

**Report of the workshop on the IWC Conservation Management Plan for the  
Southern Right Whale Southwest Atlantic Population**

Puerto Madryn, Chubut, Argentina

12 September 2016

**1. Welcome**

The workshop was officially opened by Lorenzo Rojas Bracho, Chair of the IWC Conservation Committee (CC), who welcomed the participants and thanked Argentina for hosting this meeting in Puerto Madryn, Chubut.

Meeting attendees included representatives from the following CMP range states: Argentina, Brazil, Chile and Uruguay. Lorenzo Rojas Bracho attended in his capacity as IWC CC Chair (list of participants at Annex A).

Funding support for the meeting provided by the IWC Voluntary Fund for CMPs, the Government of Argentina and the government of the province of Chubut was noted with thanks.

**2. Appointment of Chair and Rapporteurs**

Lorenzo Rojas Bracho was elected Chair. Carolina Cassani and Roxana Schteinbarg were appointed rapporteurs.

**3. Review and adoption of Agenda**

The Chair welcomed the participants to the workshop and the agenda was adopted (at Annex B).

*1.) Introduction to CMPs*

CPMs were introduced in IWC in 2011. The first CMP was adopted for the Northwest Pacific gray whale by China, Japan, Korea, Russian Federation and United States of America. Then, regarding the Southern right whales estimation of Southern Right Whales from Chile and Peru, a CMP was presented by those countries.

In 2012, following the recommendations of the IWC and particularly considering the SRW die-off event in Península Valdés area, a Conservation Management Plan (CMP) drafted by Argentina, Brazil, Chile and Uruguay was endorsed by IWC64 (IWC/64/CC7 Rev.1 refers). This plan started to be implemented after the meeting held in 2013 in Buenos Aires (IWC, 2016a).

*2.) CMP for the Southern right whale Southwest Atlantic population*

*2.1.) Review*

Nine high priorities actions of research, management, education and monitoring were identified and conducted by the CMP. The plan was very ambitious in the short term. Following the recommendations of the IWC Conservation Committee (CC) and the Scientific Committee (SC), it was decided to focus on the mortality events of Southern right whales in Península Valdés area, Argentina. A first workshop on Southern right whale die-off was held in 2010, before the creation of the CMP (IWC, 2011). The second was conducted in 2014, considering new theories (IWC 2015). In 2015 the SC adopted the 2014 report on mortality and it was decided to fund the project "Southern Right Whale Mortalities at Peninsula Valdés, Argentina: Effects on population dynamics and the impact of kelp gull on right whale health" coordinated by Centro Nacional Patagónico (CENPAT) and Instituto de Conservación de Ballenas (ICB) with £13,000. Results of this project were submitted to the IWC (SC/66a/BRG5; Sironi et al. 2015). Even though last year it was reported a reduction of numbers in mortality, it's very important to continue this work to reflect the present situation.

Iñíguez also highlight that the SC should not be closed to other proposals; one of the priorities needs to be strengthening the works in Brazil, Chile (Magallanes region in the South) and Uruguay. As CMP coordinator, he also suggests more collaborative works for example between Southern Chile and Santa Cruz Province researchers in Argentina.

2.2.) *Identified and completed actions*

The report of 2013 was revised action by action and updated, as follows:

**PACB-01 develop a strategy to increase public awareness and build capacity in range states**

(This action will be divided into two)

**PACB-01: develop a strategy to increase public awareness**

(in order to make the plan and its implementation known to the general public and increase their participation).

	WHAT	WHO	WHEN
(1)	Preparation for a small expert workshop to develop a strategy for the public awareness effort	StC, Coordinator	August 2017
(2)	Hold workshop	Identified participants (see methods below)	March 2018
(3)	Implement strategy and actions agreed by workshop following a timeline established by the workshop (probably a staged process)	Workshop, Coordinator, Stakeholders, StC	After March 2018

StC = CMP Steering Committee

This specific workshop wasn't held, but the issue was addressed at the 2014 workshop in Madryn. At that meeting, it was discussed how to strategically communicate the mortality events to press and public (IWC, 2016b). This needs to be further worked in the involved countries. The completion status of this point is 50%.

