



Whalesafari Andenes: Case study on the synergy between whale watching and cetacean research

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Introduction

Whale watching operations are commonly used as opportunistic platforms for cetacean research, providing the following advantages: (1) extensive data collection, (2) access to remote populations, (3) reduced research cost and (4) economic support. Engaging these two activities is considered "a good business decision" [1]. Cetacean research can increase the knowledge on the targeted species and contribute to reduce the impact of the commercial activity [2] through innovation.

Often, research doesn't provide meaningful knowledge to improve the sector. Despite this collaboration is extended worldwide, **few cases have assessed the synergy of both activities from the industry's economic point of view and evaluate the service provided by the research activity.**

Here we present the case of **Whalesafari Andenes and MAREFA** (NGO) that use a land-based survey station since 2011, to locate cetaceans before the commercial trips depart. The first **paramount outcome of this innovation has been the discovery of new areas of sperm whale distribution**, the main target of the local whale watching industry, that were encountered during the last 20 years in the Bleik Canyon. **In this study the impact on the company's economic and environmental sustainability is evaluated.**

Study area, Materials and Methods

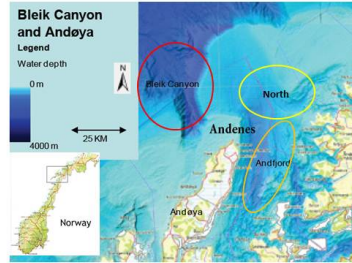


Figure 1: map of the study area and the three whale watching grounds: Bleik Canyon (traditional), Andfjord and North (new).

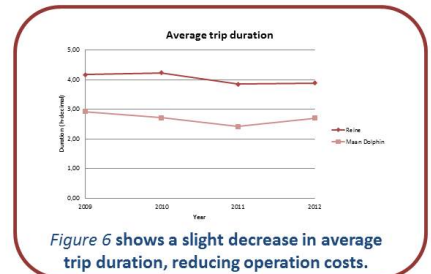
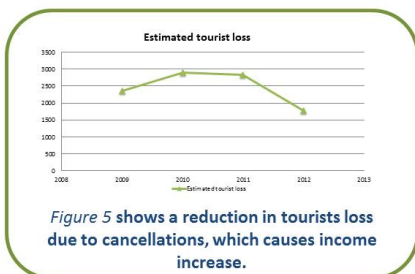
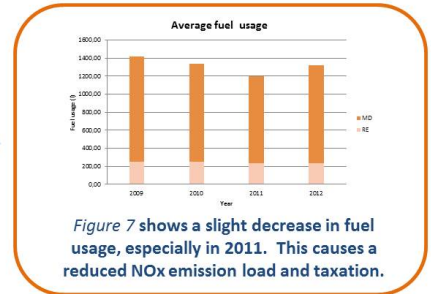
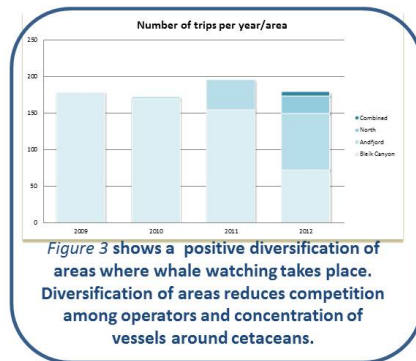
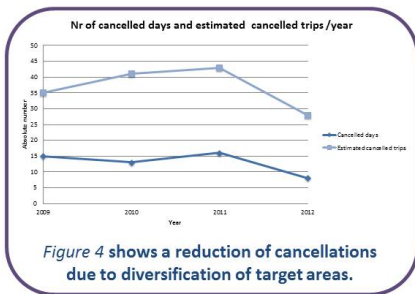


Figure 2: Land-based research station at Andenes' lighthouse.

Materials and methods

- ✓ Number of trips conducted per area has been analyzed for the period 2009 -2012, considering the ones discovered in 2011 (Andfjord and North).
- ✓ An estimation of cancelled trips according to days without trips and estimated affluence loss due to bad sea state was made.
- ✓ Lastly, average trip duration and fuel expenditure was estimated per year and vessel (Reine and Maan Dolphin).

Results



Conclusions

- ✓ Cetacean research can increase the sustainability of a whale watching company by increasing income, and reducing costs and emissions.
- ✓ Land-based cetacean research can be an innovative tool to improve the whale watching industry locally, for example, establishing a network of look-out points.
- ✓ Whale watching and cetacean research can be synergic activities.

Acknowledgements

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References:

[1] Hoyt, E. 2007. *A Blueprint for Dolphin and Whale Watching Development*. Washington: Human Society International.
 [2] Hoyt, E. 2005. Sustainable ecotourism on Atlantic islands, with special reference to whale watching, marine protected areas and sanctuaries for cetaceans. *Biology and Environment: Proceedings of the Royal Irish Academy*, Vol. 105B, no. 3, pp. 141-154.