Report of the Conservation Management Plan for Franciscana (Pontoporia blainvillei)

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INTERNATIONAL
WHALING COMMISSION

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Introduction
The IWC adopted the Conservation Management Plan for Franciscana (*Pontoporia blainvillei*) submitted by Argentina, Brazil and Uruguay (IWC/66/CC11). The overall objective of the CMP is to protect Franciscana habitat and minimise anthropogenic threats, in particular by-catch. The CMP (IWC-66-CC11) developed seven high priority actions, ranging from public awareness and capacity building through research to mitigation.

Actions

A Steering Committee and an Advisory Panel were established and its representatives were confirmed as follows:

Steering Committee
The Steering Committee is integrated by Josefina Bunge (Argentina), Fabia Luna (Brazil), Carlos Rodríguez Brianza (Uruguay), the Chairs of the Conservation Committee (Lorenzo Rojas Bracho), the Scientific Committee (Robert Suydam), the CMP Standing Working Group (Suzi Heaton) and the IWC Head of Science (Greg Donovan).

Table 1 summarizes the outcomes done during the reported period for each identified action.

Table 1. Level of achievement of the actions identified for the CMP for franciscana. Keynotes: Not achieved (NA), Partially achieved (PA) and Fully achieved (FA)				
Actions	*NA*	*PA*	*FA*	*Comments*
RES-1. Continue to Investigate Population Structure				
RES-1.1. Refine population structure and boundaries		X		-Samples acquired from strandings in the last three years along Franciscana distribution in Brazil and bycaught animals in observer programs in FMA II. -7 samples obtained from Bahía Blanca (n=6) and Río Negro estuary (n=1) in FMA IV.
MON-1. Monitor Abundance, Trends and Bycatch				
MON 1.1. Conduct a survey to identify fishing villages where		x		-Ongoing in FMA III. Starting in FMA II.

bycatch of franciscanas are likely, including fisheries characteristics (e.g. type of nets, season of operation, fishing areas).				- Ongoing in FMAIV. At the Río Negro estuary information is collecting on the type of nets, season of operation, fishing areas and remove discarded fishing gears. Interviews are also done in the local communities to determine number of families using gillnets.
MON 1.2. Estimate bycatch in the artisanal fisheries with observer programs if possible.		x		Starting in FMA II. Ongoing in part of FMA III.
MON 1.3. Estimate bycatch in the industrial fisheries with observer programs whenever possible.		x		-Ongoing in FMA III. Starting in FMA II. - In Uruguay, Franciscana bycatch by the industrial trawl fishery was estimated for the first time, with mortality estimated at ~100 individuals per year for the period 2009-2012 (Franco-Trecu et al., 2019).
MON 1.4. - Beach monitoring to estimate bycatch.			x	- FMA II and III are being surveyed regularly and intensively in the last years. - Systematic monitoring of stranding of marine mammals (including Franciscanas) in a protected beaches of Natural Reserve of Querandi and nearby areas (Dr. Pablo Denuncio, Biología, ecología inconservación de Mamíferos Marinos, BECMM; Instituto de Investigaciones Marinas y Costeras, Universidad Nacional de Mar del Plata IIMYC-UNMDP). -Monthly beach surveys are conducted at the Río Negro estuary to find stranded individuals and particularly those related to bycatch.
MON 1.5. Standardize and re-calculate previous information on CPUE and mortality estimates.		x		Mark-recapture program realising Franciscana carcasses at sea ongoing in FMA III. Experiments using franciscana prototypes released at sea staring in FMA

				II.
MON 1.6. Facilitate access to the Virtual Monitoring System data and the official data of registered vessels held by the Government of Brazil to universities and other research organizations.	x			
MON 1.7. Quantitatively assess the effect of changes in fishing effort on bycatch and the fishermen socio-economics		x		Ongoing research program in FMA III and starting in FMA II.
MON 1.8. Estimate abundance and trends		x		-Aerial surveys to estimate abundance at FMA I done and are underway in FMA II and III. -FMA IV. Aerial survey to estimate abundance will be done by September 2019 and the results will be submitted to the 68B IWC SC. This project is partially funded by the IWC.
MON 1.9. Evaluate use of alternate, more economic, methods to assess trends in abundance (e.g. passive acoustics monitoring).		x		Some acoustics experiments underway by Andriolo.
MON 1.10. Define the maximum allowable fishery related mortality (e.g. PBR, MALFIRM).	x			Data on abundance and other population parameters are being collected and processed.
MON 1.11. Model population viability analysis.	x			A considerable amount of life-history and bycatch data is being collected for FMA II and III.
MIT-1. Mitigate Bycatch				
MIT 1.1. Evaluate methods to reduce bycatch (e.g. development of alternate fishing methods, reduce fishing effort) and organize meetings with stakeholders to evaluate the most practical ways to implement/adjust monitoring and mitigation actions.	x			
MIT 1.2. Increase enforcement in priority areas for the conservation of the franciscana and no-take zones.		x		-FMA IV. At Balneario El Condor, Río Negro estuary still remains the ban on the use of gillnets from 15th November to 15th March each year.
MIT 1.3. Reinstate the list of threatened species in regional and national levels in Brazil.			x	-National List of Endangered Species reviewed in 2018. Franciscana still classified as

