



Progress Report

Sustaining Fisheries and Marine Biodiversity in Bahia Samborombon: Strategic Planning Workshop

Background

For the past several years, the New England Aquarium (NEAq) and AquaMarina have been carrying out collaborative research with fishermen in Bahia Samborombon, Buenos Aires Province, Argentina. The goal of this research is to identify practical fishing methods and tools that can mitigate the unsustainable bycatch of the endangered Franciscana dolphin (*Pontoporia blainvillei*) in gillnets, while maintaining a productive fishery. The Bahia Samborombon and nearby Cabo San Antonio in northern Buenos Aires together have the highest bycatch rate of Franciscana dolphins within the species' entire geographical range. Also, the existence of an isolated dolphin subpopulation in these two areas adds to the urgency of identifying prompt and timely conservation solutions. Drawing from this body of research into potential bycatch mitigation measures, our focus is now shifting towards helping fishermen and fisheries managers implement the most appropriate sustainable practices within this fishery.

2015 Activities

During 2015, we implemented several projects intended to advance the implementation of the most promising sustainable fishing methods in the Bahia de Samborombon. The culmination was a national workshop organized to develop a multi-stakeholder strategy for achieving a sustainable fishery in the region.

Achievements and Preliminary Results

1. Our current body of research into potential techniques for reducing the bycatch of Franciscana dolphins in gillnets includes changes in mesh size and gillnetting locations; acoustic deterrents (pingers) in gillnets and their effects on dolphin behavior; reflective and stiff nets; and alternative fishing gears such as hand-lines and fishing pots. Decisions regarding which should be practically implemented and the cost-benefits associated were discussed during the workshop (*see below*), primarily considering those that have shown to be effective experimentally. A complete assessment of this research will be included in the Final Workshop Report.
2. The first ever socio-economic study of the bay's fishery was conducted in October 2015 (*Figure 1*). The participants included 35 local fishermen representing 4 fishermen associations, and La Costa County authorities. Participatory methodologies involving both qualitative and quantitative approaches were used to examine social transformation processes, elicit perception of users about how scientific research might lead to the development of alternative fishing practices, discuss the degree of involvement of fishermen in fisheries management decisions, and clarify the roles of government sectors. A "SWOT" analysis was conducted to evaluate strengths, weakness, opportunities and threats of various options for changing the status quo. Preliminary results showed that the main concern for gillnetters involved conflicts with large trawlers operating close to shore, the lack of any law that legitimizes the artisanal gillnet fishery, overfishing, insufficient fisheries enforcement, relatively low profitability, and price control by the local fish plant that has a monopoly in the area. We are presently collecting additional information on what local fishermen perceive as the challenges they would face in modifying fishing practices through a second participative meeting, opinion polls, and personal interviews. These results will complement the on-going economic assessment of the most promising fishing options to mitigate Franciscana bycatch.

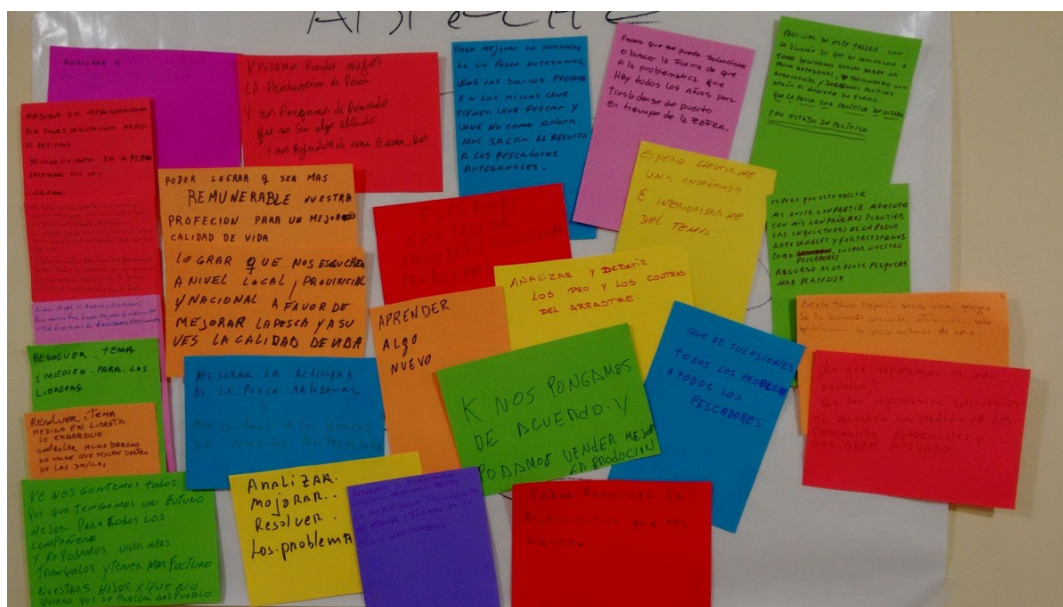


Figure 1. Artisanal fishermen from Bahía Samborombón and Cabo San Antonio meet as part of the socio-economic assessment supported by this project, with a list of problems they identified during the meeting.

