

Dear Commissioner,

RE: Dolphins

Each winter large numbers of dead dolphins have been washed up on the shores of the English Channel; since the beginning of January, 80 have been found on the beaches of Devon and Cornwall. Post-mortem studies on the carcasses show that nearly all were victims of incidental bycatch and a limited observer scheme carried out by DEFRA in 2001 also found that 53 dolphins were brought aboard in just 12 hauls.

In light of this, I urge you to commit to reducing cetacean deaths by incidental bycatch; to ensure the implementation of existing proposals for international monitoring, with a scheme in place by the winter of 2003-4, and to put in place new measures for a strategy to reduce incidental bycatch in European waters by the winter of the following year, 2004-5. The need for action is urgent, particularly in view of the likelihood that the number of carcasses coming ashore may be less than 5% of actual deaths.

I look forward to your response.

Yours sincerely

Dr Caroline Lucas MEP