

Interreg

Caraïbes

Fonds européen de développement régional

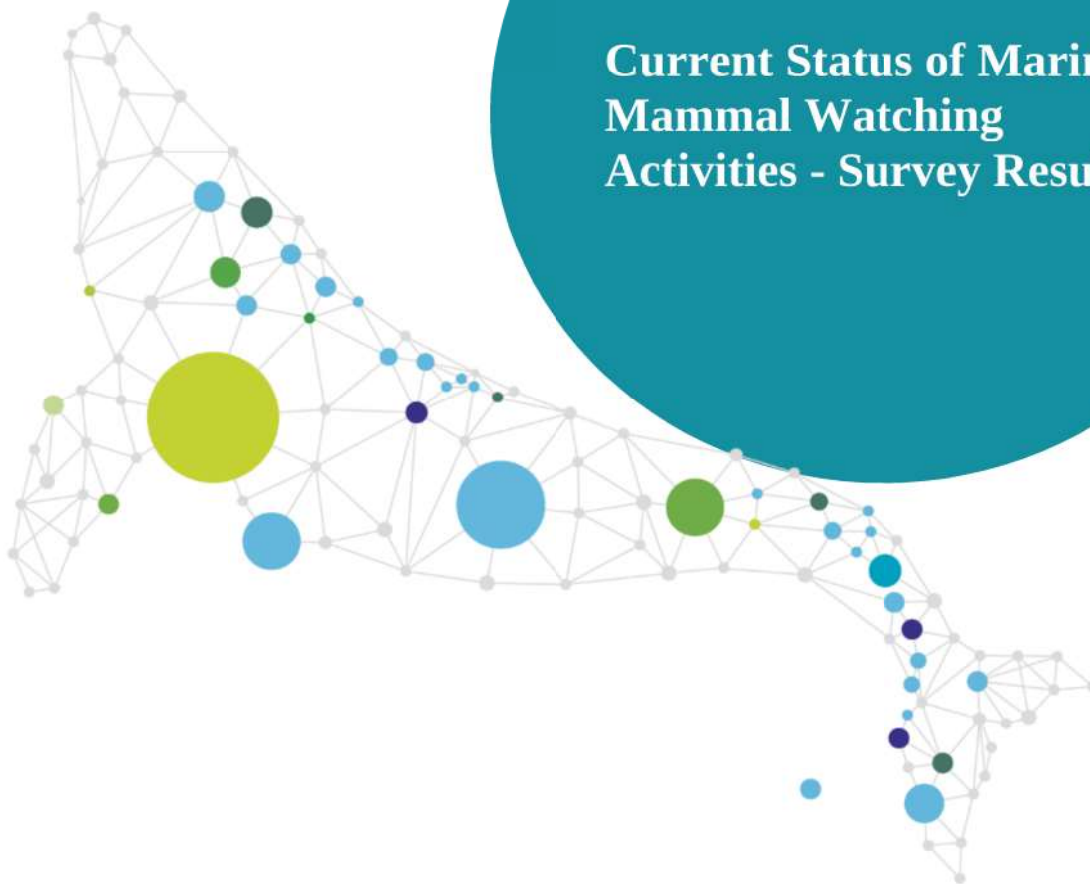


UNION EUROPÉENNE

CARI'MAM



Current Status of Marine Mammal Watching Activities - Survey Results



Le projet CARI'MAM est cofinancé par le programme Interreg Caraïbes au titre du fond européen de développement régional



Réserve Naturelle
ÎLE DU GRAND-CONNETABLE



Réserve Naturelle
SAINT-MARTIN





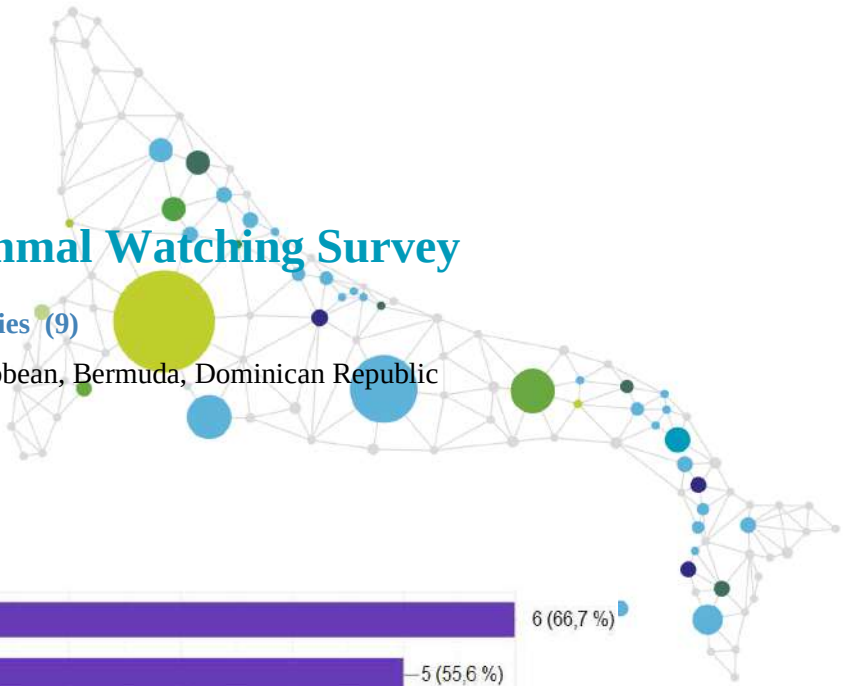
Introduction

Headed by the Agoa Sanctuary from the French Biodiversity Agency and the SPAW-RAC, with the Réserve Naturelle du Grand Connetable and the Réserve Naturelle Nationale de Saint-Martin, the main objective of the CARIMAM project is to develop a regional network of marine protected areas dedicated to the conservation of marine mammals in the Caribbean. With specific emphasis on the MMAP's Priority Actions Plan, this project aims at strengthening managerial skills and developing common tools for management and evaluation purposes. Within the framework of the CARIMAM project, it was identified the need for updated data on the current status of Whale Watching activities in the Wider Caribbean Region. This survey was proposed to all the participants of the CARIMAM second meeting.

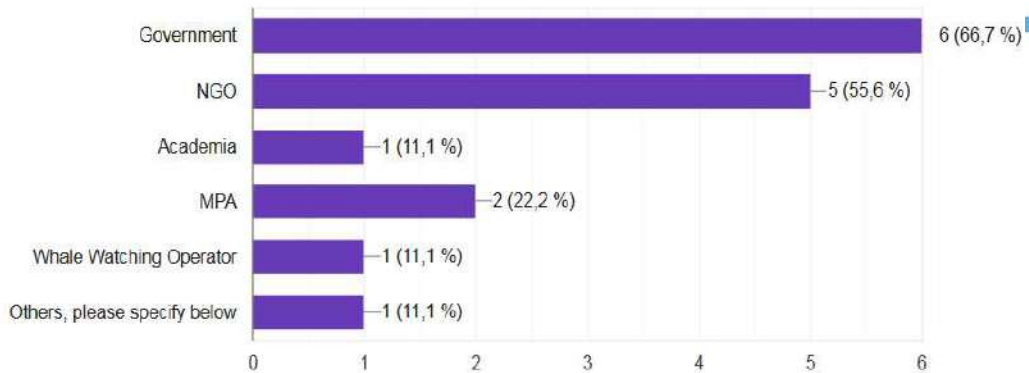
Marine mammal Watching Survey

Country of territory with this survey applies (9)

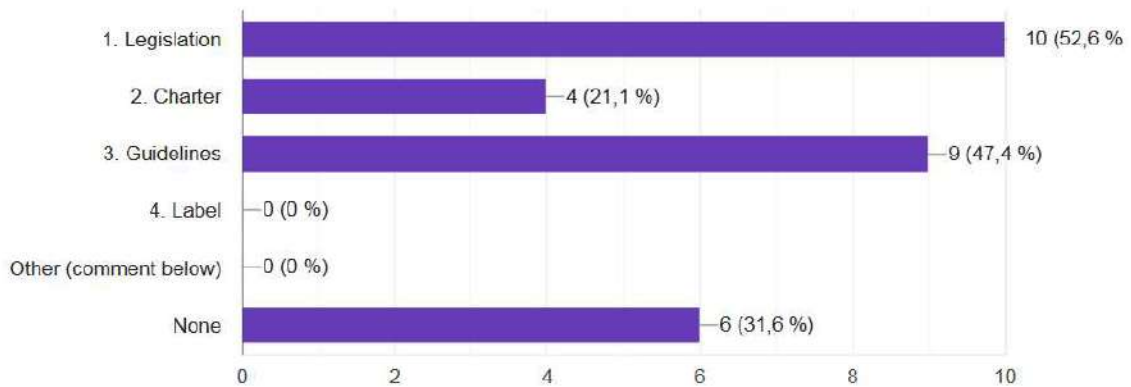
Caribbean Netherlands, Anguilla, French Caribbean, Bermuda, Dominican Republic
Turks and Caicos Islands, Bahamas, Haiti



