

FINAL REPORT:

XIII South American Meetings of Specialist in Aquatic Mammals and 7th SOLAMAC Conference

13th - 17th of October, 2008
Montevideo, Uruguay



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BRIEF HISTORY OF THE SOUTH AMERICAN MEETINGS

The South American Meeting of Specialist in Aquatic Mammals – SOLAMAC (Latino American Society of Aquatic Mammals) Conference is an event in which marine/aquatic mammalogist from Latino American meet to present and discuss their research finding and conclusions. The meeting is held biannually. The first Meeting was held in Buenos Aires, Argentina, in 1984 and since then the meetings have occurred in different countries (see Table 1. Appendix). At the meetings, issues of major concern are discussed in plenary, round tables or other discussion groups. Invited guests from outside Latino America are also invited to give a talk on a particular topic.

IMPORTANCE OF SOUTH AMERICAN MEETINGS AND SOLAMAC CONFERENCE

The Meetings represent an instance where marine mammal specialists meet to updated about the latest techniques. In this context, the latest advances in research about Latin-American aquatic mammal species are presented in the Meetings. The research presented is reviewed and evaluated by a selected scientific committee of specialist in different topics.

The Meetings allows us to reflect on the academic and institutional challenges towards the development of science in Latino America. Furthermore, we discuss about the social and political vision regarding the status of species and its conservation in the long term by sustainable management strategies. In addition, the Meetings are promoters and strengthen the development of aquatic mammal research by the multidisciplinary collaboration between scientist in Latino America.

XIII MEETING - 7th SOLAMAC 2008

At the 1st International Meeting of the SOMEMMA and SOLAMAC held in Merida, Mexico, in 2006, Uruguay was voted to be the host country for the next XIII RT(Reunion de Trabajo/ Work Meeting) and 7th SOLAMAC Conference. The last meeting organized in Uruguay was in 1988 (see Table 1. Appendix).

This year the South American Meeting of Specialist in Aquatic Mammals and 7th SOLAMAC Conference was organized by Cetáceos Uruguay (Research group) and NGO PROFAUMA (protection of marine fauna) and was carried on and hosted by the Montevideo City Council. Both organizations are committed to the conservation and research of marine mammals.

The XIII Meeting and 7th SOLAMAC Conference was sponsored by NGO Yaqu Pacha, IFAW, Sea World, European Association of Aquatic Mammals, Cetacean Society International and the National Agency of Investigation and Innovation (ANII, Agencia Nacional de Investigación e Innovación). We had the academic support of the Faculty of Sciences, University of the Republic. The Ministry of Tourism declared the conference of tourist interest. In addition, we obtained the support of the Ministry of Education and Culture, Ministry of Livestock, Agriculture and Fisheries, Montevideo city Council and the Presidency of the Republic.

The main aim of the XIII Meeting was to share new research findings, interact with colleagues and students, exchange research methodologies, to agree on collaboration investigations. And at the end the final product of the XIII Meeting was qualitative information that ultimately enhanced our understanding of the aquatic environment and how to best cope with conservation and management issues.

Participants

A total of 492 people registered online (61% student, 32% professionals and 7% invited guest) however; around 360 people participated at the XIII Meeting.

Abstract

A total of 368 abstracts were submitted by student and professionals and these were subdivided in their respective research topics and by oral or poster presentation (see Figure 1 and 2, Appendix). Hundred and five (105) talks were given and at least 224 poster were presented the XIII Meeting. The total number of participants and abstract presented overwhelmed our expectations and were significant higher than previous Meetings (see Figures 1, 2 and 3, Appendix).

Official Web page of the XIII Meeting

The official web page of the XIII Meeting received a total of 4689 visits from 21 countries (see Figure 4, Appendix). The web page received a significantly higher number of visit from Brazil, Argentina and Uruguay followed by Colombia, Chile and Mexico.

THE ORGANIZING COMMITTEE BEHIND THE XIII MEETING

The organization of the XIII Meetings was carried out by the Organization Committee conformed by four members (see Table 2, Appendix). The Organization Committee counted with the support of collaborators from CETACEOS URUGUAY and PROFAUMA; and staff (students from the university) that assisted with many task during the Meeting.

