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1. LEGAL UPDATES

- *Strategy for the Marine Environment*

The European Marine Strategies, planning tools created by Directive 2008/56/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council of 17 June 2008 establishing a framework for community action in the field of marine environmental policy, aim mainly at achieving Good Environmental Status (GES) of the EU's marine waters by 2020.

Directive 2008/56/EC has been incorporated in the Spanish legislation through the Marine Environment Protection Law (Ley 41/2010, de 29 de diciembre, de Protección del Medio Marino).

The Directive establishes eleven descriptors for determining good environmental status. Descriptor 1 aims at maintaining biological diversity, including the distribution and abundance of all species of cetaceans.

Programs of measures are the executive part of marine strategies. They incorporate already existing measures, defined in the framework of other environmental policies by the different competent authorities and after assessing their effectiveness and weaknesses, new measures are proposed.

Among the new measures approved by Spain for Descriptor 1 in order to achieve the Good Environmental Status for cetaceans are:

- Conservation Plan for *Orcinus orca* in the Strait of Gibraltar and Gulf of Cadiz. (<http://www.magrama.gob.es/es/costas/participacion-publica/plan-orca.aspx>)
- Conservation Plan for marine endangered species.
- Bycatch Reduction Strategies/ Plans for protected marine vertebrates (cetaceans, birds, turtles and sharks).
- Reduction of collision risks for cetacean and large ships.

<http://www.magrama.gob.es/es/costas/temas/proteccion-medio-marino/estrategias-marinas/>

2. CONSERVATION MANAGEMENT PLANS

- *Orcinus orca (2015)*

The population of *Orcinus orca* in the Strait of Gibraltar and Gulf of Cadiz is listed as “vulnerable” in the Spanish Catalogue of Threatened Species, while the species is included in the List of wildlife species in special protection regime. The Conservation Plan for *Orcinus orca* in the Strait of Gibraltar and Gulf of Cadiz was developed in 2015 and is currently awaiting its approval. In addition, the spatial distribution of this stock is being studied through the deployment of satellite tags.

<http://www.magrama.gob.es/es/costas/participacion-publica/plan-orca.aspx>

- *Mysticeti, deep water cetaceans and small cetaceans (2014)*

In December 2014, the Ministry for Agriculture, Food and Environment together with Spanish cetacean specialists agreed to establish three Conservation Plans for mysticetes, deep water cetaceans and small cetaceans. The aim of grouping the

species is to increase effectiveness in tackling common threats and minimizing procedures.

In addition, *Phocoena phocoena* will have a specific conservation plan.

3. MITIGATION OF HUMAN ACTIVITIES IMPACT ON CETACEANS

Collisions

A working group to prevent collisions has been created in Canary Islands under the project “Canarias con la Mar (2014)”. Its aim is to search real solutions to reduce cetacean mortality in ships collisions, to enhance maritime safety and to promote sustainable marine uses.

<https://canariasconlamar.wordpress.com/colisiones/>

<http://fundacion-biodiversidad.es/es/biodiversidad-marina-y-litoral/proyectos-convocatoria-ayudas/canarias-con-la-mar-ii>

Cetacean Stranding

A workshop held in 2015 with the participation of the different entities and organisations that deal with cetacean stranding developed a National Protocol for Cetacean Stranding and updated the content of the Spanish database on cetacean stranding.

<http://bevacet.uv.es/>

Seismic surveys and marine noise pollution

- *Agreement on measures to mitigate seismic surveys impact on cetaceans and identification of sensible areas.*

http://www.magrama.gob.es/es/costas/temas/proteccion-medio-marino/Acuerdo_medidas_de_mitigaci%C3%B3n_sismica__nov2011_tcm7-359853.pdf

- *National reference document on impacts and mitigation of marine noise pollution.*

http://www.magrama.gob.es/es/costas/temas/proteccion-medio-marino/doc-tecnico-impactos-mitigacion-contaminacion-acustica-marina_tcm7-359854.pdf

- *Training course for marine mammal Observers and Passive acoustic Technicians (2014).*

Its objective was training qualified technicians to implement mitigation protocols during seismic surveys, offshore oil industry, wind farms, etc. During this course two manuals have been implemented.

http://www.magrama.gob.es/es/costas/formacion/Manual_MMO_espa%C3%B1oles_tcm7-323455.pdf

http://www.magrama.gob.es/es/costas/formacion/Manual_PAM_espa%C3%B1oles_tcm7-323456.pdf

Bycatch

In order to develop a plan to combat the bycatch of endangered species in fishing gear, the Ministry for Agriculture, Food and Environment has commissioned the elaboration of a document collecting and analysing available scientific and technical information about fishery impacts on cetaceans in Spanish waters.

4. WHALE WATCHING RELATED ACTIVITIES

- *Whale watching monitors updating course in Canary Islands.*

With European funding, MAGRAMA and the Government of the Canary Islands have developed the thematic and contents for updating courses addressed to whale watching monitors.

<http://www.gobiernodecanarias.org/medioambiente/piac/temas/biodiversidad/medidas-y-factores/flora-fauna/conservacion-especies/Cetaceos/curso-cetaceos/>

- *Awareness raising campaigns about cetacean distribution areas in Canary Islands.*

This campaign has been developed mostly in whale watching activity distribution areas, through pamphlets and posters showing rules and good practice for whale watching activity, marine protected areas importance (mainly Natura 2000) and cetacean species significance.

