

## REPORT OF THE 13<sup>TH</sup> MEETING OF CIRVA

### Report of the 13<sup>th</sup> Meeting of CIRVA

(Comité Internacional para la Recuperación de la Vaquita (International Committee for the Recovery of the Vaquita))

Virtual meetings held on February 27 and March 10, 2026

#### EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This virtual meeting was essentially a follow-up meeting to complete the work of CIRVA-12. The primary objectives were two-fold:

1. For the Government of Mexico to provide an update on the proposed modifications to the 2020 Fisheries Agreement; and
2. For CIRVA members to provide scientific and technical advice on the most recent and near-final proposed modifications.

The Government acknowledged the significant challenges associated with enforcing the 2020 Agreement under current conditions and emphasized the need to strengthen implementation through more effective and realistic measures. It highlighted that proposed modifications are intended to support long-term, sustainable solutions developed in consultation with the fishery sector, Upper Gulf communities, CIRVA, CITES authorities, and civil society.

The most recent meeting between the Government and the fishing sector was held in Mexicali on 5 February 2026 to discuss proposed modifications to the 2020 Agreement, taking into account the recommendations from CIRVA-12. While several of CIRVA's recommendations were reflected in the proposed changes, not all of those related to the spatial protection polygons were incorporated. It proved impossible at the Mexicali meeting to reach consensus with all members of the fishing sector, but there was majority support for the main proposed modifications.

The Government's proposal to modify the 2020 Agreement included five area designations as follows:

- Zero Tolerance Area (Area de tolerancia cero), or ZTA – an area where all fishing activities are prohibited, with access limited to authorized enforcement, monitoring, or research vessels.
- Special Use Area (Area de aprovechamiento especial) – formerly referred to as the Extended Area (EA) of the ZTA. As recommended by CIRVA-12's Small Working Group, the entire EA should be legally designated as part of (i.e. subsumed within) what CIRVA proposes to be characterized as the Sanctuary for Vaquitas.
- Gillnet Prohibition Area (Area de prohibición de redes de enmalle), or GPA – formerly known as the Vaquita Refuge, where no passive gillnetting is allowed but fishing with alternative vaquita-safe gear is.
- Transit Channel (Canal de tránsito) – a proscribed area inside the ZTA to be used “solely for transit purposes” by small fishing vessels departing from San Felipe to reach the fishing grounds efficiently.
- Biosphere Reserve (Reserva de la Biosfera Alto California y Delta del Río Colorado).
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CIRVA has serious reservations about certain aspects of the Government's proposed modifications. The most important and immediate concern is the absence of full protection to the shallow waters of the northwestern portion of the GPA, an area where vaquitas were both acoustically detected and

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visually observed in 2025. This protection **should be implemented immediately** and not be contingent upon the prior installation of enforcement blocks.

CIRVA further **recommends** that the installation of blocks in this area proceed without delay and not be contingent on future threshold conditions. To date, the deployment of blocks is the only measure that has proven effective to protect vaquitas.

As CIRVA was not aware of any data or information suggesting that the enforcement blocks pose a risk to divers, it **recommends** that clam diving be legal within the ZTA (and other specially protected areas) during daytime hours. Also, CIRVA **recommends** that the Government establish and enforce separate seasons for the acoustic monitoring program and clam fishing.

In terms of at-sea enforcement efforts, CIRVA **recommends** that CONAPESCA and SEMAR work to ensure that the VMS system provides real-time data accessible to both parties for on-the-water enforcement. CIRVA also **recommends** that SEMAR, CONAPESCA, and PROFEPA increase their enforcement efforts significantly to ensure that the proposed Gillnet Prohibition Area is free of gillnets and illegal fishing.

In terms of landside inspection and enforcement, CIRVA **recommends** that (i) vessels failing to meet the inspection requirements be detained and prohibited from fishing until the necessary requirements are met, (ii) the Government provide a clear and transparent description of the administrative and criminal penalties and the accompanying sanctions for violations, (iii) CONAPESCA, SEMAR, and PROFEPA coordinate among themselves and work with other agencies responsible for vaquita conservation to facilitate enforcement at the time of departure and landing, and (iv) landing inspections explicitly verify whether VMS data were available and reviewed prior to inspection. CIRVA **strongly recommends** that the seafood products landed by any vessel that departed with gillnets and that entered or fished in GPA waters be confiscated upon landing, and that the authorities sanction the vessel owners and operators under the applicable laws.

Finally, CIRVA **recommends** that the Government of Mexico (SEMARNAT) convene an annual re-evaluation of the new Agreement, taking into consideration any data provided by scientific experts (e.g. vaquita density maps) or data from acoustic and visual surveys, and that more than one CIRVA scientist be invited to participate in future meetings of the Intergovernmental Group on Sustainability in the Upper Gulf of California.

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## 1. INTRODUCTORY ITEMS

### 1.1 Welcoming remarks

Pliego opened the meeting by thanking the members of CIRVA for their engagement over the past 30+ years and noting the complexities of the management process and the time required to achieve a successful outcome. Rojas-Bracho, CIRVA Chair, noted that this was essentially a follow-up meeting to complete the work of CIRVA-12, which began in June 2025 and continued into July 2025. He reviewed the agenda and explained that the primary objectives of this the 13th meeting of CIRVA were two-fold:

3. For the Government of Mexico to provide an update on the proposed modifications to the 2020 Fisheries Agreement (hereafter ‘the 2020 Agreement’)<sup>1</sup> and their implementation; and
4. For CIRVA members to provide scientific and technical advice on the most recent and near-final proposed modifications.

### 1.2 Participants

The list of Participants is provided as Annex A. It includes members of CIRVA, Government representatives, and invited participants.

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<sup>1</sup>AGREEMENT amending the Agreement regulating fishing gear, systems, methods, techniques, and schedules for the conduct of fishing activities with small and large vessels in Mexican Marine Zones in the North Gulf of California, and establishing landing sites, as well as the use of monitoring systems for such vessels, published in the Official Gazette of the Federation on 24 September 2020.

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### 1.3 Rapporteurs

Henry, Read, and Reeves served as rapporteurs for the first session, while Henry and Reeves served in that role for the second.

### 1.4 Review and adoption of the Agenda

The adopted Agenda is provided as Annex B.

### 1.5 Documents

A document, dated 28 February 2026, detailing the Government of Mexico's proposed amendments to the 2020 Agreement was shared with CIRVA members on 20 February 2026 and is provided for reference as Annex C.

## 2. PRESENTATION BY THE GOVERNMENT ON NEWLY PROPOSED MODIFICATIONS

The Chair invited Pliego to summarize the Government of Mexico's efforts to finalize revisions of the 2020 Agreement. Pliego explained that this has been a complex process with many factors that need to be carefully weighed before making what are bound to be difficult decisions. Recommendations from CIRVA, fishers and CITES must be taken into consideration. The Government is in the final stages of modifying the new Agreement and wishes to see the modifications implemented as soon as possible.

