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REPCET in London: towards an expansion beyond the Mediterranean ?

Nine thousands fin whales (*Balaenoptera physalus*) are present in the European atlantic waters, the majority of them being found in the **Bay of Biscay**. This area also supports a high density of commercial ships transiting between Northern Europe and Africa or Asia via the Mediterranean. Therefore, **the risk of a collision could be very high**.

Facing this issue, the marine conservation charity ORCA organised a **workshop on the 18-19th of April in London**. The objective was to bring together the scientific, institutional, socio-economic and environmental actors* in order to produce a set of concerted recommendations for ship crews.

Exchanges between participants resulted in a project of a regular collaboration especially on the awareness of crews and the use by companies of an alert system based on the real-time spotting of cetaceans in order to establish risk zones. The potential use of REPCET in the Bay of Biscay was discussed. Shipping companies' representatives highlighted the simplicity of use of the system, its adaptability, the communication potentials towards the public and its low cost.

Final workshop report available online :

http://www.repcet.com/docs/April_2012_Ship_Strike_Workshop_Report.pdf

*Were present: CMA-CGM, MAERSK, P&O Ferries, Brittany Ferries, the British Chamber of Shipping, the Universities of Aberdeen and St Andrews, MarineLife, WSPA, Tethys Research Institute, Souffleurs d'Ecume.

Marseille: one collision more, two whales less

On the 2nd June of 2012, the « *Mont Ventoux* », a ro-ro ship of the CMA-CGM shipping company, brought back **on its bulbous bow a 19-meter fin whale** in the **Autonomous Port of Marseille**. The necropsy carried out by the members of the National Stranding Network (<http://crrmm.univ-lr.fr/index.php/fr/echouages/reseau-national-echouages>) revealed that the individual was a lactating female: thus it very probably had a unweaned calf which has almost no chance of surviving in the wild without its mother.





The collision would have happened around 4am 40 nautical miles south of the Riou archipelago. **The risk of a collision by night could be significantly reduced with REPCET in a future wished as close as possible.** Indeed, this evolutionary system is conceived to host optronic detection methods. These technologies exist but are still very expensive today (more than 250,000 euros). **To this day, the priority is thus to increase the number of ships equipped with REPCET.** It is the only way of envisaging in the future modalities of provision of **these optronic technologies compatible with the budgetary requirements of the ship owners.**

Training session at the Maritime National Superior School of Marseille: 8th edition



cadets.

For the eighth consecutive year, the «Commercial Shipping and Cetaceans» training session at the Maritime National Superior School (Ecole Nationale Supérieure Maritime, ENSM) allowed to raise the awareness of shipping professionals on the problematic of ship strikes. Supported by the Regional Council of Provence-Alpes-Côte-d'Azur Region, the PELAGOS Sanctuary and the Fondation Nicolas Hulot, this training is divided in two modules: a first module of a day for active professionals and a second 2-hour module for

The main objective of this training session is to limit the disturbances on cetaceans and their habitats that the shipping industry generates while dynamizing and valorizing the implication of ship owners in the work of the PELAGOS Sanctuary. The plan is mainly based on the limitation of the risks of collision between large cetaceans and ships. Other complementary topics are also tackled each year (interest of cetacean observation sheets, acoustic disturbances, chemical pollutions, stranding guidelines, code of good conduct for the observation of cetaceans...).

This year, the first module welcomed **18 people** affiliated to shipping companies (La Méditerranéenne, SNCM), the French Navy, the Maritime Prefecture and the CROSSMED (French MRCC) who attended presentations of five speakers with a diverse background (scientists, captain emeritus, associations) and complementary speeches.

Finally, in 2011-2012, a cadet of the Maritime Nationale Superior School of Marseille (Iphise Emieu) did her thesis on REPCET and successfully passed her degree.

Dates : year on the last Friday of March.

Details : free training session in French open to all shipping companies.

Information and registration :

http://www.souffleursdecume.com/english/formation_collisions_EN.html



Knowing better to better prevent

Beyond the plotting of cetacean observations, the REPCET system calculates and shows **risk zones** around the initial point. These circular and dynamic areas are function of the ethology (swim speed, movements, ...) of the species on the concerned sector and correspond to the risk of meeting the initially detected animal through time. The definition of these risk zones (opening speed, change of colour according to the degree of risk, persistence, ...) thus imposes that the behaviour of the concerned animals is well-known.

Therefore, every summer, a scientific mission on board the sailing boat Tamory allows to collect new data in order to reinforce the **knowledge on the movements of fin and sperm whales in the PELAGOS Sanctuary**. When an animal is spotted, it is followed for several hours at a distance great enough to reduce disturbances. Every minute, scientists on board take its distance, bearing and the position of the boat. The analysis of the data will allow refining the rules that define the risk zones.



This year, the week of prospection allowed to follow 3 sperm whales and 11 fin whales for more than 20h of observations. Souffleurs d'Ecume warmly thanks Didier and Kate of the Stars'n'Bars of Monaco for their welcome and the provision of the sailing boat. The association also thanks the Var General Council (Conseil Général du Var) for the funding of the expedition.



Video broadcast on board ships equipped with REPECT



The shipping companies having equipped their ships with REPCET can **choose to broadcast to their passengers a video** proposed by Souffleurs d'Ecume. This personalised video offers the possibility to the ship owner to valorise his implication towards his passengers and to raise their awareness on the conservation of cetaceans.

The video clip is now available in different subtitled versions: English, Spanish and Italian.



REPCET observation report 2011

The data collected via REPCET during the year 2011 were compiled in an **annual report**. This document is now available for download on the REPCET website. (www.repcet.com).

Inventory of units equipped with REPCET on August 22nd, 2012

The deployment of REPCET within the PELAGOS Sanctuary is made possible thanks to the support of the French Ministry in charge of the environment and the contribution of ship owners who choose to integrate the network. To this day, the operational equipments concern :

- At sea : Kalliste, Girolata, Piana (Ropax, La Meridionale) ; Raymond Croze (cable-laying ship, France Telecom Marine), Monte d'Oro (car-ferry, SNCM) ; Tamory (private sailing boat used for research purposes).
- On land : CROSSMED (La Garde, Var, France), Souffleurs d'Ecume (La Celle, Var, France).

Contact us to participate in the network.

News PELAGOS

PELAGOS short films

The association Regard du Vivant made for the PELAGOS Sanctuary a series of four short films of a few minutes to present the PELAGOS Sanctuary, the cetacean species living in it and the threats they face. The latter can be viewed on the REPCET website (www.repcet.com).

Regulation

The Territorial Collectivity of Corsica is about to require in its next invitation to tender for the delegation of public service a system to reduce ship strikes on board the ships that will look after the transit between the island and the mainland.



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