

Project Update: February 2013

From June to August, we observed 597 humpback whales on 32 trips off the coast of Esmeraldas (northern coastal province of Ecuador), using an open fibreglass vessel. We recorded geographic position, the observed behaviour, group composition, and group size at each sighting. During each trip, we took photo ID pictures and biopsy samples of 35 whales. We identified 32 whales according to pigmentation patterns at the fluke and added 20 new whales to the photo ID database of the CETACEA project.

Every 20 to 30 minutes, we recorded humpback whale songs with a total of 1,755 minutes in 147 sound recordings. Every recording is plotted on a map using ArcMap, and at the moment, I am analysing the songs after classifying each recording according to quality and context of singer position, bottom structure and depth, as well as presence of other humpback whales.