Pliego acknowledged that the 2020 Agreement has been, and will continue to be, impossible to enforce given the current realities in the Upper Gulf. In his view, the proposed new Agreement recognizes these realities and is meant to enable the Government to move forward with effective conservation measures. Over the past year, officials from the Secretaría de Marina (SEMAR; Ministry of the Navy), the Secretaría de Medio Ambiente y Recursos Naturales (SEMARNAT; Ministry of Environment and Natural Resources), the Comisión Nacional de Áreas Naturales Protegidas (CONANP; National Commission of Natural Protected Areas), the Procuraduría Federal de Protección al Ambiente (PROFEPA; Federal Attorney for Environmental Protection) and the Comisión Nacional de Acuacultura y Pesca (CONAPESCA; National Commission of Aquaculture and Fisheries) have continued to consult with the fishing sector and CITES officials. The most recent meeting with the fishing sector was held in Mexicali on 5 February 2026 to discuss proposed modifications to the 2020 Agreement, taking into account the recommendations from CIRVA-12.<sup>2</sup> While several of CIRVA's recommendations were reflected in the proposed changes, not all of those related to the spatial protection polygons were incorporated. It proved impossible to reach consensus with all members of the fishing sector, but there was majority support for the main proposed modifications.<sup>3, 4</sup>

Pliego noted that the Government would like to bring the fishing sector directly into future discussions with CIRVA, so that any proposed future modifications could be developed with all stakeholders at the table. The Government further believes that its proposed modifications will clarify the legal use of fishing gear in the Upper Gulf, including alternative fishing gear, and assist in the elimination of illegal fishing activities. The Government plans to implement a gear marking scheme, so that gillnets used legally outside the Gillnet Prohibition Area and the Zero Tolerance Area (see next section) will be clearly marked, allowing identification of the owner of the gear. CIRVA **expressed interest** in learning more about the gear marking plan, including the types of marks to be used, their expected

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<sup>2</sup>The CIRVA-12 report is available at [https://iucn-csg.org/wp-content/uploads/2026/03/Final-CIRVA\\_12\\_Report.pdf](https://iucn-csg.org/wp-content/uploads/2026/03/Final-CIRVA_12_Report.pdf)

<sup>3</sup>Consensus in the context of Pliego's presentation is interpreted to mean unanimity, i.e. full agreement by all parties.

<sup>4</sup>Rojas-Bracho attended the meeting but due to technical difficulties, he could only listen to the discussions and not intervene.

durability under field conditions, and whether the system would allow identification at the level of the co-operative, the vessel, or the individual fisher.

### 3. SPATIAL MANAGEMENT MEASURES

For clarity, the area historically known as the Vaquita Refuge is hereafter referred to as the Gillnet Prohibition Area (GPA), consistent with the terminology used in the proposed amendments to the 2020 Agreement.

The proposal to modify the 2020 Agreement includes five area designations as follows (and see Fig. 1):

- Zero Tolerance Area (Area de tolerancia cero), or ZTA – an area where all fishing activities are prohibited, with access limited to authorized enforcement, monitoring, or research vessels.
- Special Use Area (Area de aprovechamiento especial) – formerly referred to as the Extended Area (EA) of the ZTA. As recommended by CIRVA-12’s Small Working Group (SWG), the entire EA should be legally designated as part of (i.e. subsumed within) what CIRVA proposes to be characterized as the Sanctuary for Vaquitas.<sup>5</sup>
- Gillnet Prohibition Area (Area de prohibición de redes de enmalle), or GPA – formerly known as the Vaquita Refuge, where no passive gillnetting is allowed but fishing with alternative vaquita-safe gear is. The SWG referred to this as the ‘blue polygon’ and recommended that it encompass all vaquita detections since 2017 as well as most of the detections in the range-wide 2015 survey.
- Transit Channel (Canal de tránsito) – a proscribed area inside the ZTA to be used “solely for transit purposes” by small fishing vessels departing from San Felipe to reach the fishing grounds efficiently. Such vessels must “comply with the legal framework and have an operational satellite monitoring system.”
- Biosphere Reserve (Reserva de la Biosfera Alto California y Delta del Río Colorado).

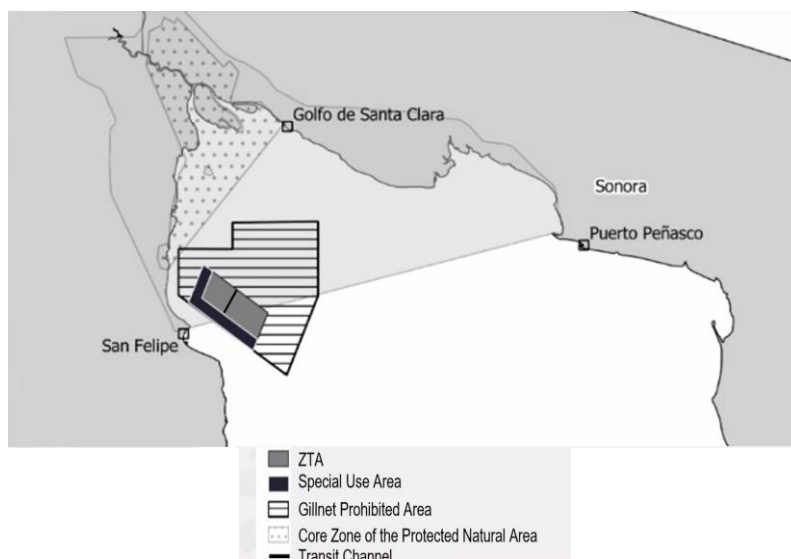


Fig. 1. Map of the proposed spatial management scheme in the new Agreement.

CIRVA has serious reservations about certain aspects of the Government’s proposed modifications. The most important and immediate concern is the absence of full protection, through the placement of concrete blocks with hooks (hereafter “blocks”), in the shallow waters of the northwestern portion

<sup>5</sup> CIRVA has recommended that the area protected by blocks with hooks be designated the Sanctuary for Vaquitas, that is, the ZTA, EA, and any further areas that will be protected by blocks. See the red polygon in the CIRVA-12 report, p. 39, Figure 7B.

of the GPA. CIRVA **recommends** that this area be included within the Sanctuary for Vaquitas (the red polygon in Fig. 7B of the CIRVA 12 report), where acoustic detections and visual encounters of vaquitas were recorded in 2025. It is important to note that, to date, the deployment of blocks is the only measure that has proven effective to protect vaquitas. Thus, protecting this area with blocks is certain to reduce risk to vaquitas immediately. In contrast, the Gillnet Prohibition Area in the proposed modifications to the 2020 Agreement has not shown any credible evidence of being effective in protecting vaquitas.