**PACB-02: build capacity in range states in order to strengthen management systems**

	WHAT	WHO	WHEN
(1)	Strengthen network connections between government agencies, civil society and scientific institutions in relation to the CMP.	StC, Coordinator	October 2016 and beyond
(2)	To present SWA SRW CMP to local and national authorities and supranational organizations (MERCOSUR, UNASUR)	Foreign Affairs Ministries	October 2016 and beyond

SC = Scientific Committee

The work of strengthening networks between government agencies, civil society and research institutions was started. The objective is to ensure the performance of the IWC CMP. In that sense, the national and local governments need to manage all the necessary permits and to make the work of the research institutions possible. It also applied to the relation with customs agencies to facilitate import of equipment.

No specific actions were developed to strengthen the concept of "Mercosur Whale", more works needs to be done.

Completion status: 50%. The first objective was accomplished; the second still needs to be developed.

**RES-01: determine movements, migration routes and location of feeding ground(s)**

(Use all available non-lethal techniques in an integrated way –e.g. satellite telemetry, photo-identification and passive acoustics)

	WHAT	WHO	WHEN
(1)	Go on conducting satellite telemetry, photo identification catalogue and passive acoustics	Coordinator, StC, AP, relevant regional scientists, IWC-SC	October 2016 and beyond
(2)	Determine budget and seek funds	Coordinator and identified scientists	October 2016 and beyond
(3)	Request IWC to provide all SRW pictures available from Antarctic surveys	Identified scientists	IWC SC 2017
(4)	Training for regional scientists on non-lethal techniques	Identified scientists	To be determined
(5)	Go on developing the SORP project proposal to study the migratory routes of big whales in Antarctic Peninsula	Coordinator, StC, relevant regional scientists, SORP SC	October 2016 and beyond

AP = Advisory Panel; SORP SC: Southern Ocean Research Partnership Steering Committee

Regarding item (1): On satellite telemetry, the project conducted by National, Oceanographic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA), Wildlife Conservation Society Argentina (WCS), Fundación Patagonia Natural, Instituto de Conservación de Ballenas (ICB), Instituto Aqualie (Brazil), CENPAT – CONICET and Dirección de Fauna y Flora del Chubut started in 2014. Today, they are conducted with the highest existence safety/ security and animal welfare standards. Very important information was gathered and presented to the SC (SC/66b/BRG/26). Considering the results of this project, the workshop **recommended** to expand this project to Brazil, Southern Chile and Uruguay if possible.

The SC endorsed that all the activities established by the CMP are conducted without interruptions, especially those long term projects (e.g. Argentina since the '70s and Brazil since the '80s). The information collected in every season is essential. The workshop **endorsed** this SC recommendation (IWC 2016b).

The workshop also **recommended** encouraging studies using passive acoustic.

(2) and (3): are being accomplished.

(4) this point is the least advanced one. There is a new project, *Big Fish*, promoted by Australia. The workshop **recommended** incorporating the local photo-ID programs developed by the Argentina, Brazil and Uruguay in the *Big Fish* program.

(5) this is already working, ideal is to continue.

(6) as a part of the IWC Southern Ocean Research Partnership (SORP), Argentina has offered the use of a vessel, which is now conducting the investigation. Argentina is responsible for the acoustic component. In 2016 "Tango" voyage participated Fernando Trujillo from Colombia and Milton Marcondes from Brazil. For the 2017, Colombia and Chile researcher expressed their interest to participate, however it was mentioned that the idea is to go on consolidating a team of researchers who could participate in successive IWC SORP campaigns.

There's little opportunity to register presence of Southern Right Whales in the routes established for SORP projects, however it was highlighted to use the routes of vessels at 200 miles offshore in the feeding grounds. After some discussion the workshop **agreed** to suggest that the IWC SC will consider including in their bi annual budget to fund the research components of this CMP and others.

**RES-02: development of a GIS [meta] database on information on human activities that might have an adverse impact on whales**

	WHAT	WHO	WHEN
(1)	Preparation of a proposal of the structure and content of a GIS database (or metadatabase) based on (1)	Stakeholders, StC, Coordinator, IWC-SC	May 2017
(2)	Identification of funds and contractor for database development and population	Workshop, Coordinator, Stakeholders, StC	May 2017
(3)	Recompilation of existing sources of information on human activities (e.g. fishing, shipping, seismic exploration, gas and oil exploitation, and development information)	Stakeholders, StC, Coordinator	November 2017
(4)	Compile a SRW Sensitivity Atlas	Contractor, Coordinator, StC	March 2018

Progress status: 20%. All countries should present the information they have and it needs to be collated. Range states will consider the opportunity to prepare a project to be presented at the IWC67a SC meeting.

