



Sustainable fisheries in the Upper Gulf of  
California : Suripera

**MUSEO** DE  
LA **BALLENA**  
Y CIENCIAS DEL MAR

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## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

### Background

For the past 20 years, Mexico's Government together with National and International NGO's, have made an effort to save the emblematic Vaquita Marina and other marine mammals in the **Upper Gulf of California (UGC)**. Amongst this actions, the use of alternative fishing gear has been of special interest. Nevertheless, an intricate maze of social and political conditions have made the implementation of this gear, inefficient.

Nowadays, the social, political and economical situation of the region is gaining complexity. **Vaquita Marina populations are at their highest risk**; the **social mesh is damaged** by illegal activities; fisheries are starting to collapse and the local fish **product is banned from import into the US** (including the industrial fleet). Therefore, it is crucial for the fishermen communities to start a process of **transition towards the use of alternative fishing gear**. This, along with the necessary policies to recover fisheries comparability, are essential steps for protecting the biodiversity of the region and give some hope to vaquitas.

With the aim of **contributing to solve this socio-environmental crisis**, the team of Museo de la Ballena, together with local fishermen, are building a strategy to use alternative fishing gear, specifically the suripera net, and make it **sustainable for both the ecosystem and the fishermen economy**.

To fully achieve sustainable fishing practices and recover U.S comparability, it is necessary to also implement **monitoring and traceability systems of the product**. This is the reason why, as part of this project, we are also developing a traceability and monitoring system that should be accessible and low cost.

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## Goal:

To test and modify “suriperas” as an alternative fishing gear for blue shrimp capture in the UGC, making them economically attractive to fishermen and friendly with marine mammal conservation, specially the vaquita marina.

## Preliminary results

### I. 2019 season

1. Since September 2019, the team of El Museo de la Ballena with the support of the local communities, had **10 meetings and 2 workshops** with the local fishermen Coops from both Santa Clara and San Felipe. As a result of this participatory processes, some Coops decided to ask for Suripera Testing Official Permits (Permisos de Fomento).
2. In October 2019, the fishing authorities supported the initiative and delivered the needed permits in a special meeting with the fishermen where Museo de la Ballena team was present.
3. From **November 2019 to March 2020**, we executed a total of **36 trials**, 15 in the Gulf of Santa Clara and 11 in San Felipe. With this fishing effort we captured **58 kg of shrimp**.
4. 2019 season was a start up to get to know the fishermen and to consolidate a group of people that were committed and interested in making suriperas shrimp capture efficient and economically viable. Nevertheless a bigger effort was needed and trials should start earlier in the beginning of the shrimp season

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## II. 2020 season

5. Starting in September 2020, two pangas from the Gulf of Santa Clara started trials with two different suripera prototypes.
6. By the second tide in October 2020, two more vessels were added to the project. Only pangas that have modified suriperas and vessels are accepted in the program, because the goal is to actually capture as much shrimp as possible
7. From September **25th to October 14th 2020** we completed a fishing effort of **24 vessel/days** and captured **342 kg of blue shrimp**
8. As part of the project we developed a **traceability mechanism** together with some expert technicians, and we started implementing this mechanism with the vessels making the trials. All of them have a permit, all of them have a tracking device, and all of them are making the proper paperwork to ensure product traceability
9. A total of **260 kg of shrimp** have been properly **processed and packed**, owned by the fishermen and ready to get into the market with added value prices.
10. This is the **first time** the **suripera trials** are made from the **beginning of the season**, this is the first time this **high capture rates** are reported by suripera nets and this is also the first time this **shrimp is processed and each lot is a traceable** unit.

## Further steps and needs

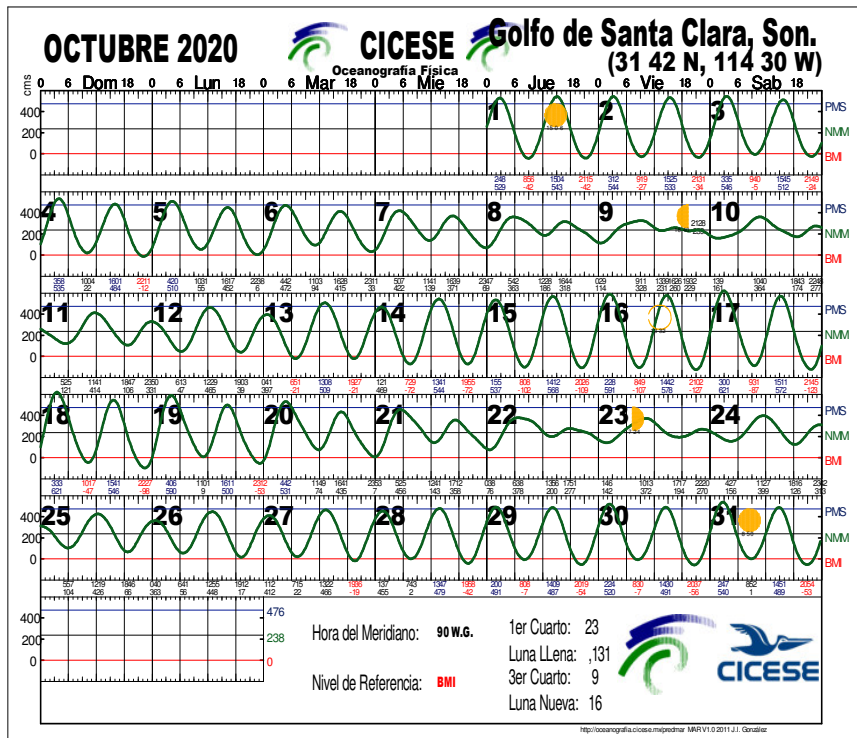
Due to the **success of this initial trials**, many fishermen became interested in developing skills and learn how to use suriperas. Therefore, Museo de la

Ballena with the help of Pronatura Noroeste, is helping fishermen to prepare their vessels and modify their suriperas so that they can go out fishing as soon as possible. **At least 4 more pangas are ready** in the Gulf of Santa Clara and 5 more are getting ready in the community of San Felipe Baja California. We have local personnel and fishermen that are willing to train new crews on the use of suripera. Most of the **newly interested people are young fishermen** from both communities.

Most of the resources to develop this effort come from a private investor, but due to COVID-19 pandemic, we have lost important part of the budget. Due to the success trials are having, Inapesca and CONANP, amongst other organisations are looking forward to support this initiative, but times taken to consolidate this financial support are not timed with the **urgent need**. We are in a **braking point**, making possible what seemed to be impossible, but **if we fail to finance the next tide trials fishermen will start fishing with gill nets** (even thou they are banned) and the results of this effort will dilute. Therefore, we are asking for **urgent support to finance** the trials for the next couple of tides to maintain fishermen interest and commitment.

**Budget needed for 5 vessels making trials each tide (approximately 7 days)**

Concept	Individual cost US dlls	Number of vessels	Total per day US dlls	Total per 7 days of tide US dlls
<b>Fishermen payment (3 fishermen per vessel = \$25 dlls each)</b>	\$75.00	5	\$375.00	\$2,625.00
<b>On board observer</b>	\$20.00	5	\$100.00	\$700.00
<b>Gasoline (100lt + oil)</b>	\$120.00	5	\$600.00	\$4,200.00
				\$7,525.00



Tidal calendar for October. **Urgent need to support trials from October 18th to 31st**

If you want to support this effort and help us make a change.

Account info is:

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