

## THE ACOUSTIC INFLUENCE OF THE INCREASING FAST FERRY ACTIVITY ON CETACEAN POPULATIONS IN THE STRAIT OF GIBRALTAR

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The fast ferries activities in the Strait of Gibraltar have been going on for more than 75 years. However, an increase of this activity in the Strait has happened in the last five years. Numbers of boats, companies and trips per day per boat have increased dramatically (from a total of 13 boats in 2000 to 20 boats in 2005, increasing the number of fast ferries alone from 5 to 9). These fast ferry activity tendencies have a potential acoustic impact for cetaceans. To analyze the potential acoustic impact the fast ferries routes in the Strait and its overlapping with distribution of different cetacean species was identified. Secondly the fast ferries frequency spectrums were compared to the relevant cetacean species. The study shows that there is an overlapping between the distribution of cetacean species and fast ferry routes. Since 2000 the increase of fast ferry activity has resulted in a higher number of direct collisions between fast ferries and cetaceans. Further more there is an overlap between the fast ferries frequencies and cetacean emission and reception.