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2014 Grants-in-Aid of Research Final Report

**Systematic and paleobiology of *Notocetus vanbenedeni* (Early Miocene, Patagonia)
and the evolution of Platanistoidea**

With the SMM Grant received, I was able to go out on the field and look for more fossil dolphins, with the help of other members of my lab. At the southern gully of the lower valley of the Chubut River, we found an odontocete skull and two mysticeti skulls. The former has already been extracted and is under preparation for further studying. The fossil appears to be *Prosqualodon australis*, and it will help in anatomical and taxonomic studies of Miocene platanistoids. We also prospected coastal outcrops, since some locals have tipped us about odontocete remains they have seen there. These remains are currently being processed but high tide blocks access, so I am looking for more funds and a proper way of reaching to the site. With this grant I was also able to buy field supplies for extraction and preparation of the specimens. On the one hand, this grant allowed me to gain more field experience and geological knowledge of the localities, which are very important for my PhD project. On the other hand, recovering new specimens will increase the current knowledge of Patagonian odontocete species and their description. As more information is available on this species, it will be very useful for my phylogenetic analysis for my thesis. In the longer term, the new finds should help to understand the early evolution of modern cetacean lineages. Overall, this field work has been very positive both personally and professionally and I hope it can continue in the future.