

Project Update: April 2016

Understanding the effects of human activities associated to the uses within nature spaces seems crucial to evaluate the impacts on wildlife and to enforce potential mitigation solutions. Underlying the principles of conservation through the basics of integrating communities as the primary vector for preserving biodiversity has been proposed as one of the most appropriate tools. As consequence, tourism plays an important role, and has been suggested to become on a main way for financing marine conservation initiatives. In essence, throughout this project we have been able to evaluate the potentials of involving a tourism fee directly with developing a financing strategy for the conservation of threatened Humboldt and Magellanic penguins in south of Chile.

Therefore, we have designed a semi-structured questionnaire in order to gain a more precise background of the possibilities of installing a conservation model for financing conservation initiatives through tourism-based. Thus, during the breeding season of Humboldt and Magellanic penguins of 2015-2016, on Puñihuil Islets, were interviewed 250 visitors from Chile and internationals. Spanish-English interviews were used. Survey was developed to evaluate perceptions of visitors regarding to the implementation of penguin conservation measures at-sea. Firstly, the group of surveyors conducted on-site questionnaire face-to-face at the Puñihuil bay. Visitors were interviewed randomly by selecting one of every three encounters. Surveyors presented themselves as researchers from Costa Humboldt, unaffiliated with local groups, and interested on understanding perceptions of penguin conservation and financing alternatives. Surveyors were acknowledging about the possible of using results in order to not reveal identities of interviewers. To conduct an optimal representation of complex questions, we attempt to: i) showing some photographs of healthy marine ecosystems versus altered areas (use of images can increase openness), ii) using local and international surveyors, and iii) conducting interviews in a conversational and casual manner. Interviews questions were designed to evaluate perceptions especially about socio-economics, willingness to pay for conservation initiatives, marine management, tourism, threats on penguins and demographics.

Ultimately, preliminary results of the project will be presented at the upcoming National Congress of Marine Science that will be held between 23rd -27th of May in Concepcion city, Chile.

Surveys, vehicles & visitors to Punihuil Islets