[CETACEOS URUGUAY](#) is formed by researchers and its main objective is to establish, develop and promote investigation and conservation of marine mammals in the Uruguayan coast. The group has the academic and institutional support of the Faculty of Sciences (UDELAR).

[NGO PROFAUMA](#) (Protection of Marine Fauna) is a legally constituted and non-profit organization formed by professionals and volunteers and has the objectives to rescue, to rehabilitate and release marine fauna, to inform and to investigate.

ACCOUNTING OF FUNDS

The total expenses of the XIII Meeting were \$ 65,246 USD. For more detail information about the expenses please see Table 3 in Appendix.

ACTIVITIES WITHIN THE FRAMEWORK OF THE XIII MEETING

Plenary

Invited guest speakers gave a talk on a specific topic (see Table 4, Appendix) during the XIII Meeting. The plenary were an excellent opportunity to exchange and discuss ideas with the speakers that are specialized in a topic. This was also a good opportunity for student in search of projects to dialogue with well recognized scientist that will otherwise be difficult to meet. The plenary were well accepted by the audience and the guest speakers were satisfied with their presence at the XIII Meeting.

Workshops & Round Table (see Table 5 in Appendix)

- “Morphology and Taxonomy of *Tursiops truncatus*” Round Table

The objective of the round table was to discuss the diversity, taxonomy and morphology of the genus *Tursiops* in South America, based on recently generated

data. The species widespread distribution, its high level of polymorphisms and lack of taxonomic studies have resulted that the status of its genus had become difficult to determine. Therefore the round table was particularly important and it was the first of its kind in Latino America.



- “Responsible Whale Watching Tourism: ” Workshop

The workshop was proposed by IFAW and co-organized by the Organizing Committee of the XIII Meeting. The objective of the workshop was to update about the situation of Whale watching in Latino America, to promote responsible tourism as an sustainable alternative of non-lethal use of cetaceans and socio-economic alternative for local communities; to promote environmental education research to highlight the importance of protection whales species and the marine ecosystem.



- "Environmental Education and its Role in the Conservation of Aquatic Mammals" Workshop

The workshop was aimed to present environmental education activities related to aquatic mammals, in order to emphasize its importance in conservation and was organized by Cetáceos Uruguay. At the workshop participated aquatic mammal specialist and school children from Rocha where an environmental education program is taken place.



- "VI Workshop for Research and Conservation of Franciscana Dolphin in the South Western Atlantic Ocean"

The franciscana dolphin (*Pontoporia blainvillei*) is endemic to the South Western Atlantic Ocean and is only found in the coast of Brazil, Uruguay and Argentina. The objectives of the workshop were to promote the development of research projects to: a) fill information gaps; b) Identification of new by-catch reduction measures (tested or not); c) Development of a Regional Action Plan for the Species; and d) Unification of work and strategies in a regional level. The main conservation problem of the franciscana dolphin is the incidental bycatch in artisanal fishing nets. One of the main

objectives was to present new information about the species and coordinate the effort to decrease incidental mortality.



Courses

Three intensive courses were held prior and after the XIII Meeting, the course were organized by the Organizing Committee and lectured by specialist (see Table 6, Appendix). A total of 63 students enrolled in the intensive courses.

Acknowledgments

We are very thankful and grateful to our sponsor without their financial support this Meeting would have not been possible. We would like to give a special thanks to Lorenzo Von Fersen for his unconditional support from the beginning of this journey that started in Mexico.

APPENDIX

Table 1. List of Meetings that have been held since 1984.

