

**THE ACTION PLAN FOR THE CONSERVATION
OF THE TONINHA/FRANCISCANA SMALL CETACEAN**

TONINHA
(Pontoporia blainvillei)



FEDERATIVE REPUBLIC OF BRAZIL

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THE ACTION PLAN FOR THE CONSERVATION OF THE TONINHA/FRANCISCANA SMALL CETACEAN (*Pontoporia blainvillei*)

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TAXONOMY

ORDER: Cetacea

FAMILY: Pontoporidae

GENUS AND SPECIES: *Pontoporia blainvillei*



Fig.2. Franciscana photographed in the Bay of Babitonga, SC – FMA II (Photo: Marta J. Cremer).



COMMON NAMES

Pontoporia blainvillei is a small odontocetic cetacean of the Pontoporiidae family, commonly known as the, but various other names may be used where it is found in Brazil, such as 'manico', 'boto-garrafa' and 'boto-cachimbo', in Spanish- and English-speaking countries, the name 'Franciscana' is commonly used.

HABITAT

The Franciscana is found from Itaúnas (18°25'S), in the State of Espírito Santo, Brazil, as far as the Gulf of Matias (~42oS), in the Province of Chubut, in Argentina. Its preferred habitat includes estuaries and coastal regions up to 50m deep, although the majority of records refer to shallower waters, up to 30m deep.

BIOLOGICAL ASPECTS

This is one of the cetaceans with the shortest life cycle, with variations throughout its areas of distribution. Sexual maturity is achieved when the animals are aged between 2 and 5 years and the longest known lifespan is 21 years. A calf is born every one or two years, after a gestation period of approximately 11 months. The food intake of the species consists mainly of bony fish and octopi in estuarine and coastal regions. Groups of 2 or 5 or solitary individuals may be observed. Up to the present time, there is no clear evidence to identify any kind of migratory pattern. There is a low potential for annual population increase.



Franciscanas, *Pontoporia blainvillei*, photographed in the Babitonga Bay, SC FMA II (Franciscana Management Area II) (Photo: Marta J. Cremer).

NUMBERS

At the present time there is no estimate of numbers for the total distribution of species, with the exception of those living in FMA III. An aerial survey carried out in Rio Grande do Sul in 1996 counted 34 Franciscanas (in 29 groups), giving an average density of 0.657 individuals per km² (IC 95%: 0.516 to 0.836) for the 435 km² monitored. Extrapolating these figures for the whole area occupied by the stock (i.e. the coast of Rio Grande do Sul and Uruguay as far as the 30m isobath) resulted in an estimate of a population size of 42,078 Franciscanas (CI 95%: 33.047-53.542). This extrapolation must be treated with caution because it was based on a density estimated for a small fraction of the whole distribution of the stock.

In 2004 a new estimate of numbers of the species was carried out in Rio Grande do Sul, also by aerial survey, during the 'Conservation and Biology of the Franciscana' project financed by the National Environmental Fund (Fundo Nacional do Meio Ambiente under Agreement No. 094/2001).

An area of 13,771 km² was flown over, almost the whole of the coast of the State (approximately between 29oS and 34oS) and 31 Franciscanas were seen, in 25 groups. The density figures resulting showed 0.513 individuals per km² (IC 95%: 0.260 to 0.929), and the estimate of numbers for the area overflown was 7,028 Franciscanas (IC 95%: 3.580 to 12.793).



DIET

The Franciscana feeds on a wide variety of prey including about 80 dietary items that have been recorded up to now in Brazil, Uruguay and Argentina. The diet of the species consists mainly of bony fish and octopi from estuaries and coastal regions. It feeds on small prey measuring about 10cm long. Consumption of solid food probably begins when the Franciscanas are about 2-3 months old and 75-80 cm long, a period when shrimps make up an important part of the diet.

DISTRIBUTION (AREA OF OCCURRENCE)

In Brazil it occurs in a non-continuous distribution from the State of Espírito Santo (18°20') to the State of Rio Grande do Sul (33°45'S).

