

THE RIGHT WHALE PROGRAM



A group of whales outside the entrance to Golfo San Jose, Peninsula Valdes, September 2008

RESEARCH, EDUCATION AND CONSERVATION PROGRAMS IN 2008

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RESEARCH

MONITORING THE PATAGONIAN RIGHT WHALE POPULATION THROUGH ANNUAL AERIAL SURVEYS



We conducted our 38th year of aerial surveys of the right whales at Peninsula Valdes on September 8-9, 2008 with the assistance of the **Argentina Armada**. Photographers John Attkinson and Mariano Sironi took 6,800 photographs of 633 whales including 207 calves. Diego Taboada provided logistical support.

The thousands of photographs of individual whales that comprise our database allow us to create life histories for many individual whales and determine the population's size, growth rate and health.

Diego Taboada, Mariano Sironi and John Attkinson with the crew of the Armada's Porter Pilatus plane including Officers Carlos Falcone, Pablo Viozzi and Fernando Spoglia, and subofficers José Tolaba and Eduardo Espinoza.

AERIAL SURVEY ANALYSIS 2003 -2008

In 2008, ICB researcher Carina Marón traveled to Utah, with financial support from IFAW, to work with Vicky Rowntree for three months to update the analysis of the aerial survey data from 2003 to 2007. The data was sent to Justin Cooke in February 2009 and we expect to be publishing a new estimate of the population's size and growth rate in 2009.



A mother/calf pair photographed during the 2008 aerial survey at Peninsula Valdes.

MONITORING THE FREQUENCY OF KELP GULL ATTACKS ON RIGHT WHALES and THE 3RD MEETING TO DISCUSS THE PROBLEM

Kelp Gulls at Peninsula Valdes eat skin and blubber that they peck from the backs of living right whales. In response the whales try to flee the attacks or assume postures that keep the whales' backs underwater. Our biggest concern is that the gulls are changing the whales' behavior and increasing the whales' energy consumption at a time when they are fasting.

Since 1995, researchers from the Instituto de Conservación de Ballenas/Whale Conservation Institute have been conducting focal animal follows of individual whales to monitor changes in the frequency of gull attacks over time.

In September of 2008 Mariano Sironi, Vicky Rowntree and Carina Marón with the assistance of Lorena Barranco, María Laura Marcías y Macarena Agrelo collected information on gull attack frequencies at two different observation sites. We followed 242 mother/calf pairs and recorded 1,065 gull attacks. The attacks are recorded as the number of 5-minute intervals of observation that included a gull attack on the mother/calf pair that is being followed. Results showed that mother/calf pairs were attacked in 26% of the 5-minute intervals they were under observation in Golfo San José and 25% of the intervals in Golfo Nuevo, compared to 17% in 1995.



Gull attacks continue to be a problem for the Patagonian right whales.

Our annual data on the frequency of gull attacks since 1995 was reported at the **Third Workshop on the Interactions between Kelp Gulls and Whales at Península Valdés** that was held in Puerto Madryn on July 3, 2008 and convened by la Administración del Area Natural Protegida Península Valdés. The objective of the meeting was "to exchange experiences and progress of the studies that were agreed to in the 2nd workshop that was held in 2004 and to propose basic and necessary actions to manage the problem with the goal of reducing the frequency of Kelp Gull attacks on right whales at Península Valdés and surrounding areas".

100 RIGHT WHALES STRANDED AT PENINSULA VALDES IN 2008

For the sixth consecutive year we have conducted systematic examinations of right whales that die and strand on the beaches of the Península. The Right Whale Stranding Program began in 2003 with the objective of creating baseline data on right whale health and determining their susceptibility to diseases and environmental disturbances as well as establishing causes of death. The Program is coordinated by Marcela Uhart, Vicky Rowntree, Mariano Sironi and a field team of veterinarians and their assistants including researchers, wildlife officers and many volunteers. The Program is a collaborative effort of non-governmental organizations including the Wildlife Conservation Society (WCS), Whale Conservation Institute (WCI), Instituto de Conservación de Ballenas (ICB), Fundación Patagonia Natural (FPN) and la Fundación Eocentro and has been funded by the US National Marine Fisheries Service, The Island Foundtion, Pacific Life, The Lawrence Foundation, The Ocean Foundation and the US Marine Mammal Commission.



Andrea Chirife, field coordinator of the Stranding Program with the ICB team examine a dead calf in Golfo San José

In 2008, the Program recorded, examined and collected tissue samples from 100 stranded right whales (89% calves) a sad world record for a baleen whale species.

