

Project Update: November 2016

Aerial surveys of cetaceans along the coast of South Africa's Garden Route [since April 2015] have been very successful. This is despite the fact that days with the right conditions for flying surveys, namely clear water and at least 5 or 6 hours of sunshine and very little wind, are very rare for the study area at times of the year – such benign conditions which are characteristic of the tropics are not very typical of the ruggedly beautiful the southern Cape coast. Nevertheless we have managed to survey the entire 140 km stretch of coastline in the study area in every month or every second month of the reporting period. Sightings during the surveys included Indo-Pacific humpback dolphins and bottlenose dolphins, humpback, Brydes and southern right whales, hammerhead and great white sharks. Of special interest, the rarely seen mating behaviour of humpback dolphins was observed at the same location (Gericke's Point) during two different surveys. The counts and observations recorded during the surveys shall help to spatially and temporally characterise the patterns of occurrence and activities of dolphins and other marine animals that frequent the coastline, and to identify areas of most importance for their protection.



Bottlenose dolphins and a southern right whale.