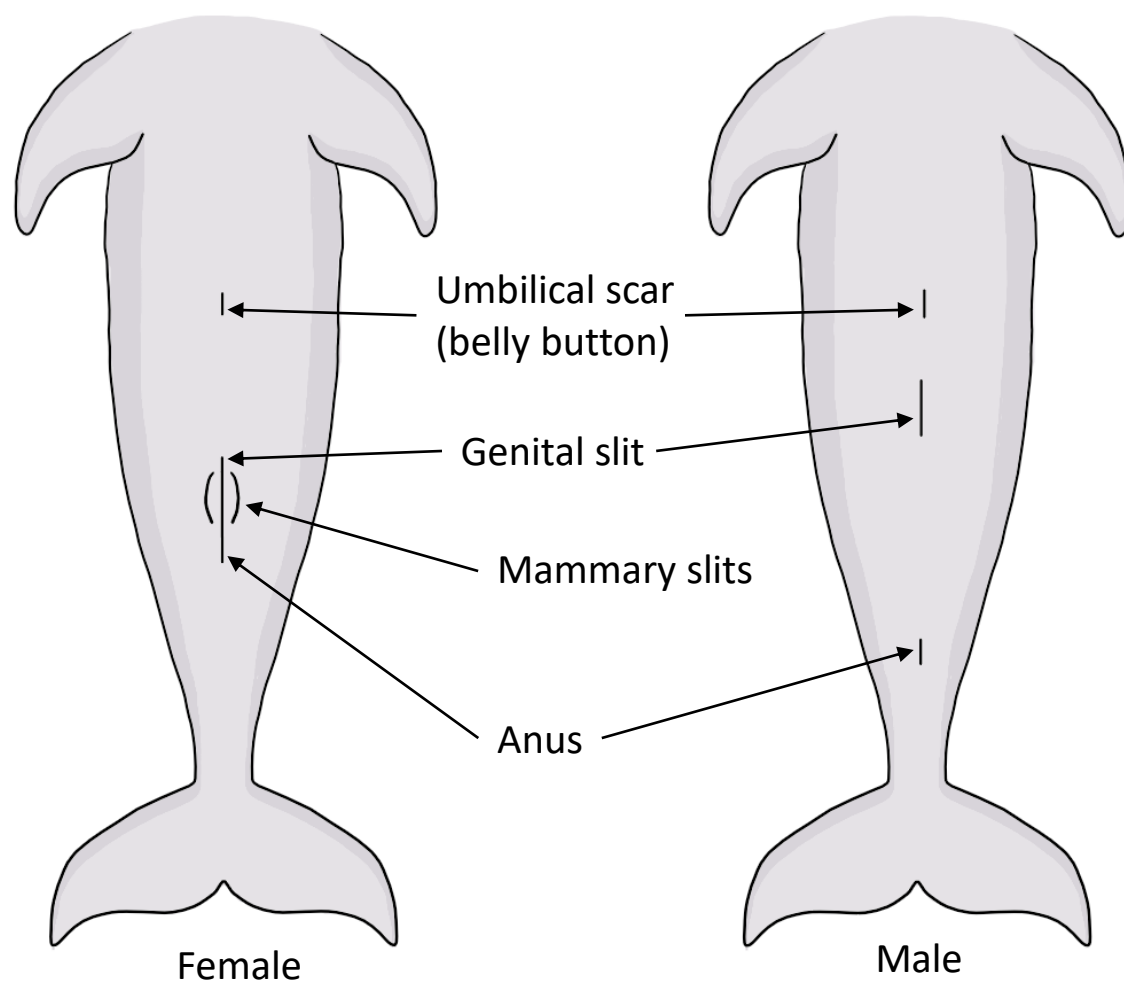


3. Assess the scene: Is it safe to approach? Is the animal entangled in fishing gear? Has it been butchered?
4. If it is safe, put on protective gloves and approach the animal. Do not touch the animal yet.



Marine mammal stranding incidents provide opportunities to collect biological information such as species, sex, and age and to assess the health of the population in an area.

