

Project Update: January 2005

Between September 2004 and January 2005, we developed several activities, including field work, conferences and meetings. In October, November, December 2004 and January 2005, we continued the surveys for small cetaceans in northern Golfo San Jorge. Despite the usually bad weather conditions to navigate, we achieved a total of 36 hours on observational effort, and we registered 15 sightings: 13 of Peale's dolphins, one of Commerson's dolphins and one of Risso's dolphins. The most representative dolphin in the area, the Peale's dolphin, used coastal areas of northern Golfo San Jorge to feed and breed. Our scientific results were communicated in the XIX National Meeting of Mammalogy carried out in November. Seven students of the Universidad Nacional de La Patagonia participated in the surveys, data analysis and communication of results as a training opportunity.

Moreover, we continued promoting local awareness about ocean conservation, taking marine mammals as flagship species. We offered conferences at Comodoro Rivadavia and informal talks with local people at Bahía Bustamante, we published articles on the local newspapers, and we produced texts on wildlife for the web-site of Comodoro Rivadavia. In addition, we carried out a meeting with the Secretariat of Environment of Comodoro Rivadavia, the coast-guard, the air force, and people from the University, to organize a team in case of a contingency (wildlife rescue or rehabilitation). Finally, in December 2004 we participated in the first meeting to work in the zoning of the South Western Atlantic Large Marine Ecosystem, held at Buenos Aires.

As an outstanding achievement, the National Ministry of Health and Environment declared our conservation program of national interest for Argentina.