

STRANDING DATA AT RIGHT WHALE ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AREA 2008/2009

Serafini, P. P.¹; Kolesnikovas, C. K. M.²; Moreira, L. M. de P.³; Corrêa A. A.⁴; Groch, K. R.; Severo, S.⁶;
Rocha, M. E. C. da³

¹ Centro Nacional de Pesquisa e Conservação das Aves Silvestres – CEMAVE/ICMBio, Brasil.

² Associação R3 Animal

³ Área de Proteção Ambiental da Baleia Franca/ICMBio, Brasil. apadabaleiafranca@yahoo.com.br

⁴ Oikos Consultoria Ambiental

⁵ Projeto Baleia Franca – PBF/Brasil

⁶ Projeto Gaia Village

In 2007 the Southern Right Whale Environmental Protection Area (The Southern Right Whale EPA), located in southern Brazil, Santa Catarina State, established a Marine Mammal Stranding Network (MMSN) to assure that live stranded animals receive fast and proper treatment. The aim is to prevent potential injury to this animals caused by population willing to help without proper instruction as well as by domestic animals, to collect data from dead animals and to develop a reliable database for stranding events in the area. Initial data as stranding site, species and animal condition were registered when the stranding was notified to the EPA office. As soon as possible, the staff went to the site to check the animal condition and to collect definitive information. Dead animals were identified and whenever possible, submitted to necropsy and histopathologic analysis. In case of small animals, carcasses were sent to scientific collections at licensed laboratories. Live animals were clinically examined. Individuals in good conditions were monitored to prevent human or animal harassment, and left at the site to return to the sea by themselves. Some animals received treatment at the beach and were immediately released. Injured or animals considered not able to be released were sent to Florianópolis Wildlife Rehabilitation Center (CETAS- Florianópolis-Santa Catarina). In 2008 and 2009 EPA attended 52 calls: 33 *Arctocephalus australis* (5 dead, 28 live), 3 *Arctocephalus tropicalis* (live), 3 *Otaria flavescens* (dead), 6 *Eubalena australis*, 2 *Delphinus delphis*, 1 *Pontoporia blainvillei*, 1 *Tursiops truncatus*, 1 *Balaenoptera physalus*, 1 *Globicephala* sp, 1 *Balaenoptera edeni*. All cetaceans, in exception of 3 entangled *Eubalena australis*, were found dead. These data show the importance of a Stranding Network as a source for scientific studies on ecology, zoology, pathology and diseases of marine mammals. In the other hand, marine mammals can also be used as environmental sentinels, demonstrating sea health patterns. The creation of the MMSN was effective in increasing public awareness on marine mammal standings and communicating it to the EPA, which will ultimately provide essential information for marine mammal conservation and management.

Keywords: stranding network, marine animals, The Southern Right Whale EPA