

Project Update: April 2019

For the conservation of whales, proper regulations should be created and for that baseline knowledge on the species in the area needs to be provided to local authorities. This knowledge arises from research using non-invasive techniques that allow us to elucidate different aspects of whale ecology in this area.

Updates of activities

Since we finished our 2018 fieldwork in Miramar at the end of October, we dedicated our effort to analyse the photos taken during the aerial survey and the information collected. As we mentioned before, southern right whales have a pattern of callosities on their head that allow us to identify each individual whale since this pattern is unique and does not change along the whale's life. Photo-ID surveys allow knowing many aspects of the whales' life on a non-invasive way. Researchers from different areas (mainly nursery grounds) have created photo-ID catalogues of individuals using aerial photos. The comparison of these catalogues can reveal characteristics of life cycle and migratory routes. We could photo-ID 11 whales from our last aerial survey, which were added to the Miramar's catalogue which now contains 19 photo-ID whales. The future action is to compare this catalogue with other areas in the region and continue to analyze the information collected.

We also continued with education's activities. At the end of November 2018 we gave a talk and distributed eco bags made with funds from this grant among students of Coronel Dorrego city (Buenos Aires province) that were visiting Miramar on a field trip during the period we were on fieldwork. Teachers of primary schools in Miramar continued working with the information that we prepared for them. We are glad to report that they sent us a painting the children made as a closure of activities in which they included the name they'd chose for one our photo-ID whales: "Miriluna".



We carried out the first “Jornadas de Conservación de Cetáceos” in Miramar. The event aimed at biology teachers and students, local authorities, Argentine Coastguard and the community. The topics discussed included biology and conservations threats, cetacean's diversity in Argentina, responsible whale watching and southern right whale research undertaken by our project and the preliminary results in Miramar.

Education activities are essential to stimulate children and community interest in cetacean's conservation and southern right whales conservation, in particular. It also allows us to get people closer with our advances in the knowledge of whales that visit the area. For conservation not only is important to study Southern right whales, but also to share with students and the community our experience on how to conserve them.

We want to express our gratitude to The Rufford Foundation, Argentine Coast Guard, Whale and Dolphin Conservation, Kilverstone Wildlife Charitable Trust, General Alvarado council, Inmobiliaria Perata and Fundación Cethus for the support to this project.



Eco bag.