**MON-01: Ensure long-term monitoring of abundance, trends and biological parameters**

(The benefits of using all available non-lethal techniques in an integrated way (e.g. biopsy sampling, photo-identification and passive acoustics) were noted).

	WHAT	WHO	WHEN
(1)	Review of updated analysis that will be presented at IWC65 SC 2013 incorporating data from Argentina and Brazil	Cooke and colleagues, IWC-SC	Accomplished (Cooke et al 2015)
(2)	Power analyses to confirm necessary levels of effort to ensure that important trends can be detected	Cooke and colleagues, IWC-SC	October 2016 and beyond.
(3)	Necessary fieldwork in the light of (2)	Scientists	October 2016 and beyond.
(4)	Consideration of most appropriate way to store and share data (including consideration of single catalogue and a single biopsy sample repository organisation)	Coordinator, StC, AP, IWC-SC, Relevant Regional Scientists	October 2016 and beyond.
(5)	Ensure adequate long-term funding	Range states, Coordinator, StC	October 2016 and beyond

This action is related to the RES projects and PA01. A subject that needs to be developed is passive acoustics studies. Funding possibilities need to be evaluated, in order to use existing opportunities. It was mentioned that if all countries work together the possibilities to get those funds are higher. Rodríguez Brianza informed on the possibilities to submit a proposal to the Global Environment Facility (GEF).

**MON-02: enhance existing strandings networks including the capacity for undertaking post-mortems**

	WHAT	WHO	WHEN
(1)	Review latest work on post-mortem examination techniques relevant to ship strikes, entanglement and the main hypotheses for the die-off (IWC, 2011)	IWC-SC	Accomplished (IWC 2015)
(2)	Consider whether there is a need to update protocols or in other ways	Relevant regional scientists and other experts	October 2016 and beyond.
(3)	Refine protocols for tissue storage and analyses following recommendations in IWC (2011)	Relevant regional scientists and other experts	October 2016 and beyond.
(4)	Enhance the logistical capacity of the Southern Right Whale Health Monitoring Program and other networks, including provision of equipment, following the recommendations in IWC (2011) if not already done	Range states, Coordinator, relevant regional experts	As soon as possible
(5)	Ensure adequate long-term funding	Range states, Coordinator, StC	October 2016 and beyond.

The workshop **recognized** and **recommended** to do complete necropsies in all stranded whales in order to try to determine possible mortality causes of these whales. It was mentioned that the IWC is working in updating information on stranding (IWC 2016c). Then, the countries could adopt this IWC protocols and avoid generating parallel protocols.

The workshop **recommended** that it is very important to grant the necessary funding for the long term projects as well as to secure that all the groups have the necessary permits to conduct the activities.

**MIT-01: development of a regional entanglement response strategy**

	WHAT	WHO	WHEN
(1)	Conduct disentanglement training workshops in Argentina and Brazil	David Mattila, IWC Delegates from Argentina and Brazil, stakeholders	Accomplished in March 2012
(2)	Arrange for apprenticeships for selected candidates at existing centres of excellence for entanglement response	Coordinator, range states, AP	Accomplished
(3)	Review progress and determine need for further training in entanglement response	Range state representatives, AP	October 2016 and beyond
(4)	Develop information materials for fishermen and ocean users in conjunction with IWC	Coordinator, relevant experts, AP	October 2016 and beyond
(5)	Determine data collection and reporting mechanism for entanglements (at sea and stranded animals) in conjunction with the proposed IWC database	Coordinator, relevant experts, IWC-SC	October 2016 and beyond
(6)	Finalise a region-wide strategy for entanglement response	Coordinator, relevant experts, AP	April 2017

Four workshops led by David Mattila under the auspices of the IWC Global Disentanglement Network were done (1 in Argentina 2012, Brazil in 2011 and 2016 and Chile in 2015). It was highlighted the importance to go on working on prevention. In this regard, Chubut province is asking for a workshop, and it is proposed to use this opportunity to conduct a regional workshop before the next season, ideally in April 2017. It would be valuable to strengthen this action by "training the trainers". Iñíguez sets the example of the network that was

established in Mexico. Every country should identify participants for this workshop. It was **agreed** that the CMP Coordinator will discuss further with Mattila.

