Project Update: November 2020

For the conservation of the whales, proper regulations should be created, and for that baseline knowledge on the species in the area needs to be provided to local authorities. This knowledge arises from research using non-invasive techniques that allow us to elucidate different aspects of southern right whale (SRW) ecology in this area.

Land-based study

Fieldwork began in July 2020, due to governmental restrictions to deal with Covid-19 pandemic with only one researcher being able travel to Miramar. The methodology used was "scanning" to find SRW and "focal sampling" with a theodolite instrument to register group composition, behaviour, and localisations. The focal sampling was applied to 57 groups of SRW, the composition of these were 1 to 4 individuals.

Education programme

A new educational leaflet was designed for digital dissemination and has already been printed. It displays information about southern right whales and the project.

We gave three virtual talks for an elementary school in Florida, province of Buenos Aires, and a high school in Miramar. Lectures were about southern right whales, cetacean biology and threats and were given in order to generate environmental awareness among the students.

"Name the whale" activity: two more whales from our catalogue were named! Children of the elementary school Santa Teresita del Niño Jesus from Florida, Buenos Aires, named the whale N°11 from Buenos Aires SRW Catalogue, as "Fluffy". On the other hand, citizens and tourists of General Alvarado (Miramar and surroundings) through a public contest via official tourism' social media of the Secretary of Tourism, Culture, and Sports, chose the name "Miramarita" for the whale N°14; this whale will represent the whole district. The aim of this kind of activity is getting the whales closer to the community.

Stranding of a southern right whale on the Miramar coast.

On the morning of 22nd October 2020, we received an alert of a dead whale on the north beach of Miramar. After contacting local and provincial authorities and getting the proper authorisations, we went to the site and coordinated action efforts jointly with personnel of Universidad Nacional de Mar del Plata. The whale was a sub-adult female southern right whale 10.7 m long. Due to its advanced decomposition state, we could only take samples of skin, blubber, muscle, and ectoparasites. We also collected some baleens. This event was striking because within 1-2 days, another two southern right whales with similar characteristics stranded in the region (one in Chapadmalal beach, 22 km north, and the other in Necochea,100 km south), it is very uncommon to see southern right whales stranded in this area. Unfortunately, it was not possible to determine cause of death for either of them.

All work done with the stranded individual was undertaken under the supervision of the Organismo Provincial para el Desarrollo Sostenible (OPDS) that coordinates the Rescue and Stranding Network at the Buenos Aires province.

Press: interviews and diffusion

- La Capital, Mar del Plata 14-08-2020: https://www.lacapitalmdp.com/cethus-continua-su-investigacion-sobre-la-ballena-franca-austral-en-miramar/
- Facebook Turismo Miramar 04-09-2020, 15:00, Live transmission: https://www.facebook.com/MiramarARG
- El diario de Miramar 27-08-2020: https://eldiariodemiramar.com/2020/08/cethus-vuelve-a-analizar-aa-la-ballena-franca-austral-en-aquas-del-distrito/
- Diary El Argentino 10-09-2020: https://www.elargentinodigital.com.ar/lucas-bravo-pase-miedo-por-un-rato-la-ballena-desaparece-por-un-momento-y-luego-vuelve-a-aparecer-abajo-nuestro/
- Diary La Capital, Mar del Plata 22-10-2020: https://www.lacapitalmdp.com/encontraron-muertas-tres-ballenas-en-la-region-e-investigan-las-razones/
- <u>Facebook e Instagram Fundación Cethus 03-11-2020,: Video Campaña de investigación 2020 Miramar: https://www.facebook.com/FundacionCethus/</u>

During 2020, and due to the COVID-19 pandemic situation, it was only possible to enter the city of Miramar with one member of the team, Eliana Zuazquita, so data collection focused on working with the theodolite. For this reason, the activities scheduled for this season, such as aerial surveying and taking aerial photographs (from a helicopter and from a drone) for photo identification, were suspended and will be scheduled for the 2021 season.

