

Project Update: May 2016

During the whale season in 2015, a total of 19 surveys were conducted inside Bahía Nueva, Golfo Nuevo in order to study distribution, abundance and behavior patterns of southern right whales. Line transects were conducted to determine usage patterns of Bahía Nueva by whales and ships and consisted of the navigation of straight lines with a semi-rigid boat. The number of whales and boats and how both of them use the area was determined. A total of 678 whales were sighted, 73% corresponded to solitary individuals, 21.2% to mother with calf and 4.8% to mating groups. A total of 100 boats were sighted, 58% corresponded to nautical boats (included diving boats, sailboats, kayaks, windsurf boards), 39% to commercial boats (included fishing boats, cargo ships, ore carriers) and 3% to Argentinian coastguard. Most of the whales were sighted performing active behaviours (70%), followed by travelling (19%) and resting (11%) and most of the boats were sighted travelling (66%) followed by anchored (34%). Raspiwhale (rw) model was tested. The rw is attached to the whales via suction cups. This system is non-invasive and does not harm the whales unlike other satellite tracking systems.

