

Voluntary National Cetacean Conservation Report

Submitted to the Conservation Committee by the Government of Argentina

1.) Advances in government programmes related to cetacean conservation

a. Sea gulls and southern right whales

During 2009 and 2010 the Wild Fauna and Flora Direction (Dirección de Fauna y Flora Silvestre) developed a series of workshops with experts from governmental and non-governmental organizations related to the problematic situation of sea gulls attacks to whales. As a result of these workshops, and with a total consensus of the parties, a management, monitoring and communication plan will begin in the medium term. The management plan has as main objective the reduction of the rate of attack from sea gulls on whales, in a medium term program to that will include experiments to evaluate capture techniques, effectiveness of captures, incidence on the attack rate and evaluation of technical and economic feasibility in the long term. A pilot management action will be implement jointly by the Dirección de Fauna y Flora Silvestre of the Subsecretaría de Recursos Naturales of the Ministerio de Industria, Agricultura y Ganadería, the Dirección General de Gestión Ambiental of the Ministerio de Ambiente y Control del Desarrollo Sustentable, the Dirección General de Conservación de Áreas Protegidas of the Subsecretaría de Turismo y Áreas Protegidas of the Ministerio de Comercio Exterior, Turismo e Inversiones and Dr. Marcelo Bertellotti (Cenpat-Conicet).

b. Ship strike

The Wild Fauna and Flora Direction (Dirección de Fauna y Flora Silvestre) along with the Environmental Ministry and Control of Sustainable Development (Ministerio de Ambiente y Control del Desarrollo Sustentable) of Chubut have developed a series of recommendations to diminish the coalition risks. The recommendations are additional to the Prefectura Naval Argentina regulation (Disposicion Madr, RIA N° 069/09) that implements a restriction for navigation through a single corridor and the mandatory reduction of speed below 10 knots for all vessels during southern right whale season between May and December. The fauna and flora direction has established an agreement with Lic Daniel Perez Martinez for the development of an applied research program to avoid the collision risk during day and night at local ports for sport and commercial vessels.

c. Development of a coastal fauna network

The Coastal Fauna of Chubut Province Network was established. The network is conformed by local nodes in the localities of Puerto Pirámide, Puerto Madryn, Comodoro Rivadavia, Rada Tilly, Playa Unión and Camarones. The objective is to give a state framework to a network of people and institutions related with the intervention on birds and marine mammals that can be seen in the province coasts. The network has initiated a series of specific activities with the aim of responding to stranding of Southern Right Whales of the Peninsula Valdés' population. Among these activities, a series of response protocols to carry out necropsies and sampling on animals found dead are included, as well as actions to be taken to release entangled animals in net, ropes and other anthropogenic related elements.

d. Cooperation Programs

Panama: The Fondo Argentino de Cooperación Horizontal (FO AR) in collaboration with the Universidad Marítima Internacional de Panamá (UMIP) and the support of National Environmental Authority of Panama, National Aquatic Authority of Panama and MarViva convened a Whale Watching training workshop for tour operators and fishermen of Península de Azuero, Panamá on August 2009 in Pedasí, Panamá. Over 40 participants attended the workshop. The workshop was the second one developed in Azuero and provided the necessary tools to develop responsible whale watching.

The I meeting of the Commission on Technical and Scientific Cooperation between Argentina and Panama was held from 12-13 April 2010 in Buenos Aires. Representatives from both governments agreed to develop a cooperation program for 2010-2012 periods to work on capacity building and training workshops on whale watching for tour operators, fishermen and scientists from Panama.