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**Voluntary National Cetacean Conservation Report, 2011**  
**Submitted to the Conservation Committee of IWC by the Government of Brazil**

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

The National Action Plans for the Conservation of Aquatic Mammals were recently published as four separated Plans, as following: Large Cetaceans and Pinnipeds, Small Cetaceans, Franciscana Dolphin and Sirenians, giving the specific frameworks developed for its elaboration and implementation.

Brazil has actually two instruments that regulate the whalewatching and harassment, a Federal Law nº 7.643/87 and Port. nº 117/96. These current legal National instruments are under review.

After long discussion an instrument to regulate the harassment, swim-with-dolphins and feeding of cetaceans was proposed to the Minister of the Environment late in 2009, but it's still under evaluation to be published. As well, the whalewatching proposed instrument still being processed.

### **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 Plans for the Conservation of Aquatic Mammals were reviewed, discussed and approved during four meeting with scientists and non-government organisations (NGOs). The Plans were published late in 2010 and early 2011.

CMA has two large programs on cetaceans which would be ongoing in 2011: 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 franciscana dolphin; 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 (REMAB) and the System of Information on Marine Mammals (SIMMAM). There are four stranding networks based on geopolitical division, inside the REMAB: 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 just reviewed, following the methodology and with the supervision of IUCN. The CMA/ICMBio is responsible for the cetacean issues in Brazil and is coordinating this process.

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. Seven veterinarians and one biologist were trained on international institutions to assess potential impacts of seismic activities on aquatic mammals. Scheduled for August this year, CMA/ICMBio will host a training course about cetacean, expecting about 25 participants.

### *3.2 Research Projects*

#### *Research Projects Funded by Federal Government*

All the projects of CMA/ICMBio are funded by Federal Government, among those are some activities on Southern Right Whales, Guiana Dolphin, Spinner Dolphin, Bottlenose Dolphin, Franciscana Dolphin, Cetaceans in the South-Southeastern Brazilian Continental Shelf, Impact of large-scale gillnet fishery on cetaceans. Project of others Institutions are also funded by Government, usually under special programs, as the ones that the Petrobras, a Brazilian Company of mixed capital, is funding as the Humpback Whale Project (Projeto Baleia Jubarte) and the Spinner Dolphin Project (Projeto Golfinho Rotador). This last one is under CMA/ICMBio scope but also receives funds from

Petrobras. One project to research whales by telemetry (Projeto Baleias) receives funds from Shell, and the Talude Project receives by Chevron.

### *3.3 Marine Protected Areas (MPAs)*

Three MPAs were created in 2010 which include cetacean habitats: APA Costa das Algas, ES, REVIS de Santa Cruz, ES and MN Arquipélago das Ilhas Cagarras, RJ, both located in Southeast Brazil. Others areas has being in discussion during beginning of 2011.

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

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

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*

The Brazilian government denied a license to build a port in dolphin occurrence area, in south Brazil.

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 cetaceans is included as a priority activity in the National Action Plans 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).

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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