Veterinarians and biologists from the field team photograph, measure, record GPS locations and conduct forensic examinations (necropsies) on all stranded whales where permitted by body condition. Tissue samples collected during necropsies are sent to researchers and specialists in laboratories in Argentina and the United States to determine possible pathologies and causes of death, genetic structure of the population, presence of toxins, foraging locations, prey preferences, cell structure and evolutionary history. Results of analyses are reported weekly to authorities in Chubut Province.

Analyses of the 89 calves that died in 2008 have so far provided no evidence for cause of death but some biotoxin and histopathology analyses are still being processed. Almost all of the whales died at sea and probably spent several days before washing onto the beaches where they were sighted by members of the Stranding Network. As a consequence, most of the whales that the team investigated were in advanced states of decay when first examined. The decay process not only destroys the animals' tissues but also the biotoxins and/or pathologies that could have caused the death and thus for many animals, it is often impossible to determine cause of death. Getting to whales immediately after they die is the biggest problem confronting all stranding researchers. An alert and broadly distributed network of people living or working near the coast who call in strandings when they first appear help solve this problem. The Peninsula Valdes Stranding Network has grown in every year and in 2008 reported 64% of the strandings. We have funds to tow fresh animals to shore and are raising funds to buy a 4-wheel drive vehicle that will help us access strandings as soon as they are reported. With these improvements we soon hope to identify the reason behind the high calf mortalities in recent years.

EVALUATING THE HEALTH OF MOTHERS AND THEIR CALVES



The roll of fat behind the blowholes of a right whale is a good indicator of the body condition of a mother and her calf.

Research in recent years indicates that mothers with greater blubber reserves can hold their breath for longer.

Vicky Rowntree continued her work to evaluate the body condition and health of the living right whales at Peninsula Valdes. Assuming that whales that hold their breaths for longer periods of time are in better physical shape (as is true for humans), Vicky follows individual mother/calf pairs for about 45 minutes and keeps a record of the time of every blow (exhalation) of a mother or calf. As well as recording the time of blows, she keeps a continuous record of the whales' behavior, and notes the size of the calf and the height of the roll of fat behind the mothers' blowholes. A high neck roll indicates that a

mother has enough blubber reserves to feed its calf through the nursery season, a period when the whales are primarily fasting. 2008 was the sixth year of this research project.

GENETICS AND THE FORAGING LOCATIONS OF OF PENÍNSULA VALDÉS RIGHT WHALES

In 2008, ICB's research team became stronger when Luciano Valenzuela successfully defended his doctoral thesis at the University of Utah. His project was based on genetic and stable isotope studies of skin samples collected from the Valdes right whales.

One of the most interesting findings of Luciano's research showed that right whale calves appear to learn their foraging locations from their mothers.

This culturally transmitted site fidelity is so strong that it has led to genetic differences between whales that use different feeding areas. His discovery was made by using a novel technique in which he combined results from genetic and stable isotope analyses of the skin samples.

After this important professional experience and his years studying in the US, Luciano said *"I hope to continue learning about the use and application of these techniques in ecological studies. There were many volunteers and collaborators who helped me through these years and to whom I am supremely grateful. Also I want to express my thanks to the governmental agencies that allowed me to conduct this research at Peninsula Valdes and the foundations and companies who provided financial support. Finally I want to thank all the member of the Adoption Program, without your help our research projects, which are recognized around the world, would not have been completed."*



Congratulations to Dr. Valenzuela for this important achievement! Actually, Luciano is continuing his work at the University of Utah but now as a postdoctoral researcher in the Stable Isotope Laboratory where he is specializing in the use of this technique to study animal and human diet and movements.

STUDIES OF THE RESPONSE OF WHALE TISSUES TO CONTAMINANTS



Julieta Martino in her laboratory at the University of Southern Maine.

In 2008, ICB researcher Julieta Martino completed her first year of classes for her doctoral degree in toxicology with Dr. John Wise at the University of Southern Maine, US, where she was financed by being awarded a Fulbright Fellowship. Juli is investigating how metals damage cells specially their DNA and cell cycle.

Marine mammals are exposed to metals such as mercury, cadmium, chromium and lead and accumulate these metals in a variety of organ tissues.

The Wise Lab studies the effects that these metals may have on cells in different marine mammal species. These studied also

contribute to a better understanding of the development of cancer in humans.

