

## **Voluntary National Cetacean Conservation Report**

### **Submitted to the Conservation Committee by the Government of the Argentine Republic**

#### **1. Legislation**

Following its traditional conservation policy, the Argentinean Congress (Legislative Power) is discussing a law project to establish a Marine Mammals Sanctuary in the waters subject to Argentine sovereignty or jurisdiction. This law project would be the framework for the development of an Action Plan that will determine conservation priorities, considering the current situation of the Argentine waters. It also seeks to strengthen similar initiatives of neighbouring countries that have already passed legislation on this subject (Brazil, Uruguay and Chile). It is also in line with the proposal to establish a Whales Sanctuary in the South Atlantic Ocean within the IWC framework, which is sponsored by Argentina, Brazil, Gabon, Uruguay and South Africa; and with the establishment of marine protected areas, according to National Law 27.037 (National System of Marine Protected Areas).

#### **2. Current Programs Related to Cetacean Conservation**

##### **2.1 Conservation Management Plan for Southwest Atlantic Southern Right Whales (CMP SWA SRW)**

A workshop to update on the progress made on the CMP SWA SRW was held in Puerto Madryn, Chubut, in September 2016 and financially supported by the IWC CMP Voluntary Fund, the government of Argentina and the province of Chubut. The results of this workshop were presented to the IWC 66 Conservation Committee (IWC/66/CC12).

#### **3. Current threats to Cetacean Conservation and Management Measures Taken/Proposed**

##### **3.1. Bycatch**

On the 3<sup>rd</sup> December 2015, by Resolution of the Consejo Federal Pesquero (CFP) 11/2015, Argentina adopted the National Action Plan to reduce Marine mammal's interaction with fisheries in Argentina (Marine Mammals PAN). The Plan was prepared jointly by the Secretariat of Environment and Sustainable Development and the Secretariat of Fisheries and Aquaculture with the cooperation of national and provincial government agencies, scientific and academic institutions, and the civil society.

The Marine Mammals PAN aims to contribute to ecosystem management of fisheries in waters of Argentina, assessing the interactions between them and marine mammals in order to reduce negative impacts on both. This PAN poses actions to mitigate bycatch. There are particular recommendations to reduce by-catch of Franciscana. Should you request further information, please contact the IWC Argentine delegation.

#### **4. Sensitivity Areas**

The Argentine Coast Guard, following Law No 24,089 of MARPOL, Law No 24,292 of OPRC 90, HNS 2000, and Law 21,947 of LC72 and LP96, established a working group on environment's safety and protection. This WG has been developing workshops to identify sensitivity areas which includes cetacean. Those identified

sensitivity areas (SA) will be based on environmental, socio-economical and scientific criteria from IMO. A first workshop was hosted by the Coast Guard in June 2015 and 4 areas were identified: El Rincón, Frente Plataforma Media, Frente Plataforma Austral and Corredor Frente Chubut. In order to begin with the implementation of this SA, the Argentine Coast Guard organized a second workshop specifically on El Rincón (October 2016), which included several species of cetacean such as Southern right whales, Bottlenose dolphins and Franciscana.

## **5. Cooperation Programs**

In 2013, Argentina and Honduras agreed to develop a two years cooperation program to work on capacity building and training workshops on whale watching for governmental staff, tour operators, fishermen and scientist from Honduras. The Fondo Argentino de Cooperación Horizontal (FO AR), in collaboration with the Minister of Environment, Department of Biodiversity of Honduras, developed three whale watching capacity building workshops in Utila, Tegucigalpa and Roatan, to train participants on responsible whale watching. Two Honduras government representatives visited Argentina in November 2015 to meet with the Peninsula Valdés Administrator to know how the protected areas system operates in the province of Chubut.