

PUBLIC AND GOVERNMENTAL INVOLVEMENT FOR THE ESTABLISHMENT OF AN EFFECTIVE MARINE MAMMAL STRANDING NETWORK WITHIN A MARINE PROTECTED AREA IN SOUTHERN BRAZIL

Serafini, P. P.¹; Kolesnikovas, C. K. M.²; Moreira L. M. de P.³; Corrêa, A. A.⁴; Groch, K. R.⁵; 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 (Southern Right Whale EPA).
apadabaleiafranca@yahoo.com.br

⁴ Oikos Consultoria Ambiental

⁵ Projeto Baleia Franca – PBF/Brasil (Right Whale Project - Brazil)

⁶ Projeto Gaia Village

The Southern Right Whale Environmental Protection Area (Southern Right Whale EPA) is located in southern Brazil, Santa Catarina State, and protects marine and coastal areas of nine Brazilian municipalities, an overall coastline of 130 km. The increasing number of strandings of marine mammals and the need of a consistent and long term plan for collecting scientific data demanded the managing authority of this Marine Protected Area (MPA) to develop together with other institutions a protocol aiming to establish an accurate profile of marine mammals stranding patterns and distribution. The establishment of the protocol was believed to be an efficient tool for contributing to an understanding of population trends, anthropogenic impacts and factors underlying natural mortality. The construction of the protocol for attending marine mammals strandings within this MPA started in 2007, considering a participatory methodology involving the communities along the coastal areas, fishermen, surfers, whale watching operators, scientific and research institutions among other stakeholders that might be involved in attending or notifying stranding events to the authorities. The protocol for the EPA was developed having other national (REMAB, REMANE and REMASUL) and international protocols as reference. In order to promote the establishment of the protocol as well as to educate potential volunteers and institutions involved, in 2008 and 2009, twelve workshops were organized, attending 353 participants. The protocol includes technical information about marine mammals, seabirds and quelonians that occur in the MPA area, information on diseases, zoonosis and adequate procedures to assist live stranded animals as well as protect human health during these events. The workshops were essential to prevent mistakes like attempts to feed live stranded animals, forcing animals to return to the water causing hypothermia, improper wash oiled animals, especially penguins, among other inadequate attempts to help the animals. Having the workshops as a starting point, the EPA protocol has been collectively improved contributing for the protection and management of the marine animals occurring in the area. This effort has been crucial to ensure quick responses and effective actions during stranding events, resulting in restricting access to stranded animals, public education in relation to strandings, as well as assuring data collection for scientific studies in this protected area. As a result of the involvement of the EPA in stranding events, in 2009, the EPA became a member of the South Brazilian Stranding Network-REMASUL, that was established in 2005 and is coordinated by national Aquatic Mammal Center.

Keywords: stranding protocol, Southern Right Whale, marine animals