Meeting	Year	Location	Organizing Institution
I	1984	Buenos Aires, Argentina	Museo Argentino de Ciencias Naturales "Bernardino Rivadavia" - Grupo de Cetáceos, Fundación Vida Silvestre
II	1986	Rio de Janeiro, Brazil	Fundação Brasileira para a Conservação da Natureza
III	1988	Montevideo, Uruguay	Museo Nacional de Historia Natural
IV	1990	Valdivia, Chile	Universidad Austral de Chile, Instituto de Biología Marina, Centro de Investigación y Manejo de Mamíferos Marinos
V	1992	Buenos Aires, Argentina	Museo Argentino de Ciencias Naturales "Bernardino Rivadavia", Fundación Australis
VI	1994	Florianópolis, Brasil	Universidade Federal de Santa Catarina, Centro de Ciências Biológicas, Departamento de Biologia, Laboratório de Mamíferos Aquáticos
VII	1996	Viña del Mar, Chile	Museo Nacional de Historia Natural, Instituto Antártico Chileno, Subsecretaría de Pesca
VIII	1998	Recife, Brazil	Centro Peixe-boi, IBAMA/PE, Fundação Mamíferos Marinhos
IX	2000	Buenos Aires, Argentina	Museo Argentino de Ciencias Naturales "Bernardino Rivadavia", Fundación Campomar
X	2002	Valdivia, Chile	Instituto de Ecología y Evolución, Universidad Austral de Chile
XI	2004	Quito, Ecuador	Pontifica Universidad Católica del Ecuador
XII	2006	Mérida, México	SOMMEMA, Universidad Autonoma de Yucatan and SOLAMAC
XIII	2008	Montevideo, Uruguay	Cetáceos Uruguay and PROFAUMA

Table 2. List of members of the Organizing Committee of the XIII Meeting-7th SOLAMAC Conference.

Names	Academic degree	Affiliation	Research expertise
Valentina Franco-Trecu	MSc candidate	Cetáceos Uruguay, Facultad de Ciencias	Pinnipeds and cetacean behavior ecology
Federico Riet-Sapriza	PhD	Cetáceos Uruguay, Facultad de Ciencias	Marine mammal ecology.
Paula Costa-Urrutia	PhD candidate	Cetáceos Uruguay, Facultad de Ciencias	Cetacean molecular ecology and behavior
Virginia Little	MSc	PROFAUMA	Population genetic structure and marine mammals rehabilitation

Table 3. Accounting of funds of the XIII Meeting-7th SOLAMAC Conference.

Category	Quantity	Days	Item	Unit price	Total U\$S
Software	1	1	Upload	200	200
	468	1	Maintenance	2	936
Web page	1	1	Web hosting: domain	200	200
	4	1	updates	20	80
	1	1	new links	200	200
Audiovisual equipment	1	5	Audio visual Blue Seminar room	550	2,750
	1	4	Audio visual Red Seminar room	400	1,600
	1	2	Audio visual Golden seminar room	400	800
Office supplies	450	1	pencils, paper	1.5	675
	4	1	ink cartridge	10	40
	1	1	office materials	140	140
	1	1	photographer	400	400
Seminar room	1	5	Blue Seminar room	900	4,500
	1	4	Red Seminar room	550	2,200
	1	1	golden seminar room	550	550
Poster	1	1	Poster design	40	40
	500	1	Poster printing	0.83	415
	1	1	Design and printing of giant poster	350	350
Staff	20	1	Staff's t-shirts	15	300
	10	5	Staff's per diem	10	500
Conference bag	1	1	Design of bag	100	100
	500	1	Making of bag	6	3,000
Abstract book	1	1	Design of abstract book	800	800
	500	1	Printing of abstract book	4	2,000
Diplomas	550	1	Printing of Diplomas for Participants and Courses	1	550
Opening Ceremony	1	1	Tribute Gift to Ricardo Praderi	160	160
	1	1	Acknowledgment Gift to artist Ago Paez	100	100
	400	1	Catering	5	2,000
	400	1	Drinks	3	1,200
	10	1	Waitering service	24	240
	1	1	Tango show	200	200
Catering: Coffee Break	150	1	Workshop Environmental Education	1.5	225
	150	1	Workshop Whale Watching	1.5	225
	400	8	Conference (morning and afternoon)	1.5	4,800
	3	8	Waitering service	20	480
XIII Meeting's Banquet	270	1	Dinner	13	3,510
	300	1	Drinks	7	2,100
	1	1	Discotheque	800	800
	1	1	Giant Screen	400	400
	1	1	Ballroom hire	1,500	1,500
	250	1	Authorization: tax pay per person AGADU	2	500

