

DO WE NEED TO KEEP AN EYE ON RESIDENT DOLPHINS IN PARACAS?

By ACOREMA



Legend: Smooth, one of the Paracas Bay Dolphins.

One of the main tasks of the work by ACOREMA with the resident dolphins in Pisco (Peru) is to keep safe the two small populations of bottlenose dolphins found there. In turn, the output of these studies, in the way of both biological and ecological information, helps to generate conservation actions in the local community that can be replicated along the coast.

A good sign is that dolphins are still observed during the study boat trips, during which each individual is photographed, its dorsal fin catalogued and compared to find new individuals; mothers and calves have been also observed from November to March.



The Supay dolphins are still present, although the remote of their location preclude approach this small group. Observing them from the cliffs, however, allows to maintain records of their presence and site fidelity, along with data on their life in that part south of the Paracas peninsula.



Legend: Dolphin mother-calf pair observed in the Paracas Bay in March 2021

In order to interact with the public, remote contact is used. In this way it was possible to manage the work with school teachers, providing them with tools to teach their students. Following the initiative by the 185 School of San Andrés to adopt Mariajose – one of the Paracas Bay dolphins-, a working booklet with pictures and explanatory texts about Mariajose and their partner dolphins in the area was produced and delivered to the teachers, which use it to illustrate the children about the dolphins and their lives. Information is also sent to teachers from other schools as a way to contribute to their own initiatives for including dolphins in class.



Legend: Front page of the working book on Mariajose delivered to school teachers

During the first half of year 2021, with a second wave of the Covid-19 pandemic restricting activities such as tourism and fishing (this one not completely closed but highly limited), people's economy experienced a dramatic decline. At present, the restrictions have been partially lifted, resumption of tourism and fishing is increasing rapidly to recover from the situation posed by several months of closure. This may represent some risk for dolphin populations, as the need for provide tourists with more boat trips to the close by Ballestas Islands could increase at the same time the encounters with dolphin groups in the Paracas Bay, bringing the dolphins with stressing encounters with several boats at a time. On the other side, the search for resources by several fishing fleets from different ports has led them to Paracas, where crowding fishing boats in the bay increase the pollution, deteriorate the marine environment and put dolphins in the course of collision with boats and nets. Follow up of the two resident dolphin groups in the area allows ACOREMA to identify emerging problems, monitoring interactions between tour boats and the dolphins, and report authorities about any negative effect of the presence of large fishing fleets anchored in the bay. Efforts are being made to keep up the work, in the understanding that the studies on the resident dolphin groups, and the changing conditions they face, can provide the arguments to promote (and ensure) their conservation.



Legend: large fleets from other ports arrive regularly to Paracas in search of fish resources.