Juli describes her research as follows: *"I am working with skin and lung cells from a variety of species of porpoises, dolphins and whales. I am coming to understand the specific type of damage caused by chromium and how this damage is repaired. Various theories suggest that long-lived species repair damage to their DNA more efficiently and I am intending to see if this occurs in the marine mammal species that I am interested in (including our southern right whales!). For now the data show encouraging results but more work needs to be done to get a broader understanding of what is happening."*

SCIENTIFIC PUBLICATIONS PRESENTED AT MEETINGS AND PUBLISHED IN REVIEWED JOURNALS

The following scientific papers were presented and/or published by the Whale Conservation Institute/Instituto de Conservación de Ballenas in 2008:

- Valenzuela, L., Sironi M., Rowntree V, Calliari D, Seger J. 2008. **Isotopic and genetic evidence for site fidelity to feeding grounds in southern right whales (*Eubalaena australis*)**. 6th Intl. Conf. on the Applications of Stable Isotope Techniques to Ecological Studies. Hawaii, August 25-29.
- Sironi, Mariano; Juan Carlos López; Roberto Bubas; Alejandro Carribero; Carlos García; Guillermo Harris; Edgardo Intrieri; Miguel Iñíguez and Roger Payne. 2008. **Predation by killer whales (*Orcinus orca*) on southern right whales (*Eubalaena australis*) off Patagonia, Argentina: effects on behavior and habitat choice**. SC/60/BRG29 presented to the International Whaling Commission Scientific Committee, June 2008 (unpublished). [Available from the IWC Office]
- V.J. Rowntree, L.O. Valenzuela, P. Franco Fraguas, J. Seger. 2008. **Foraging behaviour of southern right whales (*Eubalaena australis*) inferred from variation of carbon stable isotope ratios in their baleen**. SC/60/BRG23 presented to the International Whaling Commission Scientific Committee, June 2008 (unpublished). [Available from the IWC Office]
- Valenzuela, Luciano, Mariano Sironi, Victoria J. Rowntree y Jon Seger. 2008. **Isotopic and genetic evidence for site fidelity to feeding grounds in southern right whales (*Eubalaena australis*)**. SC/60/BRG13 presented to the International Whaling Commission Scientific Committee, June 2008 (unpublished). [Available from the IWC Office] and published in *Molecular Ecology* (2009) 18: 782-791.
- Uhart, M., Rowntree, V.J, Mohamed, N., Pozzi, L., La Sala, L., Andrejuk, J., Musmeci, L., Franco, M., Sironi, M., Sala, J. E., McAloose, D., Moore, M., Touhey, K., McLellan, W.A., Rowles, T. 2008. **Strandings of southern right whales (*Eubalaena australis*) at Península Valdés, Argentina from 2003-2007**. Paper presented to the International Whaling Commission Scientific Committee, June 2008 (unpublished). [Available from the IWC Office]
- Lundquist, D., Sironi, M., Wursig, B. and Rowntree, V. 2008. **Changes in the movement patterns of southern right whales in response to simulated swim-with-whale tourism at Peninsula Valdes, Argentina**. SC/60/WW3 presented to the International Whaling Commission Scientific Committee, June 2008 (unpublished). [Available from the IWC Office]
- Lundquist, D., Sironi, M., Wursig, B. and Rowntree, V. 2008. **Behavioral responses of southern right whales to simulated swim-with-whale tourism at Peninsula Valdes, Argentina**. SC/60/WW4 presented to the International Whaling Commission Scientific Committee, June 2008 (unpublished). [Available from the IWC Office]
- Mohamed, N.; Pozzi, L.; La Sala, L.; Musmeci, L.; Andrejuk, J.; McAloose, D.; Uhart, M.; Rowntree, V. and M. Sironi. 2008. **Southern Right Whale (*Eubalaena australis*) health monitoring program at Península Valdés, Argentina: evaluating health risks**

affecting the recovery of Right Whales. XVII Biennial Conference on the Biology of Marine Mammals. Cape Town, South Africa, Nov 28-Dic 3. 2008
Payne, R., Rowntree, V. and M. Sironi. 2008. **The Southern Right Whale Program at Península Valdés.** Oral presentation in the special workshop discussing "**Long-term Studies of Individually Identified Cetaceans**". XVII Biennial Conference on the Biology of Marine Mammals. Cape Town, South Africa, Nov 28-Dec 3, 2008.

EDUCATION AND PUBLICITY

LECTURE BY DR. ROGER PAYNE AT A CONFERENCE IN BUENOS AIRES DISCUSSING: *IS THERE A FUTURE FOR WHALES?*



ICB organized a conference: *Is there a Future for Whales?* with support from Petrobras, Aeropuertos Argentina 2000, the Buenos Aires Stock Exchange and the Congressional Library of Argentina (la Bolsa de Comercio of Buenos Aires and la Biblioteca del Congreso de la Nación),

The event was held in the Buenos Aires Stock Exchange and was attended by over 400 people. Dr. Payne was introduced by Sergio Elguezabal, one of Argentina's best known reporters and producer of TN Ecología, a television program dedicated to themes showing

the relationship between conservation and the natural world..

