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SOCIEDAD LATINOAMERICANA DE
SOLAMAC
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PROGRAMA Y RESÚMENES

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PROGRESS REPORT ON THE SOUTHERN RIGHT WHALE *Eubalaena australis* OFF SANTA CATARINA, SOUTHERN BRAZIL: 1995

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The southern right whale *Eubalaena australis*, the second most endangered whale species, has been systematically studied during the past 15-ys in southern Brazil. In 1995, boat-based monitoring and photoidentification of individuals off the coast of Santa Catarina (~ 26°00'-28°25' S, 48°30'-49' W) were started. A total of 97 sightings and 233 individuals, including double countings, were recorded from July to December, pairs mothers-calves accounting for 64.95% (n=63) of sightings and calves corresponding for 35.19% (n=82) of the total number of whales. The highest frequencies of sighting occurred on August and October (39.17 and 28.87%, respectively), with higher number of individuals and calves recorded on October (36.49 and 17.60%, respectively). One female and her male calf (sexed through photography of his genital region) were photoidentified on 16 September and resighted on five occasions, 30 days and about 20-km apart from the first sighting. Copulatory behavior was recorded based on filming. Boat harassment, sighting of a living adult with a piece of fishing net and a death of a calf by entanglement were the direct threats recorded. Together with the monitoring of the whales, a massive awareness campaign (based on lectures, media coverage, distribution of booklets and posters) was carried out throughout the coastal region. This project has been supported by the Whale and Dolphin Conservation Society (UK).