				critically endangered in Brazil. Review of the National Action Plan for the conservation of Franciscana planned to occur in July 2019. - Management Plans of MPAs in Uruguayan: - Humedales del Santa Lucía (NA) - Laguna Garzón (NA) - Laguna de Rocha (FA) - Cabo Polonio (FA) - Cerro Verde e islas de La Coronilla (FA) - Parque Nacional Isla de Flores (NA) (**) (*) The Franciscana dolphin is a focal conservation object in Laguna de Rocha and Cerro Verde e islas de La Coronilla; and is associated with a focal object in Cabo Polonio. Although in those cases it is established by Decree that specific programs will be established and implemented, currently no specific actions are being implemented in relation to marine objectives other than: the coastal bottom trawl fleet is excluded within 7 nm from the coast (this applies for the entire Uruguayan coast); SNAP supports research and the control of the artisanal fishing allowed in the MPAs. (**) This area was incorporated as a MPA in the National System of Protected Areas (SNAP) in February 2018. (SNAP, DINAMA, MVOTMA)
MIT 2. - Develop or Implement Protected Areas.				
MIT 2.1. Create conservation areas in Baia de Babitonga and Albardão.		x		Albardão and Baia de Babitonga still under consideration. Albardão not

				yet declared a protected area as planned for 2018.
MIT 2.2. Develop a protection area in Estuário del Rio Negro.	x			
MIT 2.3. Create and implement the Management Plan for existing MPAs in Argentina (Bahía Samborombón; Arroyo Zabala; Pehuencó-Monte Hermoso; Bahía Blanca, Falsa y Verde; Bahía San Blas; Punta Bermeja – La Lobería; Caleta de los Loros; Bahía de San Antonio) and Uruguay (Humedales del Santa Lucía, Laguna Garzón, Laguna de Rocha, Cabo Polonio y Cerro Verde e islas de La Coronilla).	x			
MIT-3. Encourage the Implementation of the National Action Plan to Reduce the Interactions of Marine Mammals with Fisheries (PAN) in Argentina.				
MIT 3.1. - Evaluate and monitoring the implementation of the use of acoustic alarms (pingers) in gillnets.		x		Ongoing project at Buenos Aires province.
MIT 3.2. - Evaluate and monitor the replacement of gillnets by alternative current fishing gears by those of lower impact.	x			
MIT 3.3. - Evaluate socio economic impact of the implementation of mitigation measures.	x			
PAC-1. Develop a Strategy to Increase Public Awareness of the Franciscana				
PAC 1.1. Design and implement a public awareness campaign about the franciscana and their conservation problems.		x		-A workshop on Communication on Franciscana was hosted by WWF in Sao Paulo in 2018.
PAC 1.2. Design an educational program about the franciscana.		x		- A Franciscana Day is being planned for Brazil.
PAC 1.3. Create a steering group to coordinate actions PAC 1.1 and PAC 1.2.		x		Coordinators: D. Danilewicz, F. Sucunza, P.H. Ott, R. M. Gama (GEMARS), M. Cremer and R. L. Paitach (Univille). -FMA IV. An ongoing educational program is developed by Fundación Cethus at Río Negro estuary.
PAC 1.4. Build capacity of specific sectors (e.g. fishermen, park rangers).	x			
PAC-2. Include the Franciscana in Bilateral and Multilateral Discussions				
PAC 2.1. - Generate discussions within the framework of CMS		x		-Informal discussion began among Argentina, Brazil and

				Uruguay to submit a Concerted Action to CMP.
PAC 2.2. - Generate memoranda of understanding among universities and research institutes of Argentina, Uruguay and Brazil within the framework of applicable agreements to establish common research programs	x			