



## PRESS RELEASE

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### **DEHCC Successfully Undertake Marine Mammal Rescue Course**

The Department of the Environment, Heritage and Climate Change (DEHCC) undertook a marine mammal rescue course recently, organised and accredited by the British Divers Marine Life Rescue (BDMLR).

BDMLR is an organisation dedicated to the rescue and well-being of all marine animals in distress around the UK. They are a voluntary network of trained marine mammal medics who respond to call outs from the general public, HM Coastguard, Police, RSPCA and SSPCA. They are the only marine animal rescue organisation operating across England, Wales and Scotland. In addition to acting as a first point of call by the other emergency services, they also train their staff. DEHCC engaged with this highest qualified and reputable organisation to train its staff to the very highest of standards.

The course was run in two parts and included both theory and practical applications. The theory involved learning about:

- cetacean identification,
- cetacean anatomy,
- cetacean adaptations to the marine environment,
- threats associated to cetaceans,
- management of stranded (beached cetaceans),
- stranded cetacean assessment and first aid checks
- recording strandings
- cetacean triage

The practical sessions were carried out at Catalan Bay. The course participants had to adopt their recently acquired cetacean management & first aid skills into practice. Life-sized water filled dolphin and whale models were used during these sessions. The DEHCC staff which attended the course are now certified marine mammal medics.

Commenting on the training, Minister for the Environment John Cortes commented, “With the richness of marine life around our shores, which appears to be increasing in recent years, there is



always a possibility – as has happened in the past – that dolphins and whales will become stranded on our shore. We have a responsibility towards the wildlife found in British Gibraltar Territorial Waters. The training undertaken by the Department’s team will better allow them to deal with these situations when time can often be of the essence in saving the life of one of these animals.”

The general public is kindly reminded that the relevant authority for any cetacean stranding or when spotting a cetacean in distress, is the DEHCC. The appropriate course of action is to call DEHCC immediately on 58009620 if they spot any cetaceans in distress.