
Voluntary National Cetacean Conservation Report, 2010

Submitted to the Conservation Committee of IWC by the Government of Brazil

1. Legal and other developments

The Action National Plan for the Conservation of Aquatic Mammals is in final editorial corrections for publishing. A separate volume is the Action National Plan for the Conservation of Franciscana, giving the specific framework developed for its elaboration and implementation.

The current legal National instrument to regulate whalewatching boat operation in Brazil is under review. Another one regulating the harassment, swim-with-dolphins and feeding of cetaceans was proposed to the Minister of the Environment late in 2009 after a long discussion and review with cetacean experts.

2. Information on whale-watching operations

Main whalewatching (including dolphin) occur with humpback, southern right and less intensively Bryde's whales, Guiana and spinner dolphins as well as the Amazon boto.

Humpback whales (*Megaptera novaeangliae*) are targeted by whale watching in Bahia State, Northeastern Brazil, particularly in the Abrolhos National Marine Park and off Praia do Forte, near Salvador, as well as more recently in Itacaré.

Bryde's whales (*Balaenoptera edeni*) are usually watched during diving tour boats off "Laje de Santos" Marine State Park, Southeast Brazil. As extra attraction for diving tours, these about 90-minute trips may allow watching other species of dolphins and whales as well.

The Guiana dolphin is an important tourist target from boats and from shore in some regions along the Brazilian coast, mainly at Baía Norte near Florianópolis, Santa Catarina State, and Cananéia estuary in Paraná State (both in the South of Brazil) as well as Praia da Pipa in Rio Grande do Norte State, at the northeastern coast. Baía Norte and Cananéia have marine protected areas which encompass part of the dolphin's distributional range. Special reference could be made to the Environmental Protection Area of Anhatomirim (EPAA), a federal MPA created to protect the southernmost population of Guiana dolphin.

The spinner dolphin (*Stenella longirostris*) frequent the National Park of Fernando de Noronha, an archipelago 350km off the northeastern coast of Brazil, almost daily and its observation from a shore-based lookout and tourism boats is a major tourism asset.

Amazon botos (*Inia geoffrensis*) are watched from "floating houses" and "floating restaurants" as well as boats in some parts of the Amazon, including few cases of assisted feeding and swim-with-dolphin operations.

3. Current Government programs related to cetacean conservation

3.1 National Initiatives

The National Action Plan for the Conservation of Aquatic Mammals was reviewed, discussed and approved during four meeting with scientists and non-government organisations (NGOs). The Plan is being published in June/July 2010.

CMA has two large programs on cetaceans which would be ongoing in 2010: Conservation Biology of Cetaceans in Brazil and Biogeography of Aquatic Mammals of Brazil.

The Program Conservation Biology of Cetaceans in Brazil currently includes research projects on 1) abundance and vital parameters estimates of Guiana and Bottlenose dolphins in a MPA; 2) aerial surveys for abundance estimation and distribution of franciscanas; 3) occurrence and distribution of cetaceans in the

South-Southeastern Brazilian Continental Shelf; 4) migratory destinations and routes of southern right whales based on telemetry; 5) impact of large-scale gillnet fishery on cetaceans monitored in a harbor of Santa Catarina State.

The Program Biogeography of Aquatic Mammals of Brazil establishes the Brazilian Stranding Network for Aquatic Mammals and the System of Information on Marine Mammals (SIMMAM). There are four stranding networks based on geopolitical division: South Region Stranding Network (REMASUL), Southeastern Region Stranding Network (REMASE), Northeastern Region Stranding Network (REMANE) and North Region Stranding Network (REMANOR). REMASE and REMANOR have initiated their development in 2009, while REMASUL and REMANE have operated for a number of years. The network members are required to enter data into SIMMAM.

SIMMAM is the acronym in Portuguese for a GIS platform for marine mammal sighting and stranding database. It was created by the National Center for Research and Conservation of Aquatic Mammals (CMA/ICMBio) and the CTTMar-Univali (<http://siaiacad09.univali.br/simmam/>).

