A SOCIOLOGICAL INVESTIGATION ON THE ATTITUDE OF FERRY’S PASSENGERS TOWARDS A “CETACEAN SAFE MARITIME MOBILITY”: CAN REDUCTION OF VESSEL SPEED TO REDUCE THE RISK OF SHIP STRIKE BE A COMMERCIALLY SUSTAINABLE TOOL?

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According to several reports, collisions between large vessels and large cetaceans are one of the known main causes of threats to whales. EU-directives and Intergovernmental-Agreements state norms for the conservation of cetacean species present in the Mediterranean Basin. Supported by these norms and in order to reduce the risk of ship strikes many conservation bodies suggested the reduction of vessel speed (reasonably in cetacean high density areas). On the other hand in recent years many shipping companies, often commercially competing with each other, have increased cruise speed with the aim to supply a better service for customers willing to reach the proper destination faster. Within this framework, and following a multidisciplinary approach (combining natural and social science), to investigate the attitude of ferry’s passengers towards a cetacean safe maritime mobility a questionnaire on marine environment and cetacean awareness was supplied to a sample of 521 passengers of the Corsica-Sardinia-Ferries travelling along the Bastia-Savona (within the Pelagos-Sanctuary) and the Civitavecchia-G.Aranci routes. Results showed, among the others, that more than 80% of passengers would prefer to use a ferry company more oriented towards the environment more than on customers’ needs and that more than 75% of passengers would prefer to choose a company that reduces ferry speed if this would reduce the risk of ship strikes. This multidisciplinary study shows that, according to the investigated sample, creating cetacean safe routes (reducing the speed of the ferries) could find customers favor without being, subsequently, an economical disadvantage (considering also cost of fuel) for the shipping companies. Interestingly the survey (subsample) also showed that only less than 10% of the passengers on the Bastia-Savona were aware to travel all across a protected-area and that 65% of the passengers on the Civitavecchia-G.Aranci believed, incorrectly, that the crossed region was (even partially) a Protected Area.
From 2007 synoptic systematic monitoring using ferries as platform of observation
>250,000 km travelled on effort: 1 ship strike and 5 near miss.
Reason to conduct a sociological investigation on the attitude of ferry’s passengers

- Maritime traffic cause impact cetacean
- Ship strike it is claimed to be one of the main cause of mortality due to human
- Ferries are part of maritime traffic
- One of the measure to mitigate the impact could be to reduce ferry speed

It common thinking that ferry companies don’t want to reduce vessel speed

Reducing speed means reducing fuel consumption, at least at present ferry companies will be happy to reduce vessel speed as long as they all do it

...then it seems that customers prefer to reach faster their destination.

So we investigate the attitude of ferry’s passengers to be ready to make the trip longer in time to reduce possible collisions events.
Questionnaire on ferry’s passengers knowledge and awareness regarding sea and cetacean

29 questions divided in 3 section

1) Environment and ecology
2) Sea and cetacean
3) Passengers environment friendly attitudes

Summer 2010 and 2011

512 Questionnaires filled up

111 on the Savona-Bastia
401 on the Civitavecchia-G. Aranci
Marine animals with lungs

Marine animals living in...

Big fish

Cetacean are...

How many cetacean species occur in "our sea"
Is it possible to sight a cetacean from the ferry?

How long does it take from the ferry's deck to sight a cetacean?
Will you be ready to make your travel longer in time to reduce risk of collisions?

- Yes, interely
- Yes, partially
- 10<min<30
- 30<min<60
- More 1 hr

Crossing a "protected area"?

- Yes, partially
- No
- Yes, interely

Civ-G.A
Sav-Bas
CONCLUSIONS

The reduction of vessel speed to reduce the risk of ship strike can be a commercially sustainable tool

However

Work must be done to valorize the attitude of ferry’s passengers towards a “cetacean safe maritime mobility” and the use of environmental friendly companies

Through

1) Specific sensibilisations campaigns

2) A better communication from the ferry companies to associate the name of the companies to marine conservation and in particular to cetacean safe maritime mobility...maybe adopting a code of conduct to reduce ship strike and promote “collision free” routes
How long does it take from the ferry's deck to sight a cetacean?

Approximately 1 sighting/hour

THANK YOU