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Agenda Item 31.2.8

**REPORT ON THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE CONCERTED ACTION
FOR THE FRANCISCANA DOLPHIN (*Pontoporia blainvillei*)***

Summary:

The Governments of Argentina, Brazil and Uruguay have submitted the attached report on the implementation of the Concerted Action for the Franciscana dolphin (*Pontoporia blainvillei*), UNEP/CMS/Concerted Action 14.5.

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REPORT ON THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE CONCERTED ACTION FOR THE FRANCISCANA DOLPHIN (*Pontoporia blainvillei*)

UNEP/CMS/ CONCERTED ACTION 14.5

CONCERTED ACTION

Title: CONCERTED ACTION FOR THE FRANCISCANA DOLPHIN (*Pontoporia blainvillei*)

Document number: UNEP/CMS/Concerted Action 14.5

REPORTING GOVERNMENT

Argentina, Brazil and Uruguay

TARGET SPECIES/POPULATION

Class: Mammalia

Order: Cetartiodactyla

Infra-Order: Cetacea

Family: Pontoporiidae

Genus: Pontoporia

Species: *Pontoporia blainvillei*

Subspecies: *Pontoporia blainvillei blainvillei* and *Pontoporia blainvillei pukusi*

Listed in Appendices I and II of CMS

PROGRESS IN ACTIVITIES

Activity 1: Development of the national conservation plan

- **Progress:** A draft plan to assess all Franciscana dolphin populations has been agreed by the IWC Scientific Committee. The assessment will initiate at the 2026 meeting of the Committee and continue until all populations are reviewed. The assessment will lead to new recommendations to refine the research, mitigation and conservation actions within the Franciscana Conservation Management Plan (CMP). Work is ongoing to prepare for the assessment, including updating estimates of bycatch mortality and discussions on the effectiveness of current mitigation measures.
- **Results:** Update information on the population assessment for Franciscana Management Areas (FMAs) Ia, Ib, IIa, IIb and III, on mortality levels (including strandings), bycatch estimation and mitigation measures (i.e. bycatch regulation, coastal habitat protection) were presented and discussed.
- **Difficulties/Delays:** The implementation of technical and scientific studies has faced significant delays due to insufficient funding and logistical constraints. One of the main obstacles is the lack of reliable and up-to-date population data, which is critical for IWC assessments. While abundance estimates exist for most Franciscana Management Areas (FMAs), **no such estimates are currently available for the FMAs in Argentina (FMA IVa, IVb, IVc, IVd, and IVe)**. This data gap is a major limitation, as it prevents a

full assessment of the species across its entire range. Conducting an abundance survey in Argentine waters is therefore considered urgent.

- Additionally, new estimates of bycatch mortality are needed, particularly in Argentina, where existing data are outdated or incomplete. These gaps hinder the evaluation of current mitigation measures and limit the ability to formulate effective conservation strategies. Delays in national-level coordination and endorsement of required studies have also contributed to the slow progress in preparing for a full population assessment.
- **Status of Expected Outcome:** A Comprehensive Assessment of the franciscana dolphin populations is expected to begin in 2026 and will focus on FMAs Ia, Ib, IIa, IIb (in Brazil) and III (in Brazil and Uruguay). Assessments of populations in Argentina (FMA IVa-e) require additional data (see previous bullet point). Endorsement of the assessments and future recommendations to improve the Franciscana CMP is expected in 2026 and 2028.

Activity 2: Strengthening national and regional capacities

- **Progress:** An international workshop was held in July 2025 to discuss the Franciscana dolphin assessment. A total of 45 participants (including scientists, government representatives, administrators, academia and NGOs) attended the meeting. Local representatives had the opportunity to share their activities in places specially assigned to them.
- **Results:** Updated information necessary to initiate the IWC Comprehensive Assessment in 2026 was received during the workshop. Additional intersessional work will continue to refine input data for the Assessment.
- **Difficulties:** Logistical challenges and lack of funds. Without consistent funding and institutional support, the scaling up of capacity-building efforts and the establishment of a regional framework for technical exchange remain at risk, potentially compromising the quality and consistency of data feeding into the IWC Comprehensive Assessment.
- **Expectation:** Capacity-building outcome partially achieved; the remaining workshops are planned for completion in the second and third quarters of 2026. Funds are required to develop these workshops.

Mitigation of Global Threats to Aquatic Migratory Species

Activity 3: Addressing bycatch and other mitigation problems

- **Results:** Updated information on mortality (including strandings) and bycatch estimation, as well as bycatch mitigation measures. Collaboration is underway between fishers and researchers to continue and expand the implementation of mitigation actions to reduce incidental mortality in some FMAs.
- **Difficulties:** Lack of enforcement of the legislation for some FMAs; limited funding to expand trials of bycatch mitigation methods to other FMAs; implementation timeframe depends on national policies.
- **Expected Situation:** Partial results achieved; further institutional progress needed to reach threat reduction goals. A workshop is planned to bring together fishers, researchers, and government representatives to discuss the use of both existing and emerging bycatch mitigation methods, and explore ways to support their range-wide implementation. Funds are required to develop this workshop.

General Summary and Evaluation

Overall, significant progress has been achieved in scientific knowledge, strategic planning, international collaboration, and the adoption of key decisions aimed at conserving the species.

Concrete achievements include:

- Development of a **draft** conservation plan (more work needs to be done).
- Improvements in capacity building,
- Regional connectivity agreements were established,
- The franciscana dolphin has been included in the national list of species in need of protection in Argentina, Brazil and Uruguay.

However, important limitations remain:

- Finalise the stock structure for all FMAs.
- Conduct an abundance survey in FMA IVa, b, c and d (Argentina).
- Continue to review human-induced mortality, including bycatch estimates.
- Update information on natural mortality and other population parameters (e.g., age structure of the population, reproductive rates). Lack of sustainable financing,
- Pending effective implementation of some expected results (e.g., review of MPAs' success in the conservation of franciscana dolphin and mitigation measures in practice).

For the next phase (2026–2029 triennium), the following actions are recommended:

- Securing financial and technical resources,
- Increasing community engagement,
- Institutionalising transboundary mechanisms,
- Promoting range-wide bycatch mitigation,
- Strict monitoring of the execution of plans under the Samarkand–GBF framework,
- Complete the IWC Comprehensive Assessment.

CHANGES TO THE CONCERTED ACTION (IF ANY)

No change

REFERENCES (if any)

Not applicable

ACTION

We aim to **continue** the Franciscana Dolphin Concerted Action because the species is still classified as *Vulnerable*, and coordinated international action represents the best chance to ensure its long-term survival. In addition, some of the smaller populations are believed to be at greater risk, with independent assessments suggesting they may qualify as *Endangered* or *Critically Endangered* under the IUCN Red List. Halting efforts now would not only put the species at increased risk but also undermine important regional and scientific collaborations that have already been established.