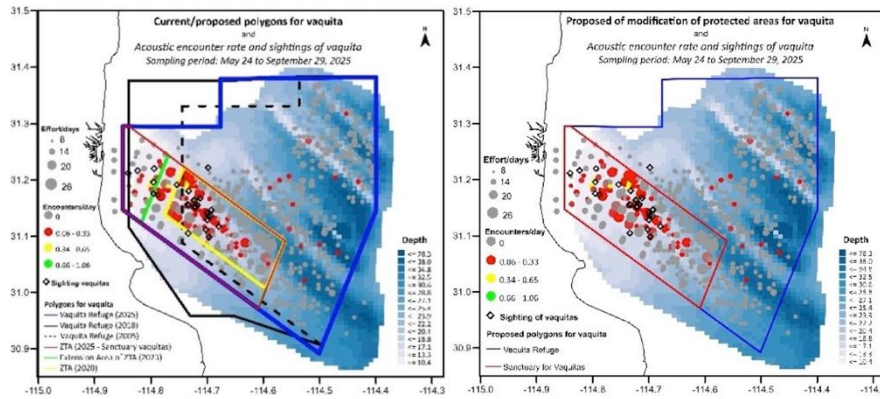


Fig. 2. Proposed modification of protected areas for vaquitas based on 2025 acoustic and visual data (reprinted from CIRVA 12 Report, Fig. 7). Left panel: Circle size indicates the number of days of acoustic effort per site, and circle colors represent acoustic encounter rates: gray (0), red (0.06–0.33), yellow (0.34–0.65), and green (0.66–1.06) encounters per day. Black diamonds indicate vaquita sightings in September 2025. The revised polygons recommended by the Small Working Group are shown: the updated Vaquita Refuge (blue), as defined in CIRVA 12 and hereafter referred to as the Gillnet Prohibition Area (GPA), and the proposed Sanctuary for Vaquitas (orange). Water depth is represented by blue shading, with darker tones indicating deeper waters. Right panel. Acoustic encounter rates, acoustic effort, sightings, and proposed protection polygons for vaquitas based on 2025 results. Circle size indicates the number of days of acoustic effort per site, and circle colors represent acoustic encounter rates: gray (0), red (0.06–0.33), and yellow (0.34–0.65) encounters per day). Black diamonds indicate vaquita sightings in September 2025. The proposed protection polygons are shown, including the proposed Sanctuary for Vaquitas (red) and the Vaquita Refuge (blue), as defined in CIRVA 12 and hereafter referred to as the Gillnet Prohibition Area (GPA). Water depth is shown by blue shading from shallow to deep.

Given the difficulties of enforcing existing or new fishery regulations outside the ZTA, some vaquitas (including females with calves) are still at risk of gillnet entanglement. Although 193 concrete blocks were initially installed within the ZTA and 216 additional blocks were deployed in 2024 within the Area de Aprovechamiento Especial, the northwestern shallow-water area mentioned above has not been protected with blocks, and there is no plan to do so in the proposed modifications to the newly proposed 2020 Agreement.

Therefore, CIRVA **strongly recommends** that the Government of Mexico extend full spatial protection to the shallow waters of the northwestern portion of the GPA, where vaquitas were detected in 2025, by incorporating this area into the proposed Sanctuary for Vaquitas (the red polygon, Fig. 2b) and installing blocks. This protection **should be implemented immediately** and should not be contingent upon the prior installation of enforcement blocks. CIRVA **further recommends** that the installation of blocks in this area proceed as soon as feasible to ensure that vaquitas there are protected by the only measure demonstrated to be effective.

There was a discussion of a potential trigger mechanism if additional blocks are not deployed as recommended here. While trigger-based approaches may be considered, CIRVA **recommends** that, given the critically endangered status of the species and the demonstrated risks associated with gillnet use, the deployment of enforcement blocks in areas where vaquitas are detected should proceed without delay and not be contingent on future threshold conditions.

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### 4. CLAM FISHING

CIRVA considers that the concern expressed about risks posed by blocks with hooks to clam divers is unfounded. Pliego noted that the Government's position is to avoid signaling that the ZTA is open to any kind of fishing, including clam diving. However, several CIRVA members who have spent considerable time on the water within the ZTA report having seen clam divers operating there regularly. Allowing clam diving to continue supports local fishing communities while maintaining effective protection for vaquitas. During discussion, it was confirmed that the standard spacing between blocks is one kilometer. No one present at this meeting had heard of any incidents to suggest that blocks with hooks, spaced as they are at 1 km intervals, pose a risk to divers, so CIRVA **recommends** that clam diving be legal within the ZTA (and other specially protected areas) during daytime hours. If the Government or the fishing sector considers it necessary to conduct a formal evaluation and scientifically verify the potential risk to clam divers, this should be done collaboratively, with CIRVA representatives engaged directly with the fishing community. One caveat is that clam fishing does conflict with acoustic monitoring of vaquitas because there is considerable loss of listening equipment (C-PODs and F-PODs) when clam fishing is active in an area. Therefore, CIRVA **recommends** that the Government establish and enforce separate seasons for the acoustic monitoring program and clam fishing.

### 5. ENFORCEMENT IN THE PROPOSED GILLNET PROHIBITION AREA

#### 5.1 At-sea Enforcement

To date, vaquitas have benefited from a de facto sanctuary (i.e. the ZTA) where they are protected by concrete blocks with hooks that ensnare gillnets, together with enforcement efforts for the relatively small number of infractions in that area. Efforts to enforce a broader gillnet exclusion area without blocks, as represented by the proposed Gillnet Prohibition Area, will be a challenge.

Despite the 2020 Agreement, gillnet fishing has continued in the GPA and even in the EA, which is partially protected by blocks. A Sea Shepherd vessel (*Seahorse*) has collected radar data showing hourly fishing effort in the ZTA, EA, and parts of the GPA on most days over the past three years. Table 1 summarizes detections of pangas possibly engaged in net fishing in January 2026 for days when the number of detections exceeded 30. Large portions of the northeastern Vaquita Refuge fall outside the radar detection range (approximately 8 nmi), and the numbers reported represent possible fishing activity within only a portion of the GPA. Panga counts vary dramatically and depend on fishing season, lunar cycle, and weather.

Table 1. Peak numbers of pangas detected daily by radar and possibly engaged in net fishing inside portions of the Vaquita Refuge and the Extension Area, suggesting that some net fishing continued even in an area partially protected by blocks (the EA). Radar coverage is limited to the detection range of the monitoring vessels, and much of the northeastern GPA lies outside the *Seahorse* radar range (8 nmi). (Source: Sea Shepherd Conservation Society).

Date	Vaquita Refuge	Extension Area
1/15/2026	31	6
1/16/2026	80	2
1/17/2026	45	4
1/18/2026	55	1
1/20/2026	58	11
1/21/2026	58	9

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1/22/2026	60	10
1/28/2026	41	2

The numbers recorded almost certainly underestimate the total number of pangas potentially gillnetting within the Vaquita Refuge, as the SSCS radar covers only a circular area with a diameter of 8 nmi, and the Refuge is much larger than that. Enforcement on the water alone will remain far from adequate.

Enforcement will require continued cooperation between Sea Shepherd's surveillance efforts and the enforcement efforts of SEMAR and CONAPESCA. Critical to enforcement is the vessel monitoring system (VMS) installed by CONAPESCA. As of 28 October 2025, SEMAR reported that approximately 850 GPS units had been installed on all legal pangas in San Felipe and on a substantial portion of the fleet in Golfo de Santa Clara. To be truly effective the system must operate in such a way that when a vessel is detected fishing in the area illegally, the information is shared with SEMAR in real time. Only then can SEMAR intercept vessels that either (i) Sea Shepherd's surveillance indicates are potentially net fishing, (ii) CONAPESCA's data indicates are operating without a VMS, or (iii) are fishing illegally in an area with a VMS. CIRVA **recommends** that CONAPESCA and SEMAR work to ensure that the VMS system provides real-time data accessible to both parties for on-the-water enforcement. CIRVA also **recommends** that SEMAR, CONAPESCA, and PROFEPA increase their enforcement efforts significantly to ensure that the proposed Gillnet Prohibition Area is free of gillnets and illegal fishing.

### 5.2 Landside Inspection and Enforcement

Under the new Agreement, landside vessel inspections will be even more critical given that the proposed modifications will be complicated to enforce as both gillnets and vaquita-safe gears will be legal at the time of departure. At landing and departure, these inspections must confirm that the pangas are registered, have engines not exceeding legal limits, have an operational VMS, and are carrying only the type of gear specified on their permit. CIRVA **recommends** that vessels failing to meet the inspection requirements be detained and prohibited from fishing until the necessary requirements are met. This would, in practice, mean that local legal fishers enjoy exclusive rights to harvest their natural resources and market their products. Although enforcement on the water is to be commended and strengthened, the potential for illegal fishing with gillnets inside the proposed GPA makes what happens at the departure and landing sites of key importance.