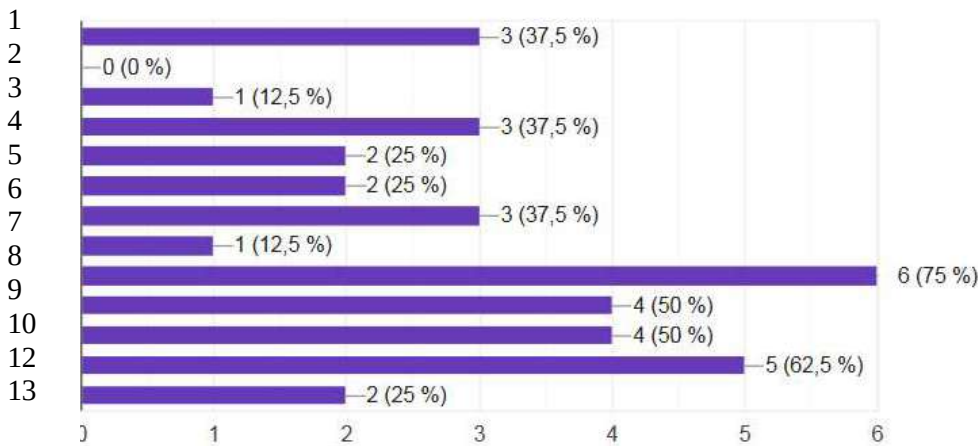
Type of Organization



1. Are there any existing legislations, regulations and guidelines on cetacean watching to which operators must abide ? (19 answers)

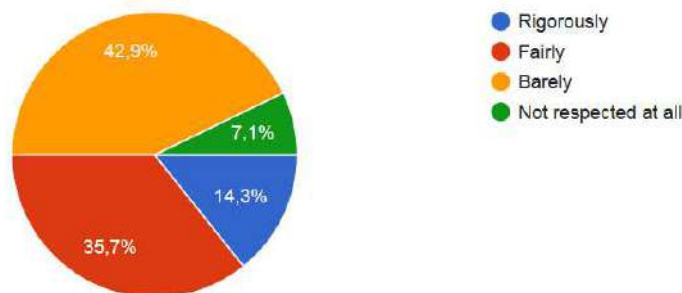


2. a. Do they include the following conditions?



1. Compulsory permit
2. Training programs
3. Operators have sufficient experience with MM
4. Operators have sufficient experience of the local area, sea and weather conditions
5. One crew member is a dedicated lookout
6. Certified/trained local guides
7. Vessel meets appropriate safety standards/safety equipment
8. Guidelines/regulations on display
9. Prohibition of any disruption of the normal movement or behaviour of the MM
10. Allow the MM to determine the duration and the nature of the encounter
11. Prohibition of physical contact with the MM
12. Prohibition of any feeding practices of MM
13. Prohibition of any littering

2.a. To what extent are these conditions respected? (14 answers)



2.a. Comments

-regulations are under development and will be based on the Guidelines for whale watching established under the SPAW protocol ; Visitors/divers want to go close to the animal

- In Martinique, because of the substantial number of operators and boats in the water, certain rules or not necessarily respected (number of boats around animals, 2 in theory but often up to 10 ; time spent around animals in theory limited to 30 minutes but some may overstay and cause spats between operators ; use of eco-friendly cups instead of plastic cups is often disregarded). In addition, people who do not have a chart (thus not allowed to approach less than 300 meters away) often enter the observation circle, thus increasing the number of boats, disturbing the animals and also the good behavior of observation. ==> lack of

communication and control Regarding point 5: no obligation to have a person dedicated to the research of cetaceans. But obligation to have at least one person trained in approaching cetaceans. "

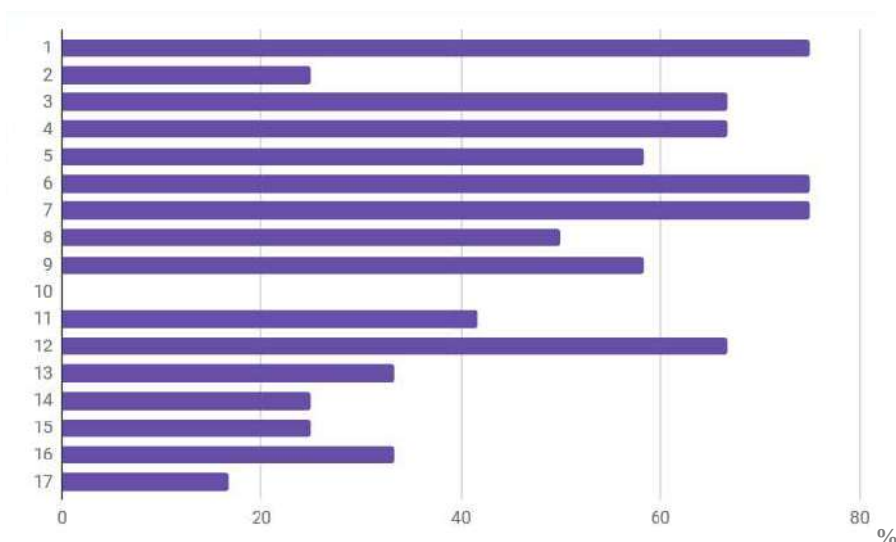
-- "training is not at all up to the stakes in terms of conservation of cetaceans and implementation of a good practice of the activity.No need for cetacean experience, yet essential, to ensure good assessment of the behavior and approaches of cetaceans, no obligation for a merchant marine vessel to ensure safety. Activity was not regulated in time in Martinique meaning too many operators leading to absurd approach times 10 minutes and parading of boats, the worst imaginable, and in terms of the education, the image of observations of wild animals in natural environments: the natural environment must not be a fast observation, the approaches must be done slowly and quietly and in the long term, for mutual acceptance between cetaceans and boats. Currently there is a risk that Guadeloupe follows the same path and ends up beyond the point of no return. "

- "In Martinique there is no control of the activity"
- We have to aske for a special permit to work on these protected species

I am not out on the water enforcing the legislation so I can not say for sure how closely the tour operators follow the guidelines. I have heard from the tour operators that locals going out in their own private boats are less likely to follow the whale watching guidelines and try to get in the water with the whales.

-As tour operators are not required to follow guidelines and are likely to get excited when a whale is in the area (tips from guests) No conditions in place

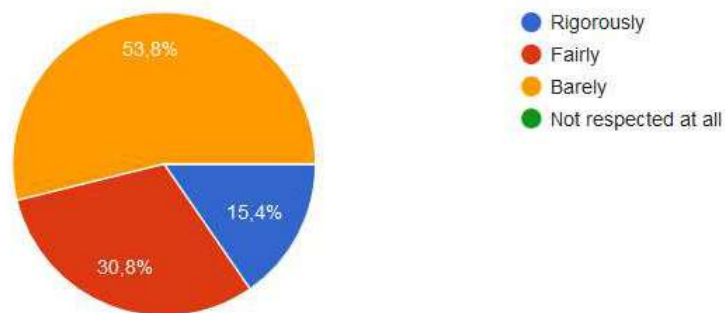
2.b. Do they include the following conditions? (Approach and departure method) (12 answers)



1. Approaching and departing from a direction that is parallel and slightly to the rear of the animal
2. Approach sperm whales slowly from behind or from an angle
3. Follow a parallel route to the animals without overtaking
4. No approach head-on
5. No scattering or separating of members of a group of cetaceans
6. No boxing in of cetaceans, cutting off their paths or preventing them from leaving
7. Vessel operators should coordinate their movements by radio contact
8. In case of an approach by a cetacean :
 - a. Placing the engines in neutral and letting the animal pass by as he pleases
 - b. Slowing down and continuing on course
 - c. Steering a straight course away from the animal
9. When watching, the engines are placed on neutral
10. Avoiding sudden changes in direction or speed
11. In case of a cetacean showing disturbance activities, withdrawing immediately to a 'no wake' speed
12. No chasing or pursuing

13. Moving off at a slow 'no wake' speed to the outer limit of the caution zone (See annex) and gradually increasing speed
14. Sailboats should start engine and keep it in neutral when near cetaceans
15. No drifting down on whales
16. No approaching a breaching whale
17. No approaching resting whales

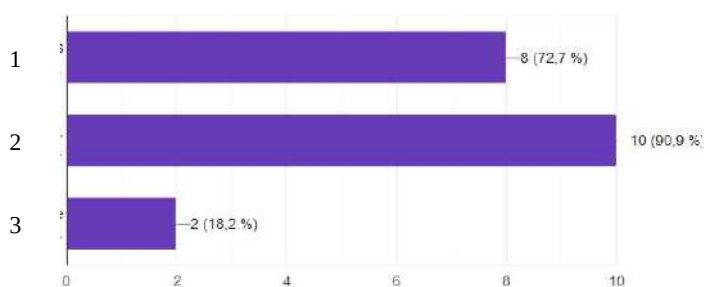
2. b. To what extent are these conditions respected? (13 answers)



2. b. Comments

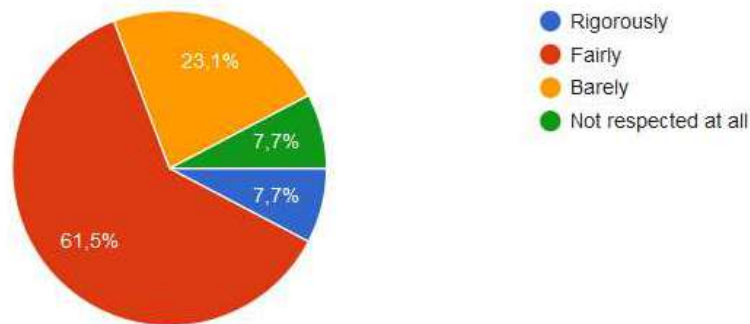
-no tag on calf
 - see 2002 Charter and Agoa Sanctuary. Decree forbidding approaches without special authorization is not broadcasted or respected. Operators are not trained to assess situations. Regarding the 8th point, recommendations within the Sanctuary are : in case of small cetaceans encounter, the speed and course are maintained. Are excluded changes in the speed and course to deliberately create an interaction. In the case of an encounter with large cetaceans, the speed is reduced and if possible, the engine is shut down. Respect of the rules : the engine if not shut down in the presence of dolphins, while the approaching speed and manner (3/4 from the back in a diagonal way) are rarely respected.
 -Ibid. Guidelines are focused on whales.