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	13	1	Dinner show	60	780
	1	1	Dr. R. Hoetzel (plenary) United Kingdom	2,260	2,260
	1	1	Dr. D. Costa (plenary) USA	1,550	1,550
	1	1	Dr. D. Auriolos (plenary and course) Mexico	1,560	1,560
Air ticket for special guest	1	1	MSc. P. Costa (Organizing Committee) Mexico	1,550	1,550
	1	1	Dr. M. Lewis (plenary) Argentina	600	600
	1	1	Dr. S. Pedraza (Course) Argentina	350	350
	1	1	J. Klaich (Course) Argentina	200	200
	1	1	Dr. E. Secchi (plenary) Brasil	200	200
Accommodation for special guest	112	1	Hotel Crystal Palace****	50	5,600
Conference grants for student	20	1	Per diem grant	80	1,600
	20	1	Registration fee grant	65	1,300
	3	9	Car rental	50	1,350
	3	9	Gasoline	10	270
	100	2	Poster boards renting	15	3,000
Miscellaneous	2	1	Transport of poster boards	55	110
	1	1	Seminar room for SOLAMAC members meeting	200	200
	10	5	Per diem for Organizing Committee and collaborators	20	1,000
				TOTAL US\$	65,246

Table 4. List of guest speakers and topic of their plenary.

Topics of the Plenary	Guest speaker	Affiliation	Country
"Status of Latino American Aquatic Mammals"	Dr. F. Trujillo	Omacha Foundation,	Colombia
"Incidental capture of marine mammals"	Dr. E. Secchi	Lab. Mamíferos Marinos, Museum Oceanográfico Prof E C Rios	Brazil
"Animals as Polar Oceanographers: Using Animals to Define and Describe Their Habitat"	Dr. D. Costa	Department of Ecology and Evolutionary Biology, University of California, USA.	USA
"Information development applied to the biogeography or marine mammals"	Dra. M. Lewis	Área de Biología y Manejo de Recursos Acuáticos Centro Nacional Patagónico, Argentina.	Argentina
"Conservation Genetics of Marine Mammals"	Dr. R. Hoeltzel	Durham University	United Kingdom
" Trophic ecology of pinnipeds: applications and recent advances	Dr. D. Aurióles	CICIMAR-IPN	Mexico
"Population status of humpback whales in south America"	Dr. A. Zerbini:	National Marine Mammal Lab. Alaska Fisheries Science Center NOAA	USA
"SOLAMAC & IUCN"	Dr. E. Crespo	Lab. de Mamíferos Marinos Centro Nacional Patagónico (CONICET)	Argentina

Table 5. Special activities conducted at the XIII Meeting -7th SOLAMAC Conference.

Special Activities	Responsible	Institution	Country
ROUND TABLE			
"Morphology and taxonomy of <i>Tursiops truncatus</i> "	Dr. Ignacio Moreno	Grupo de Estudos de Mamíferos Aquáticos do Rio Grande do Sul - GEMARS	Brazil
WORKSHOPS			
"Environmental education and its role in the conservation of Aquatic mammals"	Micaela Trimble and María Szephegyi	Proyecto Arenas, Facultad de Ciencias	Uruguay
"VI Workshop for Research and Conservation of Franciscana Dolphin in the South Western Atlantic Ocean"	Franciscana Project	Cetáceos Uruguay , Facultad de Ciencias	Uruguay
Responsible Whale Watching Tourism"	IFAW	IFAW	Mexico

Table 6. Intensive courses held at the in the XIII Meeting-7th SOLAMAC Conference.

