

Peru – Voluntary Cetacean Conservation Report 2022

SCIENTIFIC PROGRESS REPORT TO THE INTERNATIONAL WHALING COMMISSION

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Thirty-two species of cetaceans have been recorded in Peru: seven species of mysticete (baleen cetaceans) and 25 species of odontocetes (toothed cetaceans). All of them face threats such as illegal hunting, interactions with fisheries, overfishing of resources, pollution and habitat destruction, unregulated tourism activities, natural events ("El Niño"), natural predators, diseases, among others, which impact their populations and pose a challenge for the entities responsible for their conservation.

The following is information on cetacean-related activities in recent years in Peru:

I. LEGAL REGULATIONS ASSOCIATED WITH CETACEANS

With regard to legislation, our country has legal provisions aimed at the conservation of marine and inland water cetaceans.

Supreme Decree N° 026-2001-PE: this is the only regulation on large cetaceans issued since Peru's accession to the IWC moratorium. It states that the ban on hunting of various whale species such as the minke, blue whale, fin whale, sei whale, Bryde's whale and right whale in Peruvian maritime waters remains in force.

Supreme Decree 002-96-PE: (Regulations for the Protection and Conservation of Small Cetaceans of Law N° 26585) regulates and guides the activities related to the conservation of small cetaceans in marine and continental waters. It prohibits the capture, consumption and commercialisation of cetaceans, as well as their harassment and bullying, among others. It includes articles on research and the keeping of small cetaceans in captivity.

Ministerial Resolution N° 451-2019-PRODUCE: The most recent regulation, which establishes minimum approach distances to marine cetaceans, and also indicates the prohibition of approaching or approaching groups of cetaceans with calves or a mother with calf. 2

II. SIGHTINGS OF CETACEANS ON HYDRO-BIOLOGICAL RESOURCE ASSESSMENT CRUISES

The Instituto del Mar del Peru carries out cruises for the evaluation of fishing resources, which represent a platform of opportunity for the registration of marine mammals in the Peruvian sea. This activity has been carried out since 1997, and its main purpose is to know the relationship between marine mammals and fishing resources; however, with the records we have, we know the presence of the different species of cetaceans in Peru. Due to the pandemic, the habitability of the vessels on which these assessments were carried out was reduced, making it impossible for whale watchers to participate, so the most current data correspond to 2020.

Table 01. Record of cetacean species for the last five years

Individuos identificados	CRUCEROS DE EVALUACIÓN DE RECURSOS HIDROBIOLÓGICOS							
	2017 Cr.170203	2018 Cr.190203	2018 Cr.180911	2019 Cr. 190203	2019 Cr.190911	2020 Cr.200203	2020 Cr.200911	2021
<i>Balaenoptera bonaerensis</i>	0	0	2	0	0	0	0	Se desconoce
<i>Balaenoptera edeni</i>	0	2	0	0	0	0	0	Se desconoce
<i>Balaenoptera musculus</i>	4	0	6	9	2	5	2	Se desconoce
<i>Balaenoptera physalus</i>	0	0	0	2	8	25	22	Se desconoce
<i>Balaenoptera sp.</i>	20	2	1	24	13	14	6	Se desconoce
Balaenopteridae	7	1	2	12	0	6	0	Se desconoce
<i>Balaenoptera edeni/B. borealis</i>	0	0	4	22	5	1	24	Se desconoce
Cetáceo mayor	9	0	6	0	0	0	0	Se desconoce
Cetáceo menor	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	Se desconoce
Delphinidae	534	1540	0	58	25	0	650	Se desconoce
<i>Delphinus capensis</i>	3480	8820	2550	2217	383	1437	90	Se desconoce
<i>Delphinus delphis</i>	4046	0	4709	8073	1580	6919	12550	Se desconoce
<i>D. capensis/D. delphis</i>	0	0	0	1830	0	825	0	Se desconoce
<i>Delphinus sp.</i>	188	0	3298	1254	1264	0	0	Se desconoce
<i>Globicephala sp.</i>	7	0	11	0	4	5	0	Se desconoce
<i>Grampus griseus</i>	8	0	6	70	9	51	52	Se desconoce
<i>Lagenorhynchus obscurus</i>	627	2946	1549	1312	1312	0	653	Se desconoce
Manada mixta (<i>Lagenorhynchus obscurus/Delphinus capensis</i>)	0	0	0	400	0	1234	0	Se desconoce
Manada mixta (<i>Delphinus capensis/Delphinus delphis</i>)	20	200	0	0	0	0	0	Se desconoce
Manada mixta (<i>Tursiops truncatus/Globicephala sp.</i>)	0	0	45	0	0	0	0	Se desconoce
<i>Megaptera novaeangliae</i>	112	12	103	9	73	33	55	Se desconoce
<i>Pyseter macrocephalus</i>	0	0	9	28	5	0	6	Se desconoce
<i>Tursiops truncatus</i>	57	0	71	47	309	530	955	Se desconoce
Ziphiidae	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	Se desconoce

III. MONITORING OF STRANDED MARINE FAUNA ON THE NORTH COAST AND ATTENTION TO CETACEAN STRANDINGS AT NATIONAL LEVEL

In recent years, IMARPE has strengthened its work in recording strandings in the northern part of the country (Piura, Lambayeque, Tumbes and La Libertad) as a result of the Stranded Marine Fauna Monitoring Project, which has been carried out uninterruptedly since 2014, with the exception of 2020, due to the pandemic. These results, together with other stranding reports from the Peruvian coast, make up the national stranding database.