2. c. Do they include the following conditions? (Noise) (11 answers)



1. No loud or sudden noises near cetaceans
2. Reasonable use of engines, gear changes and manoeuvres
3. No Echo sounders near cetaceans

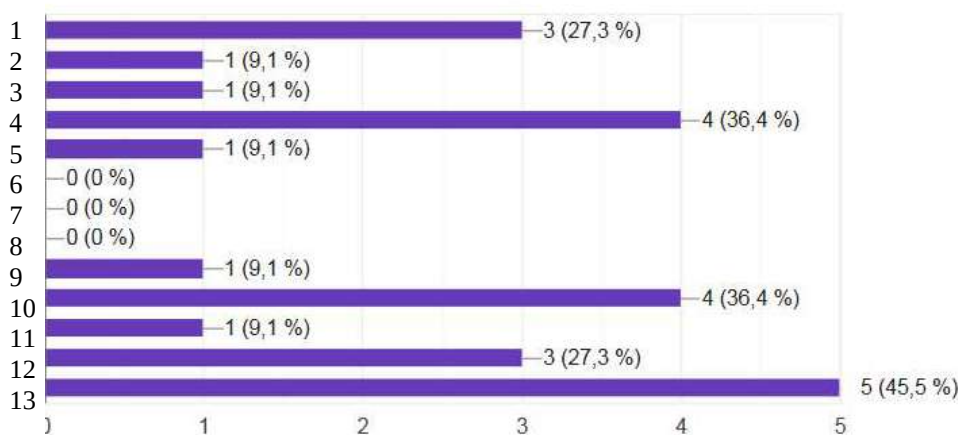
2. c. To what extent are these conditions respected? (13 answers)



2. c. Comments

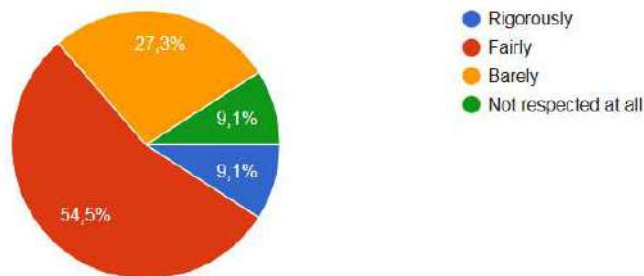
-des opérateurs non qualifiés pour activité d'observation d'espèces protégées

2. d. How close can whale watching operators approach whales? (Approach distance – Whales) (11 answers)



1. 50m
2. 50m for stationary whales
3. 80m
4. 100m
5. 100m for moving whales
6. 200m when feeding or socializing
7. 200m (vessels less than 35')
8. 250m
9. 300m (vessels larger than 35')
10. Caution zone within 300m of whales
11. Vessels waiting to watch whales must maintain a distance of 500m
12. Restricted distance to whales being studied by researchers
13. Qualified scientists, experts and researchers are allowed to approach marine mammals closer for justified scientific purposes

2. d. To what extent are these conditions respected? (11 answers)

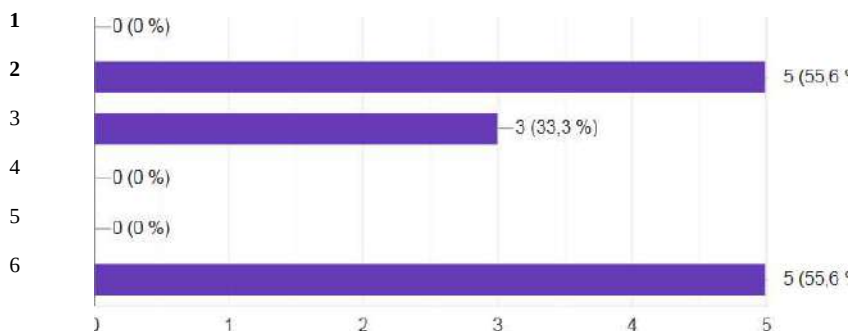


2. .d. Comments

- The approaching distance in itself is not the main problem, as it is quite hard to evaluate even for seasoned professionals but the way with which behaviours are evaluated and the adaptation of the approach in consequence. As Carole Carlson (IWC expert on whale watching) argued, using the example of the Valdes Peninsula where the best regulation was to limit drastically the number of boats up to 50m from small cetaceans and 100 for large cetaceans.

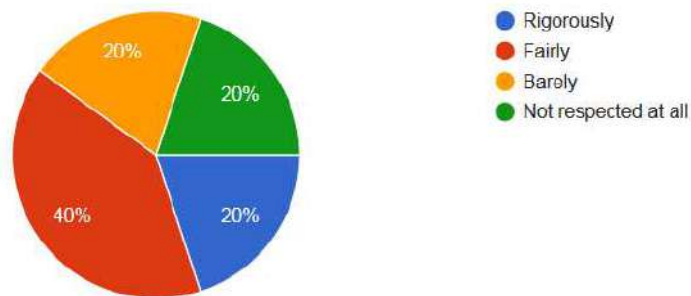
- En el caso de Mamá y Ballenato las embarcaciones deben mantener un mínimo de 80 m de distancia
- No recommended distance

2. e. How close can whale watching operators approach dolphins? (Approach distance – dolphins) (9 answers)



1. 30m with engines off
2. 50m
3. 50m with engines on
4. 100m
5. 100m when feeding or socializing
6. Qualified scientists, experts and researchers are allowed to approach marine mammals closer for justified scientific purposes

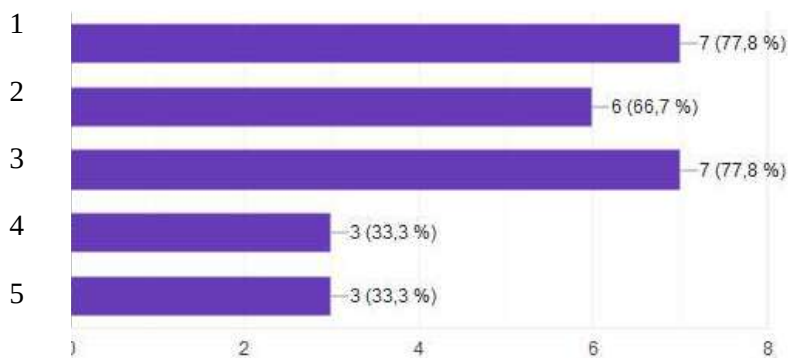
2. e. To what extent are these conditions respected? (10 answers)



2. e. Comments

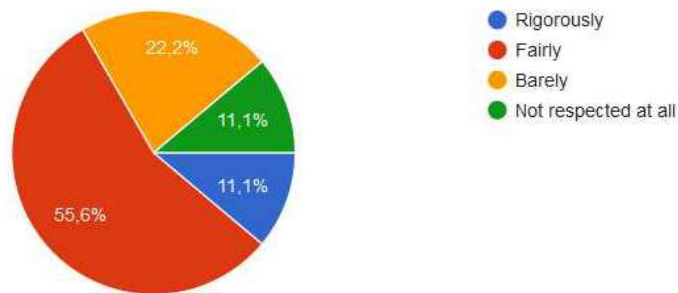
- Mainly dolphins approach the boats
- See Charter and decrees. No precision in the charter on the obligation to turn off the engine. One of the peoples who contributed to the technical drafting of the charter has told me that shutting down the engine would be useless.
- Los delfines nadan en paralelos de las embarcaciones cuando suelen coincidir en las mismas zonas
- No recommended distance

2. f. Do they include the following conditions? (Speed) (9 answers)



1. Avoid sudden or repeated changes in speed when within the caution zone
2. Avoid speeds over 10 knots within 1500 feet of a whale
3. When within a caution zone of a cetacean, move at a constant, slow ('no wake') speed
4. Slow down to 6k at first sighting of a cetacean
5. Do not move faster than the slowest moving cetacean

