

## **Voluntary National Cetacean Conservation Report - 2022**

**Submitted by the Government of Argentina to the Conservation Committee  
68<sup>th</sup> Meeting of the International Whaling Commission  
Portoroz, October 2022**

*The Federal Network for Assistance to Marine Fauna Strandings (RFAVFM)*

The Federal Network for Assistance to Marine Fauna Strandings (RFAVFM) was created by Resolution MAYS 218/2021, in July 2021 with the following aims: a) To articulate the tasks of assistance to marine fauna in rescue situations due to strandings or coastal arrivals, by means of interjurisdictional and inter-institutional cooperation; b) To contribute to the standardization of guidelines on early response, biosecurity, operational safety, necropsies, sampling, analysis of causes of mortality, animal welfare, final disposal, communication and systematization of event registration; c) Generate handbooks for the care of marine fauna in a vulnerable situation or in a marine fauna in situations of vulnerability or potential risk generation, on the basis of the best available practices, d) Integrate and systematise reliable data on stranding events and coastal arrivals of marine fauna, by means of a specific register; e) Identify gaps in knowledge on the problem of strandings or coastal arrivals of marine fauna as a tool to promote research; f) Collaborate in capacity building and g) Contribute to public information, environmental education and citizen participation in accordance with the objectives of the network.

The process of creating the RFAVFM began in 2017, when the Ministry of Environment and Sustainable Development (MAYS) proposed, in agreement with the coastal-marine provinces of the Ente Coordinador Interjurisdiccional de Fauna (ECIF), to move towards the creation of a regional coastal network for the rescue of marine fauna.

This initiative was carried out in accordance with the National Fauna Conservation Act (Ley National Fauna Conservation Law (Law N° 22.421) and within the Federal Strategy for Integrated Coastal Management (Estrategia Federal de Manejo Costero Integrado) (EFMCI) that is being developed within the framework of the Federal Council for the Environment (COFEMA)(Resolution 324/2016). Likewise, by Resolution COFEMA N° 405, in 2019, the creation of a "*Federal Network for Assistance to Marine Fauna Strandings (RFAVFM)*" was declared of federal environmental interest which was finally consolidated in mid-2021, by Resolution of the Secretariat of Environmental Policy on Natural Resources (Res 2021-218-APN-MAD#SGP) of the MAYS.

During 2019, a series of activities were carried out to lay the foundations for the creation of the RFAVFM. In this context, two workshops were held with the provincial representatives of the RFAVFM, the scientific sector and civil society organisations (June and November 2019). At the same time, a consultancy for the elaboration of the *Document of procedures and protocols of the best practices for the care of coastal marine fauna at risk* (Montanelli, S. 2020) was done. Finally, Resolution 218/2021 was adopted and several meetings were carried out with the five coastal provinces in the planning of the 2022 activities. Five Workshops for the Development and/or Strengthening of Coastal Provinces were scheduled for the second half of the current year, one for

each jurisdiction (Tierra del Fuego, Santa Cruz, Chubut, Río Negro and Buenos Aires). The main objective of these workshops is to facilitate a space for local articulation that will allow to think about the model of response to strandings, which is best adapted to each jurisdiction according to the characteristics of its coastal territory and the availability of logistical and human resources.

On the other hand, they will also contribute to training on different technical issues related to the different stranding events that occur along our coastal marine litoral, including the incursions of marine fauna in the Río de la Plata and other important river courses.

Another consensus reached at the 2019 workshops was the need to have an integrated record of marine fauna incidents occurring along the Argentinean maritime coast. The creation of a database for the National Registry of Marine Coastal Fauna Events at Risk, will make it possible to consult systematised information that contributes to establish trends (increase, decrease or stability), spatial-temporal distribution of the events, and distribution of strandings, characteristics of the incidents and of the specimens involved.

This will also make it possible to identify stranding hotspots and, consequently, to make logistical and human resources available more efficiently to deal with strandings.