A discussion after the lecture included invited panelists **Dr. Mariano Sironi**, Scientific Director of **Instituto de Conservación de Ballenas** and **José Truda Palazzo**, President of the **Projeto Baleia Franca of Brasil**, who was inspired by Payne and today is one of the leading proponents of whale conservation in Brazil and Latin America. Both shared their experiences with whale research and the difficult task of making significant contributions to conservation as a non-governmental organization.

Whales are not saved. This was the message given by Dr. Roger Payne from a life of working for the conservation of the whales of the world

Dr. Roger Payne, Founder and President of Ocean Alliance/Whale Conservation Institute, created the Right Whale Program. Since 1994, the Program has been represented in Argentina by the Instituto de Conservación de Ballenas.

In 1970, Roger discovered that he could identify individual Patagonian right whales from the pattern of callosities on their heads. This discovery was the initial insight that

began the research program which today is the longest continuous study of a large whale based on following the lives of known individuals.



PHOTOGRAPHIC EXHIBIT OF THE WHALES OF VALDES



The Exhibit's theme was to show the beauty of whales and the necessity to protect their habitat to assure that this emblematic species will continue to exist along the Patagonian Coast of Argentina.

As part of the Conference "*Is There a Future for Whales?*" and with the support from the **Bolsa de Comercio de Buenos Aires** (the Stock Exchange of Buenos Aires) and the **GartenGroup**, a photographic show of "The Whales of Valdes" was held in the central Hall of the Stock Exchange. Participating artists included: **Alberto Patrian, Alejandro**

Avampini, José Carracedo and the Scientific Director of ICB **Mariano Sironi**. The show was on display from May 19-30, 2008.

AN EVENING FOR ICB'S ARGENTINE SUPPORTERS

The achievements and programs of the Instituto de Conservación de Ballenas could not have been realized without the help and support from a large number of individuals, companies, foundations and organizations who understand that protecting the natural environment is the responsibility of all.

With great appreciation, ICB hosted an evening for its principal Argentine collaborators and supporters to thank them for all they have done in support of the Patagonian right whales. The event took place on May 26, 2008 in the Patagonia Store (outdoors clothing) in the center of Buenos Aires with support from **SAS** (computer software company), **Aeropuertos Argentina 2000**, **The National Library of Congress**, **Bodega La Riojana** and **Quesos La Suerte**.

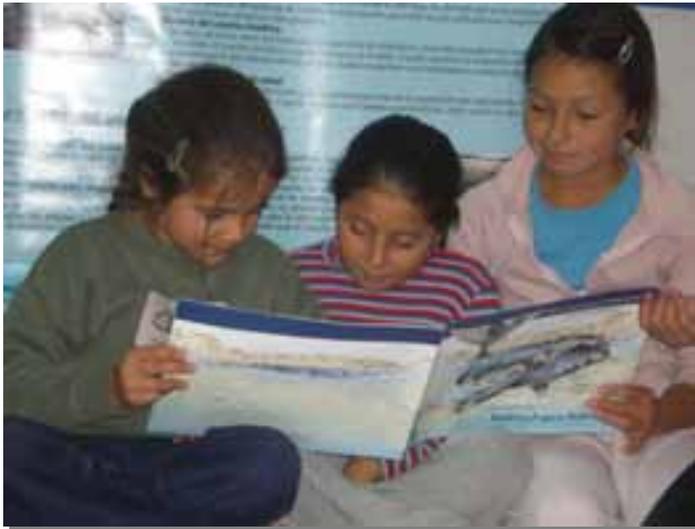
Eighty people attended the evening including newspaper reporters, owners of whale watch companies, business owners, representatives from foundations, and others who took the opportunity to hear about what had been achieved through their joint collaboration. Roger Payne and Vicky Rowntree, Director of the Right Whale Program thanked everyone for their support of ICB and the whales. During the event Aeropuertos Argentina 2000 displayed their new book, *Haya Pax*, which provides a collection of beautiful writings and photographs (including some by Mariano Sironi) that illustrate airline destinations in Argentina.



Roxana Schteinbarg and Mariano Sironi describe the ICB's programs and what has been achieved with the support from individuals, foundations and businesses.

