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## **Voluntary National Cetacean Conservation Report, 2012 Submitted to the Conservation Committee of IWC by the Government of Brazil**

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### **1. Legal and other developments**

Actually, Brazil has four different National Action Plans for the Conservation of Aquatic Mammals, published in 2010 and 2011: (1) Sirenians, (2) Franciscana, (3) Small Cetaceans, (4) Large Whales and pinnipeds. All the four Action Plans are being executed successfully, coordinated by the National Aquatic Mammals Center (CMA/ICMBio).

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.

Brazilian government established the Stranding Network for Aquatic Mammals, named REMAB, divided into four (4) regional stranding: REMANE, REMANOR, REMASUL and REMASE.

### **2. Information on whale-watching operations**

Main whalewatching (including dolphin) occur with humpback whale, southern Right whale and less intensively Bryde's whale, 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,

Right whales are target by whalewatching in Santa Catarina State, mainly at Right Whale Marine Protected Area (APA da Baleia Franca/ICMBIO).

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 four National Action Plans for the Conservation of Aquatic Mammals were reviewed, discussed and approved during four meeting with scientists and non-government organizations (NGOs). The Plans were publish in 2010 and 2011.

CMA has two large programs on cetaceans which would be ongoing in 2012: 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 is a stranding network, named REMAB (Portaria ICMBIO n° 43, de 29 de junho de 2011), that subdivided bases 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 was review last year, 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.

A GEF for the sea is in process of creation with funding to the Brazilian marine waters.

As for capacity building, CMA/ICMBio provided with IWC and NOAA the first training of Untangle Whales, Dr. David Mattila, an international expert provided theoretical and practice classes and the event was attended by more than 45 persons from all over Brazil, march, 2012.

#### *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.

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

#### *4.1 Seismic surveys and oil-gas exploration*

IBAMA and ICMBio established areas of restriction for seismic research activities in priority conservation regions for aquatic mammals in the Brazilian coast. The Joint Instruction No. 02/2011 was officially published in 01.12.2011. The initiative was the result of a broad debate involving technicians from the General Coordination of Oil and Gas-CGPEG / IBAMA, the National Center for Research and Conservation of Marine Mammals-CMA / ICMBio, universities and environmental organizations linked to the conservation of mammals and also representatives of the oil and gas in Brazil, such as the National Petroleum and Gas-ANP and oil companies. This way 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 is still being conducted as a mandatory action to prevent rebuilding of the docks at Imbituba 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).

Brazil is a member at *GBA Group*, formed by 14 Latin-American countries, from which 13 are member of the IWC – GBA has a strong conservation oriented action.

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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