

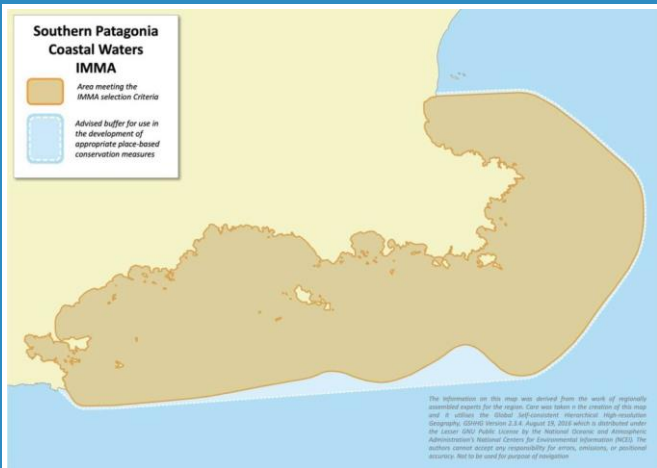
Southern Patagonia Coastal Waters IMMA

Summary, continued.

enable the presence of a distinctive assemblage of marine mammal species, some being only found in this area. It includes important haul-out sites for South American fur seals and South American sea lions.

Description:

This IMMA includes all of the waters of the Parque Interjurisdiccional Marino Costero Patagonia Austral (PIMCPA). It covers 132,124 hectares, and extends over 180 km of coastline in Southern Patagonia. The coastal environment is interspersed with small sheltered bays, coves and inlets with soft substrata of mud and fine sand, and rocky shores exposed to the open sea (Yorio, 1998). The rocky reefs and the more than sixty islands and islets in this area give this part of the coastline distinctive features that set it apart from the rest of the Chubut province coastline (Yorio, 1998). The islands and islets are mostly of volcanic origin, composed of a pyroclastic basement covered by accumulations of agglomerates, sand, silt, and shells from the surrounding coasts and bottoms. The surfaces of the islands and islets are bare rock or have different degrees of vegetation, shrub or herbaceous cover. The presence of coastal environments of different wave energy, with pronounced tidal fluctuations (tidal amplitudes in this sector reach approximately four meters), results in a large number of coastal geofoms and particular intertidal environments (Rivas & Pisoni, 2010). In some areas, such as the Melo and Ezquerra bays and the Malaspina cove, extensive intertidal areas with muddy or sandy substrata alternate with rocky and boulder shoals that are exposed during low tides.



Area Size

2 596 km²

Qualifying Species and Criteria

South American sea lion – *Otaria byronia*

Criterion B (2); C (1)

South American fur seal – *Arctocephalus australis*

Criterion B (2); C (1)

Marine Mammal Diversity

Criterion D (2)

Otaria byronia, *Arctocephalus australis*,
Cephalorhynchus commersonii, *Lagenorhynchus obscurus*, *Lagenorhynchus australis*, *Orcinus orca*,
Mirounga leonina, *Megaptera novaeangliae*,
Globicephala melas edwardii, *Pseudorca crassidens*, *Grampus griseus*

Summary

The Southern Patagonia Coastal Waters IMMA includes a large coastal, marine and insular sector in the north of the San Jorge Gulf, from Cabo dos Bahías (44°55' S, 60°32' W) to a few kilometers south of Quintano Island (45°13' S, 66°03' W), including the adjacent maritime zone up to 1.8 nm from the coast. The rocky reefs, 39 islands and 6 islets give this section of the coast distinctive features that differentiate it from the rest of the Chubut coastline. These features

A number of marine mammals as well as seabirds, live and feed in or transit through the IMMA. Around 60% of the total global population of South American fur seals hauls out at Isla Rasa (around 13000 individuals) (Crespo et al., 2015). Other marine mammals present include South American sea lions, dusky dolphins, Peale's dolphins, Commerson's dolphins and killer whales (Brownell et al., 1998; Crespo et al., 1985). Other cetaceans use the area for feeding, breeding or transit as well, including pilot whales, false killer whales, and several orcas which migrate between tropical breeding areas and Antarctic feeding grounds (Reyes et al., 2006). Several species of seabirds breed and feed in the area as well. In the adjacent area to the Park, the area is also used by more than 100 trawlers fish for hake and squid all year round (Crespo et al., 1997a,b).

Criterion B: Distribution and Abundance

Sub-criterion B2: Aggregations

The population of South American fur seals resident in the IMMA is small relative to the original population size which was severely hunted since the 18th century. More than 100,000 fur seals were taken in Argentine waters until complete protection in the 20th century. The species started to increase after the harvest stopped in Uruguay in 1991 (Crespo et al., 2015). Isla Rasa within this IMMA contains around 60% of the total population of South American fur seals in Argentina, with counts documented by Crespo et al. (2015) as ranging between 2,700 animals in 2001 to almost 13,000 in 2013. Fur seal recovery in Patagonian rookeries was supplied by Uruguayan breeding colonies.

Large aggregations of South American sea lions occur on islands within the IMMA. At least 43,000 sea lions haul out on 21 rookeries and feed in the surrounding waters (Reyes et al., 1999; Grandi et al.,

2015; Romero et al., 2017).

Large numbers of small cetaceans have been recorded inside the IMMA and surrounding areas (Crespo et al., 1997a,b, 2017; Durante et al., 2020 a,b; Loizaga de Castro et al., 2017; Schiavini et al., 1999).

Criterion C: Key Life Cycle Activities

Sub-criterion C1: Reproductive Areas

Sea lions, fur seals and several species of small cetaceans give birth, nurse their young, and mate in the IMMA, including dusky, Peale's and Commerson's dolphins (Brownell et al., 1998; Reyes et al., 1999; Coscarella, 2005; Grandi et al., 2015, 2016; Romero et al., 2017; Soto et al., 2017). The rookeries of fur seals reported an increase in the number of pups born, from 15 pups in 1995, to more than 800 in 2018 (Crespo, unpublished information). Counts of at least 11,000 South American sea lion pups have been recorded at haul-out sites within the IMMA (Reyes et al., 1999; Grandi et al., 2015; Romero et al., 2017).

Criterion D: Special Attributes

Sub-criterion D2: Diversity

The area includes habitat that supports an important diversity of marine mammal species, both pinnipeds and cetaceans (Crespo et al., 2007). The Parque Interjurisdiccional Marino Costero Patagonia Austral represents an important habitat supporting a wide diversity of marine mammal species of global significance. Eleven species of marine mammals have been reported, of which nine are resident and several more are occasional and use the park for transit (Reyes, 2006).

Supporting Information

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