

Project Update: May 2011

Initial correspondence with the concerned local government units (LGUs) of the Province of Bohol and other environmental agencies were done from July to October 2010. The first batch of fieldwork was conducted from October 10th - 16th, 2010. Two days prior to the actual survey, the team traveled to site and visited the offices of the five different municipal mayors, the provincial governor, and the Bohol Environmental Management Office or BEMO as a form of courtesy to them and introduces the project. The survey team was composed of members from Silliman University-Institute of Environmental and Marine Sciences graduate program, Tubbataha Management Office, Palawan State University, and marine mammal volunteers. This study seeks to provide an estimate of the population size, address movement patterns and habitat range of the most frequently sighted cetaceans within the project site. To achieve these objectives, a systematic line-transect survey was conducted on October 12th - 15th and November 21st – 30th 2010 covering an on-effort distance of approximately 540 km. To date, 46 cetacean encounters has been documented identifying six different species: *Grampus griseus*, *Lagenodelphis hosei*, *Peponocephala electra*, *Physeter macrocephalus*, *Stenella longirostris* and *Tursiops* sp. Catalogue of marked individuals is still ongoing. Resighting of *G. griseus* has been observed and the sperm whale seen in October was again encountered in November based on its dorsal fin markings. Species seen were predominantly *Grampus griseus*.

Behaviours observed were feeding, mating, milling, logging, nursing, and sailing. Data are insufficient at the moment and preliminary to compute for an abundance estimate. Analysis of the distinctly marked individuals is still ongoing since images taken throughout the survey were quite large in number. Physical parameters like temperature and salinity are collected in each survey. This undertaking serves as the springboard between the university and local NGOs (Condura and Ayala Foundation, Inc.) to initiate a memorandum of agreement to support marine mammal studies within the area. Likewise, the principal investigator was also given additional funding support from OPCFHK to complement this project thereby increasing field effort days for a more robust data collection.

More effort surveys are scheduled in the months of March to May 2011 which have longer durations compared to the previous trips. IEC materials are created and ready for reproduction. It will be disseminated to the five LGUs and other agencies on the next field survey. Preliminary results will presented to the municipal local council as well. It is also anticipated that the catalog of marked individuals will be in place by next months.