

Project Update: June 2010

Fieldwork activities at sea launched in February 2010. The final site area covers the Bay of Panama and islands within a 20 km range.

We began to collect data with stationary hydrophones deployed at different sites to record the sounds of dolphins that transit these areas. These sounds are saved automatically to a data card within a 24-hour cycle while the recorder remains underwater for approximately 5 days.

In addition, fieldwork outings are performed to other sites within the same area using the Boat Hydrophone CR55 and sounds are recorded on a FR32 (Cetacean Technologies). This records nearby transiting dolphins and ocean background noises – including ship noise. At each of these sites, physical parameters such as conductivity, dissolved oxygen, salinity and others are measured with the help of a YSI Professional Plus. The outings involve visual surveys for cetaceans and distance to object is estimated with the help of range-finder binoculars. These last three mentioned pieces of equipment have been funded by The Rufford Small Grants Foundation.

To date, we have collected 4091 audio files of 2-minute duration each, with the Stationary Hydrophone, and 60 audio files of 20 minutes in length each, with the CR55, which is used directly from the boat and therefore outings are dependant on the appropriate sea state and weather. Preliminary analysis has shown scattered dolphin presence. We are positive that in the following months more data will be collected throughout other sites within the bigger area.