The Government of Mexico is also developing protocols to establish coordination between the various enforcement entities, document chain of custody for confiscated products (e.g. swim bladders), operationalize the inspection scheme for departure and landing sites, and revise the sanctions for the new Agreement. CIRVA **recommends** that the Government of Mexico provide a clear and transparent description of the administrative and criminal penalties and the accompanying sanctions for violations of the laws included in the new Agreement and that the sanctions be severe enough to deter and disincentivize illegal activity.

Vessel monitoring devices installed by CONAPESCA should make real-time location data available to aid enforcement at the time of landing. CIRVA **strongly recommends** that the seafood products landed by any vessel that departed with gillnets and that entered or fished in GPA waters are confiscated upon landing and that the authorities sanction the vessel owners and operators under the applicable laws. This critical step would accomplish two important things to initiate the transition to vaquita-safe gear: 1) the VR becomes, as intended, an area where only alternative vaquita-safe gear and methods can be used, and 2) there are immediate and costly consequences for illegal use of gillnets within the VR. CIRVA **recommends** that CONAPESCA, SEMAR, and PROFEPA coordinate

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among themselves and work with other agencies responsible for vaquita conservation to facilitate enforcement at the time of departure and landing. CIRVA further **recommends** that landing inspections explicitly verify whether VMS data were available and reviewed prior to inspection, and that such information be transparently reported to ensure that the inspections accurately reflect effective compliance and enforcement.

Ideally, the new Agreement would completely exclude illegal pangas such as ‘white’ (i.e. unregistered) pangas, allow fishers to use gillnets where there are assumed to be no vaquitas (outside the proposed GPA), allow fishing with vaquita-safe gear (which is problematic to impossible in areas with blocks, depending on the gear), and incentivize fishers to switch to vaquita-safe gears by providing exclusive access to gillnet-free fishing grounds in the proposed GPA. This would, in principle, facilitate the eventual transition to vaquita-safe gears in all communities adjacent to vaquita habitat. The new Agreement must recognize and commit sufficient resources to account for the challenges and increased cost of enforcement.

### 6. RE-EVALUATION OF THE NEW AGREEMENT

Article 1 of the proposed new Agreement states, “The regulation polygons established in this Agreement will be subject to permanent evaluation and may be subject to modifications, according to the best scientific evidence available derived from the biological monitoring of the vaquita marina, and from an adaptive management approach based on continuous, multidimensional and participatory learning, for decision-making, aimed at a permanent improvement in strategies and results. The evaluation of the regulatory polygons may be accompanied by the assessment of additional and complementary measures that contribute to the objective of this Agreement, such as the placement of net capture devices in areas of high presence of the vaquita marina species, in addition to the Zero Tolerance Area.”

CIRVA is best equipped to undertake any re-evaluation of the regulation polygons and to recommend new measures to conserve the vaquita. CIRVA **recommends** that the Government of Mexico (SEMARNAT) convene an annual re-evaluation of the new Agreement, taking into consideration any data provided by scientific experts (e.g. vaquita density maps) or data from acoustic and visual surveys.

### 7. OTHER ASPECTS OF THE NEW AGREEMENT

CIRVA notes and supports continuation of the current prohibition of night fishing within the GPA. Enforcement is more efficient under this restriction, which does not inhibit any of the currently allowed fisheries, such as clam diving or rodeo-style fishing for curvina. Maintaining this prohibition should ensure that any panga detected within the GPA at night is treated as an immediate target for enforcement.

### 8. CONCLUSION

The Mexican Government’s commitment to revise fishing regulations is most welcome. It is reassuring to hear that the Government, CIRVA and civil society share the same end goal, which is to save the vaquita and facilitate the population’s recovery. To reach that goal, fishers and management bodies must move quickly to adopt fishing practices that do not harm vaquitas and contribute to sustainable communities in the Upper Gulf. This will require, among other things, that (i) fishers who do not have the requisite permits are immediately excluded from designated areas, (ii) the prohibition on the use of gillnets in the GPA is enforced, (iii) departure and landing inspections are undertaken as a priority, (iv) the entirety of vaquita habitat, as acoustically and visually documented by a robust annual monitoring program, is protected, and (v) alternative gear research, testing, training, and market analyses are supported. CIRVA **recommends** that more than one CIRVA scientist be invited

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to participate in future meetings of the Intergovernmental Group on Sustainability in the Upper Gulf of California. A CIRVA scientist was invited to the most recent meeting; however, due to technical difficulties affecting virtual (i.e. online) participants, it was not possible for him to intervene despite requesting the floor. Inviting more than one CIRVA scientist and ensuring effective participation would help strengthen scientific input in future GIS discussions.

**Annex A**

**List Of Participants**

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## ANNEX B

### AGENDA

February 27 and March 10, 2026.

1. Introduction by the Chair
2. Government Presentation: Proposed modifications to the 2020 Agreement (Valder Pliego)
  - A. Legal and Regulatory Framework
    - Scope of amendments, repeals, and additions
    - Relationship to the 2020 Agreement
    - Entry into force and implementation timeline
  - B. Spatial Management Measures
    - Gillnet Prohibition Area
    - Zero Tolerance and Extension Area, including the proposed northwest extension of the concrete block enforcement area (Sanctuary in the SWG report)
    - Area of Special Use and transit provisions
  - C. Fisheries Regulations
    - Authorized fishing gears
    - Prohibition and treatment of gillnets
    - Gear marking and environmental authorization requirements
  - D. Monitoring and Surveillance
    - Vessel monitoring systems
    - Inspection protocols
    - Enforcement coordination mechanisms
    - Consequences of violations, including individual sanctions and contingency measures in the event of recurrent non-compliance in high risk areas for vaquitas
  - E. Ongoing Evaluation of Regulatory Polygons and Adaptive Management Framework
    - Role of biological monitoring of the vaquita
    - Mechanism for evaluation and future modification of spatial measures
    - Adaptive management approach
  - F. Governance and Institutional Arrangements
    - Intergovernmental Group on Sustainability
    - Law Enforcement Collaboration Subgroup
3. Discussion and conclusions
4. AOB

## REPORT OF THE 13<sup>TH</sup> MEETING OF CIRVA

### ANNEX C

"AGREEMENT amending the one regulating arts, systems, methods, techniques and schedules for carrying out fishing activities with smaller and larger vessels in Mexican Marine Zones in the North of the Gulf of California and establishing landing sites, as well as the use of monitoring systems for such vessels published in the Official Gazette of the Federation on September 24, 2020"

ARTICLE FIRST.- This Agreement is of general observance and compliance

mandatory for persons holding fishing concessions or permits, captains and masters of vessels, motorists, fishermen and crew members of smaller and larger vessels, including sport-recreational fishing and the provision of services to sport-recreational fishing, who carry out fishing activities in the North of the Gulf of California.

The limits of the areas established in this Agreement and the permitted and prohibited activities within each one, will be disseminated to the maritime sector through the Port Captaincies, as the National Maritime Authority.

The regulation polygons established in this Agreement will be subject to permanent evaluation and may be subject to modifications, according to the best scientific evidence available derived from the biological monitoring of the vaquita marina, and from an adaptive management approach based on continuous, multidimensional and participatory learning, for decision-making, aimed at a permanent improvement in strategies and results.

