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Report on observations of whales' interactions with fishing gears

SIOFA Secretariat

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Abstract	
<p>SIOFA CMM 02 requires CCPs to report mammal presence and interaction with the gears for the demersal longline fishery. In 2023, 326 operations took place in the SIOFA area. <u>No</u> presence of mammal has been observed outside Del Cano Risesubarea 3b. However, most of the operations took place in Del Cano Risesubarea 3b, where the observers reported mammals several times. When the species were sperm whales or killer whales, most of the times they interacted with the fishing gears.</p>	

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Introduction

CMM 02(2023) (Data Standards) requires CCPs to provide annually the observations of whales and the interactions with the deep-sea demersal longline (ref CMM 02(2023) annex E).

These observations are recorded in the SIOFA observer's database, where a table is dedicated to store these observations. In 2023, 3 CCPs submitted data relevant to demersal longline operations and recorded information about mammals and whales' interactions.

Methods

The observer database was queried to retrieve the information provided by CCPs which submitted demersal longline operations.

Result

The table below summarize the observations of whales' interactions with the demersal longline fisheries.

CCP/Flag	Number of operations	% Operations monitored for mammal and whale	% Operations with presence of mammal or whale	% Operations where interactions have been reported
AUS	5	100.0	0.0	0
EU-ESP	316	99.7	32.2	28.6
FR-OT	5	100.0	0	0

97% of the longline sets have been carried out by one fishing flag, it is consistent with that flag being the only one to report presence and interactions of whales.

All activities from that flag took place in [subarea 3b](#) (in the SIOFA Del Cano Rise [and South Indian Ridge](#)) area, where observers sighted mammal for 32% of the activities, and when whales showed up, they interacted with gears almost every times.

The chart below illustrated which species where present and interacted

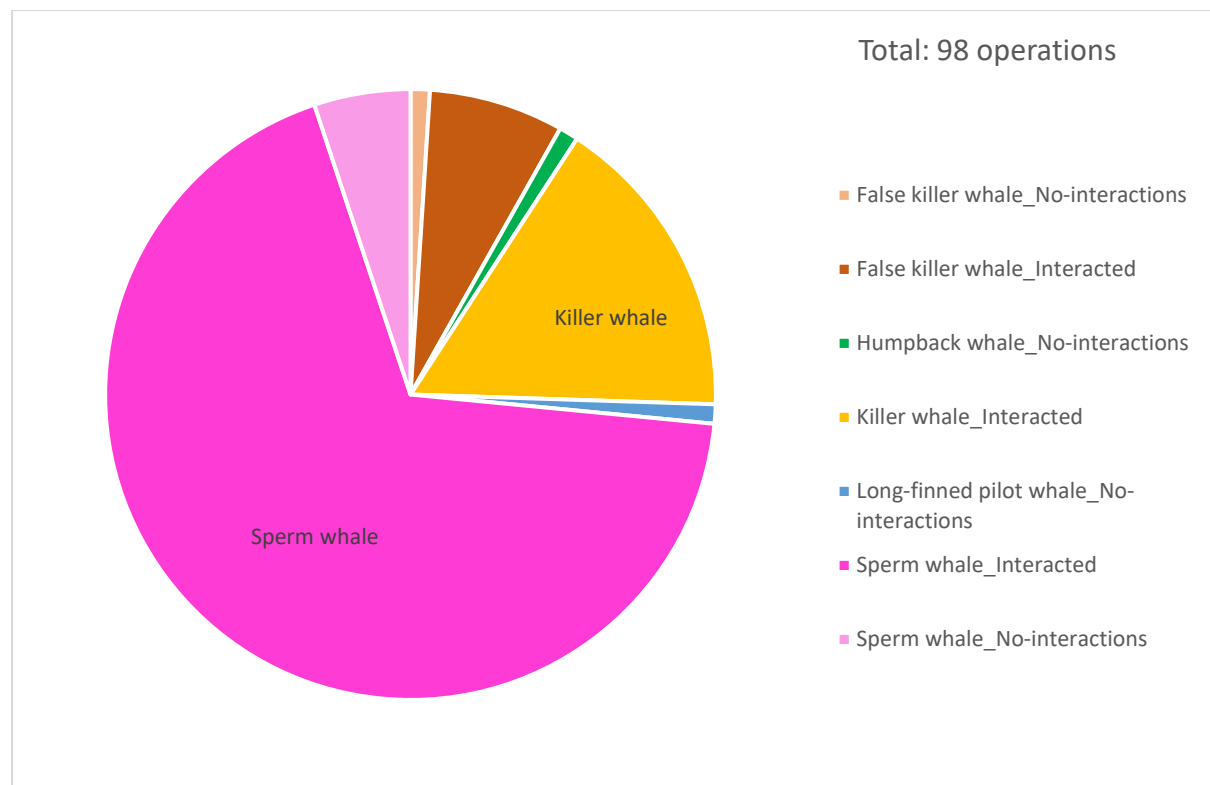


Figure 1: interacting and non-interacting species composition

Conclusion

About one third of the demersal longline operations experienced whale's presence, the main species reported consisted of sperm whale, then the second most frequent species was killer whale. When these species are present, they almost interacted every time with the gears.

While being much less reported, humpback whale and long-finned pilot whale did not interact with the gears.

References

CMM 02(2023) Data Standards (<https://siofa.org/management/CMM/02%282023%29>)