ICB'S EDUCATION PROGRAM "BRINGING WHALES TO YOUR SCHOOL"

In 2007 ICB created an educational curriculum "**Bringing whales to your school**", a modular program that provides materials and activities that allows teachers to take their students to the ocean where they can be surrounded by whales while remaining in their classrooms.



Students in **Escuela de Caleta Córdoba** reading the booklet "Knowing Southern Right Whales" that is included in the Program's materials

The program has been introduced into 34 schools in Chubut, Córdoba and Buenos Aires. About 4,000 students have worked with the Program since it was launched in 2007.

Each additional year the Program is taught, multiplies the number of students benefitting from its message.

Many students have never seen the Sea or its whales because they live so far inland. For this reason, it was our intension to **bring the students to the whales** by allowing them to discover **the wonders found along the Argentine coast**. As part of this discovery, they also learn the importance of protecting a species and its habitat. The program shows the ecological

value of whales as well as their social and economical value as star attractions of an ecotourism industry.

The curriculum has been declared of "Educational Interest" by the Province of Chubut's Minister of Education and of "Interest" by the Chamber of Representatives of Argentina.

PRESENTING THE EDUCATION PROGRAM TO THE CITIES OF CORDOBA AND PUERTO MADRYN

Both presentations generated a rich exchange of ideas between the audience and teachers that have used the Program

On July 30, "Bringing Whales to Your School" was presented at the **Provincial Museum of Natural History in Cordoba** to teachers and others from eight schools in Cordoba who will be using the Program. The meeting was held to introduce the Program and create a time for the teachers who will be using the program to meet and exchange ideas about its application with those who have already used the Program.



A similar presentation was made in the House of Culture in Puerto Madryn on September 24 with support from the City of Madryn. Over 50 teachers and educational managers listened intently to presentations made by Roxana Schteinberg (Program coordinator) and the teachers and biologists Hilda Suárez and Carina Marón, who explained how the program worked, its various components and activities. In addition to these presentation, Dr. Mariano Sironi also spoke of his experiences working with Argentina's right whales.

HOW THE EDUCATION PROGRAM WORKS



Presentation of the Program to **Escuela Municipal N° 3 of Puerto Madryn**

As a part of promoting "Bringing Whales to Your School", ICB introduced the Program to five and six-year olds in 15 schools as part of the initial presentation of the curriculum.

About 50 students in each school participated in the presentations. The students worked to assemble the life histories of three right whales whose stories were revealed by the Right Whale Research Program – Garra, Troff and Docksider. While collecting information about each whale the students were taken beyond the activities they experience with their teachers, and were surrounded by the realities of world confronting the whales in our oceans today.

While working with the curriculum students used information cards that provide information about each of the three whales. The text and photographs on the cards are used as clues to the whale's identity. The students divide into groups and using the clues, they collect the information necessary to construct the story of the whale that they have selected. Finally, when they have gathered all of the information and photos of their whale on a panel, they report what they have learned about the history of their whale to the rest of their companions.

FIRST EXPERIENCE WITH "BRINGING WHALES TO YOUR SCHOOL" IN PUERTO PIRAMIDES

To commemorate Right Whale Day in Puerto Pirámides, School #87 held science fair on September 26, 2008 with activities connected to the "Bringing Whales to your School" program.

ICB and the Dirección de Fauna y Flora Silvestre of the Provincia de Chubut brought materials for the students to use in creating panels. Carina Marón, entertained the children too young to participate in the curriculum with the contents and



Students at the Science Fair in **Escuela Nro 87 of Puerto Pirámides** show the booklets that they use as references while working through the Education Program.

illustrations in the Program's educational booklet "Knowing Southern Right Whales"

POSTER PRESENTATION OF "BRINGING WHALES TO YOUR SCHOOL" AT THE III INTERNATIONAL MEETING OF BIOLOGY TEACHERS

A poster about the curriculum was presented at a meeting of the Association of Teachers of the Biological Sciences of Argentina (ADBiA) which was held in Mar del Plata on October 9-11, 2008. The poster was co-authored Carina Marón, Liliana San Gil, Roxana Schteinbarg, Mariano Sironi, Hilda Suárez y Leticia García. The poster was presented by Leticia García, a biologist and professor of Biology who is also using ICB's "Brining Whales to Your School" Curriculum in her school in Córdoba.

ICB BROCHURES



40,000 newly designed information brochures were printed with support from the International Fund for Animal Welfare and SAS Business Intellegene .

The objective of "**A Guide to Whale Watching**" is to provide the public with general information about right whales including their biology, distribution and behavior, current threats and on-going conservation efforts. The brochure has been distributed to tourists since 2002 through the six whale watch companies in Puerto

Piramides, at the entrance to the Peninsula by the Área Protegida Península Valdés and through a network of local businesses that host the tourists that come to see the whales.

