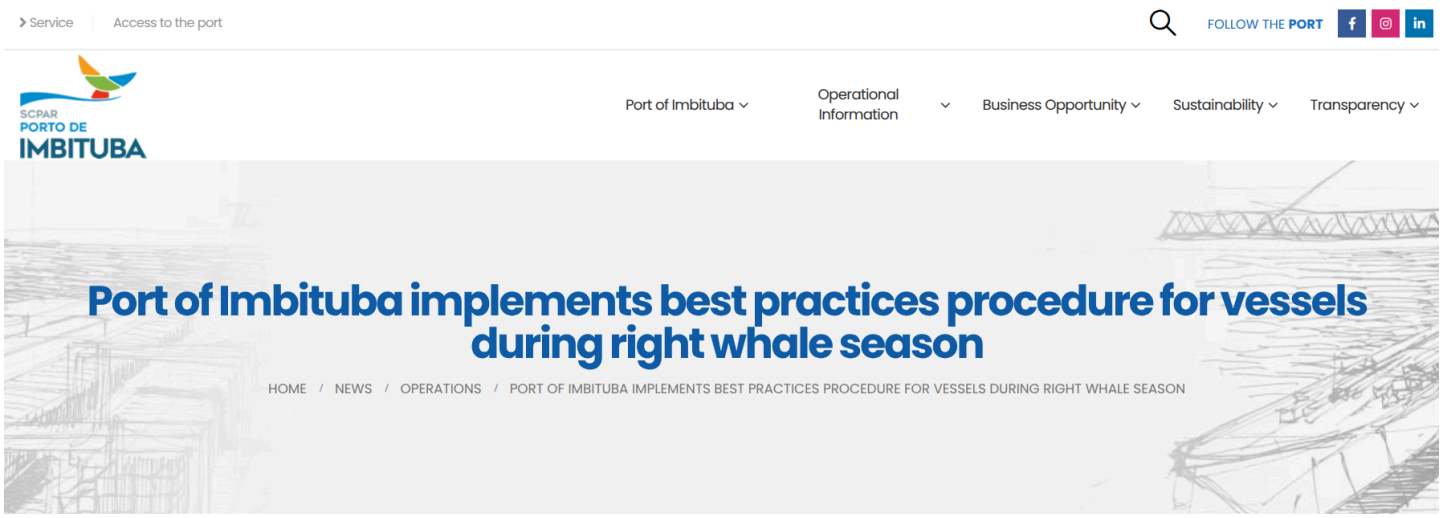
Porto de Imbituba implanta procedimento de boas práticas para embarcações durante temporada da baleia franca

Port of Imbituba implements best practices procedure for vessels during right whale season



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With the aim of intensifying the protection and preservation of right whales, the Environmental Sector of SCPar Porto de Imbituba is implementing PO.SSMA.01, a new internal procedure of good practices for vessels operating in the port during the reproductive season, which occurs annually from July to November, a period in which the species uses the Santa Catarina coast to mate, breed and nurse their young, making the State of Santa Catarina the main reproductive concentration area for right whales on the Brazilian coast.

Working in conjunction with the Port Authority's Southern Right Whale Research and Monitoring Program, the procedure is advisory in nature and reinforces navigation guidelines, aiming to protect the species from unintentional harm and minimize the risk of a potential collision with vessels. The initiative's target audience is port workers directly involved in berthing and unberthing maneuvers, such as pilots, tugboats, captains, and maritime agents, as well as shipowners.

Responsible for implementing the procedure, SCPar Porto de Imbituba Oceanographer Camila Kuminek de Amorim explains that the PO.SSMA.01 operational methodology consists of establishing communication between the Right Whale monitoring team, tugboats, pilots, and the Port Authority; enforcing compliance with the speed limits regulated by the Santa Catarina Port Authority in document NPCP-SC/2016; and promoting awareness-raising initiatives. "When whales are observed within the vessel's navigation route, the monitoring team will report the situation to SCPar Porto's Environmental Department, which will request the tugboats and pilots to reduce their vessels' speed, allowing the whales to leave the maneuvering area, while the vessel approaches at a slow speed," explains Camila.

Port workers directly involved with vessels are also raised through information meetings about right whale behavior, the importance of their conservation, and what to do in the event of a collision. These meetings also distribute educational brochures in Portuguese and English, summarizing the presentation.

To date, in addition to meetings with maritime agents, pilots, and tugboats, the team has visited 18 vessels to present PO.SSMA.01 to captains and their crews. Camila emphasizes that the procedure has been well received by captains, who have committed to increasing their vigilance during navigation in the port's vicinity. "It's been a very positive experience; in addition to delivering information to the ships, we also returned with information on how other ports around the world address this issue," she concludes.

With vessels that provide services to the Port Authority, there is even an effort to ensure that the guidelines described in IBAMA Ordinance No. 117/1996 (amended by IBAMA Ordinance No. 24/2002) continue to be followed, which regulates the approach of small vessels to avoid intentional and unintentional harassment of cetaceans, passing on instructions to turn off the engine when 100 m from a whale and to turn it back on 50 m from the last sighting.

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