**MIT-02: develop and implement a strategy to minimize kelp gull harassment**

	WHAT	WHO	WHEN
(1)	Hold workshop to (a) review previous work and recommendations (including local workshops in 2004 and 2008 as well as IWC, 2011 and 2012); (b) develop a pragmatic, costed mitigation strategy to address this issue, especially but not exclusively for Argentina; (c) develop a disease sampling programme for gulls.	Coordinator, StC, relevant experts, local authorities	Accomplished August 2014 (IWC 2016b)
(2)	Implement the strategy developed at the above workshop	See IWC 2015	See IWC 2015
(3)	Continue to monitor the frequency of gull attacks (in the field and through examination of photographs) throughout the range and exchange information to enable determination of whether developed strategy is successful when implemented	Relevant regional scientists	October 2016 and beyond

There was a program in Chubut province on culling kelp gulls that was discontinued (IWC 2016b). There are two government agencies with competence in the subject; the Direction of Protected Areas of the Ministry of Tourism of Chubut and the Direction of Fauna and Flora of Chubut. The program has been accomplished intermittently.

After some discussions the Workshop **agreed** that it would be important to conduct every 4 or 5 years an update workshop as the one held in 2014, encouraging participation of researches of all the CMP countries. That was a very positive workshop, which allowed advancing very rapidly in many fields.

**MIT-03: establishment of an expert advisory panel**

	WHAT	WHO	WHEN
(1)	To identify and establish an advisory panel and its modus operandi	Coordinator, IWC-SC	Accomplished
(2)	To nominate 2 specialists per country	Range states	Accomplished
(3)	To invite the IWC SC to nominate 2 representatives	IWC-SC	Accomplished

The Advisory Panel was established; fortunately, there was no need to contact the experts.

**MIT-04: develop mitigation actions to address major threats identified through the Sensitivity Atlas**

	WHAT	WHO	WHEN
(1)	Identify and recommend mitigation measures to range states	Coordinator, StC, AP	Ongoing
(2)	Track progress in delivering mitigation measures	Coordinator, StC	Ongoing

This subject is related to GIS, and therefore not finished. Some actions were developed indirectly, allowing solving the problem in an indirect way. Iñíguez proposes advance status 50% because there are threats identified by some countries.

*2.3.) Future*

Report of the progress in the CMP objectives: it is recommended to conduct one yearly partial revision which will be submitted to the IWC SC and SC/CC meetings and a complete one every 4 years. Originally it was considered to conduct a complete revision every 3/5years. There is no document as such, but the present should be considered the 3<sup>rd</sup> year revision (2013-2016).

*2.4.) Election of new Coordinator*

Iñíguez reports that his mandate was due in October 2014 and highlights the importance for the consolidation of the CMP of having a coordinator of another country. That would strengthen the other countries' positions. His coordination was originally designed for 18 months. The same period is proposed for the new coordinator.

He also proposes that Brazil takes the coordination. Uruguay celebrates the work performed by Iñíguez and proposes that Argentina continues with the coordination. In the case that other country takes the lead, Uruguay requests that the same working capacity is ensured, with the same commitment and dedication that Iñíguez has shown in these years. He appreciates Brianza's comments but, considering that the conservation plan brings advantages for the countries, those should be profited by the other countries of CMP. It helps bring conscience and strengthening the departments involved.

After Argentina, Brazil is the second place with the largest concentration of SRW and similar concerns (except for the kelp gull).

IWC CMP Voluntary Funds secured funds for stipends, meetings, flight tickets and not for research programs. Based on the experience as Coordinator and after some discussion the Workshop **recommended** that the IWC CMP Voluntary Funds needs to go on securing those funds mentioned above. In Argentina, Brazil, Chile and Uruguay a member of a government agency is not allowed to receive an additional salary. After some discussion, Brazil accepted to coordinate the CMP and it was nominated Fabia Luna. It is requested that every country informs their representatives at the steering committee about the election of the new coordinator.

Fernández Barahona recognizes especially Iñíguez' work and regrets that he needs to leave the position. In this case, he agrees with Fabia Luna's nomination.