LECTURES ON RIGHT WHALES IN THE PROVINCES OF CORDOBA AND SAN LUIS

As part of ICB'S educational outreach in 2008, Mariano Sironi gave talks on right whales to:

- Provincial Museum of Natural Sciences in Cordoba, May 13, 2008 as part of a Photography Exhibit entitled "Chronicals of Valdés, travel notes" presenting the work of biologist and photographer Maximiliano Oro.
- The Book Fair of San Luis, July 4, 2008. at the invitation of the Secretary of the Extension University (UNSL) and the Radio Program "The Search"
- Organización Estudiantes Ciencia Abierta, 5 July 5, 2008,

BUILDING CAPACITY AMONG ARGENTINE CONSERVATION AGENCIES

A Training Day for Conservation Agents working In the Administradora del Área Natural Protegida Península Valdés

In October Dr. Mariano Sironi held a one-day training session at the research station in Golfo San Jose for the people involved in conservation activities in the Administration of Protected Areas at Peninsula Valdes (the organization responsible for managing PV as a World Heritage Site). During the session, Mariano described the biology and behavior of right whales, ICB's research and education programs and how they relate to the conservation of right whales and their habitat. Andrea Chirife, veterinarian and field director of the Right Whale Health Monitoring Program in 2008, also participated in the training session and described the work of the Stranding Program and the importance of the Stranding Network in determining causes of death. Andrea's

presentation was very enriching and showed the conservation agents the importance of that the Stranding Project to understanding the current health of the Patagonian right whales. The Training Session will be repeated in future years for new conservation agents and to introduce specific topics of interest with respect to the human resources of the organization.

ICB IN THE MEDIA

The media continues to be an important way to tell thousands of people about whales and their conservation needs.

In 2008, ICB's work appeared in 13 articles in national and provincial newspapers, 5 articles in national and international magazines, 8 interviews and reports on television, and 5 radio interviews.

We are extremely grateful to all newspaper reporters, commentators, teachers and people who join with us to increase environmental awareness and the protection of the whales and their environment

Most Prominant:

The whales and ICB on Telenoche, Channel 13 TV news:

In August, Mariano Sironi was interviewed by Sergio Elguezabal on National News 13 and again for his TN Ecología series "Advances, the effect of a grain of sand" during which Mariano described his work with the whales at Península Valdés.

The whales of Península Valdés in Clarin's News Magazine:

On November 9, 2008 the newspaper Clarin published a 10 page article in its Sunday news magazine (**Revista Viva**) on the Peninsula Valdes right whales. Clarin is one of the most prominent newspapers in Argentina with an audience of 770,000 throughout the country. The magazine included a fold-out with a fully annotated 3-dimensional drawing of a right whale and her calf that also shows the whales' internal anatomy (see below). The ICB/WCI team worked closely with the journalist and photographer when they traveled to Peninsula Valdes and later advised the designer about the informtion and drawing included in the foldout



Links to articles in national and provincial newspapers

http://www.perfil.com/contenidos/2007/05/24/noticia_0029.html

<http://www.diariodemadryn.com/vernoti.php?ID=92498>

http://www.lanacion.com.ar/nota.asp?nota_id=1015478

<http://www.diarioelpopular.com.ar/diario/2008/06/09/nota.html?idnota=27106>

<http://www.diarioperfil.com.ar/edimp/0263/articulo.php?art=7589&ed=0263>

<http://www.clarin.com/diario/2008/11/09/sociedad/s-01798852.htm>

ICB'S NEW INTERNET SITE

ICB uses the internet to report its activities and to open communication channels beyond Argentina's borders.

Contributions from **IFAW** and the company **PETROBRAS** have allowed the development of a new website that is easy to update and edit and requires no webmaster. We are changing the contents of the site and will have the new site on line in April 2009.



INFORMATION SERVICES OF ICB

ICB answers questions through the “**Contact Us**” section of the site. Visitors ask a broad range of question about topics such as whale biology, the current status of whaling, the Adoption Program and whether they can help with ICB's activities. In 2008 ICB received over **350 questions from 15 countries**, showing that our message is being in heard within Argentina and beyond.

ICB'S ELECTRONIC BULLETINS: LISTA FRANCA AND LISTAFRANCA Jr.