COURSES	Responsible	Affiliation	# of student
"New applications and advances in trophic ecology"	Dr. D. Auriolés	CICIMAR- IPN Mexico	30
"Behavioral Ecology of Marine mammals"	Dr. F. Lima Dr. J.Martins	Universidade Federal do Rio Grande do Norte, Brazil	14
"Marine Mammals and Mathematical Models"	Dr. S. Pedraza BSc. J. Klaich	CENPAT – CONICET, Argentina	19

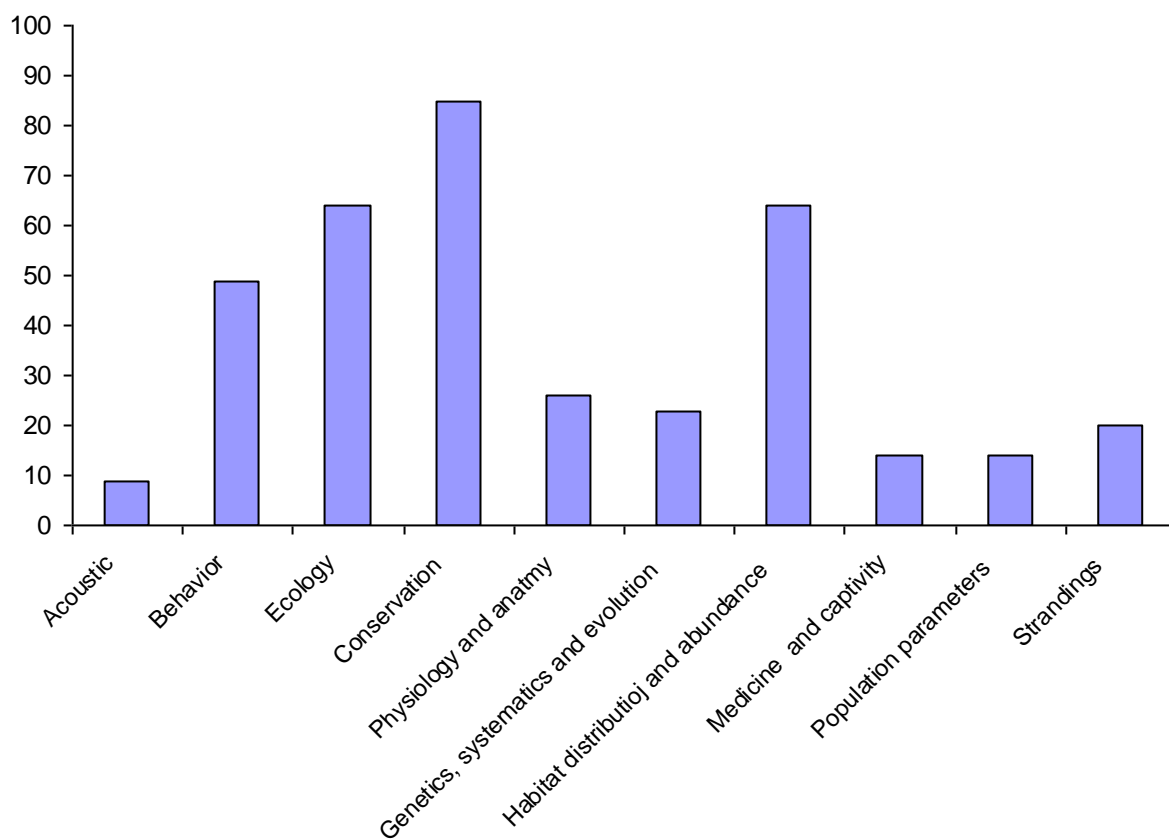


Figure 1. Total number of abstract received for each research topic.