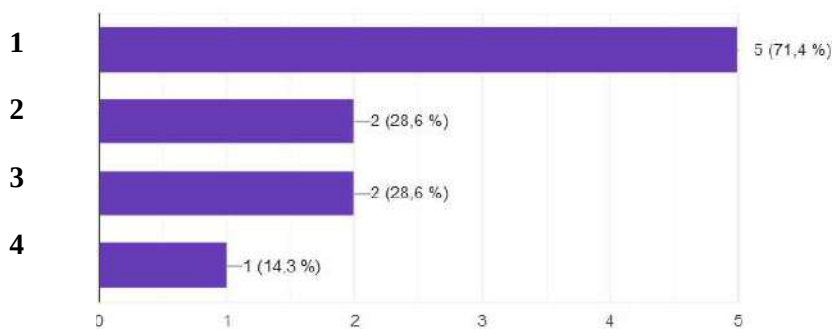
2. f. To what extent are these conditions respected? (9 answers)



2. f. Comments

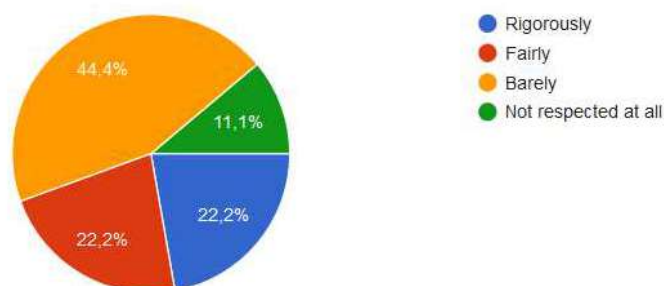
- We don't have regulations on dolphins
- here 5 noeuds into the caution zone (300 m) (not respected by everybody)
- No recommendations on speed

2. g. Do they include the following conditions? (Time spent with the marine mammal) (7 answers)



1. No staying with whales above 30 minutes
2. No staying with dolphins above 20 minutes
3. No boat should approach the sae whale for a period of 60minutes
4. Do not stay with whales for more than 3 dive sequences

2. g. To what extent are these conditions respected? (9 answers)



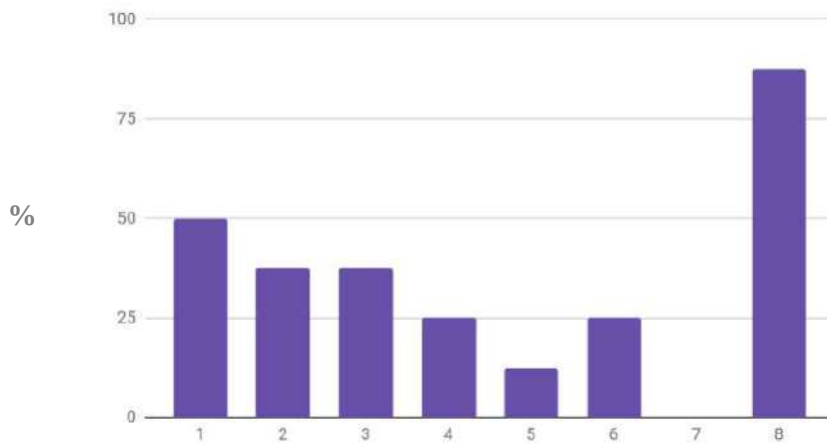
2. g. Comments

-We don't have time regulations

-Risks of absurd countdowns on observation time. Each encounter is different and must be adapted to the animals' behaviour. Here 20 minutes of observation with dolphins and whale is the maximum

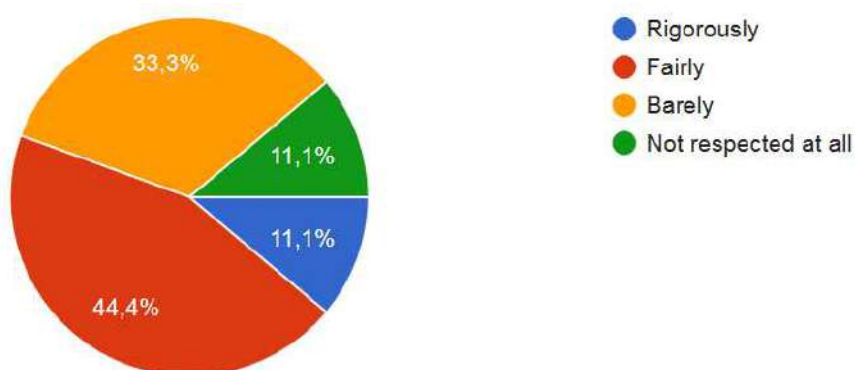
-No recommended limit on time

2. h. Do they include the following conditions? (Specific conditions for groups with calves) (8 answers)



1. Limit observation time
2. No approaching of a calf on the surface
3. No approaching closer than 80m to whales with calves
4. No approaching closer than 100m to any pod with calves or mother/calf pairs
5. No approaching closer than 150m to whales with calves
6. No approaching closer than 200m to whales with calves
7. No approaching of a pod with calves or mother/calf pairs
8. No placing between a mother and a calf

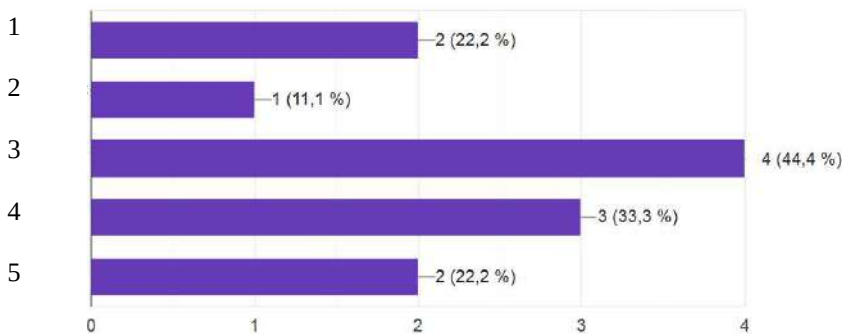
2. h. To what extent are these conditions respected? (9 answers)



2. h. Comments

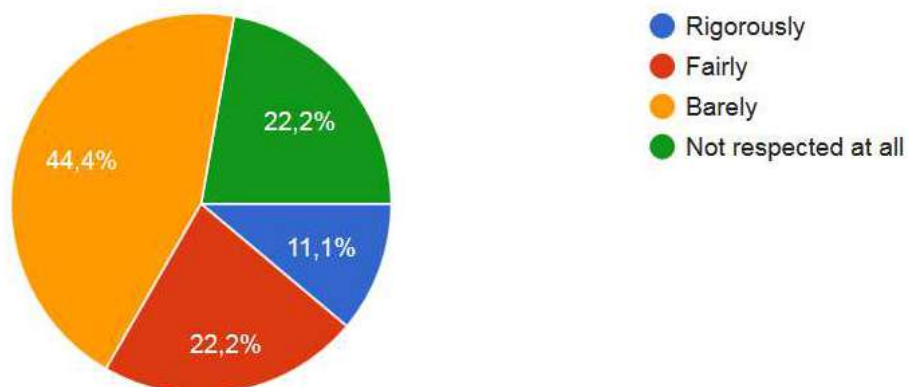
- See charter and decrees 2017 & 2018, not respected. Point 6 : no approaching under 300m during feeding time. Regarding the respect give, to these, not enough perspective to provide a comprehensive response.
- None of the points under 2 h are included in our guidelines.
- Only recommendation relating to calves is to avoid separating them from mothers

2. i. Do they include the following conditions? (Number of boats) (9 answers)



1. Limited to one boat within the caution zone/or one boat on each whale or group of whales
2. No more than one large boat (>9m) and 2 small boats (<9m) on a whale or group of whales at the same time
3. No more than 2 boats on a whale or group of whales at the same time
4. No more than 3 boats within the whale watch area
5. No entering of the caution zone if already 2 boats present within 200m of a whale or group of whales

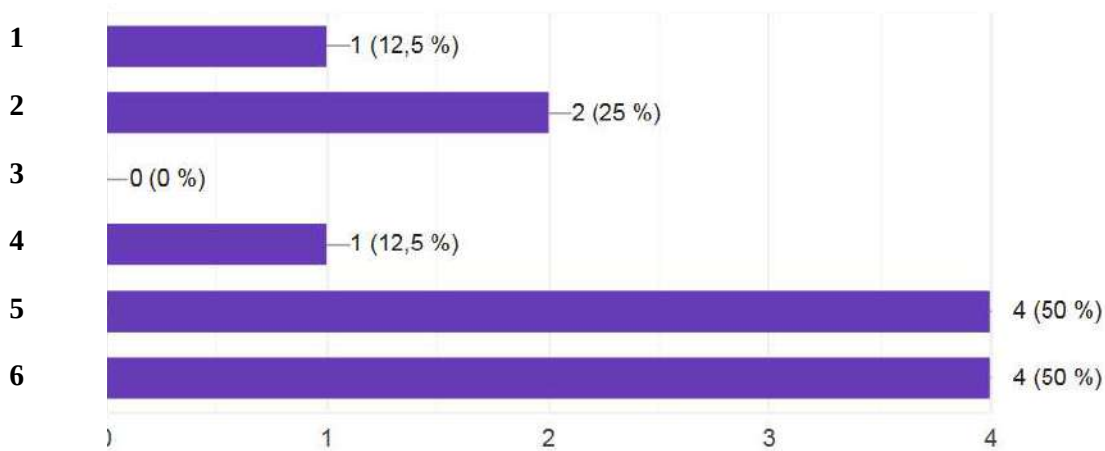
2. i. To what extent are these conditions respected? (9 answers)