5. Determine Sex



6. Document carcass state

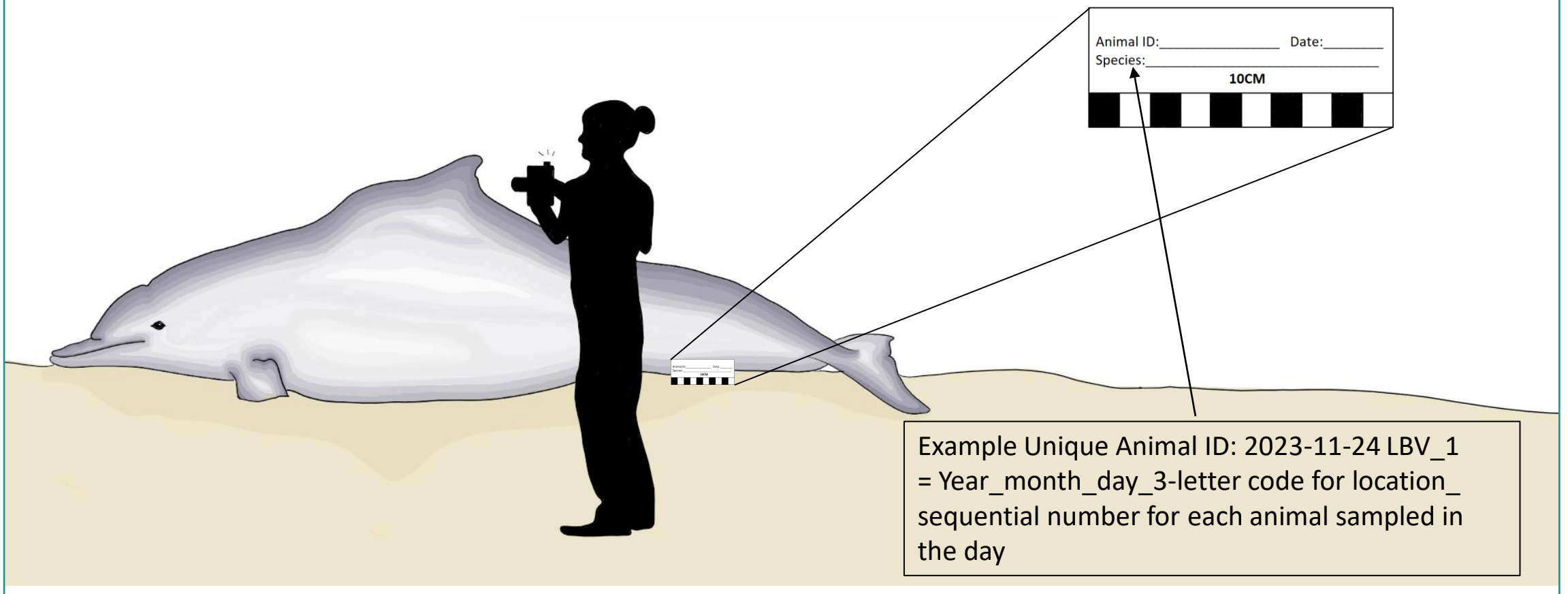
- 1 = alive
- 2 = fresh
- 3 = decomposed
- 4 = very decomposed
- 5 = bones



2. Photographs

Photographs are essential for species identification. Put a **scale label** with a unique **animal ID** (e.g. 2023-11-24 LBV_1) and the **date** next to the animal in each photo.

1. Stand side-on to the animal to photograph the entire animal from a perpendicular perspective. This will allow accurate assessment of the scene, as well as the shape of the dorsal fin, head and 'beak'. Carefully wash off any sand with water to get a clean view.



2. Close-ups of various body parts and **any** noticeable wounds or markings on the skin should be taken. A close-up photograph of the dorsal fin can be used for individual identification. All photos should be taken perpendicular to the animal if possible. It is ok to move the animal if needed and you can do so safely.

