

Ambassador & ORCA monitoring British waters for whales, dolphins & porpoises

Ambassador Cruise Line named ORCA a charity partner for the third year running and continues to support the monitoring of the 25 species calling the British Isles home: whales, dolphins and porpoises, including 'slinky' minke whales, orcas and the largest bottlenose dolphins in the world.

The cruise line will offer 23 ORCA sailings for the 2024/25 season totalling almost 585 days at sea - the highest number of dedicated ORCA sailings since the partnership began.

Each one will see a minimum of two ocean conservationists join passengers on board to collect important scientific data aimed at protecting sea life, including whales, dolphins and porpoises. They will invite travellers to spend time on deck to learn about ocean conservation, help spot marine life, and attend lectures and Q&As.

'I'm incredibly proud that we will be continuing our collaboration with our nominated charity partner ORCA for a third successive year,' said Ambassador Cruise Line CEO Christian Verhounig. 'Sustainability is and will remain one of Ambassador Cruise Line's core values, and the 23 dedicated ORCA itineraries in the 24/25 season will see marine conservationists conduct essential research.'

He added, 'With ORCA's interactive education programme continuing to be well-received by our guests, I'm delighted that ORCA and Ambassador will again work together to help guests understand the opportunity they have to help us in our joint mission to protect the oceans we sail in.'

Ocean conservationists will join passengers aboard Ambience for 12 itineraries, with sister ship Ambition set to host a further 11.

Both ships will offer dedicated enrichment areas and a range of educational materials focussed on whales and dolphins. These include the ORCA Ocean Watchers app, which allows passengers to try their hand at being an ocean conservationist, and information about ORCA's conservation programmes detailing how they are working to protect sea life around the world.

In 2023, over 8,062 sea life sightings were recorded during Ambassador sailings - the highest number since the collaboration began.

Since ORCA's first sailing with Ambassador in June 2022, the charity's experts have recorded and tracked many different species of animal. The common dolphin was sighted 1,100 times, with a further 457 sightings of the white beaked dolphin; 380 striped dolphin sightings; 48 loggerhead turtle sightings; 92 humpback whale sightings; 78 fin whale sightings; and 12 blue whale sightings.

Steve Jones, director of fundraising & operations at ORCA, stated, 'The last two years with Ambassador have given us the opportunity to reach more important habitats and engage with more guests than we would have ever thought possible.'

'Working aboard Ambience and Ambition is giving our Ocean Conservationists the chance to collect vital data about vulnerable habitats around the world, all whilst teaching guests about the role they can play themselves in keeping whales and dolphins safe...'

Ambassador Cruise Line has been working with ORCA on a joint anti-whaling campaign since April 2022.

None of Ambassador's 2024/25 itineraries will feature destination experiences that incorporate any form of whaling or offer the option to consume whale and dolphin products (e.g. restaurants serving whale meat.) Nor will the cruise line offer experiences to dolphinariums or other destinations that feature captive marine mammals.

ORCA's on board talks provide an overview of the whaling industry, the impact it has on the marine ecosystem and the myths that surround it.

Ambassador itineraries will visit various ports of call that are of major significance and value to ORCA, helping them plug vital gaps in the monitoring of sea life populations and offering critical insights to further its work protecting sea animals.

From fin whales migrating through the Bay of Biscay to acrobatic common dolphins, elusive beaked whales, shy harbour porpoises and other species, the 'Multigenerational Iberian Treasures & North Africa' (August 10-22) will offer ORCA the chance to visit a number of important hotspots when crossing one of the most diverse sea life locations on the planet.

With 25 species spotted in UK waters, the British Isles is home to a diversity of whales, dolphins and porpoises, including 'slinky' minke whales, orcas and the largest bottlenose dolphins in the world. The 'British Isles & Ireland Discovery' sailing (June 30-July 17) will take in a number of protected areas so the sightings ORCA record play a direct role in helping to monitor the whales and dolphins around the coast.

Crossing the Bay of Biscay, the 'Canaries, Cape Verde & Morocco' itinerary (November 15-December 8) will see ORCA collect important winter data to help better understand the migrations of whales and dolphins. After reaching the Canary Islands, ocean conservationists will show passengers how important it is to enjoy whales and dolphins in the wild, with Ambassador's anti-captivity pledge being especially important in an area with a number of captive marine mammals.

Springtime in the Azores sees a combination of deep diving sperm whales and migrating whale species, like the blue whale. After leaving the Azores, the sailing will take in the North African coastline, an area that the charity has very limited data for, taking in Madeira, Morocco and the Strait of Gibraltar, as part of the 'Springtime Azores, Madeira and North Africa voyage' itinerary (March 21, 2025-April 11, 2025.)