ICB produces two electronic bulletins that provide information about whales and their conservation: **Lista Franca** (7,000 subscribers) and **Lista Franca Júnior** (2,500 subscribers). Lista Franca Júnior is aimed at a younger audience and is used by teachers in the classroom as well as many adults. Both electronic bulletins are distributed through different web portals allowing us to reach a much broader audience. We thank **Madryn.com** who has provided us with this service that has allowed us rapidly and efficiently send bulletins to thousands of destinations.



CONSERVATION

STRENGTHENING THE CONSERVATION BLOCK IN THE INTERNATIONAL WHALING COMMISSION (IWC)



The IWC and its 84 member nations regulate whaling and make decisions about whale conservation. The official presence of many Latin American countries in the International Whaling Commission (IWC), has been of key importance in strengthening the conservationist block which places conservation needs ahead of the commercial interests of whaling.

ICB works with other organizations in Argentina and Latin America to ensure that whale conservation needs are fully represented in the IWC.

UNEXPECTED REGIONAL STRENGTHS WITH RESPECT TO THE 2009 MEETING OF THE INTERNATIONAL WHALING COMMISSION

ICB has participated in several meetings to promote a coordinated regional strategy at the 2009 annual meeting of the IWC. The first meeting was held on October 2007 and co-organized by **Centro de Conservacion Cetacea**, **Fundacion Cethus** and **ICB** with support from **IFAW**. **15 Latin American non-governmental organizations from 10 countries** attended the meeting. Participants discussed topics of regional interests such as the establishment of whale sanctuaries, development of responsible whale watching and the strengthening of whale research at a regional level.

After the meeting a joint Declaration was created, signed and later presented to a December 2007 meeting of the Group of Buenos Aires. by Roxana Schteinberg, as a representative of the 15 NGOs.

The Declaration expressed the idea that Latin American Countries in the Group of Buenos Aires (a regional group of IWC commissioners, primarily from South America) should work towards an Agreement for Whale Conservation, and thus take steps to ensure that the Latin America and the Southern Hemisphere become a region that is free from hunting of whales and dolphins.

A second follow-up meeting was organized by the **Centro de Conservacion Cetacea** and was held on February 2008.

The regional NGOs also met the Comisión de Medio Ambiente y Bienes Nacionales of Chile's Senate in an Advisory Whale Working Group at the 2008 IWC meetings in Chile to discuss the importance of establishing a Whale Sanctuary within Chile's jurisdictional waters.



Representatives from Latin American NGOs meet during IWC meetings in Santiago, Chile.

THE 2008 MEETING OF THE INTERNATIONAL WHALING COMMISSION



ICB has participated in IWC meetings as an NGO observer since 2006

In 2008 Roxana Schteinberg and Diego Taboada worked with other regional NGOs to develop regional strategies for conservation. ICB participated in the Conservation Committee meetings, discussions about the future of the IWC and the Plenary Session. During the days of the Plenary Session, the commissioners in the Group of Buenos Aires held several meetings.

Diego Taboada at the Plenary Session of the IWC. Behind is the President of the IWC, William Hogarth.

ICB's activities with respect to the negotiations with the Group of Buenos Aires were publicly recognized by the Argentina's Alternate Commissioner, Javier Figueroa. The Governor of Chubut, Mario Das Neves and his committee also recognized ICB for their assistance in allowing the Governor to promote the Province of Chubut for its non-lethal use of whales in the international forum.



ROXANA SCHEINBARG SPEAKS FOR THE LATIN AMERICAN NGOS AT A RECEPTION DURING THE PLENARY SESSION

On June 23 a reception was held by the **International Fund For Animal Welfare, Greenpeace, World Society for the Protection of Animals and the Humane Society** to support the efforts of Latin American NGOs in their efforts to promote the non-lethal use of whales in nations participating in the

IWC. Posters showing the educational and conservation work of Latin American NGOs were on display during the reception. ICB presented three posters and distributed brochures and educational pamphlets

THE 5TH REUNION OF THE GROUP OF BUENOS AIRES



Javier Figueroa, Alternate IWC Commissioner of Argentina commenting on the Declaration presented by Latin American NGOs to their governments.

Roxana participated in the **5th Reunion of the Group of Buenos Aires** that was held in Costa Rica in November 2008 with support from the PEW Charitable Trust. Her attendance allowed her to continue following the negotiations of this Group and working with other Latin American NGOs to make advances towards ensuring adequate protection for the world's whales in the IWC.

During the Costa Rica meeting, NGOs presented a declaration signed by **33 environmental organizations** from Argentina, Brasil, Chile, Colombia, Costa Rica, Ecuador, Guatemala, México, Nicaragua, Panamá, Perú, República Dominicana, Uruguay and Venezuela and other nations that are involved in conservation in the region. The document requested that advances be made in the process of reforming the IWC so that effective protection for the cetacean species of Latin America.