<http://www.gobiernodecanarias.org/medioambiente/piac/temas/biodiversidad/medidas-y-factores/flora-fauna/conservacion-especies/Cetaceos/red-varamientos-canarias/>

5. RESEARCH AND MONITORING

- *LIFE+INDEMARES Project (2009-2015)*

LIFE Program is a EU financial instrument devoted exclusively to the environment

For 6 years, the LIFE+INDEMARES Project has been studying the deep-sea habitats, pelagic species and seabirds that represent the enormous biodiversity of our seas, and has also analyzed the human use of these areas. The aim has been to understand the natural and socioeconomic values in order to complete the Natura 2000 Network for marine environments.

Ten big areas corresponding to Atlantic, Mediterranean and Macaronesia regions were proposed as Sites of Community Importance (LIC): Aviles Submarine Cannon System, Banco de Galicia, Gulf of Cadiz Mud Volcanoes, South of Almería -Seco de los Olivos, Alboran Marine Area, Illes Columbretes Marine Area, West of Gulf of Leon Cannon System, Menorca Channel, Banco de la Concepción and East and South of Lanzarote-Fuerteventura Marine Area

9 of 10 sites were accepted by the European Commission in December 2015 and now Spain has 6 years to elaborate their management plans. The remaining one is expected to be approved in December 2016.

In all of these areas, the presence of bottlenose dolphin was key to their protection, in addition to the presence of harbour porpoise in Aviles Submarine Cannon System and Gulf of Cadiz Mud Volcanoes.

Cetaceans have been monitored through visual and acoustic census, photo identification and biopsies.

<http://www.indemares.es/>

<http://www.magrama.gob.es/es/costas/temas/proteccion-medio-marino/biodiversidad-marina/espacios-marinos-prottegidos/red-natura-2000-ambito-marino/red-natura-2000-declaracion-lugares.aspx>

- *MYSTIC SEA (2015-2017)*

MISTIC SEAS project, (*Macaronesia Islands Standard Indicators and Criteria: Reaching Common Grounds on Monitoring Marine Biodiversity in Macaronesia*) is oriented to create a monitoring common methodology for researching marine biodiversity in Macaronesia Region in application of EU marine Strategy. It focuses on cetaceans, turtles and marine birds populations.

This project is financed by the European Commission and runs from December 2015 to February 2017

<http://fundacion-biodiversidad.es/biodiversidad-marina-y-litoral/proyectos-propios/misticseas>

- *Project ESTEMAR (2015)*

This project involves the modeling spatiotemporal of the presence of cetaceans for the design of marine protected areas

<http://fundacion-biodiversidad.es/biodiversidad-marina-y-litoral/proyectos-convocatoria-ayudas/presencia-cetaceos-este-baleares>

- *MITCALD (2015)*

This project involves the determination of risk factors for the conservation of short-finned pilot whale (*Globicephala macrorhynchus*) in Tenerife

<http://fundacion-biodiversidad.es/biodiversidad-marina-y-litoral/proyectos-convocatoria-ayudas/mitcald-determinacion-de-factores-de-riesgo-calder%C3%B3n-tropical>

- *Beaked whale monitoring (2014-2015).*

Project designed to monitor Cuvier and Blainville beaked whale populations in El Hierro Island.

<http://fundacion-biodiversidad.es/biodiversidad-marina-y-litoral/proyectos-convocatoria-ayudas/monitoreo-de-zifios-en-el-hierro>

- *Bottlenose dolphin and Risso's dolphin in marine LIC in Murcia and Andalucía Project (2014- 2016).*

The aim of this project is to improve the information about bottlenose dolphin (*Tursiops truncatus*) and Risso's dolphin (*Grampus griseus*) populations of several Sites of Community Importance along south and south-east Spanish Mediterranean coast

<http://fundacion-biodiversidad.es/biodiversidad-marina-y-litoral/proyectos-convocatoria-ayudas/delfin-mular-y-calderon-gris-en-lic>

- *Proyecto Grampus: seguimiento del calderón gris en la costa catalana. (2014-2015)*

This project is aimed at monitoring Risso's dolphin (*Grampus griseus*) populations in the Catalan coast, in particular in the submarine canyons of Maresme and Palamós.

<http://fundacion-biodiversidad.es/biodiversidad-marina-y-litoral/proyectos-convocatoria-ayudas/proyectorampus-seguimiento-del-calder%C3%B3n-gris>

- *Aquaculture and dolphins: collaboration in creating a scientific basis for management in Natura 2000 (2014)*

This project involved the quantification and characterization of the use made by different groups of bottlenose dolphins of fish farms in the towns of San Pedro del Pinatar, Aguilas and Almeria.

<http://fundacion-biodiversidad.es/biodiversidad-marina-y-litoral/proyectos-convocatoria-ayudas/acuicultura-y-delfines-anse>

- *Canarias con la Mar: cetacean and marine birds conservation (2014)*

In relation to cetaceans, this Project focuses on two main issues that require immediate action: artisanal fisheries in El Hierro Island and collisions with ferries.

<http://fundacion-biodiversidad.es/biodiversidad-marina-y-litoral/proyectos-convocatoria-ayudas/canarias-con-la-mar>