

## ARGENTINA - Voluntary National Cetacean Conservation Report - 2018

### Submitted to the Conservation Committee by the Government of Argentina

1. Legal developments (laws, regulations and other regulatory measures related to cetaceans).

- National Law 27,037 of 2014 and its Regulatory Decree No. 402 of 2017 institutes the National System of Marine Protected Areas, generating the regulatory framework for the protection of marine areas under national jurisdiction. This law complements other measures related to the protection of cetaceans, beyond the fact that whaling is already prohibited by pre-existing laws.

2. Current Government programs related to cetacean conservation.

- National Action Plan to reduce the interaction of marine mammals with fisheries in the Argentine Republic (PAN Mammals). Approved by the Federal Fisheries Council through Resolution 11/2015.
- International Whaling Commission Conservation Management Plan for Southwest Atlantic population of Southern Right Whales (*Eubalaena australis*) is implemented, jointly with Brazil (Coordinator), Chile and Uruguay. For more information see SC/67b/CMP/14
- Conservation Management Plan for Franciscana (*Pontoporia blainvillei*), endorsed by the IWC in September 2016. Argentina (Coordinator) implements it together with Brazil and Uruguay. For more information see SC/67b/CMP/16.
- On September 2017 the Chamber of Deputies of the National Argentine Congress (Cámara de Diputados) approved legislation to create a Marine Mammal Sanctuary in the Exclusive Economic Zone of Argentina. At present, the bill Nr. 21.17 is on the Senate agenda pending its final approval. This Sanctuary will strengthen the existing national legal frameworks for protecting marine mammals from threats and catches, which threaten their welfare or the continued existence of their populations. Its approval will allow national government to advance in an Action Plan to consider conservation priorities.
- Also, the Government presented a draft law for the creation of two new marine protected areas. These areas are the “Yaganes” area and the extension of Namuncurá-Burdwood Bank, which will increase the coastal area to 155,918 km<sup>2</sup> and constitute the first step to achieve the protection of 10% of these areas. The draft law proposes the creation of the Namuncurá-Burdwood Bank Strict National Marine Reserve and the National Marine Reserve; and the Yaganes Strict National Marine Reserve, the Yaganes Marine National Park and the Yaganes National Marine Reserve. These areas are located in the Exclusive Economic Zone of Argentina. Yaganes contributes 0.23% of the fishing effort at national level and will add more than 69.000 km<sup>2</sup> to the coastal marine protection; while Burdwood represents 0.81% of the fishing activity with an area of more than 28.000 km<sup>2</sup>.

**3. Current threats to cetacean conservation and management measures taken/proposed.**

- Bycatch of the Franciscan dolphin in artisanal fishing with gillnets has become the main threat to the conservation of this endemic species in Argentina. In our country a series of assessments have been carried out to mitigate their bycatch, working in collaboration with artisanal fishermen from Bahía Samborombón and Cabo San Antonio. Evaluations included the modification of the net mesh size, the spatial variation of gillnets, the use of pingers, the use of reflective nets, and the evaluation of long-line and fishing traps as alternative fishing gears together to socio-economic studies on the fisheries. Of all these options, pingers were the most effective in reducing bycatch.

**4. Reporting systems for cetacean injuries/mortality/strandings.**

- At the request of the Ministry of Environment and Sustainable Development, within the framework of the Interjurisdictional Coordinating Body on Fauna, there has been development towards the establishment of a Marine Wildlife Rescue Network at the federal level. The objectives include the systematization of records of strandings and the training of technical personnel in disentanglements.
- In 2003, the Southern Right Whale Health Monitoring Program was established by a consortium of NGOs to monitor the health status of this population by post-mortem examinations. A total of 774 dead whales were recorded on the Península Valdés calving ground (Chubut Province) since 2003. The number of dead whales was 15 in 2016 and 28 in 2017. This information was presented to the International Whaling Commission Scientific Committee, Bled, Slovenia, April 2018 (SC/67B/CMP/06).

**5. International cooperation activities (includes bilateral or multilateral cooperation, assistance and funding programs and appropriate contact information, and other international activities of the Country submitting the Report).**

- IWC CMP for Southwest Atlantic population of Southern right whales (SC/67b/CMP/14)
- IWC CMP for Franciscana (SC/67b/CMP/16)

**6. Other (at the discretion of the Authority submitting the Report).**

- Within the framework of Project GCP / ARG / 025 / GEF "Strengthening the Management and Protection of Marine Coastal Biodiversity in Key Ecological Areas and the Application of the Ecosystem Approach to Fisheries (EEP)", in execution since June 2017, abundance estimation of Franciscana are planned (to take place in 2019) on the coast of the province of Buenos Aires (north coast, between San Clemente del Tuyú and Mar del Plata, and south coast between Mar del Plata and Orense). Particular efforts will be made to assess the Samborombón Bay.

- The aforementioned Project is executed by the Ministry of Environment and Sustainable Development of the Nation (MAyDS), the implementation agency is the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) and the funds are from the Fund for the Environment World (GEF).
- The Administration of National Parks, in coordination with the Ministry of Environment and Sustainable Development of the Nation, is advancing in the development of actions to determine the patterns of habitat use and to identify the key sites for the southern right whale. This initiative seeks to comply with the mandate of Resolution UNEP / CMS / Resolution 12.17 CONSERVATION AND MANAGEMENT OF THE WHALES AND HABITATS IN THE REGION OF THE SOUTH ATLANTIC and Annex PLAN OF ACTION FOR THE PROTECTION AND CONSERVATION OF THE WHALES OF THE SOUTH ATLANTIC: Objective 1. Determine habitat use patterns and critical zones. This activity will be link to the work develop under the framework of the IWC CMP.