The evaluation of the regulatory polygons may be accompanied by the assessment of additional and complementary measures that contribute to the objective of this Agreement, such as the placement of net capture devices in areas of high presence of the vaquita marina species, in addition to the Zero Tolerance Area.

ARTICLE SECOND.- The use of all gillnets is permanently prohibited, including those made of monofilament or multifilament nylon thread, or any modification thereof, operated actively or passively for carrying out fishing activities, in the gillnet exclusion area indicated in Table 1 of this Agreement.

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The only fishing gears allowed to be used in the fishing concessions or permits issued by the competent authority for fishing with smaller vessels in the Gillnet Exclusion Area, except for the ZTC, are those that are selective: actively operated suripera nets, hook line, longline, traps, and free or semi-autonomous diving with hose and compressor ("hooka") and those fishing gears and methods that do not pose a risk to the vaquita marina and are approved by the IMIPAS, through a technical opinion, are authorized by CONAPESCA in the permit or concession, and that do not contravene the provisions of this Agreement; in accordance with the provisions of articles 28, 29 section XXI and 43 of the General Law of Sustainable Fisheries and Aquaculture.

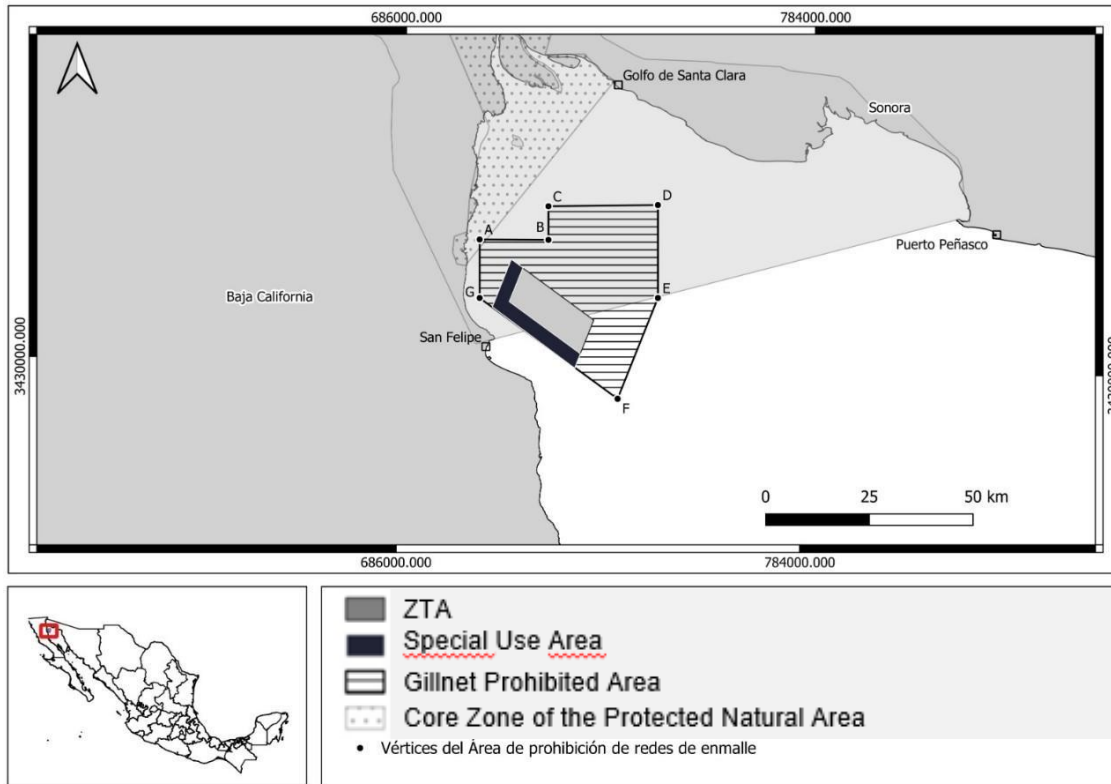
Likewise, the gulf corvina fishery (*Cynoscion othonopterus*) is permitted; in accordance with Official Mexican Standard "NOM-063-PESC-2005, Responsible fishing of gulf corvina *Cynoscion othonopterus* ) in federal jurisdiction waters of the Upper Gulf of California and Delta of the Colorado River. Specifications for its use" published in the Official Gazette of the Federation on August 16, 2007 and other applicable legal and administrative provisions; as it is a selective fishing method and does not represent a risk to the vaquita marina.

Table 1. Coordinates of the gillnet exclusion area

Vertex	Decimal coordinates		Metric Coordinates (UTM) Zone: 11 R		Coordinates Degrees, minutes and seconds	
	LONGITU DE	LATITU DE	X	Y	LONGITU DE	LATITUD E
A	-114.85	31.295	704639.736	3464291.086	114°51'0.0	31°17'42.0
B	-114.676	31.294	721207.669	3464516.349	114°40'33.	31°17'38.4
C	-114.676	31.379	721008.759	3473940.561	114°40'33.	31°22'44.4
D	-114.399	31.382	747351.056	3474863.27	114°23'56.	31°22'55.2
E	-114.399	31.147	747965.397	3448805.825	114°23'56.	31°8'49.20
F	-114.501	30.892	738874.207	3420308.569	114°30'3.6	30°53'31.2
G	-114.85	31.147	704959.032	3447883.023	114°51'0.0	31°8'49.20

## REPORT OF THE 13<sup>TH</sup> MEETING OF CIRVA

Figure 1. Map of the gillnet exclusion area



ARTICLE TWO BIS.- SADER, through CONAPESCA, will implement the marking of gillnets that will operate outside the gillnet exclusion area, in accordance with the respective current fishing permit, with the objective of identifying the gillnets and the holders of permits and concessions who were authorized to use the fishing gear, exclusively outside the gillnet exclusion area.

CONAPESCA may use the marking mechanisms that are considered most efficient, and may adapt said mechanisms as deemed necessary to comply with the objectives established in this article.

ARTICLE THREE.- Any fishing activity is prohibited in the Area of Gillnet Ban, during the night hours between 19:00 (nineteen) hours and 5:00 (five) hours.

ARTICLE FOUR.- Natural or legal persons who carry out fishing activities in the gillnet exclusion area delimited in this Agreement, must, in the event of detecting any entangled marine mammal, immediately notify the Port Authority and the authorities of SEMAR, CONANP, PROFEPA and/or CONAPESCA with which they may have communication, so that they in turn activate the corresponding protocols, including the participation of the National Network for Attention to Entangled Whales (RABEN) and members of local communities and civil society organizations trained and accredited to assist in such activities, in accordance with the applicable legal framework. Likewise, they must submit the corresponding information to CONAPESCA, in the format provided

## REPORT OF THE 13<sup>TH</sup> MEETING OF CIRVA

in the “Agreement establishing the format for reporting any interaction with marine mammals and/or loss and/or loss of fishing gear during fishing activities in Mexican marine areas in the Northern Gulf of California”, published in the Official Gazette of the Federation on December 8, 2021.

CONAPESCA will share in writing the information it receives in the format referred to in the previous paragraph, with CONANP, PROFEPA and SEMAR, so that they collaborate in the tasks of recovering lost, abandoned or discarded fishing gear, also known as ghost fishing gear.

ARTICLE FIVE.- Small vessels that have a concession or permit to carry out fishing activities in the Northern Gulf of California, must have a monitoring system installed and functioning that is tamper-proof or manipulation-proof.

