

Project Update: February 2009

Salmon farming in southern Chile and the impacts on marine life:

The salmon farming industry has expanded into the fjords and channels of southern Chile exponentially, causing unforeseen environmental damage, overlapping with unique ecosystems, some of them critical habitats not only for cetaceans. The recent outbreak of the virus ISA (Infectious Salmon Anemia) has generated high losses for the industry, but also important consequences for both the environment and the local communities.

The rotten fish and the chemicals used have created an unprecedented pollution, causing both human health problems and serious environmental damage, bringing as a consequence lack of dolphin sightings, a decrease in seabird abundance, as well as dead invertebrates on the beaches. Legal actions have been taken by the community and we are involved giving evidence and by elaborating an international campaign to inform about the effects of this industry on the marine environment. Critical habitats might be being lost faster than expected, to rates we don't even know. Any help you can give us on strategies to follow are welcome.

All the best and many greetings from southern Chile.