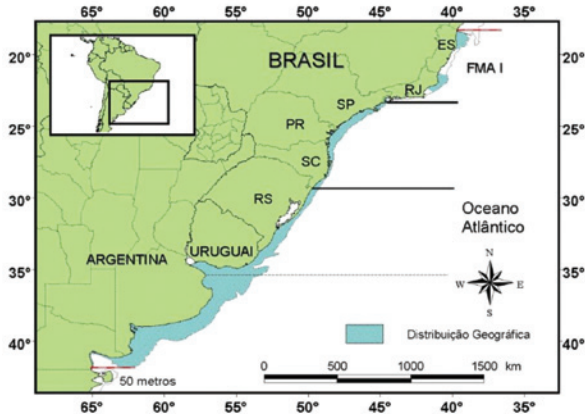


Fig. 3. Distribution map of the Franciscana (*Pontoporia blainvillei*). The red lines represent the northern and southern limits of distribution. The limits of each Franciscana Management Area (FMA) are shown in black. The thickness of the line of each FMA represents the level of development of each population



MAIN THREATS

The main threat to the conservation of the Franciscana is death due to accidental capture in fishing nets, especially seine nets. Swallowing plastic objects has also been a cause of general concern since analysis of the stomach contents of the Franciscana has shown that the species is also vulnerable through swallowing various types of detritus including pieces of net and fishing line. Added to these factors is the reduction of fish stocks, which causes seasonal variations in the diet of the species, as does the ingestion of residues related to chemical pollution.



Fig. 4. Franciscanas accidentally captured in fishing nets in Rio Grande, in the South of do Rio Grande do Sul. (Photo: Eduardo R. Secchi).



Fig. 5: Female and calf Franciscanas caught up in fishing nets in Rio Grande, RS (Photo: Museu Oceanográfico Prof. Eliézer de C. Rios).



THE RISK OF EXTINCTION

The Franciscana is listed in Appendix II of the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES), of which Argentina, Uruguay and Brazil are signatories, and in Appendices I and II of the Convention on the Conservation of Migratory Species of Wild Animals (CMS), which Brazil has not yet signed up to.

In Brazil, the species is included on the National list of Brazilian Fauna Threatened with Extinction, having been classified as 'VU' in the Action Plan for Aquatic Mammals Brazil, and as 'EN' in the Red Book of the Biodiversitas Foundation. The species was also recently included in several states lists of Brazilian wildlife threatened with extinction, including Rio Grande do Sul (the 'vulnerable' category – 'VU'), Paraná (the 'in danger' category – 'EN'), São Paulo (the 'vulnerable' category – 'VU'), Rio de Janeiro (the 'vulnerable' category – 'VU'), and Espírito Santo (the 'in danger' category – 'EN').

PREDATORS

Although there is little information concerning natural causes of death of the Franciscana, there is evidence that it is the prey of certain species of sharks such as the tiger shark (*Aleocercus cuveri*), the broadnose sevengill shark (*Notorynchus cepedianus*), the hammerhead shark (*Sphyrna* spp.) and killer whales.

THE TONINHA PAN

The National Action Plan (PAN) for the Toninha/Franciscana small cetacean was proposed by specialists between 2003 in 2005, and was supported by resources resulting from the FNMA/PROBIO 01/2003 Report. This report described various aspects related to biology, taxonomy, threats, areas of occurrence, and other points, as well as suggesting actions for preserving the species. The plan was the result of joining together two subprojects in the report: the subproject entitled "Strategies for Conserving the Franciscana (*Pontoporia blainvillei*) in Management Areas I and II: seeking alternative ways to save a species" along with "The Conservation and Biology of the *Pontoporia blainvillei*". In 2005 a workshop was held in Búzios (RJ) that was attended by 10 researchers involved in the two subprojects.

In 2007 the MMA (Ministry of the Environment) sent the plans resulting from that



report to be evaluated by the DIBIO/ICMBIO. This evaluation took place between 24th and 26 February 2010 in Brasilia the DBIO organised a strategic planning workshop for the Franciscana at the ICMBIO headquarters, based on work carried out for the MMA which resulted in Report No. 91/2010 being drawn up by the Chico Mendes Institute. The workshop produced aims, 7 targets, 88 actions and indicators for the implementation of actions, drawing on the contributions of various institutional bodies such as research centres, universities, IBAMA, the Ministry of Fisheries and NGOs, as well as the creators of the plan.

THE AIM OF THE ACTION PLAN (PAN)

The aim of the Toninha/Franciscana Action Plan is to avoid a fall in population numbers of the *Pontoporia blainvillei* where it occurs in Brazil, from Espírito Santo (18°20') to Rio Grande do Sul (33°45'S).

