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Status of common bottlenose dolphins (*Tursiops truncatus*) in northern Dalmatia, Croatia

### **Annual report for 2015**

During the pre-season period (January – May), I finished the analysis of the photo-ID data collected during 2014. From this, the reference dorsal fin catalogue was updated and now counts more than 220 individually identifiable bottlenose dolphins. This catalogue was compiled using Adobe Lightroom software for easy sharing and was cross referenced with catalogues from two other study sites. The field work started in June 2015. Since then the research team made 40 surveys in search for dolphins, spent 161.2 hours at sea and covered a total distance of 3366 km, of which 107.5 hours and 2932 km were done “on effort”. A total of 73 sightings were recorded, with the average group size (based on field estimates) of 4.6 individuals, ranging from 1 to 15. Of these, 19 sightings were recorded at aquaculture sites. The next steps involve: 1) continue the field work till 30<sup>th</sup> September; 2) detailed photo-ID and navigation data analysis; 3) writing reports for public institution National park Kornati and State Institute for Nature Protection; 4) writing research articles. Part of this study will also be poster presented at the Croatian Biological Congress in September 2015.

The granted funds were used for the boat fuel and thus helped achieve goals of my study in 2015. I am therefore grateful to the Society for Marine Mammalogy for supporting the effort to study and conserve bottlenose dolphins in the Adriatic Sea.