

FINAL REPORT: COMMERSON'S DOLPHIN TROPHIC ECOLOGY AND POPULATION GENETICS ALONG ITS ENDEMIC DISTRIBUTION IN THE SOUTHWESTERN SOUTH ATLANTIC OCEAN

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The Southwestern south Atlantic Ocean (SWA) has been one of the most impacted marine environments in the last four decades by fisheries and more recently by eco-tourism activities based on cetaceans. This ecosystem holds several top predators like pinnipeds and cetaceans, including the Commerson's dolphin, *Cephalorhynchus commersonii*. This species lacked genetic or trophic ecology information along its distribution range. Therefore, the project objective was to investigate the role of this species in the complex SWA ecosystem with respect to population structure and use of food resources, to facilitate the development of more effective management and conservations plans. Due to bad weather conditions and COVID-19 lockdown, we could not develop the projected fieldwork. However, genetic work was carried out at Dalhousie University (lead by Dr. Daniel Ruzzante) with previous collected samples. From 5017 primers of specific microsatellite identified, 70 were chosen at random for amplification, of which 31 were useful and amplified in 70 samples. Also, we are expecting new $\delta^{13}\text{C}$ and $\delta^{15}\text{N}$ results to complete trophic ecology analysis. Population genetic analysis is already done and the corresponding scientific article is being written. The SMM Small Grants in Aid of Research was used to cover partially airline tickets to Halifax (Canada) and supplies (microsatellites analysis and samples preservations). I would like to thank to *The Society for Marine Mammalogy* for the financial support given to this project, as well as the trust deposited in myself and my research group (*Laboratorio de Mamíferos Marinos - CESIMAR- CCT CENPAT-CONICET*).