

Ref: Data request - southern right whale offshore sightings South of 40°S

To whom it may concern,

Research Theme 6 of the Southern Ocean Research Partnership (SORP) of the International Whaling Commission (IWC), entitled "*The right sentinel for climate change: linking foraging ground variability to population recovery in the southern right whale (Eubalaena australis)*", aims to investigate the impact of past and future climate variation at southern right whale foraging grounds on the population recovery of the species. For more information on this project, please visit <https://iwc.int/sorp>

A key part of this project is the identification of southern right whale foraging grounds. However, southern right whales are known to forage from 40 ° S to the ice edge based on historical sources. Contemporary data on feeding ground location is sparse, and thus the identification of areas of importance to the species is difficult. Currently, studies are being carried out using satellite telemetry, stable isotopes and prey sampling to clarify the matter.

Another avenue of research we are pursuing on this topic is a comprehensive desktop study to collate all available (published and unpublished, dedicated or opportunistic) data regarding southern right whale offshore sightings South of 40°S. Such information will be essential to further develop foraging ground habitat models and select appropriate environmental variables, to evaluate effects of climatic changes on the species' foraging success and ultimately reproductive success.

In our bid to collate such data, we therefore wish to inquire if:

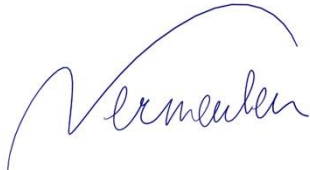
- 1) You or your organisation hold opportunistic data on southern right whale offshore sightings South of 40°S ,
and
- 2) You or your organisation would be willing to contribute such data to this IWC-SORP research project

IP rights of all contributed data will remain unchanged, and will, at this stage, only be tabulated. Further data analyses and processing will not occur without written consent of the respective data owners. The final table of collated data will be made publicly available on the IWC website, unless specifically requested otherwise by the data contributor. If so required, data sharing agreements can be put in place on a case-to-case basis.

For more information or further questions, please do not hesitate to contact us.

Kind regards,

IWC-SORP Theme 6 co-leads

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Vermeulen', with a large, sweeping arch over the first few letters.

Dr Els Vermeulen
Research Manager – MRI Whale Unit
University of Pretoria
Els.vermeulen@up.ac.za

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'E. Carroll', with a large, sweeping arch over the first few letters.

Dr Emma Carroll
Rutherford Discovery Fellow
University of Auckland
e.carroll@auckland.ac.nz