24th February 2023

Dear Whale Heritage Site board,

My name is Vane, and I am the director of intergovernmental policy for WDC, Whale and Dolphin Conservation. WDC is the leading global charity dedicated to the conservation and protection of whales and dolphins. Our vision is a world where every whale and dolphin is safe and free.

WDC hope that you will name Golfo Dulce a Whale Heritage Site. We care deeply about whales and dolphins, and we share this passion with our supporters in working towards healthier and safer oceans for whales & dolphins around the world. Our work is backed by robust research, science, and philosophy. WDC does not work alone and our supporters are at the heart of what we do. We also work with other NGOs, communities, and governments to achieve real protection for whales and dolphins.

Golfo Dulce is designated as an Important Marine Mammal Area (IMMA), that provides several critical habitats for cetaceans such as the common bottlenose dolphin and humpback whale. WDC is committed to help create an ocean-governance framework that ensures that marine wildlife can flourish in an ocean with the required levels of protection for individuals, populations, species, and habitats. For this and many other reasons, WDC strongly support that Golfo Dulce is to be named as a Whale Heritage Site.

Whales act as 'ecosystem engineers'. As they dive deep to feed, and then come to the surface to breathe and poo, they circulate huge amounts of nutrients, particularly iron and nitrogen. Whale poo is a brilliant fertilizer for microscopic plants called phytoplankton, which, as the basis for the entire marine ecosystem, remove millions of tonnes of carbon from the atmosphere and produce massive amounts of oxygen. This is known as the whale pump.

We need to protect whales and therefore we must protect the ocean. Costa Rica is recognized for its relatively strong preservation policies, but community engagement is crucial to conservation on a local level.

WDC are committed to serving the goals of a Golfo Dulce Whale Heritage Site, including offering talks and of course sharing scientific resources for educational outreach. Together, we can further promote this area to decrease threats to cetaceans, strengthen communities and celebrate this incredibly special place and the importance of whales.

Sincerely,

Vanesa Tossenberger
Director of Intergovernmental Policy

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