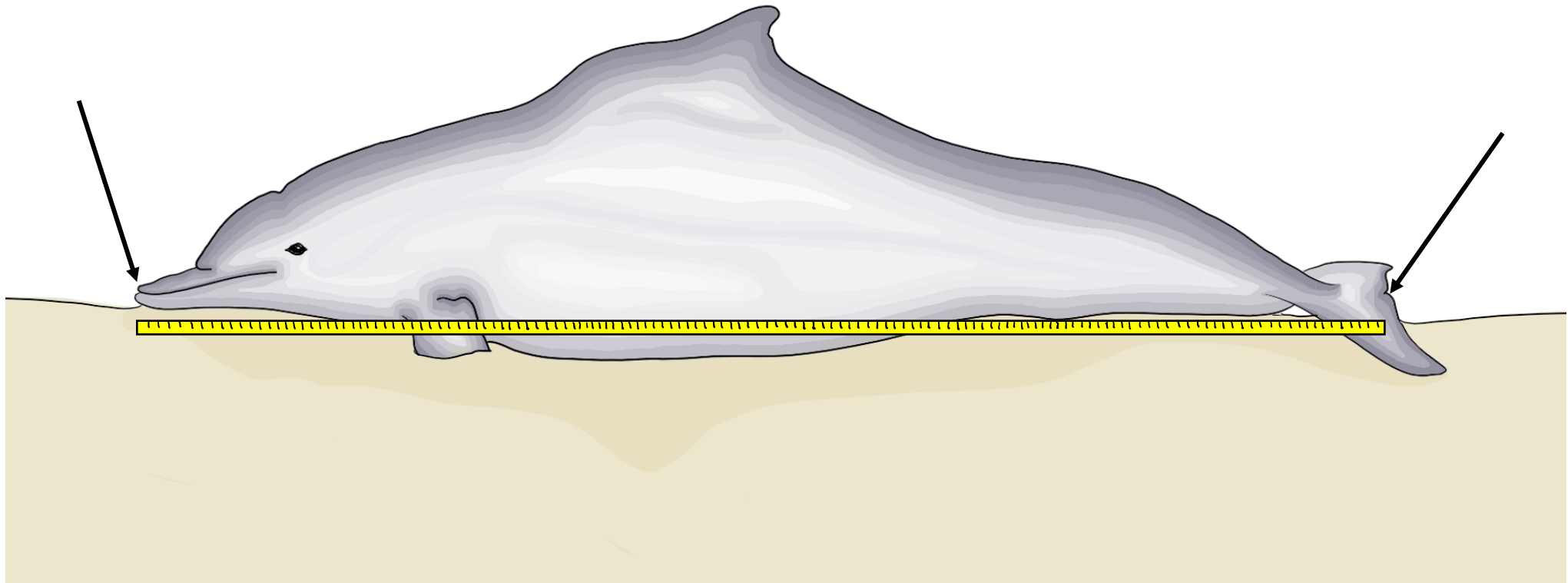
Right Side	Left Side	Right Head	Left Head
Dorsum (Back)	Ventrum (Belly)	Pectoral Flippers	Flukes/Tail
Dorsal Fin (left and right sides)	Genital Area	Teeth (left and right sides)	Wounds/Marks



