

Project Update: April 2022

Field trips were carried out in Bahía de los Ángeles to obtain biopsies from whale sharks (n=10), along with as zooplankton trawls (n=5), phytoplankton (n=5) and microplastic samples (n=5).

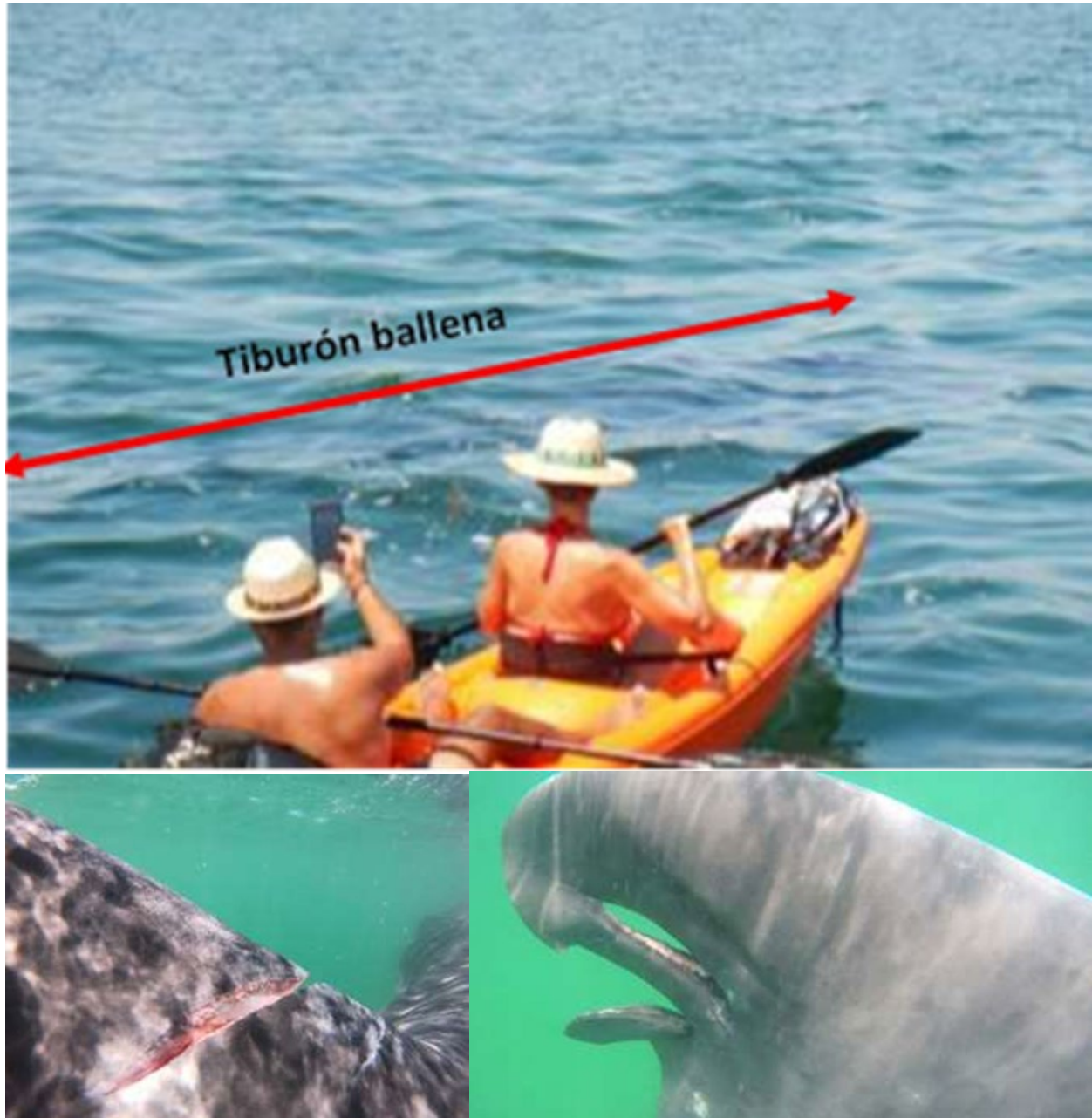
During the study period in the bay, we involved local captains who are tourist operators. Also, a talk was held with the Commission of Natural Protected Areas (Comisión de Áreas Naturales Protegidas, CONANP). We also, conducted interviews with the community to keep them informed and involve them research project activities.

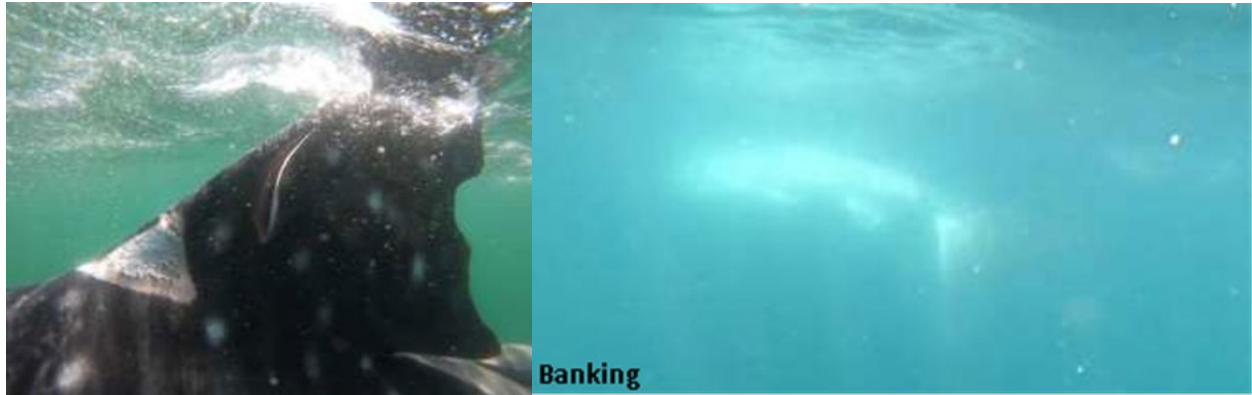


A relevant collaboration was carried out with the local group PEJESAPO, which oversees whale shark monitoring in the area. Thanks to their support, we were able to implement a new sampling technique, which consists of marking the sharks with a wax crayon that is commonly used for livestock. It is, non-toxic and lasts 7 days on the organism. This technique is a significant contribution to the research project since the sampling effort is reduced and the benefit is enhanced.



During the monitoring we observed an evasive behaviour by the sharks previously reported as “banking”. This consists of sharks showing their ventral or dorsal part to the swimmer. Several sharks were seen with injuries, which is of concern for the conservation of this species. Several tourists were kayaking although this activity is prohibited in the area. Additionally, several tourist operators were speeding.





The issue of garbage is important in this area. During boat trips and on the beach, we found a great number of plastics items that were already in the process of turning into microplastics.



Acknowledgment

I want to thank the team that accompanied me to the field, our captains and the PEJESAPO group.

