

Achieving greater reductions in marine mammal bycatch in South American gillnet fisheries

Date: September 15, 2012

Place: Universidad Nacional de la Patagonia, Puerto Madryn, Argentina

Time: 9AM – 5PM

Conveners: Tim Werner, Consortium for Wildlife Bycatch Reduction, New England Aquarium, USA
Kike Crespo, CENPAT, Argentina

Purpose: Gillnet bycatch continues to be the most immediate threat to many endangered marine animals worldwide, including a large number of small cetaceans and pinnipeds. In a few areas, acoustic pingers and time-area closures have improved the situation, but when considering the scale of the problem progress has largely been elusive, especially in small-scale artisanal fisheries.

The purpose of this workshop is to examine different courses of action that can lead to greater progress in reducing bycatch of threatened marine mammals in gillnet fisheries, both industrial and non-industrial. Put simply, we want to prevent species such as the franciscana and Chilean dolphin sharing the fate of the baiji or even the vaquita, while respecting the interests of fishermen to maintain productive livelihoods for themselves, their families, and their communities.

This workshop represents a logical progression from two previous international workshops. The first, held in Woods Hole, USA, reviewed the various techniques applied for reducing marine mammal bycatch in gillnet fisheries: acoustic deterrents, non-acoustic gear techniques, time-area closures, and gear switching (exchanging gillnets for another type of fishing gear). Also in 2011, a second international workshop was held during the Society for Marine Mammalogy's Biennial Meeting in Tampa, during which participants from around the world discussed their experiences and voiced priorities for achieving greater progress in reducing bycatch of marine mammals in gillnets. One recommendation from that meeting was to address this challenge at regional forums, such as SOLAMAC. (Information and materials from both the international workshops can be accessed at www.bycatch.org).

Workshop goal: Define a process for achieving major marine mammal bycatch reductions in South American gillnet fisheries.

Workshop preparation: The first part of the workshop is designed to bring everyone up to speed on what gillnet bycatch mitigation work is going on in South America. In advance of the workshop, many participants will prepare profiles of specific fisheries that are the focus of their bycatch research and mitigation work. Each profile will take the form of a brief presentation at the workshop as well a written 2-page summary containing information about:

1. The fishery (where is it located, what gear is used, how many fishermen are involved, what seasons are they active, what is the target catch and in what volumes, what is known about the bycatch—actual or estimated—and what methods were used to acquire that information—observers? interviews? etc.)
2. How is the fisheries managed--under what authority/ies? How are catch and bycatch levels recorded (if at all)?

3. A brief summary of the history of research within this fishery focused on reducing bycatch.
4. What is known about fishermen's perspectives? Is this anecdotal information or have any formal interviews or questionnaires been implemented?
5. What are the challenges? (This should be specific, rather than obvious observations, for example, fishermen needing to keep fishing for economic or subsistence needs).
6. What are the greatest needs? How can change truly occur?

DRAFT Agenda:

- 9AM Overview (Tim, Kike)
 9:15 Introductions by Participants
 9:30 Presentations (10 minutes maximum/each) with Questions (3 minutes/each presentation)
- 11:00 Break
- 11:15 Discussion focused on:
1. Defining specific, strategic and concrete objectives leading to critical bycatch reductions for threatened and endangered marine mammals.
 2. Do we have guidance from artisanal fisheries that have adopted new bycatch-reducing techniques? What about from other fisheries (other than gillnets) in the region?
 3. What is the process for moving forward?
 4. What is the role of fishermen? government? Others? NGOs?
 5. Where should we focus? Where can we actually create change?
 6. Can we change how we work with fishermen who are largely preoccupied with declining catches?
 7. Although this workshop is focused principally on mitigation, how well quantified is the problem? What are the assessment needs? How do you balance investment into more assessment without detracting from making progress on bycatch reduction? (We don't want to spend years assessing the problem only to find out it is too late to rectify).
- 12:30 Lunch break
- 1:30 Discussion (continued)
 4:00 Action Items

Invited Participants:

Marcos Cesar
 Eduardo Secchi
 Paulo Ott
 Daniel Danilewicz
 Carolina Bertozzi
 Juliana Marigo
 Pablo Bordino
 Valentina Franco Trecu
 Larissa Rosa de Oliveira

Fernando Trujillo
 Vera da Silva
 Enzo Aliaga
 Joanna Alfaro-Shigueto
 Jeffrey Mangel
 Francisco Viddi
 Jorge Gibbons
 Juan Jose Alava
 Kike Crespo

Lorenzo Rojas
 Martin Hall
 Randy Reeves
 Tim Werner
 Maria Nube Sphegy
 Maria Laura Tombesi
 Fernando Felix