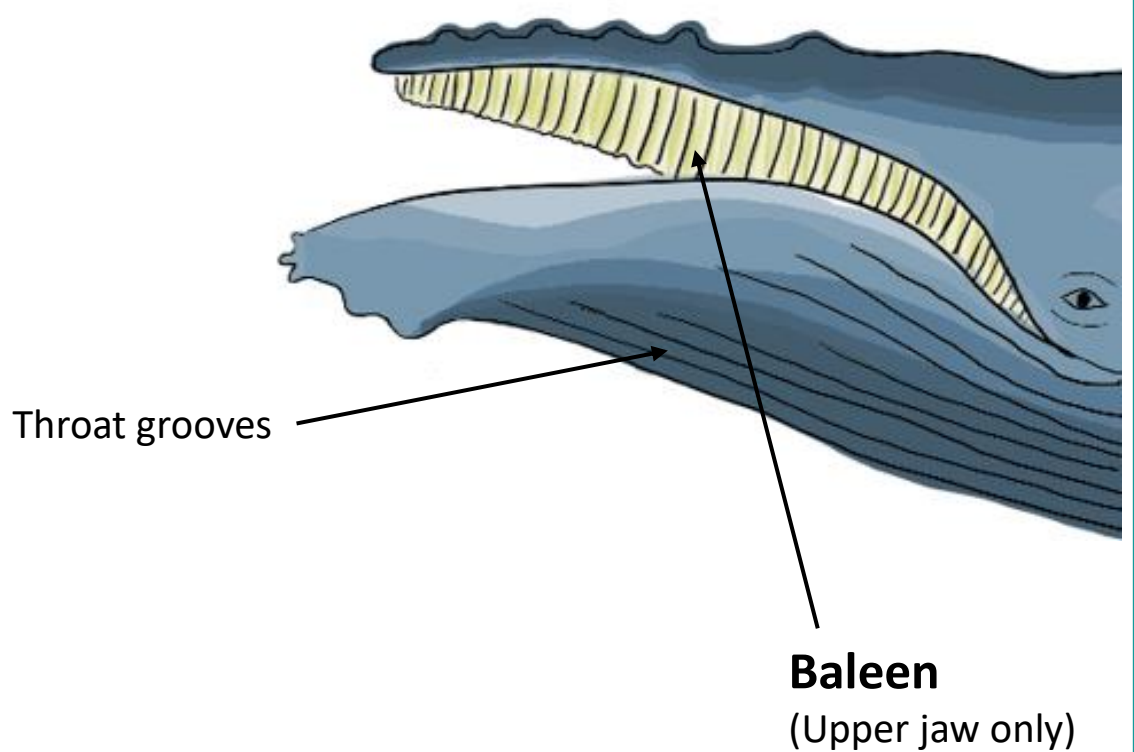
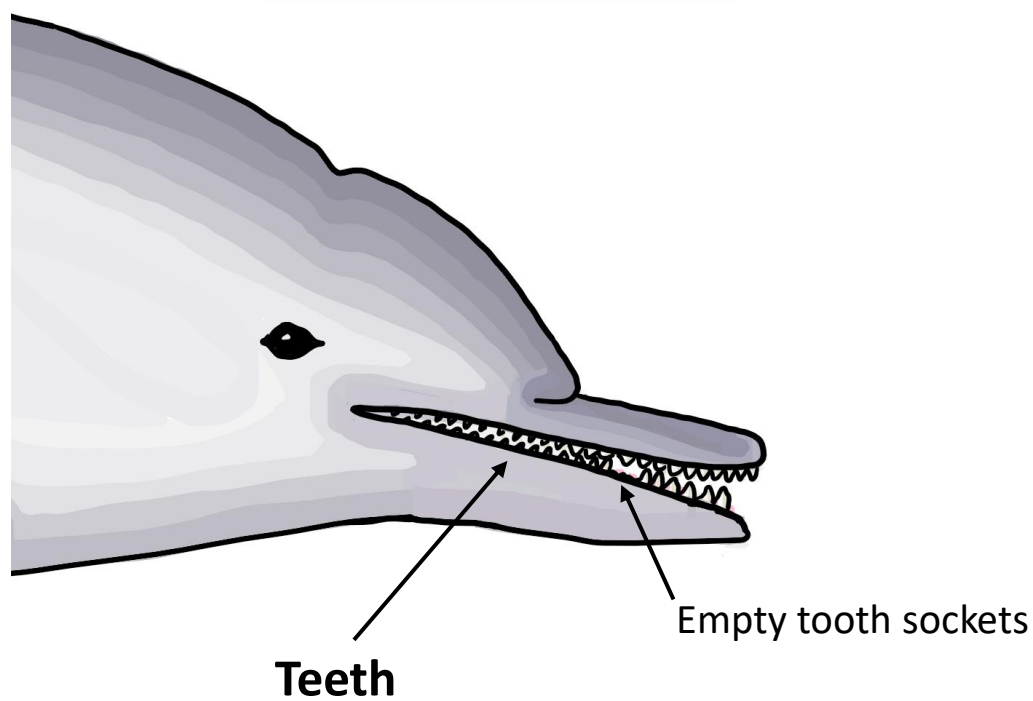
3. Measurements

Measurements can further help with species ID and age determination.

1. Take a total straight length from the tip of the upper jaw to the fluke notch. Make sure the measuring tape is pulled tight.

