

## Project Update: January 2017

The aerial surveys for Indo-Pacific bottlenose dolphins and other marine animals along the Garden Route were concluded. In total we accomplished 12 successful surveys accumulating 4675 km of flying in 53 hours. We had a total of 144 encounters of different species including Indo-Pacific bottlenose and humpback dolphins (see map below), hammerhead and great white sharks, Brydes, southern right and humpback whales, plenty of fish, rays, seabirds and Cape fur seals, one elephant seal; and a drifting whale carcass which had four sharks feeding upon it. Currently we are analysing the data in order to determine an abundance estimate for bottlenose dolphins in the area based on the aerial surveys. This estimate shall complement the mark-recapture estimate obtained from boat-based surveys and fin recognition during the same study. Each of these approaches has limitations therefore being able to develop comparative estimates is ideal and can strengthen the information and advice provided for conservation and management strategies. Furthermore, calibration of the two techniques will potentially be relevant to future monitoring using only a single approach (either within the current study area or elsewhere), which is in line with the principles of “adaptive monitoring”.