2. i. Comments

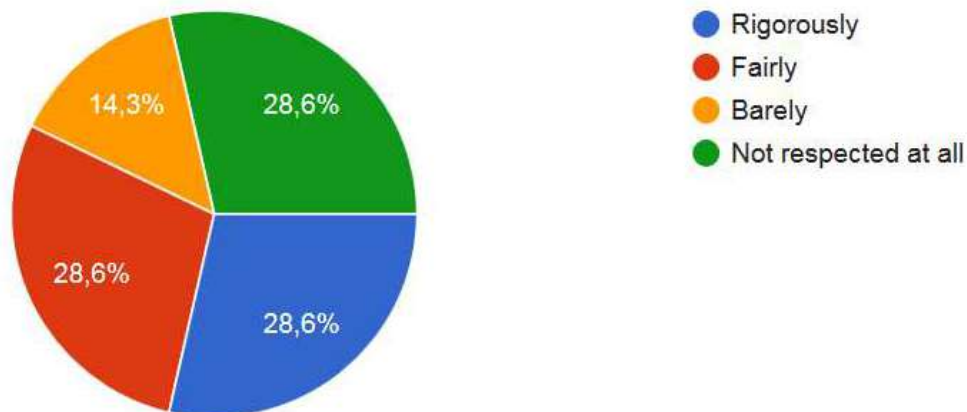
- We don't have a maximum boat regulation
- We do not have any guidelines on how many boats can be within the caution zone or watching a group of whales
- No limits on number of boats. Encourages captains to communicate over radio if additional boats is possible.

2. j. Do they include the following conditions? (Aerial observation - Helicopter and drones) (8 answers)



1. Maintaining a distance of over 150m
2. Maintaining a distance of over 300m
3. Maintaining a distance of over 500m
4. Maintaining a distance of over 1000m
5. No helicopter or aircraft
6. Qualified scientists, experts and researchers are allowed to carry aerial observation using a drone marine mammals closer for justified scientific purposes

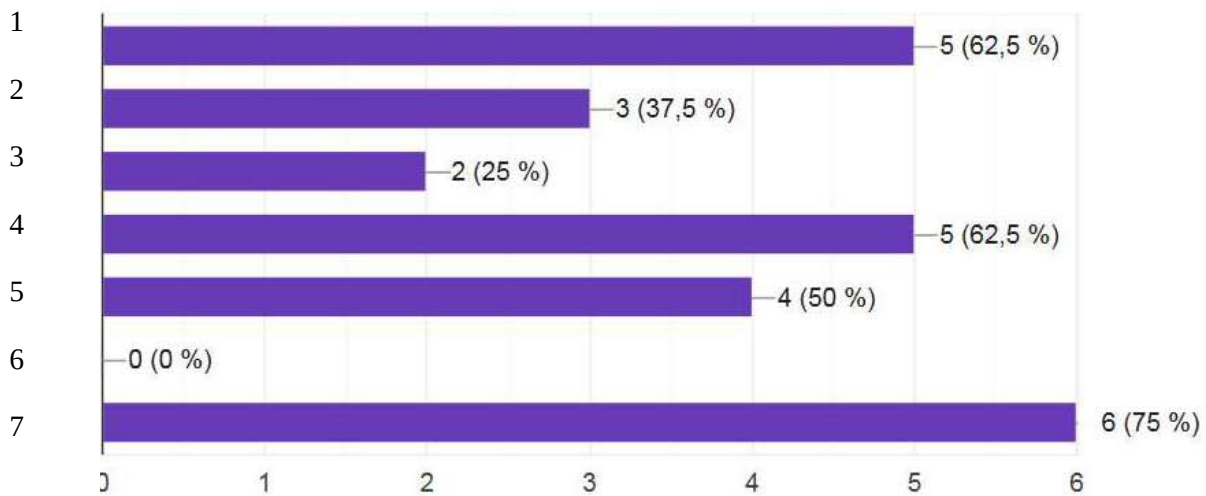
2.j. To what extent are these conditions respected? (7 answers)



2. j. Comments

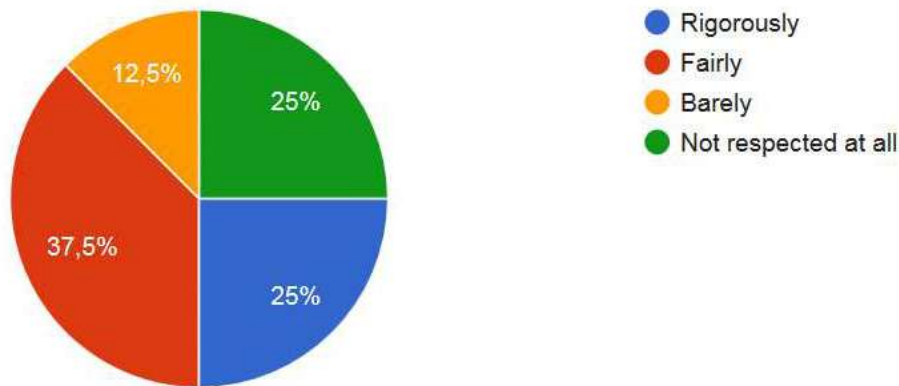
- No regulations for helicopters and drones
- As of now, there are not many cases of aerial observation using drones.
- We have no guidelines for helicopter or drone operation near marine mammals
- Nothing relating to aerial observation

2. k. Do they include the following conditions? (Swim-with encounters) (8 answers)



1. No swimming with marine mammals
2. No diving/scuba
3. Snorkeling with whales allowed
4. No touching or riding dolphins
5. No chasing/rapid swimming towards dolphins
6. Low ratio of people-to-dolphins in water
7. No music or sounds around marine mammals
8. NA

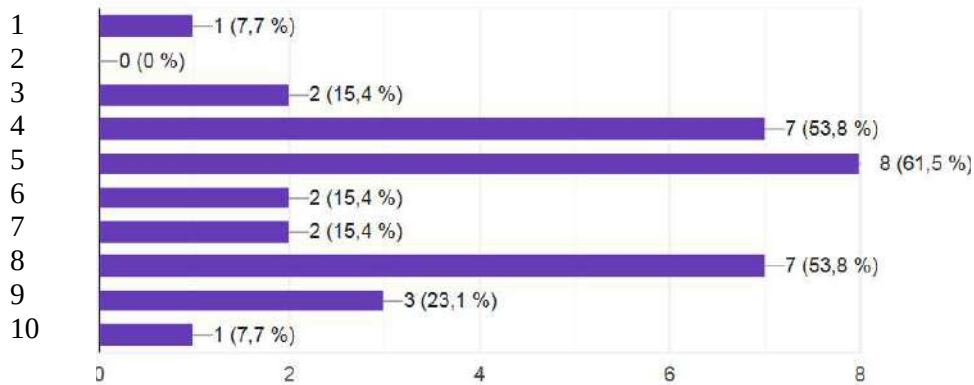
2. k. To what extent are these conditions respected? (8 answers)



2. k. Comments

- Some whale Watchers untrained have put people in water with dolphins
- Our guidelines advise not to swim with any marine mammals
- En la Bahía de Samaná esta prohibido el nado, snorkeling y el buceo con las ballenas, sin embargo, en el Banco de La Plata están permitidas estas actividades, ya que es otro tipo de manejo en zonas muy distantes del país.
- Nothing restricting in-water experiences

2. I. What are the type of vessels engines used by whale watchers? (13 answers)



1. No jet-ski/para-sails
2. No windsurfing, canoes and kayaks
3. Rapid response steering and engines with minimal noise/vibration
4. 4-strokes engines with propeller guards
5. Power
6. Sail
7. Monohull
8. Catamaran
9. Inflatable/Raft
10. Other :

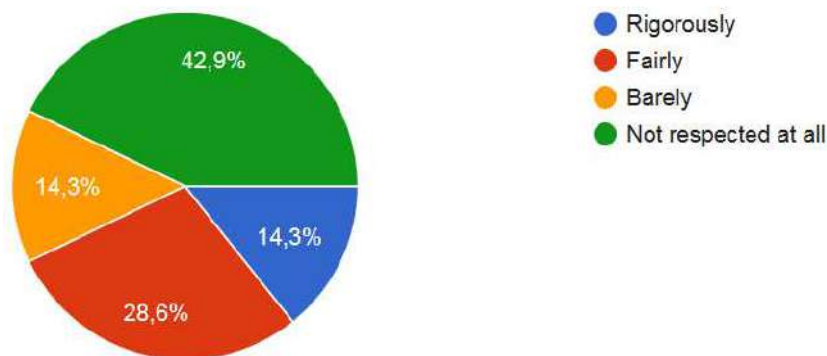
2. I. Comment:

