

## Actions to Reduce the Threat of Ship Collisions with Southern Right Whales in Patagonia Argentina

Submitted to the IWC61 Conservation Committee by Argentina

### Background

The Southern right whales off South Africa and off eastern South America (Brazil, Uruguay and Argentina) suffer significant mortality (Van Waerebeek *et al.*, 2007). 25 confirmed and probable collisions with Southern right whales have been reported in Argentina until 2003. Two new cases were further reported in the IWC61 Progress Report of Argentina. On 13<sup>rd</sup> June 2008, a southern right whale was killed instantly due to a collision with an Argentine Navy ship maneuvering at the pier in Puerto Madryn, Chubut province. In a second event, a 13m male that stranded dead on the coast of Monte Hermoso, Buenos Aires province, showed evidence of probable collision.

This paper presents legislation (Disposicion Madr, RIA N° 069/09) that has been developed and implemented by the Argentine Coast Guard to reduce ship strikes with southern right whales in the nursery ground of Peninsula Valdes, Patagonia Argentina. Its aim is to prevent further collisions.

### Legislation (Disposicion Madr, RIA N° 069/09)

*Recommended routes:* A navigation corridor has been established within the zone of Golfo Nuevo, Chubut province, limited by the following geographical points (Figure I):

- 1- Lat. 42° 53' S- Long 064° 10' W
- 2- Lat. 42° 44' S- Long 064° 56' W
- 3- Lat. 42° 44' S- Long 065° 00' W
- 4- Lat. 42° 46' S- Long 065° 00' W
- 5- Lat. 42° 46' S- Long 064° 56' W
- 6- Lat. 42° 55' S- Long 064° 18' W

*Ship speed:* Reduce speed to less than 10 knots, be vigilant and adopt precautionary measures to avoid collisions with cetaceans when navigating in the waters of the corridor described above and presented in the map below.

*Maneuvering in the harbour:* During mooring or departure maneuvers in the local port or during navigation within one and a half (1.5) nautical miles of the harbour, keep a minimum speed to enable good steering of the ship and control to ensure that all the sectors aft are free of cetaceans, especially in case of engines astern operations.

*Report whales sightings:* Any vessel which encounters a Southern right whale, must report the presence of whales to the Coastal Radio Station "L4S PUERTO MADRYN PREFECTURA NAVAL RADIO", within the corridor or port sector. The foregoing measure shall also be valid for those ships making anchor and those continuing their navigational maneuvers in Bahía Cracker.

*Period of time:* This provision shall be applicable for the whole period from June 1<sup>st</sup> and November 30<sup>th</sup> of each year. The provisions herein may be subject to revisions or changes according to the particular characteristics of each season and/or the result of any research connected therewith.

*Local radio diffusion:* The contents of this provision shall be adapted to an adequate text for the purposes of local radio diffusion so all vessels are aware of this "RECOMENDATION" provision.

*Maritime Agencies and NGOs:* Notify all Maritime Agencies and Non Government Organizations and other government institutions having connection with the protection of Southern right whales (*Eubalaena australis*).

### Literature cited

Secretaría de Ambiente y Desarrollo Sustentable. Argentina. 2009. Progress report on cetacean research, April 2008 to March 2009, with statistical data for the *calendar year* 2008 or season 2007/08. SC/61/ProgRep Argentina. 14p.

Van Waerebeek, K., A.N. Baker, F. Félix, J. Gedamke, M. Iñiguez, G. P. Sanino, E. Secchi, D. Sutaria, A. van Helden and Y. Wang. 2007. Vessel collisions with small cetaceans worldwide and with large whales in the Southern Hemisphere, an initial assessment. *LAJAM* 6(1):43-69.

**Fig. 1.** Navigation corridor at Golfo Nuevo

PROVISION MADR. RIA N° 069/09

