World Cetacean Alliance
Unit D, 132-134 Albion Street,
Southwick, Brighton, East Sussex
BN42 4DP, United Kingdom

25 October 2022,

Dear Whale Heritage Site board,

I greatly hope you will name Golfo Dulce a Whale Heritage Site. As a biologist, I've been studying charismatic marine fauna in Golfo Dulce since 2010 and I coauthored the recent candidacy report to designate it an Important Marine Mammal Area (IMMA), so I recognize the ecological value of its cetaceans. And as an author and science communicator who strives to inform and inspire protection for the ocean realm, I appreciate the exciting opportunities a WHS label would provide!

Costa Rica is recognized for its relatively strong preservation policies, but community engagement is crucial to conservation on the local level. The human-wildlife intersection is closely felt on the Osa. I have conducted over a hundred longitudinal interviews with marine workers in Golfo Dulce, and in asking specific questions about whales and dolphins, I found overarching interest in and appreciation for their presence.

Considered a rare 'tropical fjord', Golfo Dulce influences the ecology of the Eastern Tropical Pacific, and several cetacean species utilize the inlet, including bottlenose dolphins (*Tursiops truncatus*), pantropical spotted dolphins (*Stenella attenuata*), and false killer whales (*Pseudorca crassidens*). Humpback whales (*Megaptera novaeangliae*) arrive from both the North Pacific Ocean and Southern Ocean during their respective wintering seasons. Humpback neonates and nursing behavior have been documented, and birthing events have been reported, indicating Golfo Dulce serves as an important nursery. Intriguingly, the unusual geographical overlap of northern and southern humpbacks in this area allows potential trans-equatorial genetic exchange between late and early running individuals.

I am personally committed to serving the goals of a Golfo Dulce Whale Heritage Site, including offering talks and library readings, and of course sharing scientific resources for educational outreach. I believe, working together, we can celebrate cetaceans in ways that strengthen communities, empowering them to continue embracing the wonders of the natural world. Please let me know if there are any questions that I could assist in answering.

Sincerely,

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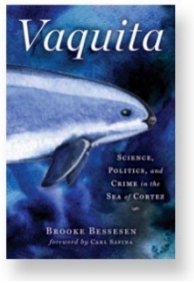

PRAISE FOR *VAQUITA*
★ —Booklist
A lucid, informed, and gripping account...a must-read. —Science
Passionate...a heartfelt and alarming tale. —Publishers Weekly
Intrepid conservation detective story. —Nature
Compelling. —Library Journal
Wonderful, heartbreaking… beautifully written. —Nature Conservancy
A well-told and moving tale of environmentalism and conservation. —Kirkus