TARGET 1	NUMBERS OF ACTIONS IN THE ACTION PLAN
1 - Creating the conditions to evaluate the viability of the population throughout 100% of the area of occurrence, within five years.	12
2 - Proposing and implementing measures for controlling fishing with nets in order to preserve the Franciscana, within five years.	13
3 - Controlling the environmental impact of the activities of local businesses on the areas of occurrence of the Franciscana, within five years.	6
4 - Including proposals for the conservation and management of the Franciscana in the Management Plans of all the states of Brazil where the species occurs, within five years.	3
5 - Creating and implementing a programme for visual identity and educational communication for preserving the Franciscana, within five years.	13
6 - Strengthening the political and international cooperation instruments for managing and preserving the species, within five years	13
7 - Increasing the biological and ecological knowledge concerning the Franciscana in all of its Brazilian area of distribution, within five years.	28



DURATION OF THE ACTION PLAN

Implementation of this action plan will last until September 2015, in other words five years.

COORDINATION OF THE PLAN

Coordination of the Franciscana PAN will be the responsibility of the National Centre for the Research and Conservation of Aquatic Mammals (Centro Nacional de Pesquisa e Conservação de Mamíferos Aquáticos - CMA), under the supervision of the General Coordinating Body for Endangered Species of the Directorate for Conservation and Biodiversity (Coordenação Geral de Espécies Ameaçadas da Diretoria de Conservação da Biodiversidade – CGESP/DIBIO).

IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGY

The President of the ICMBIO will appoint an Advisory Strategic Group to help monitor the implementation of the Franciscana PAN within the terms of the ICMBIO-MMA Joint Report No. 316/2009.



ICMBIO REPORT NO. 91, 27TH AUGUST 2010

The President of the Chico Mendes Institute for Biodiversity Conservation (ICMBIO), by virtue of the authority granted by Art. 19, iii, of Annex I of Decree No. 6,100, dated 26 April 2007, which approved the Regulatory Structure of the ICMBIO states that:

Considering MMA Normative Instruction No. 3, dated 27 May 2003, recognises as Brazilian wildlife species threatened with extinction those included on its appended list;

Considering MMA-CONABIO Resolution No. 3, dated 21 December 2006, which establishes targets for reducing the loss of biodiversity in species and ecosystems, in line with the targets set out in the Strategic Plan for the Convention on Biological Diversity;

Considering MMA/ICMBIO Joint Report No. 316, dated 9 September 2009, which establishes the Action Plans to implement the National Biodiversity Policy;

Considering ICMBIO Report No. 78, dated 3 September 2009, which sets up the Chico Mendes Institute's national research and conservation centres and gives them official recognition; and

Considering the indications of Process No. 02070.000483/2008 -18, resolves:

Art. 1. To approve the National Action Plan for Conservation of the Toninha/Franciscana (*Pontoporia blainvillei*) – The Toninha/Franciscana PAN;

Art. 2. That the aim of the Toninha/Franciscana PAN is to avoid the decline in numbers of the *Pontoporia blainvillei* in its area of occurrence in Brazil, from Espírito Santo (18°20') to Rio Grande do Sul (33°45'S);

§ 1. The aims of Toninha/Franciscana PAN are found in 7 (seven) targets and their respective actions, which should be implemented within five years, being valid until September 2015, with annual supervision and monitoring of the implementation process.

Art. 2. 1. It shall be the responsibility of the National Centre for Aquatic Mammal Research and Conservation (Centro Nacional de Pesquisa e Conservação de Mamíferos Aquáticos – CMA) to coordinate the Toninha/Franciscana PAN, under the supervision of the General Coordinating Body for Endangered Species (Coordenação-geral de Espécies Ameaçadas da Diretoria de Conservação da Biodiversidade – CGESP) of the Directorate for Conservation and Biodiversity (Diretoria de Conservação da Biodiversidade – DIBIO).



Single paragraph: The President of the ICMBIO will nominate the Strategic Advisory Group to help monitor the implementation of the Toninha/Franciscana PAN.

Art. 3 This Order shall take effect from the date of its publication.

Rômulo José Fernandes Barreto Mello

Chico Mendes Institute for Conservation and Biodiversity