

New records of humpback whales in Nicaragua: extension of the migratory route of the Southern Pacific Breeding stock G?

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Abstract

In the light of environmental conservation and management it is important to get insights into movement patterns of animals, especially for migrating animals such as the humpback whales. Humpback whales in the South Pacific (G stock) migrate to Costa Rica which is the most Northern part of their breeding ground according to the IWC. Humpback whales haven't been studied in Nicaragua until now. A pioneer project is in progress and in this context a feasibility assessment has been done from 17 to 21 of August 2015, both North of Nicaragua in Padre Ramos and South of Nicaragua in San Juan del Sur with a total effort time of 21,5h. Several recent observations of humpback whales occurrences in San Juan del Sur in August 2015 suggests an extension of the breeding ground of the breeding stock G. Several sightings were reported by touristic operators during August 2015 with mentioning of time, location and group type. On the 17th of August, a mother-calf pair was observed during a scientific boat survey in San Juan del Sur and behavioral data, geographic position, distance to the coast, depth, water temperature and photo-identification of dorsal fins were taken. The 5 sightings suggest a potential extension of the actual breeding ground for the Southern Pacific humpback whale population (Stock G).