-Whale watching is opportunistic

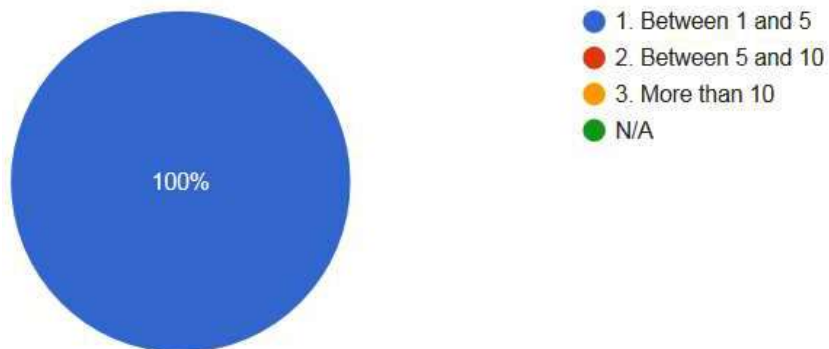
In the latest Agoa Charter, the possibility of using jetskis has been integrated. It should be removed and replaced with larger boats to host a greater number of passengers instead of NUC boats (12 - 13 people) because they consume more fuel, imply a larger number of boats and increase the impacts on cetaceans and their marine environment

-No restriction

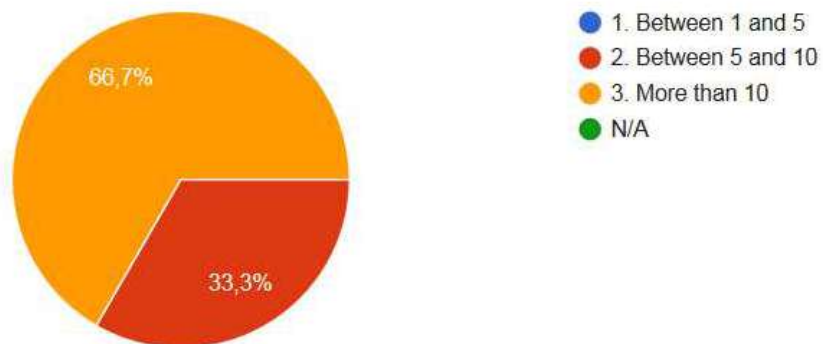
2. I. To what extent are these conditions respected? (7 answers)



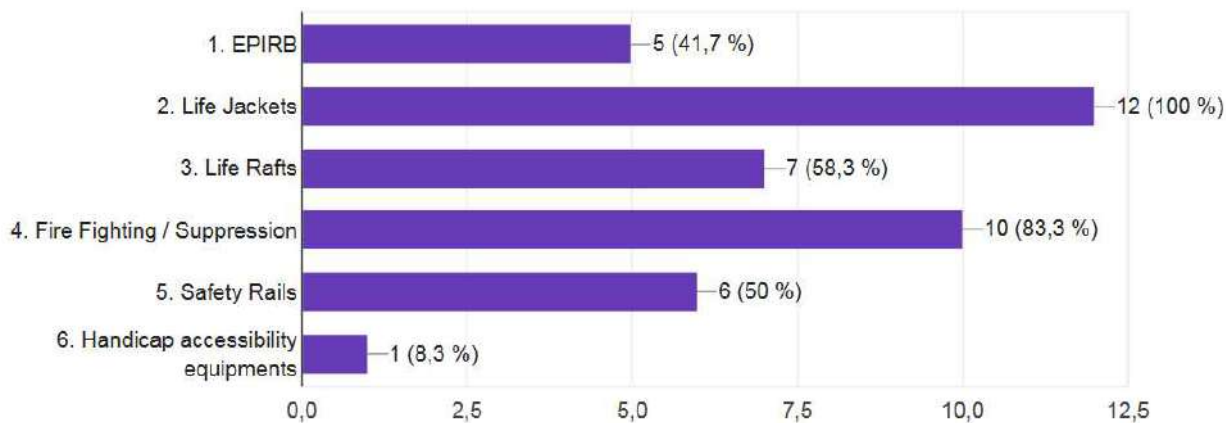
3. a. Number of crew members on board(12 answers)



3. b. Number of passengers on board (11 answers)



3. c. What kind of equipments need to be available on board? (12 answers)

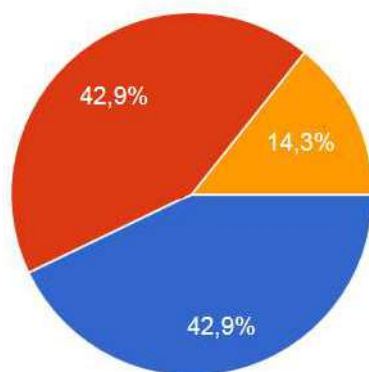


3. d. Number of trips per day allowed (9 answers)



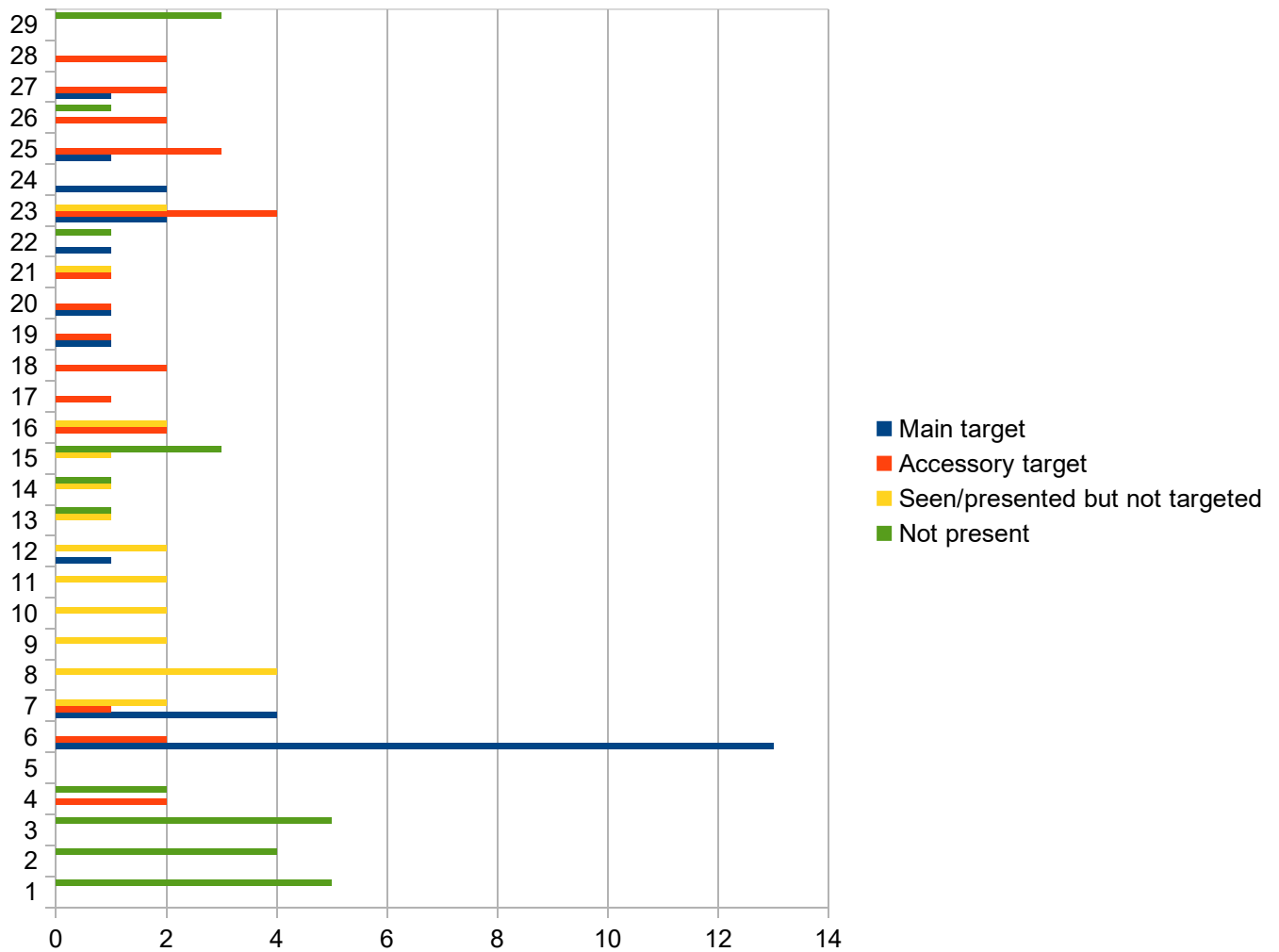
- 1. Between 1 and 3
- 2. Between 3 and 5
- 3. More than 5
- N/A

3. f. What is the authorized duration of encounters? (7 answers)



