

6 Months Report September 2024

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We performed our field work season to obtain data of whale-watching vessels presence causing stress on humpback whales in Los Órganos, northern Peru, during July and August 2024.

We performed a total of 10 boat surveys in order to collect data regarding the behaviour of humpback whales, photo identification of flukes and to obtain skin and blubber biopsy samples. During our study period we had 77 sightings of humpback whales with a total of 140 different individuals counted.

We obtained a total of 33 skin/blubber samples of different individuals in different social groups. In total we obtained 8 biopsies from mothers in company with a calf, 10 biopsies of adults in competitive groups, 8 of adult triads, 7 of adult pairs of which 16 were in absence of whale-watching vessels and 17 with whale-watching vessels presence. The presence of the whale-watching vessels was considered as an estres agent when the presence lasted a minimum of 20 minutes nearby the humpback whales.

The biopsies were preserved at -20°C until laboratory analyses.

In addition we performed two workshops to local whale-watching companies, one in the locality of Punta Sal and one in the locality of Los Organos. Both workshops counted with a great participation of captains and whale-watching guides. We are very grateful to the Municipality of Los Organos to support us in the organization of the workshops. We deliver a whale-watching best practices guid and a identification guide of cetaceans of northern Peru to the participants. In the workshops we showed the results of our last 2nd Rufford Grant study performed in 2022. The most important result was that the presence of whale-watching vessels decreased the logging and resting behaviour of calfs during maternal care. And the resting behavior of the calf ended when the number of vessels increased nearby the calf. We expected a change of behaviour of captains and whale-watching companies after the workshops as we encourage to avoid the observation of mother-calf pairs and the number of boats observing one group of whales should be reduced to 3 vessels according to international guidelines.

During boat surveys unfortunately we were not able to obtain skin/blubber biopsies of entangled individuals. However, during July and August 2024 a

total of 4 entangled whales were observed in the area. One of them was a calf observed in the locality of Cancas. There, the local whale-watching company was able to rescue the humpback whale calf from the net.

We also photographed an adult individual with a rope around his head (Figure 6). However, during the sighting the whale was very elusive and swimming fast so we were not able to approach to liberate her.

We are currently organizing a disentanglement workshop in Peru jointly with WWF Peru, SERNAPESCA Chile and Ministerio de la Producción Perú for this year 2024 as new disentanglement tools and a protocol for the disentanglement of whales is needed in order to coordinate the activities to perform in the presence of entangled whales in the area.



Figure 1: A humpback whale calf breaching during the presence of a whale-watching vessel.



Figure 2: Preserving skin/blubber biopsy samples during boat surveys.



Figure 3: Workshop performed in Punta Sal to the company Ultramar Expeditions.



MUNICIPALIDAD DISTRITAL DE
LOS ORGANOS

CAPACITACIÓN

**BUENAS PRACTICAS EN EL DESARROLLO DE
LA ACTIVIDAD DE AVISTAMIENTO DE
FAUNA MARINA**

**DÍA: LUNES 12
DE AGOSTO
HORA: 3:00 P.M.**

**PONENCIA
A CARGO DE:**



LUGAR
BIBLIOTECA DE LA
I.E AUGUSTO SALAZAR BONDY

#ORGANOSAVANZA
Lo que se promete, se cumple

Municipalidad Distrital de Los Órganos

Figure 4: Flyer of the workshop in Los Organos



Figure 5: Whale-watching best practices workshop performed in Los Organos, 12 August 2024.



Figure 6: An adult humpback whale entangled and not rescued.



Figure 7: Part of the team during boat surveys. Thanks to Los Corales Tours whale-watching company for the support.