The Brazilian List of Endangered Species is under review following the methodology and with the supervision of IUCN. CMA/ICMBio is responsible for the cetacean issues under this review.

A UN-GEF project was approved for mangroves in Brazil, which might include critical coastal habitats for small cetaceans, specially the Guiana dolphin which is usually associated with this habitat.

As for capacity building, CMA/ICMBio provided the first training for veterinarians and biologists on necropsy of cetaceans to assess potential impacts of seismic activities on these animals. Two international experts provided theoretical and practice classes and the event was attended by 42 persons from all over Brazil. Scheduled for August this year, CMA/ICMBio will host a training course for cetacean observers in seismic operations, expecting about 175 participants.

3.2 Research Projects

Research Projects Funded by Federal Government

Several projects are fully or partially funded by different Federal agencies, but no figures were compiled. We are willing to provide this in the next report.

3.3 Marine Protected Areas (MPAs)

Two MPAs were created in 2009 which include cetacean habitats: RESEX de Cassuruba, BA, and RESEX da Prainha do Canto Verde, CE, both located in Northeastern Brazil.

4. Current threats to cetacean conservation and management measures taken/proposed

4.1 Seismic surveys and oil-gas exploration

There was no round of offers for oil-gas exploration blocks in Brazil in 2009. The current legal procedure is being applied in which the Petroleum and Oil National Agency has to consult the CMA/ICMBio beforehand. Critical habitats for humpback, southern right and Bryde's whales, as well as the franciscana dolphin are permanently excluded albeit considering the seasonal occurrence patterns of humpbacks and southern right whales occurrence.

Seismic surveys have been conducted only for oil and gas prospection and exploration. None scientific experiment has been conducted using seismic methods.

4.1 Harbors or Ports and other coastal large development operations

Monitoring of southern right whale near a MPA in Santa Catarina State was conducted as a mandatory action to prevent rebuilding of the docks at Imibituba Harbour. This action was taken after the embargo of the operation because it did not follow proper legal process. This is an important step as CMA/ICMBio proposed to implement it as a regular legal requirement for any such operations in areas where cetaceans occur regularly or permanently.

5. Reporting systems for cetacean injuries/mortality/stranding

The creation and establishment of a reporting system for large whales is included as an priority activity in the National Action Plan for the Conservation of Aquatic Mammals. CMA/ICmbio is responsible to coordinate this task.

6. International cooperation activities

The Brazilian Government is party to other multilateral agreements related to cetaceans, besides the IWC, such as the *Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species* (CITES). The Government of Brazil participates as Observer in the *Convention on Migratory Species* (CMS) and has signed a Letter of Intentions to this agreement. Potential benefits of such include southern right whales and franciscana dolphin.

The Brazilian Government is participating at the Steering Committee of the *Southern Ocean Research Partnership* (SORP).

The Brazilian Government is a member of the *Supporting Group to Assist the IWC Chair* and attended the four of its meetings from October 2009 until April 2010. Brazil is also a member and have attended meetings of the *IWC Small Working Group on the Future of IWC* and the also *GBA Group*, formed by 14 Latin-American countries, from which 12 are member of the IWC – GBA has a strong conservation oriented action.

Brazil has participation in two IWC workshops in 2009. A biologist from Brazil attended the *IWC Southern Right Whale Die-Off Workshop*, held during March this year in Argentina. A Brazilian veterinarian attended the *IWC Workshop on Welfare Issues Associated with the Entanglement of Large Whales*, held in Hawai'i, April 2009. Also, Brazil has participation at the *IWC Cetacean Emerging and Resusrging Disease (CERD) Working Group*.

Brazilian Marine Protected Area (MPA) managers and experts continue the participation in the Latin American Network of MPAs and Cetaceans (*RedCetáceos*), which aims at providing an exchange and cooperation platform to promote cetacean conservation and the appropriate management of cetaceans and MPAs that protect vital cetacean habitat.

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