The declaration, whose proponents were coordinated by Roxana Schteinbarg, marked a record for the number of organizations involved and shows the involvement of these Latin American civil organizations in the protection of cetacean from threats to thier survival.

TOWARDS AN INTERNATIONAL WHALING COMMISSION THAT GUARANTEES EFFECTIVE PROTECTION OF CETACEANS

During the Plenary Session of the International Whaling Commission (IWC) in 2008 a process was negotiated between member countries to reform the organization by removing the dead end that has arisen from the division between conservationists and whalers. This action motivated a group of Latin American NGOs (including ICB) to prepare a document containing specific requests they feel should be part of the reform. The document was presented to the commissioners in the Group of Buenos Aires at the end of the IWC meetings in Chile and to an intersessional meeting of the IWC that was held in Tampa, FL (USA). The document requests a discussion of the following topics: the elimination of scientific whaling in sanctuaries established by the IWC and the creation of new Sanctuaries, such as the South Atlantic Sanctuary; the incorporation of non-lethal use of whales in the statutes of the Convention; the assurance of access to information, transparency and full participation of organizations of civil society in the different institutional processes of the commission.

CENTRO DE CONSERVACIÓN CETACEA DE CHILE WORKS TO ESTABLISH A WHALE SANCTUARY IN THE JURISDICTIONAL WATERS OF CHILE

As part of a campaign run by the Centro de Conservación Cetácea of Chile (ICB's close collaborators) a letter with over 100 signatures was sent to President Bachelet of Chile in December of 2007 suggesting that she make a Presidential Declaration that establishes a Whale Sanctuary within the territorial waters and the exclusive economic zone of the Republic of Chile with the objective of prohibiting commercial and scientific whaling within Chile's jurisdictional waters. ICB was one of signatures.

COORDINATION OF THE WEB SITE MARDECETACEOS

In 2007, ICB developed a web site MardeCetaceos (www.mardecetaceos.net) with support from the International Fund for Animal Welfare. The purpose of the sight is to **improve access and exchange information about the non-lethal research on whales and dolphins, whale-watching, and strategies for whale conservation in Latin America**. The site was created by ICB's Julieta Martino, Carina Marón and Roxana Schteinbarg and developed by the Fundación Código Sur.



CBIaldía
mardecetáceos

The site presents information on whale research, whale watching and whale conservation from 22 non-governmental organizations in 11 Latin American countries.

It provides access to over 450 scientific publications and 34 reports and publications. In 2008, **mardecetaceos** added a mini-website called **CBIaldía** (IWC today) that provides information in Spanish about the IWC and the latest daily news and information on events during the annual meeting of the International Whaling Commission.

PARTICIPATION IN PEW'S INTERNATIONAL WHALE NETWORK

Roxana Schteinbarg, has become the Latin American point-person for the Pew Charitable Trust's Whale Project. The Project exchanges information on regional activities in the International Whaling Commission with the objective of increasing the participation of conservationist countries.

NEW LEGISLATION FOR WHALE-WATCH BOATS AT PENINSULA VALDES



New whale-watch regulations were enacted at Peninsula Valdes January 2008 to minimize the impact of whale-watch tourism on the whales.

In response to requests from whale watch operators ICB held a workshop in Piramides in 2004 to discuss the need for a new set of regulations for the whale-watch industry. The regulations at that time were adopted from whale watching activities in other parts of the world. Governmental officials, NGOs and representatives from the whale watch companies in Puerto Pirámides attended the meeting.

During the meeting, the Chubut government officials pledged to adjust the rules to the actual conditions of whale-watching at Peninsula Valdes. In 2006, la Dirección de Conservación y Áreas Protegidas de Chubut asked the community to form a Technical Committee to work out a new law with new regulations. ICB's Diego Taboada and Mariano Sironi participated in many of the meetings of the Technical Committee where they

worked to balance conservation interests with those of a commercial activity.

A rough copy of the law was submitted to the provincial legislature where it was stalled for several months. Negotiations led by ICB and other groups resulted in a request to the legislature for a speed-up in the process. The request was signed by 23 representatives of local NGOs and whale-watch companies. The result was an acceleration in the process and the new law was approved on January 14, 2008. In response to the request the sub-Secretary of Tourism and Protected Areas sent a revised copy of the regulations included in the law and its annexes to ICB for revision before sending them to the legislature. The law was finally approved in February 2008.

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FOUNDATIONS AND INSTITUTIONS

Administración del Área Natural Protegida
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