Cetaceans accounted for 7.5% of the strandings recorded during these years. The main species affected were the common dolphin *Delphinus sp.* with 61.6%, followed by the spiny porpoise *Phocoena spinipinnis* 22.9%, bottlenose dolphin *Tursiops truncatus* 2.6%, humpback whale *Megaptera novaeangliae* 1.9%, among other species identified and unidentified in smaller numbers.

Due to the fact that a large percentage of these specimens were found in an advanced state of decomposition, it was only possible to determine probable causes of stranding in 11% of the total. Of these, entanglement in fishing nets accounted for 63% of the total probable causes identified, followed by killing for exploitation of the animal with 30%, among others with lower percentages.

It should be noted that the monitoring effort was not the same in all departments or in all years. Also, since the first monitoring was carried out in 2014, the large number of cetaceans observed this year could be the result of the cumulative effect of previous years. Finally, so far this year, only one first survey has been carried out in April.

Table 02. Number of stranded cetaceans recorded in monitoring and reports from 2014 to 2022

MONITORING YEAR	NUMBER OF STRANDED CETACEANS
2014	894
2015	108
2016	140
2017	216
2018	363
2019	259
2020	
2021	190
2022	

IV. CETACEAN BYCATCH INFORMATION

In 2020, the report on cetacean sightings on board the industrial anchoveta fleet on the Peruvian coast between 2000 and 2019 was produced. This analysis provided important information on cetacean sightings during fishing trips, showing that *Megaptera novaeangliae* and *Physeter macrocephalus* are the most commonly sighted species. In relation to possible interactions during fishing sets, the results of this monitoring indicate that *Tursiops truncatus* (46.81%), *Delphinus capensis* (16.34%) and *Lagenorhynchus obscurus* (8.11%) are most frequently observed feeding on fishing nets.

Table 03. Species identified during fishing hauls between 2000 and 2019 by observers from the Logbooks Programme

Species	Common name	Number of sightings	Percentage of sightings
<i>Tursiops truncatus</i>	Bottle-nosed dolphin	404	46.81%
Delphinidae	Unidentified Small Cetacean	214	24.80%
<i>Delphinus capensis</i>	Long-snouted common dolphin		16.34%
<i>Lagenorhynchus obscurus</i>	Dark dolphin	70	8.11%
<i>Delphinus delphis</i>	Short-snouted common dolphin		3.94%

V. LIST OF FOREIGN FISHERIES

Since 2015, the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) has developed a List of Foreign Fisheries (LOFF) that lists foreign commercial fisheries that export fish and fishery products to the United States. This list has been implemented with the primary objective of

prohibiting the importation into the United States of marine resources or products caught by commercial fisheries that result in bycatch or harm to marine mammals that exceed U.S. standards, and thus, through the Marine Mammal Protection Act (MMPA), called for an ecosystem approach to wildlife management.

To export hydrobiological resources to the United States, countries must apply for and receive a Comparability Finding, demonstrating that they have a regulatory programme to reduce marine mammal bycatch mortality, and that it is comparable in effectiveness to U.S. standards (in particular the minimisation of bycatch and elimination of directed take of marine mammals).

In 2021, through the Ministry of Production, Peru reached the report on marine mammal bycatch in 17 export fisheries and 25 intermediate fisheries. To date, the results of the Comparability Finding have not yet been issued.

VI. BYCATCH MITIGATION INITIATIVE (BMI)

In Peru, interactions between cetaceans and the artisanal fishery have been a matter of constant concern, both on the part of artisanal fishermen and governmental entities, considering also that they are protected species. This conflict is a complex and multi-faceted issue, so it must be borne in mind that the interaction is reciprocal, in the sense that cetaceans have an effect on the fishery (damage to gear, loss of catch, etc.) and in turn, the fishery has an effect on them (bycatch mortality, targeted capture, reduction in food availability, among others). Moreover, it is a problem that has been approached from separate angles, either from the socio-economic fisheries issue or from the cetacean conservation point of view, but not in an integrated manner.

The Instituto del Mar del Perú has been assessing the interaction between marine mammals, including cetaceans, and industrial fisheries since 2017. However, in the last two years, due to the pandemic, the monitoring was postponed.

In 2017, work began in Pisco to implement the on-board observer programme, and in 2019 the same work was carried out in La Libertad. In 2020, due to the pandemic, it was not possible to continue monitoring. However, in 2021, the activities of this project were restarted with surveys in Lambayeque and Ica, and will continue in 2022 in the regions of La Libertad and Ancash.