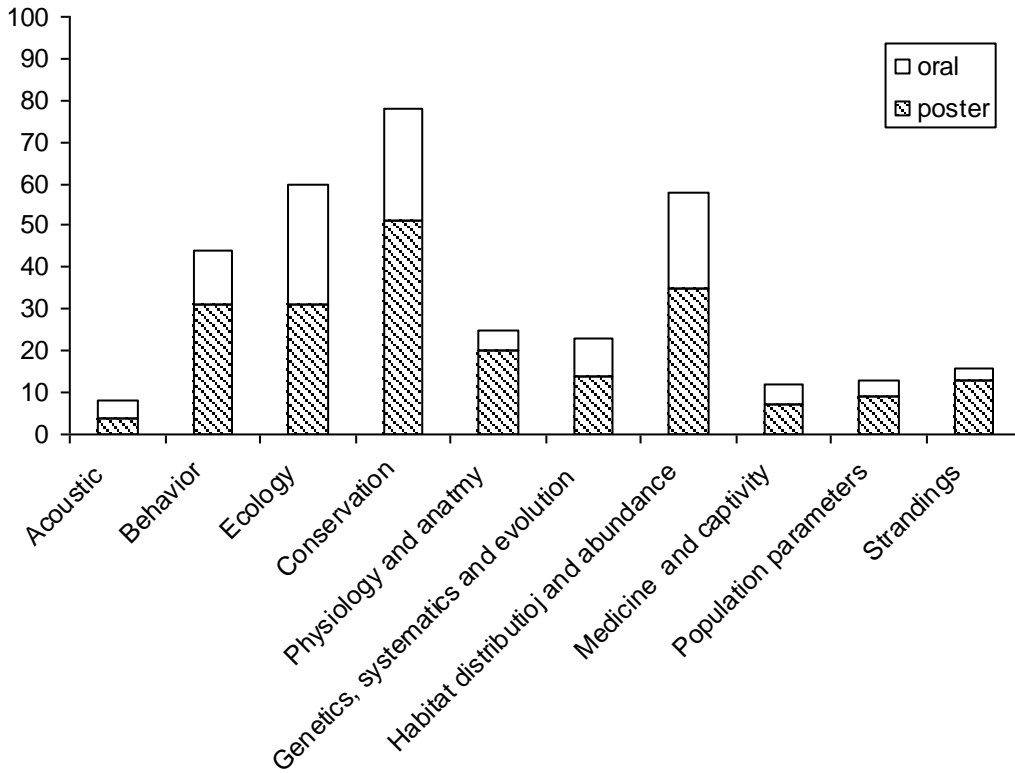


Figure 2. Total number of oral (n=122) and poster (n=224) accepted for each research topic.

