



## OCORRÊNCIA DE ENCALHES DE BALEIAS AO LONGO DA COSTA SUL E SUDESTE DO BRASIL

Groch Karina<sup>1</sup>, Renault Eduardo Pires<sup>2</sup>, Morais C. R. M.<sup>1</sup>, Barreto André<sup>3</sup>, Dick Jefferson<sup>3</sup>, Maranhão Andrea<sup>4</sup>, Domit Camila<sup>5</sup>, Gallo-Neto Hugo<sup>6</sup>, Kolesnikovas Cristiane K. M.<sup>7</sup>, Godoy Daniela F.<sup>8</sup>, **Cremer Marta Jussara**<sup>9</sup>, Castilho Pedro V.<sup>10</sup>, Valle Rodrigo R.<sup>11</sup>, Días-Delgado Josué D.<sup>12</sup>, Groch Kátia<sup>12</sup>. <sup>1</sup>Projeto Baleia Franca, Instituto Australis, Imbituba, BR. <sup>2</sup>Projeto Baleia Franca, Instituto Australis, Imbituba, BR. <sup>3</sup>CTTMar, Universidade do Vale do Itajaí. <sup>4</sup>Instituto Gremer Pesquisa, Educação e Gestão de Fauna, Instituto Gremer Pesquisa, Educação e Gestão de Fauna. <sup>5</sup>CEM, Universidade Federal do Paraná. <sup>6</sup>Instituto Argonauta, Instituto Argonauta. <sup>7</sup>Associação R3 Animal, Associação R3 Animal. <sup>8</sup>Instituto de Pesquisas Cananéia, Instituto de Pesquisas Cananéia. <sup>9</sup>Clências Biológicas, Universidade da Região de Joinville. <sup>10</sup>Departamento de Zoologia, Universidade do Estado de Santa Catarina. <sup>11</sup>Instituto Biopesca, Instituto Biopesca. <sup>12</sup>Laboratório de Patologia Comparada de Animais Selvagens, Universidade de São Paulo.

There is limited knowledge on strandings and health aspects of baleen whales (Mysticeti) along the south and southeastern Brazilian coastline. A systematic and intensive beach monitoring program was established along the coastlines of São Paulo (SP), Paraná (PR) and Santa Catarina (SC) states to monitor anthropogenic impacts on marine megafauna, including mysticetes. This project is part of the federal environmental licensing process for the oil production and transport by Petrobras at the pre-salt province. Here, we report on stranding epidemiological data and pathological findings on mysticete species between August 25, 2015 and March 02, 2018. Beach surveys were conducted along 674.1 km (daily) and 148.7 km (weekly), totaling 822.8 km of coastline between Ubatuba/SP (23.36S; 44.72W) and Laguna/SC (28.49S; 48.76W). Stranding date and location, species, age class, sex, status when stranded (alive/dead) were recorded and, whenever possible, postmortem examinations were conducted to investigate causes of stranding and/or death. A total of 144 mysticetes (140 dead, 4 alive) was recorded. Three of the four live-stranded whales were successfully rescued. Most animals found dead were in advanced state of decomposition (118/140, 84.3%). Species could be determined in 78 cases. The most frequent was *Megaptera novaeangliae* (53/78, 67.9%); followed by *Balaenoptera brydei* (12/78, 15.4%); *B. acutorostrata* (7/78, 8.9%); *Eubalaena australis* (3/78, 3.8%); *B. borealis* (2/78, 2.6%) and *B. physalus* (1/78, 1.3%). Most *M. novaeangliae* stranded between June and October (44/53, 83.0%), coinciding with its seasonal pattern of occurrence. All *B. brydei* were recorded between September and February. Most *B. acutorostrata* were recorded in SC (4/7; 57.1%), while *B. physalus* and *B. borealis* were recorded only in SP. Eleven animals had gross evidence of entanglement in fishing gear, being particularly prevalent in *M. novaeangliae* (9/53; 16.9%) and was likely a major contributor to death. One *E. australis* had unequivocal evidence of collision with vessel (multiple parallel cuts), whereas it was suspected in one *M. novaeangliae* with cranio-encephalic trauma. Our results expand knowledge on species occurrence and stranding trends, and further confirm anthropogenic threats to large whales in the study area. Continuing monitoring may contribute for future policies aiming at preservation of mysticetes in Brazil.

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