Iñíguez is requested to accompany the new coordinator's work and he agrees to collaborate. He also uses the opportunity to thank all the countries for their support and the excellent predisposition of all countries in his coordination of the CMP.

**4. Adoption of Report**

Votes of thanks to the IWC for its financial contribution and to Argentina and the province of Chubut for hosting, organizing and supporting the workshop, and providing both the Chair and the rapporteurs, were supported by all workshop participants.

The workshop report was adopted on the 15<sup>th</sup> of September at 19:30 hours.

**List of Annexes:**

**ANNEX A: List of participants**

**ANNEX B: Agenda**

**ANNEX C: List of all reports presented to the IWC SC**

## **ANNEX A: List of Participants**

### **Argentina**

Mario Oyarzábal – IWC Commissioner  
Juan Pablo Paniego – IWC Alternate Commissioner  
Miguel Iñíguez Bessega – IWC Alternate Commissioner  
Carolina Cassani – Rapporteur  
Roxana Schteinbarg – Rapporteur

### **Brazil**

Thais Evangelista Coutinho – IWC Alternate Commissioner

### **Chile**

José Fernández Barahona – IWC Commissioner

### **Mexico**

Lorenzo Rojas Bracho – Chair of IWC Conservation Committee

### **Uruguay**

Carlos Rodríguez Brianza – IWC Commissioner

## **ANNEX B: Agenda**

### **IWC Conservation Management Plan for the Southern right whale Southwest Atlantic population**

Puerto Madryn,  
Hotel Territorio, Blvd. Alte. G. Brown 3251  
September 12th 2016

*Commissioners of Argentina, Brazil, Chile, Mexico and Uruguay*

#### **Day 1. Monday September 12th, 2016**

- 1.) *Introduction to CMPs*
- 2.) *CMP for the Southern right whale Southwest Atlantic population*
  - 2.1.) *Review*
  - 2.2.) *Identified and completed actions*
  - 2.3.) *Future*
  - 2.4.) *Election of new Coordinator*



**ANNEX C: List of all reports presented to the IWC SC**

- Cooke, J., Rowntree, V., and Sironi, M. (2015). Southwest Atlantic right whales: interim updated population assessment from photo-id collected at Península Valdés. *J. Cetacean Res. Manage. (Suppl.)* 16: SC/66a/BRG23.
- Crespo, E.A., S.N. Pedraza, S.L. Dans, M.A. Coscarella, G.M. Svendsen, M. Degradi, J.C. Pedraza and A.C.M. Schiavini. (2015). More whales *Eubalaena australis* growing at a decelerated speed. Paper SC/66a/BRG5 submitted to the 66a IWC Scientific Committee. San Diego, USA. May 2015. 21p.
- International Whaling Commission. (2011). Report of the Southern Right Whale Die-off Workshop. *J. Cetacean Res. Manage* 12 (Suppl.) 367-398.
- International Whaling Commission. (2016a). Report of the Standing Working Group on Conservation Management Plans: Progress on the Development and Implementation of CMPs. In Report of the 65<sup>th</sup> meeting of the International Whaling Commission, Portoroz, Slovenia. 317-329p.
- International Whaling Commission. (2016b). Report of the Scientific Committee. Report of the Second Workshop on Mortality of Southern Right Whales (*Eubalaena australis*). In Report of the Scientific Committee. *J. Cetacean Res. Manage. (Suppl.)* 17: 585-98.
- International Whaling Commission. (2016c). Report of an IWC Workshop Developing Practical Guidance for the Handling of Cetacean Stranding Events. IWC/66/WKM&WI Rep02. 23p.
- Sironi, Rowntree and Uhart. (2015). Southern right whale mortalities at Península Valdés, Argentina: Effects on population dynamics and the impact of kelp gull lesions on right whale health. Report submitted to the IWC Secretariat. December 2015. 6p.
- Zerbini, A.N., H. Rosenbaum, M. Mendez, F. Sucunza, A. Andriolo, G. Harris, P.J. Clapham, M. Sironi, M. Uhart and A.F. Ajó. (2016). Tracking southern right whales through the southwest Atlantic: An update on movements, migratory routes and feeding grounds. Paper submitted to the 66b IWC Scientific Committee. SC/66b/BRG/26. 16p.