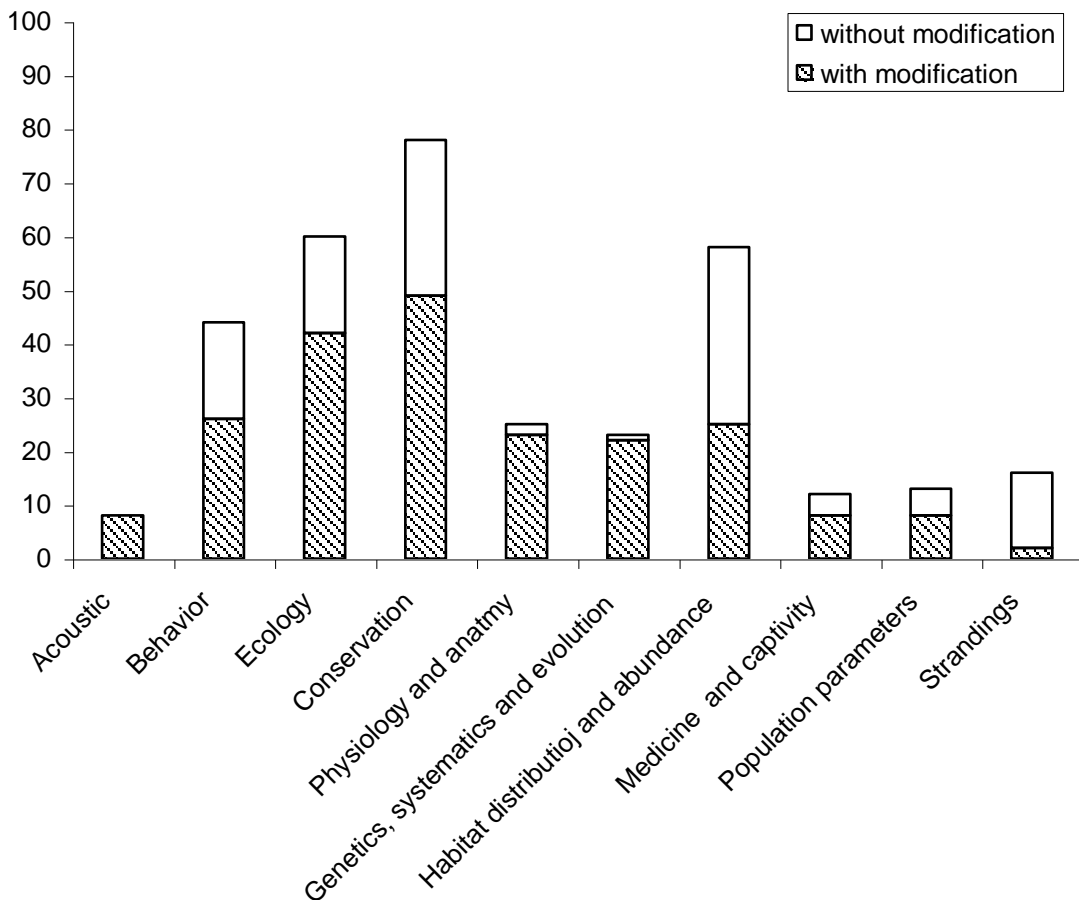


Figure 3. Total number of abstracts accepted without modification and with modifications for each research topic.

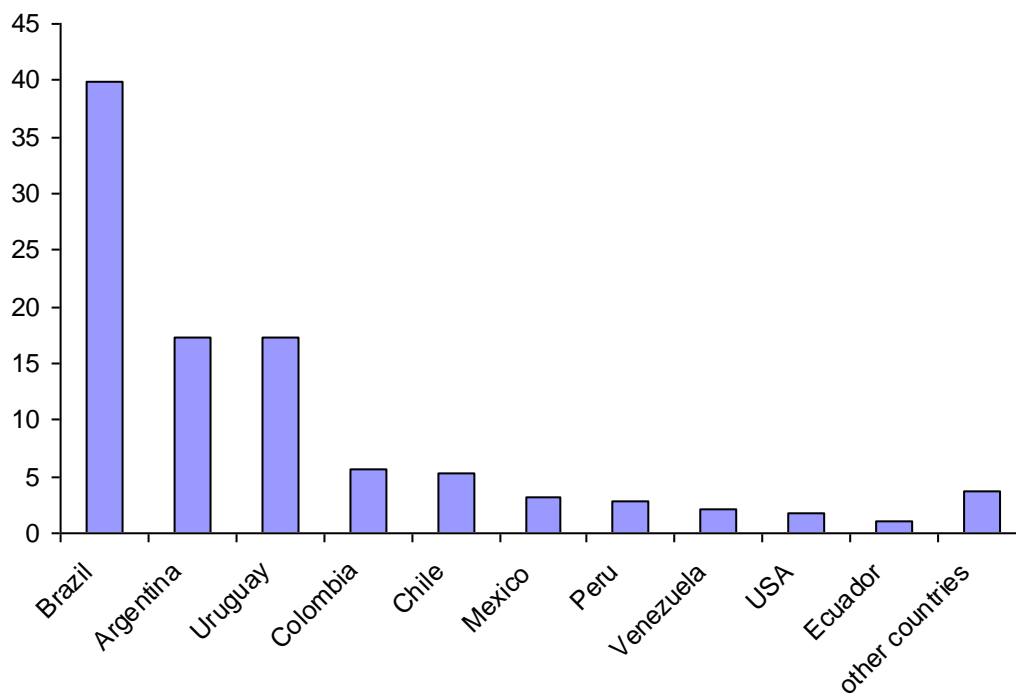


Figure 4. Percentage of visit to the conference web page by country. Other countries included: Spain, Guatemala, Canada, Switzerland, France, United Kingdom, Australia, Germany, French Guiana, Portugal, Bolivia.