- 1. Less than 2 hours
- 2. Between 2 and 4 hours
- 3. More than 4 hours

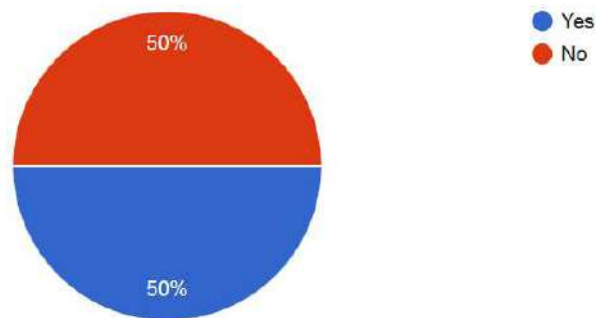
4. Species under observation



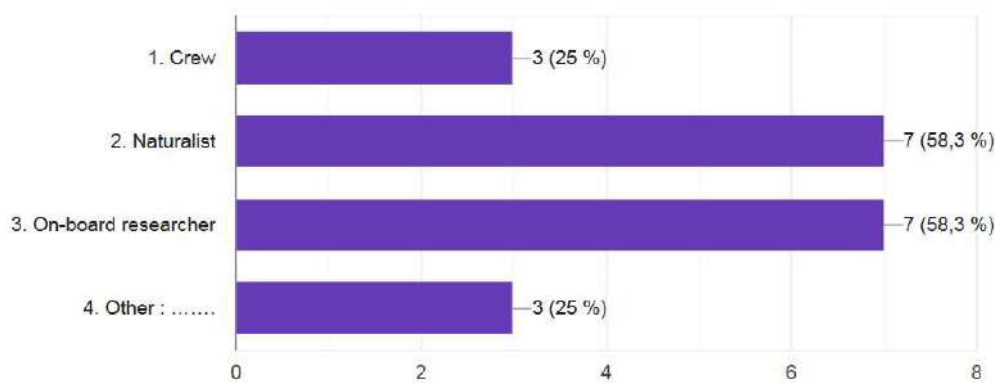
1. Blue whale
2. Fin whale
3. Sei whale
4. Minke whale
5. Bryde's whale
6. Humpback whale
7. Sperm whale
8. Pygmy Sperm whale
9. Dwarf Sperm whale
10. Cuvier's Beaked whale
11. Blainville's Beaked whale
12. Gervais' Beaked whale
13. Sowerby's Beaked whale
14. Trues Beaked whale
15. Manatees
16. Orca
17. Melon-headed whale
18. Pygmy killer whale
19. False killer whale
20. Short-finned pilot whale
21. Short-beaked common dolphin
22. Long-beaked common dolphin

23. Common bottlenose dolphin
24. Pantropical spotted dolphin
25. Atlantic spotted dolphin
26. Striped dolphin
27. Spinner dolphin
28. Clymene dolphin
29. Tucuxi

5.a. Data - Does the whale watching operator collect sightings data ? (14 answers)



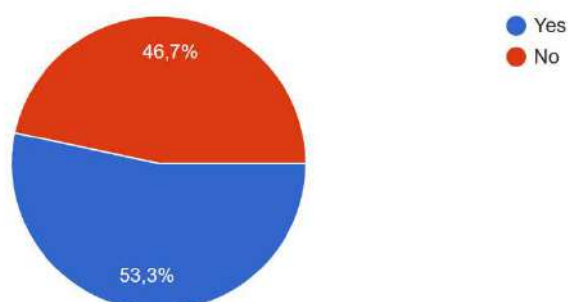
5.b. Data - Who collects data ? (12 answers)



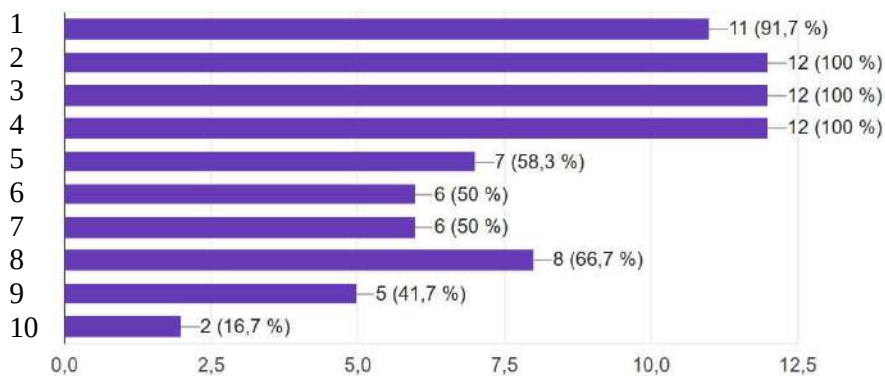
5.b. If "other", please explain:

- general call to submit sighting reports as a citizen science project in Martinique some whale Watchers collect data not all
- NGO
- Visiting researchers
- If he feels involved in the process of Mammal protection

5.e. Data - Do you have established protocols/data forms? (15 answers)



5.d. Data - What type of data? (12 answers)



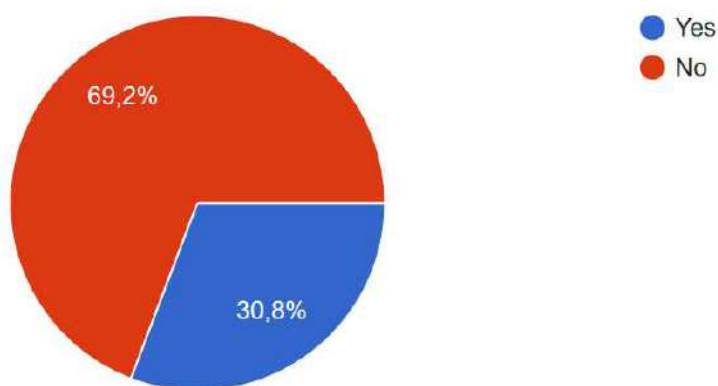
1. Date
2. Time
3. Location
4. Species
5. Pod Composition
6. Age/Class
7. Heading
8. Behaviours
9. Sound
10. Other :

5.d. If "other", please explain:

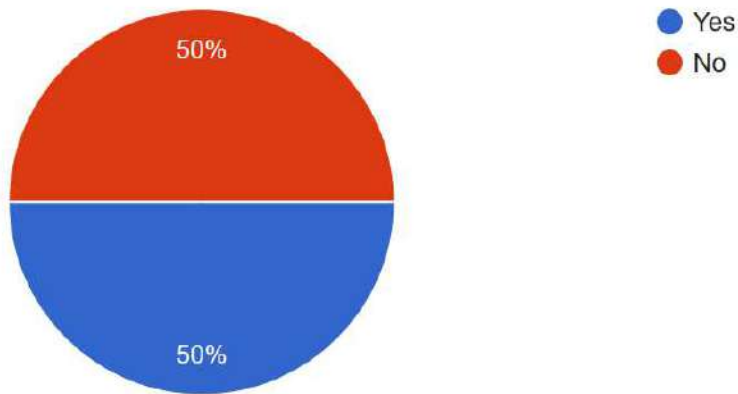
-pictures ; depends on sea conditions

-All the operators do not collect data, some are unable to collect relevant data. Some « essentials » are required first : passenger security, good evaluation of behaviours prior to approaching, relevant information to disseminate to the audience, adjusted commercialization of the activity in relation to the observation of protected species

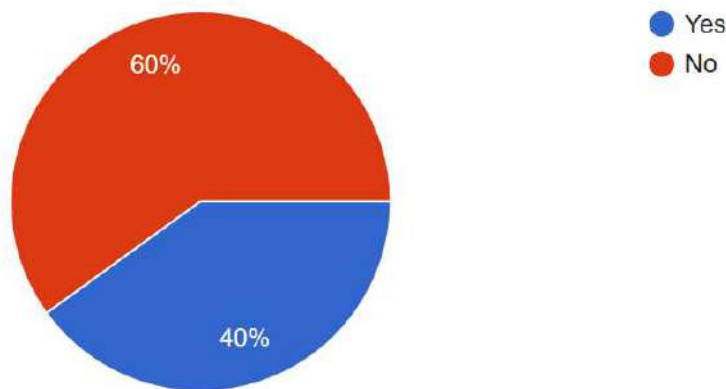
5.e. Data - Is the data made available and publicly shared? (13 answers)



6.a Education and awareness raising - Are there on-board education and awareness programs? (14 answers)



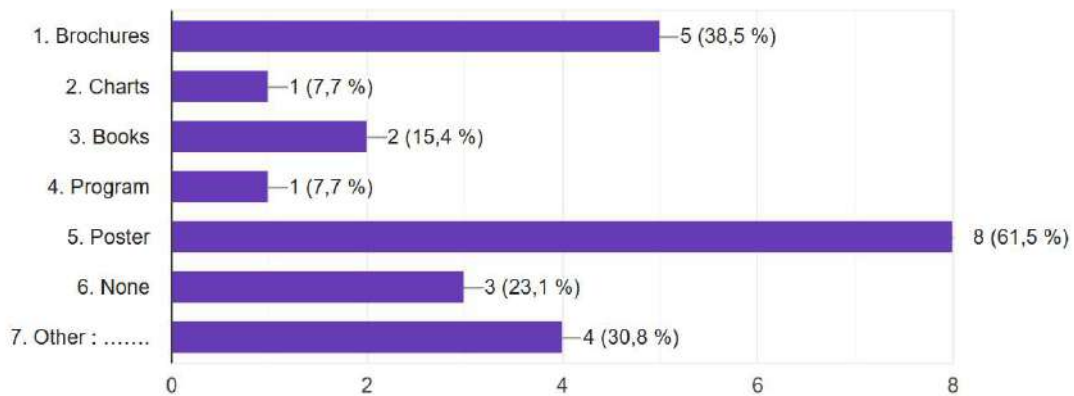
6.b. Education and Awareness - Are there designated educators/guides ? (15 answers)