ARTICLE SIXTH.- All larger vessels with a fishing permit or concession to operate in the gillnet exclusion area established in this Agreement, must have a monitoring system installed and functioning, which is tamper-proof or manipulation-proof.

ARTICLE SEVENTH.- The Port Captaincy may suspend dispatch via fishing, of smaller and larger vessels, in accordance with the Law of Navigation and Maritime Commerce.

ARTICLE EIGHTH.- All smaller vessels that have a concession or permit to operate in the areas indicated in this Agreement may be inspected, without exception, at the time of departure, as well as at landing. Inspections of smaller vessels at authorized departure and arrival sites will be carried out by personnel from CONAPESCA, SEMAR, the National Guard, and PROFEPA, or by any other entity to which the laws of the United Mexican States grant such powers during the term of this Agreement.

The inspection acts indicated in the previous paragraph will be carried out by the authorities within the terms of their competence, and will consist, among other actions, of verifying that the fishermen and vessels are duly authorized by a current permit and carry out fishing activity in accordance with what is authorized in it, use authorized fishing gear, in authorized areas, the catch corresponds to the authorized fishery, to the minimum catch size and to the authorized catch quota, have the vessel monitoring system in operation and it does not have signs of manipulation or alteration, do not possess specimens of wildlife in contravention of current regulations, and that fishermen and vessels comply with the other applicable regulatory provisions.

No fishing vessel may go out to carry out fishing activities within the gillnet exclusion area delimited in this Agreement, unless it has a valid concession or permit to carry out fishing activities in said area, and a prior verification has been carried out before its departure that demonstrates that it complies with the conditions established in this Agreement.

ARTICLE NINTH.- The authorized sites for departure and arrival are the following:

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Table 2. Authorized sites for departure and arrival

I.- Gulf of Santa Clara, Sonora	
Landing site	Geographic coordinates
Campo Las Brisas	31.52620° N - 114.22235° W
Gulf of Santa Clara	31° 41' 02.90" N- 114° 30'07.90" W
Los Pinitos	31° 30' 52.87" N - 114° 12' 28.65" W
II. San Felipe, Baja California	
Landing site	Geographic coordinates
Malecón de San Felipe	31°01'32.21"N - 114°49'54.52"W
San Felipe Pier	30° 59' 36.13" N - 114° 49' 42.66" W
III. El Indiviso/Bajo Río, Baja California	
Landing site	Geographic coordinates
El Zanjón	31° 56' 50.05" N - 114° 57' 48.08" W

ARTICLE TENTH.- It is repealed.

ARTICLE ELEVENTH.- The transshipment of fishery products, or other marine species and their parts between vessels within the gillnet exclusion area is prohibited, except in cases of emergency, climatic contingencies and vessel breakdowns, in accordance with the provisions of articles 73 paragraph two and 74 paragraph two of the General Law of Sustainable Fisheries and Aquaculture. Any natural or legal person who unauthorizedly transships any fishery product, or other marine species, as well as their parts and derivatives between vessels within the gillnet exclusion area established in this Agreement, shall be subject to the sanctions established in the General Law of Sustainable Fisheries and Aquaculture.

ARTICLE TWELFTH.- Persons who do not comply with the provisions of this Agreement shall be subject to the corresponding procedures by the competent authorities, and subject to the applicable sanctions, in accordance with the General Law of Sustainable Fisheries and Aquaculture, the General Law of Ecological Balance and Environmental Protection, the General Law of Wildlife and its Regulations, the Law of Navigation and Maritime Commerce, the Federal Law of Environmental Responsibility, the Federal Law of Administrative Procedure, the applicable official Mexican standards, and other legal provisions that may be applicable.

Natural and legal persons who use gillnets within the gillnet exclusion area shall be subject to the applicable sanctions, in accordance with the provisions of articles 132 sections IV and XVII, 133 sections II and VI, and other applicable articles of the General Law of Sustainable Fisheries and Aquaculture, and in the General Law of Ecological Balance and Environmental Protection.

Said sanctions include, but are not limited to, fines equivalent to 101 to 1,000 times the Unit of Measurement and Update and seizure of fishing gear and products, for the use of prohibited or not allowed fishing instruments, gear or methods; as well as the seizure of the vessel in case of recidivism in the commission of infractions referring to the use of prohibited or not allowed fishing instruments, gear or methods, or fishing with vessels other than those permitted and registered.

ARTICLE TWELFTH BIS.- When minor and major vessels do not have the monitoring equipment in operation, required in accordance with this Agreement,

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will be provisionally retained, after verification, and will be sanctioned in accordance with articles 125, 132 sections XXVIII, XXXI, 133 sections II and VI, and 138 section II of the General Law of Sustainable Fisheries and Aquaculture, and in the case of larger vessels, also in accordance with NOM-062-SAG/PESC-2014. SEMAR, through the Harbor Master's Office, may suspend dispatch via fishing, in accordance with articles 9, section I and 51 of the Law of Navigation and Maritime Commerce, applying, where appropriate, the Federal Law of Administrative Procedure.

These sanctions include, but are not limited to, fines equivalent to 101 to 1,000 times the Unit of Measurement and Update, for not having the required specialized satellite monitoring equipment.

ARTICLE TWELFTH TER.- In case of not proving the legal origin of fishery products, CONAPESCA will carry out the precautionary retention of these, and will draw up an inspection report through which record of the inspection procedure will be made, which will be delivered to the legal area so that, in terms of the administrative procedure that regulates the General Law of Fisheries and Sustainable Aquaculture, the corresponding sanction is imposed.

ARTICLE TWELFTH QUATER.- Vessels that set sail or arrive in an unauthorized site, will be subject to the sanctions established in the General Law of Fisheries and Sustainable Aquaculture.

SEMAR, CONAPESCA and PROFEPA, when in the exercise of their verification and surveillance powers, they notice activities that constitute alleged criminal conduct in accordance with the Federal Penal Code, will present the corresponding complaints to the Federal Public Ministry, within the scope of their respective powers.

ARTICLE TWELFTH QUINQUIES.- Natural and legal persons, holders of fishing concessions or permits, who re-offend in non-compliance with the provisions of this Agreement, may be subject to the procedure for revocation of permits or concessions in accordance with the provisions of the General Law of Fisheries and Sustainable Aquaculture.

ARTICLE TWELFTH SEXIES.- All vessels, major and minors, must have Environmental Impact Authorization issued by SEMARNAT; otherwise, they may not set sail. If they go to sea without said authorization, they will be subject to the sanctions provided for in the General Law of Ecological Balance and Environmental Protection and its regulations on the matter.

In the event that the authority detects upon arrival a specimen listed in NOM 059-SEMARNAT 2010, the sanctions will be in accordance with the General Law of Ecological Balance and Environmental Protection, the General Law of Wildlife, the Federal Law of Environmental Responsibility, the Federal Law of Administrative Procedure, and the Federal Penal Code.