3. A review of what is known about the study area and its environmental challenges is currently in preparation, and will be included in the Final Workshop Report.

4. A workshop took place at the Secretariat of Natural Resources (Argentina Federal Government) in November 2015. The *“Sustainable Fishing Practices: Reduction of Franciscana Dolphin Bycatch in Artisanal Fisheries”* workshop involved 30 participants, including representatives of local artisanal fishermen associations, non-governmental organizations, National and Provincial government officials from Fisheries and Environmental Agencies, scientists, technicians, and experts on community-based conservation and development (*Table 1; Figure 2*). The Federal Government’s Secretary of Natural Resources, and the Director of the Aquatic Resources Department formally opened the workshop. The agenda (*Figure 4*) was designed to get consensus from participants about what short- (3 years) and long-term (5 years) actions are needed to reduce the bycatch of Franciscana dolphins. Among the full list of actions identified, four short-term ones were listed within all the different working groups: (1) To promote fishing management policies and practices that help reduce franciscana bycatch; (2) To implement existing bycatch mitigation tools such as pingers; (3) To continue investigation of other fishing gear and gear modifications that reduce the bycatch; and (4) To develop an awareness campaign about the conservation significance of the Franciscana dolphin. Importantly, the national government formally recognized this workshop as the first product of its National Action Plan for Reducing the Bycatch of Marine Mammals, now in final draft form and likely to receive formal approval in 2016.

A Final Workshop Report will synthesize all these project outputs, to be submitted in March 2016. The report will be bilingual (Spanish-English), and will include recommendations to help guide national and provincial policies based on the consensus views identified during the workshop.



Figure 2. Participants of the *Reduction of Franciscana Dolphin Bycatch in Artisanal Fisheries Workshop* (middle), and during working group sessions.

