



EVALUATION OF THE IMPACT OF WHALE-WATCHING AND THE HIGH QUALITY WHALE-WATCHING®



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The **whale-watching (WW)** activities can disturb **cetaceans** with potential **consequences at short-, middle- and long-term on the populations**. Regular monitoring of human activities and assessment of their effects on cetacean populations is currently required by the **Marine Strategy Framework Directive (MSFD)**. This **pilot study** aims to provide for the MSFD concrete and standardized **assessment tools** to monitor the **evolution of pressure** on cetacean populations from whale-watching activity in the French Mediterranean Sea and evaluate the **effectiveness of the High Quality Whale-Watching®* (HQWW)** Certificate as a management tool.

*www.whale-watching-label.com

Ecological & Socioeconomic indicators (metrics associated)



2 socioeconomic indicators (n=17 HQWW operator answers; n=13 non-certified operator answers).

BUSINESS DEMOGRAPHY
2 associated metrics

TOURIST FREQUENTATION
3 associated metrics

3 ecological indicators of evolution of pressure on cetacean populations

PRESSURE
5 associated metrics

RISK
5 associated metrics

IMPACT Individual
3 associated metrics

Population
2 associated metrics

- ✓ 20 operators selected for all indicators (16 HQWW and 4 non-HQWW) ;
- ✓ 11 HQWW operators dedicated 0% to 25% of their trips to WW ;
- ✓ For 9 HQWW operators, the number of clients from one year to the next change between 0% and +50% ;
- ✓ Insufficient number of responses from non-certified clients.

2 ecological indicators of evaluation of the effectiveness of HQWW

ACTIVITY OF HQWW OPERATORS WITHIN THE WW ACTIVITY
3 associated metrics

COMPLIANCE WITH THE COMMITMENTS OF HQWW CERTIFICATE
5 associated metrics

Visit experience : by distinguishing the sustainability-oriented and consumption-oriented tourists.

	HQWW clients answers (n=201)	Non-certified client answers (n=13)
Not aware of HQWW	88%	100%
Impact on the decision (Related to knowledge of HQWW)	12%	30%
Impact on customer satisfaction (conditions of observation related to HQWW)	15%	75%

24 visits aboard HQWW trips, 65 surveys among HQWW and not certified operators

For each metric value there is a predefined score :

Category	Indeterminate	Very bad	Bad	Average	Good	Very good
Threshold						
Score	/	1	2	3	4	5

Score of each metric

Metrics	Indeterminate	Very bad	Bad	Average	Good	Very good
Metric 1		1	2	3	4	5
Metric 2		1	2	3	4	5

Indicator value obtained from the weighted average of the scores of each metric

Threshold	/	[1-1.5[[1.5-2.5[[2.5-3.5[[3.5-4.5[[4.5-5]
Final score of indicator						

Conclusion

- Data collected during the test phase allowed most of the metrics for the identified indicators to be filled in.
- Questioning the relevance of keeping certain indicators for non-certified operators.
- Our result can be used as reference state in the implementation of new indicators in the framework of the MSFD measurement and monitoring programs.



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