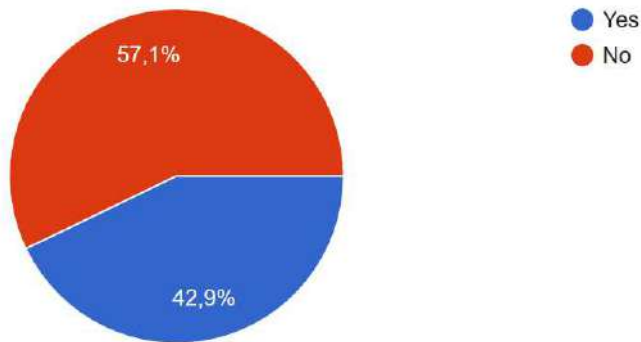
6. b. If yes, please describe their qualifications

- Marine Park Ranger/Manager
- Ranger from the marine park only with one whale watcher in Martinique, done by Aquasearch team

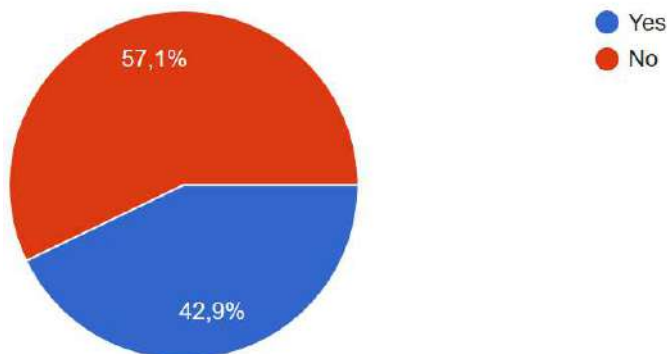
6.c. Education and Awareness - Is some educational material available ? (13 answers)



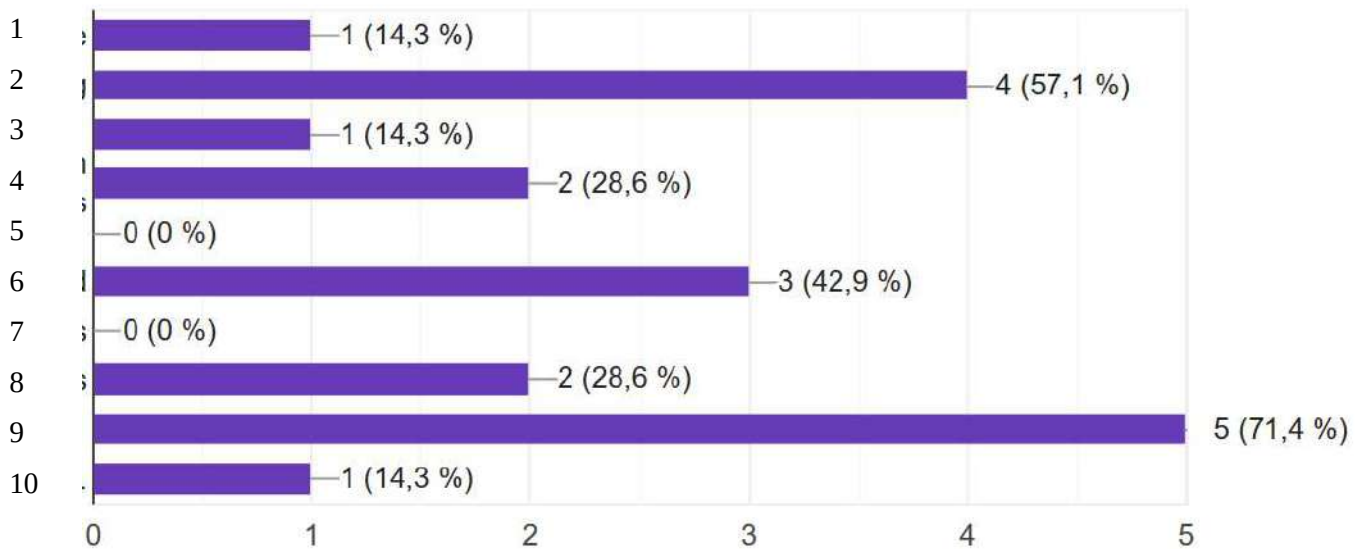
6.d. Education and Awareness - Are there any information for passengers who wish to learn about or subscribe to campaigns or programs to protect the species ? (14 answers)



6.e. Education and Awareness - Is there a "green policy" aiming at reducing environmental impact ? (14 answers)

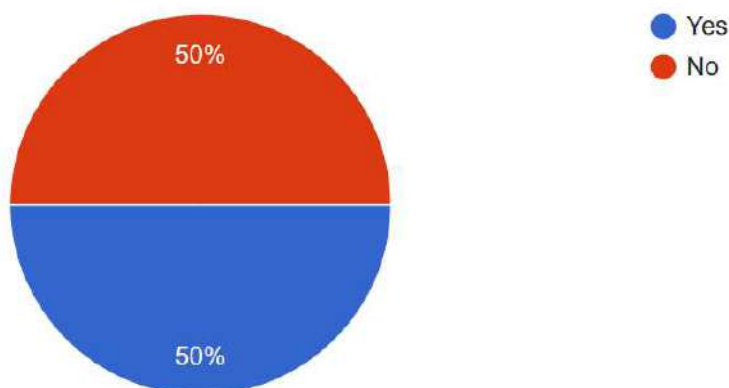


6.f. Education and Awareness - What kind of green practices ? (7 answers)



1. Biodiesel use
2. Recycling
3. Use of recycled goods in education and promo materials
4. Energy wise appliances in operations
5. Use of pump out facilities
6. No smoking on board
7. Prop guards
8. Low emission engines
9. Use of sustainable goods for refreshments and snacks (i.e. no plastic cutlery)
10. Other :

6 g. Education and Awareness - Do the marine mammal Watching companies host or support in-kind on board research activities ? (12 answers)



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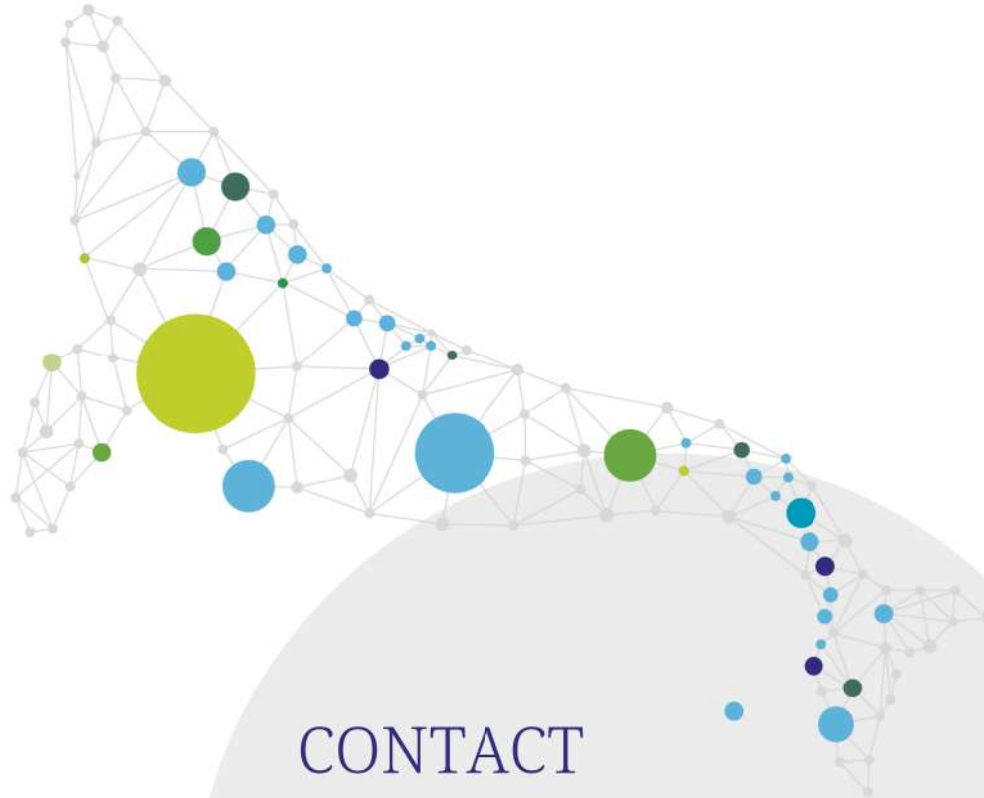
Caraïbes

Fonds européen de développement régional



UNION EUROPÉENNE

CARI'MAM



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Réserve Naturelle
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