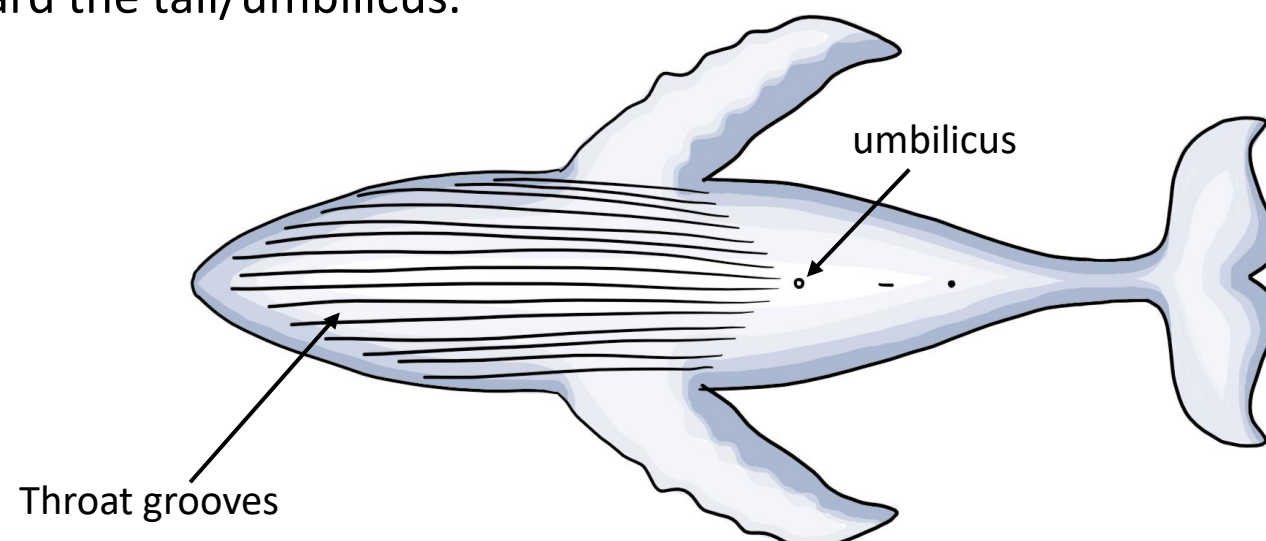


2. Determine if the animal has teeth or baleen:



2.1 If there are teeth, count the teeth on the right and left sides of both the upper and lower jaws. Note any empty sockets.

2.2 If there are baleen plates, count the number of throat grooves on the whale's underside and note how far they extend toward the tail/umbilicus.

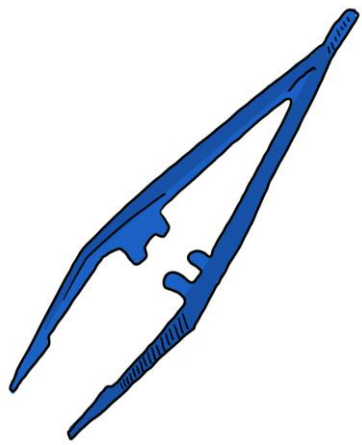


4. Sampling (Optional) and Final Steps

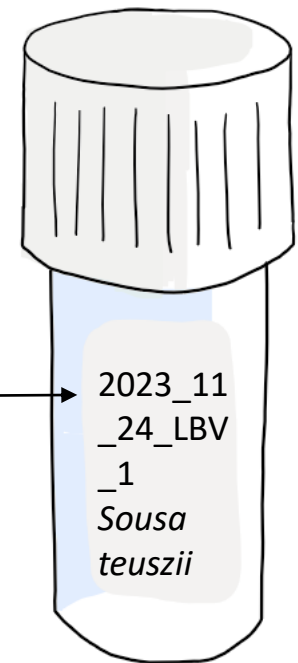
SAMPLING: Samples can be collected for genetic analysis and age determination.

Skin

1. Make sure you are wearing gloves and are using a fresh sterile blade to avoid contamination of your sample.
2. Cut a small cube (5mmx5mm) of skin using the blade and tweezers. Make sure the sample doesn't contain blubber or fat.
3. Use tweezers to pick up the sample and store it in one of the following ways:
 - a. Put sample in a 20% salt-saturated Dimethyl Sulfoxide solution (DMSO) (this is in the sample vial provided in the CCAHD sampling kit); or
 - b. Put sample in 95% Ethanol (EtOH) or strong spirits (vodka/gin); or
 - c. Remove blubber, air dry the sample, put in a clean bag/jar.
4. Label the vial/bottle with the unique animal ID and date.



Unique Animal ID =
Year_month_day_3-letter
code for location_
sequential number for each
animal sampled in the day



Teeth

If possible, remove 1-2 teeth from the jaw. Let air dry and put in a clean, dry bag or jar labelled with the unique animal ID and date.

FINAL STEPS: After initial assessment, photographs, measurements and samples are complete;

1. Fill out the [data sheet](#).
2. Store all samples in a Ziploc bag and **label it** with the unique animal ID, species, location, date, sample types, and fluid used for storage.
3. Use a **separate bag** for each individual animal sampled.
4. Submit the [data sheet](#), photos, and samples to your project or country focal point (see below).
5. Restock stranding kit if needed.

Contact Info (*Local project coordinator to provide contact details here*):

Project coordinator/lab name: _____

Phone/WhatsApp: _____

Email: _____

Notes: _____

