

Project Update: September 2014

Between August 21st and September 19th 2014, we completed 15 boat trips, seven research-exclusively and eight on tourism vessels, for a total of 750.5 km travelled. During this time we have observed 92 whales in 37 groups (six competitive groups, seven mother-calf groups, one mother-calf-escort, 18 groups with only adults, four adults-sub adults groups and one sub adult group) - on average we found 2.48 whales per group. We have additionally recorded 2h11min with the hydrophone.

Four workshops with whale-watching operators have been performed in El Cantil, La Joviseña, Turquí and Punta brava. Additionally, 15 talks with tourists (one before the whale-watching tour) have been conducted. We are carrying out short surveys (25 questions) to assess the level of knowledge of tourism operators before the workshops. At the end of the season, we plan to make final survey to measure the level of impact of our environmental education activities.

Boat trips on tourism vessels were made with six different tourism operators and they have been observed ignoring the whale-watching recommendations given by the Ministry of tourism. All of the operators have been observed moving at high speeds during the sightings, maintaining very short distances (<50m) and even getting in direct contact with whales. We are in the process of contacting them to do surveys and discuss about the whale watching recommendations.

To summarize, so far we have made 39 boat trips (14 research only and 23 on tourism vessels), we have travelled 1454.9 km along the Tribugas gulf and sighted 191 whales in 81 groups. We have recorded 7h 21 min with our hydrophone.



Left: Whale with fresh wound from a boat propeller. This injury was certainly caused in the Tribuga's gulf. Middle: A tourism vessel very close to a whale. Right: A group of mother-calf-escort in which we saw the calf being nursed.