We want to express our gratitude to The Rufford Foundation, IBM Argentina, Whale and Dolphin Conservation, and Fundación Cethus for the support to this project. Also, thanks to Miramar's Secretary of Tourism, Culture and Sports, Playa Club building consortium, Claudio Copes and Mónica Luise. Data were collected under permission of the OPDS.



Delivery of the "Miramarita" picture as a gift to the Secretary of Tourism, Culture and Sports, Mr. Tomas Crowder, and the Director of Tourism Promotion. © Ms. Rosana Marinelli.



generales estudiar la biologia y ecologia de la ballena franca austral fuera de sus dreas conocidas de reproducción y cria en el Atlántico Sudoccidental, a fin de Impulsar estrategias de conservación en tomo a la especie.

Miramar, Buenos Aires, Entre los meses de maio v octubre ex posible en esta zona observar ballenas desde la costa; se encontrarian de paso entre las áreas de reproducción y cria y las de alimentación

Entre 2003 y 2014 se realizar on estud sistemáticos en el Golfo San Jorge, Santa Cruz. Estas investigaciones permitieron determinar mayo v octubre vique las assas del sur del goifo serian de gran importancia en la socialización y migración de las BFA. hacia áreas de reproducción y cria.

Cabo Virgenes, en la boca oriental del Estrecho de Magallanes, es otra de las áreas bajo estudio, con el objetive de conocer el uso de hábitut. nuta migratoria de la especie.



La fotoidentificación y las ballenas

investigadores. En el caso de la ballena franca austral se estudian fotografías de sus coliosidades.

El reavistaie de individuos por medio de sus fotografías permite corocer mucho acerca de la biología y ecología de la especie, conseilendo datos como Gempo entre pariciones, edad a la que llega a la modurno sexual, expectativa de vida, etc. A su vez, **la comparación** de los catállogos de diferentes áreas nos brinda información acerca de la distribución y sus nutas migratorias. Fundación Cethus cuenta con tres catálogos para la especie: Provincia de Buenos Aires, Golfo San Jorge y Cabo Virgenes (provincia de Santa Cruz).

miramar









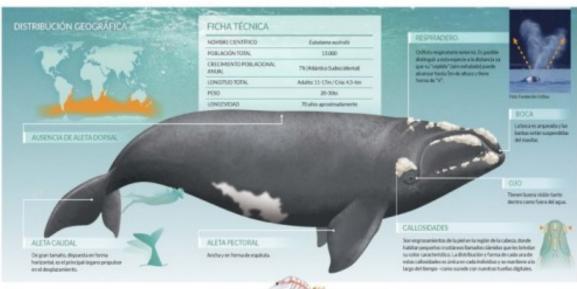
ESTA ESPECIE O QUE RÉS SABER MÁS. COMUNICATE CON NOSOTROS

- cethus@cethus.org
- @www.cethus.org El Fundación Cethus
- fundacion cethus









Medidas de conservación

▶ En 1935 se crea la Conversión Internacional para la Regulación de la Caza de Ballenas (ICRW). En 1946 se establece la Comisión Ballenera Internacional, que en 1986 implementa la moratoria a la cacería comercial de ballenas ("monsturia").

► La Convención sobre el Comercio Internacional de Especies Amenazadas de Fauna y Flora Silvestres (CITES) la incluye en. Aptindice I (el que establece el mayor grado de protección).

En 1984 Argentina la declara Monumento Natural Nacional, En. 2003 faz-nombrada Monumento Natural Previncial en Santo Cruz y en 2006 hizo lo propilo Rie Negro.

➤ La Unión Intervacional para la Conservación de la Naturaleza (URCN) y la Unta Roja de los mandieros de Argentina categorizan a esta especie como "Preocupación Menor".

Alimentación

Su dieta consiste principalm en pequeños crustáceos, como el urilly copépodos, que son filtrados a través de las barbas (estructuras comeos suspendidas del maxillar).



dura aproximadamente 12 meses y el internalo entre pariciones es de 2 a daños. Lasorian naces-en invierno y son amamantados hasta que alicancas hos 9-11: so de integrada. Presente afrisorifaren sexual, siendo las hembras de mayor tamaña que los machos.

















Leaflet