ARTICLE THIRTEENTH.- The Zero Tolerance Area is delimited by the coordinates established in this article, which may be updated or modified based on scientific evidence, including acoustic and visual monitoring of the vaquita marina. The updates or modifications that, where appropriate, are made, must be published by agreement in the Official Gazette of the Federation. The limits of the Area of

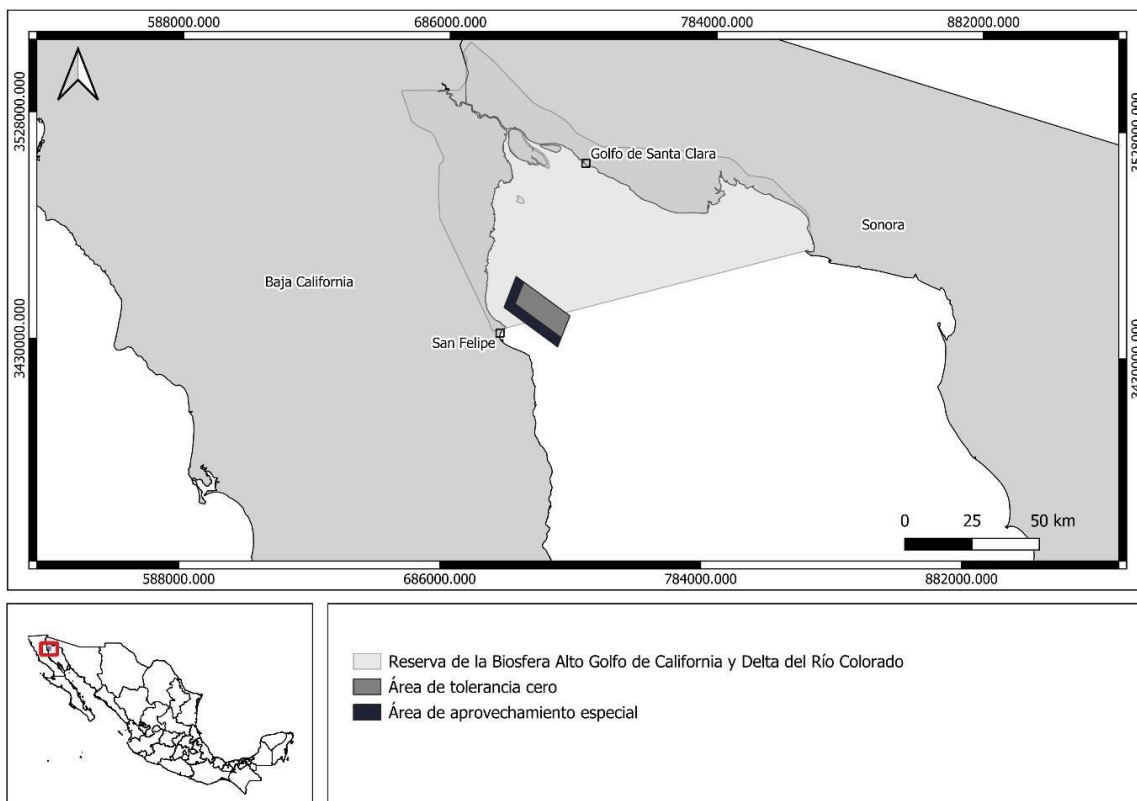
## REPORT OF THE 13<sup>TH</sup> MEETING OF CIRVA

Zero Tolerance will have permanent signaling by buoys; as well as devices designed for the capture of gillnets and suitable for the environmental conditions of the site.

Fishing and navigation within the Zero Tolerance Area are prohibited. No transit of any type of vessel or navigation in this area will be allowed, with the exception of vessels authorized by the competent authority, to transit for reasons of scientific research, community biodiversity monitoring, habitat restoration and surveillance. Likewise, the transit, without stopping, of small fishing vessels that comply with the legal framework and have the satellite monitoring system for small vessels in operation will be allowed, through the Transit Channel established in this article, only for transit purposes.

A Special Use Area is established, in accordance with the delimitation provided in Table 4 of this Agreement, in which only fishing by free or semi-autonomous diving with hose and compressor ("hooka") will be allowed.

Figure 2. Map of the Zero Tolerance Area and Special Use Area



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Table 3. Coordinates of the Zero Tolerance Area (225 km<sup>2</sup>)

Vertex	Decimal coordinates		Metric Coordinates (UTM) Zone: 11 R		Coordinates Degrees, minutes and seconds	
			X	Y	LONGITUDE	LATITUDE
A	-114.7409	31.22277	715190.4	3456490.7	114° 44' 27.24"	31° 13' 21.97"
B	-114.77486	31.13805	712139.9	3447032.2	114° 46' 29.64"	31° 08' 16.98"
C	-114.59526	31.00626	729584.1	3432778.4	114° 35' 43.08"	31° 00' 22.53"
D	-114.56131	31.09097	732624.8	3442241.2	114° 33' 40.68"	31° 05' 27.49"

Table 4. Coordinates of the Special Use Area

Vertex	Decimal coordinates		Metric Coordinates (UTM) Zone: 11 R		Coordinates Degrees, minutes and seconds	
			X	Y	LONGITUDE	LATITUDE
A	-114.816289	31.1244706	708222.664	3445448.204	114°48'58.	31°7'28.09
B	-114.6131581	30.9752847	727952.376	3429307.415	114°36'47.	30°58'31.0
C	-114.5953	31.00625984	729584.1	3432778.4	114°35'43.	31°0'22.53
D	-114.7749	31.13804956	712139.9	3447032.2	114°46'29.	31°8'16.97
E	-114.7408998	31.22277026	715190.4	3456490.7	114°44'27.	31°13'21.9
F	-114.7690817	31.2430625	712459.851	3458685.9	114°46'8.6	31°14'35.0

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Figure 3. Map of the Transit Channel in the Zero Tolerance Area