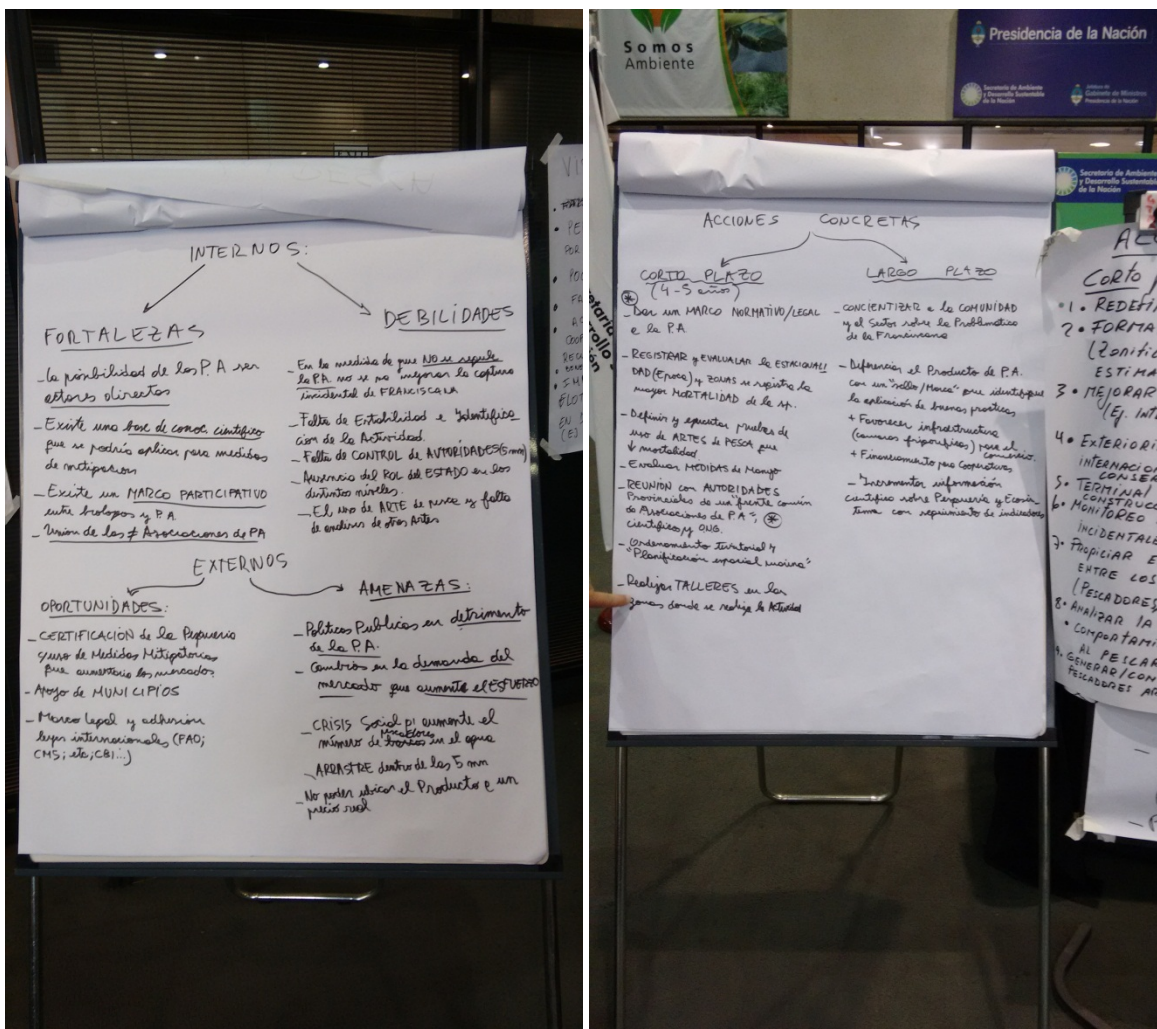


Figure 3. Some of the strengths, weakness, opportunities, threats, and actions identified and discussed during the workshop.

Identificación de prácticas pesqueras sustentables: “Reduccion de la interaccion de Franciscana con pesquerías artesanales” Secretaría de Ambiente y Desarrollo Sustentable de la Nación SAyDS – San Martín 451 – PB CABA	
Noviembre 10, 2015	
09:00 - 09:30	Acreditaciones
09:30 - 10:00	Apertura del Taller y Objetivos (<i>M.L. Tombesi, G. Navarro, P. Bordino, T. Werner</i>)
10:00 - 10:30	Programa de Trabajo y Presentación de participantes
10:30 - 11:00	PAN Mamíferos Marinos (<i>M.L. Tombesi, D. Winter</i>)
11:00 - 11:15	<i>Café</i>
11:15 - 11:45	Principios en Pesca Sustentable y Responsable (<i>G. Cañete</i>)
11:45 - 12:15	Pesca costera bonaerense (<i>L. Prodescimi G. Navarro</i>).
12:15 - 12:45	Efectividad de artes de pesca. Experiencias realizadas por el INIDEP (<i>R. Roth</i>)
12:45 - 13:15	Aspectos socio económicos de la pesca artesanal en BSB y CSA (<i>S. London, V. Vitale</i>)
13:15 - 14:15	<i>Almuerzo</i>
14:15 - 14:45	Aspectos antropológicos de la pesca artesanal en BSB y CSA (<i>M. Carman</i>)
14:45 - 15:15	Captura Incidental en Argentina (<i>E. Crespo</i>)
15:15 - 15:45	Mitigación de Captura Incidental de Franciscana (<i>P. Bordino</i>)
15:45 - 16:00	<i>Café</i>
16:00 - 16:15	Propuesta de Plan de Acción en la Comisión Ballenera Internacional (<i>M. Iñiguez</i>) (<i>A confirmar</i>)
16:15 - 16:45	Visión sector pesca artesanal. Espacio de discusión. Trabajo grupal (Análisis FODA)
Noviembre 11, 2015	
10:00 - 11:00	Revisión Día 1. Trabajo grupal (Análisis FODA)
11:00 - 11:15	<i>Café</i>
11:15 - 12:15	Estrategias viables de Conservación en BSB y CSA. Trabajo Grupal
12:15 - 12:45	Identificación de Acciones a corto y mediano plazo. Trabajo Grupal
12:45 - 13:45	<i>Almuerzo</i>
13:45 - 14:45	Conclusiones y recomendaciones finales
14:45 - 15:00	<i>Café</i>
15:00 - 15:30	Cierre del Taller (<i>ML. Tombesi, G. Navarro, P. Bordino</i>)

Figure 4. Workshop agenda.

Table 1. List of participants at the *Sustainable Fishing Practices: Reduction of Franciscana Dolphin Bycatch in Artisanal Fisheries* workshop.

INVITADOS	INSTITUCION	MAIL
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