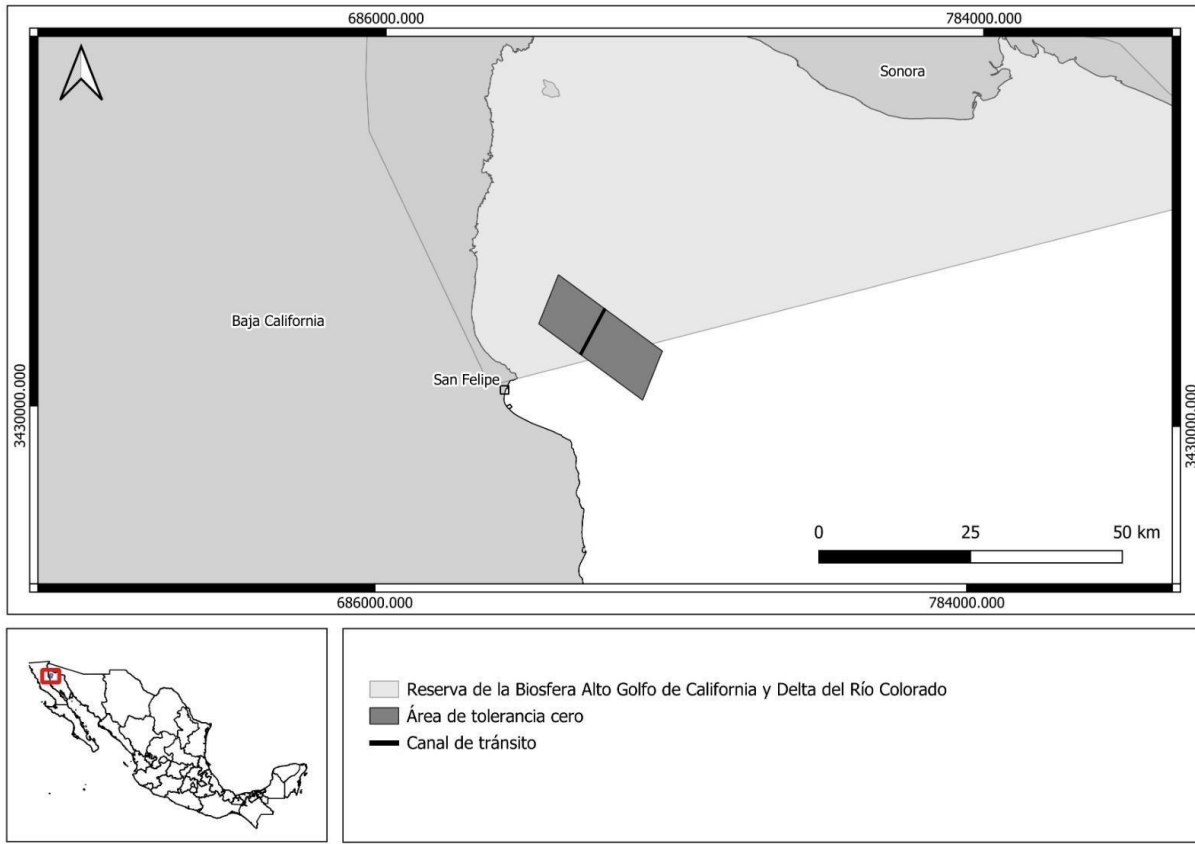


Table 5. Coordinates of the Transit Channel

Vertex	Decimal Coordinates		Metric Coordinates (UTM) Zone: 11 R		Coordinates Degrees, minutes and seconds	
	LONGITUDE LAT	ITUDE	X	Y	LONGITUDE LAT	ITUDE
A	-114.659	31.163	723130.461	3450001.122	114°39'32.	31°9'46.80
B	-114.662	31.165	722824.516	3450253.438	114°39'43.	31°9'54.00
C	-114.704	31.086	718994.87	3441429.111	114°42'14.	31°5'9.600
D	-114.701	31.084	719305.15	3441177.413	114°42'3.6	31°5'2.400

ARTICLE THIRTEENTH BIS. Within the Zero Tolerance Area and the Special Use Area, the competent authorities, within the scope of their legal powers, will carry out, in a coordinated, constant and strategic manner, maritime and aerial surveillance or by any other means and technology deemed necessary, in such a way as to provide real-time response capabilities to intercept and sanction any case of non-compliance with this Agreement.

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ARTICLE FOURTEENTH.- SEMAR, CONAPESCA and PROFEPA, within the scope of its powers and in accordance with applicable regulations, they will seize and remove from the Gillnet Exclusion Area prohibited non-permitted fishing gear, including gillnets, as well as abandoned, lost or discarded gear.

The prohibited or non-permitted fishing gear or instruments removed from the Gillnet Exclusion Area, based on the administrative resolution of the competent authority or by means of a final judgment issued by the jurisdictional body, must be destroyed in accordance with the General Law of Sustainable Fisheries and Aquaculture and the General Law of Ecological Balance and Environmental Protection.

For the removal and destruction of prohibited, illegal, abandoned, lost or discarded fishing gear, the collaboration of other public and private entities may be counted on, including civil society organizations and community groups, through collaboration agreements, in order to expand the efforts to remove said fishing gear in the Gillnet Exclusion Area.

ARTICLE FIFTEENTH. - SEMARNAT, through CONANP, will continue conducting acoustic monitoring of the vaquita population and will promote, according to budget availability, the carrying out of cruises for the visual component of the species' monitoring.

ARTICLE SIXTEENTH.- The Intergovernmental Group on Sustainability in the Upper Gulf of California (GIS) will be the inter-institutional body in charge of analyzing, defining, coordinating, supervising and evaluating the actions and strategies required for compliance with this Agreement.

Said group will be chaired by SEMARNAT, and will be made up of SEMARNAT, SEMAR and SADER, through their decentralized administrative bodies, decentralized and administrative units: Undersecretariat of Biodiversity and Environmental Restoration, PROFEPA, CONANP, CONAPESCA and IMPAS; and may include the collaboration of other dependencies whose activities contribute to compliance with this Agreement, such as the Ministries of Economy, Finance and Public Credit, Labor and Social Welfare, Security and Citizen Protection, Welfare and Foreign Relations, the Tax Administration Service, among other dependencies of the Federal Public Administration, as well as the Attorney General's Office.

In terms of inspection and surveillance, the actions required to comply with the provisions of this Agreement will be the responsibility of SEMARNAT, through PROFEPA, with the intervention corresponding to CONANP, as well as SADER, through CONAPESCA, each within the scope of their respective powers. All these dependencies will coordinate with SEMAR for surveillance in the marine areas delimited and defined in this Agreement.

As part of its activities, the GIS will establish parameters and measures aimed at preventing and controlling situations in which fishing activity as a whole significantly violates the regulations of this Agreement, in accordance with the parameters established.

ARTICLE SEVENTEENTH.- It is repealed.

## REPORT OF THE 13<sup>TH</sup> MEETING OF CIRVA

TRANSITORY FIRST.- This Agreement shall enter into force on the day following its publication in the Official Gazette of the Federation.

SECOND.- It is repealed.

THIRD.- It is repealed.

FOURTH.- It is repealed.

FIFTH.- It is repealed.

SIXTH.- The GIS will establish and update, as necessary, the Guidelines for its organization and operation.

SEVENTH.- Within 30 calendar days following the publication of this Agreement in the Official Gazette of the Federation, the GIS will establish the Collaboration Subgroup on Law Enforcement. This subgroup will function as a centralized conduit to facilitate the exchange of information and coordination for law enforcement in matters relating to this Agreement, including, but not limited to:

- a. Identification and sanction of actions by third parties in contravention of the Agreement;
- b. Information on the illegal trafficking of totoaba, its parts and/or derivatives;
- c. Implementation of joint protocols and strategies for deterrence, inspection and surveillance, monitoring of administrative, criminal and judicial processes, and application of sanctions, for actions by third parties in contravention of the Agreement;
- d. Development of legislative proposals to strengthen internal processes and coordination inter-institutional in matters related to the provisions of this Agreement.

EIGHTH.- It is repealed.

NINTH.- CONAPESCA, in coordination with SEMAR, will implement a system of monitoring that is tamper-proof or manipulation-proof, for vessels smaller than those referred to in ARTICLE FIFTH of this Agreement, within a period not exceeding twelve months from the corresponding budgetary authorization.

TENTH.- The "AGREEMENT establishing the indicators, triggering factors and predetermined actions, in accordance with article seventeen of the Agreement regulating arts, systems, methods, techniques and schedules for carrying out fishing activities with minor and major vessels in Mexican marine areas in the northern Gulf of California and establishing landing sites, as well as the use of monitoring systems for such vessels, published on September 24, 2020", published in the Official Gazette of the Federation on July 09, 2021, is repealed.

ELEVENTH.- The authorized sites for departure and arrival established in article ninth of this Agreement, correspond to those that are part of the scope of said Agreement. CONAPESCA may maintain and establish the authorized departure and arrival sites that it determines outside the scope of this Agreement.

## REPORT OF THE 13<sup>TH</sup> MEETING OF CIRVA

Given in Mexico City, on February 28, 2025.-

The Secretary of Agriculture and Rural Development, Julio Berdegué Sacristán.- Signature.-

The Secretary of Environment and Natural Resources, Alicia Isabel Bárcena Ibarra.- Signature.-

The Admiral Secretary of the Navy, Raymundo Pedro Morales Ángeles.- Signature.-