

# STUDY AND CONSERVATION OF SPERM WHALES IN THE CANARY ISLANDS

**PARTICIPATE IN THE SECAC CITIZEN SCIENCE PROGRAM  
ON THE ISLAND OF LANZAROTE**

Research campaign plans for 2026

Information document



## PROYECTO CACHALOTES DE CANARIAS CANARY ISLANDS SPERM WHALE PROJECT

## THE CANARY ISLANDS SPERM WHALE PROJECT

**The Sperm whale** (*Physeter macrocephalus*) is listed as vulnerable in the National Catalog of Threatened Species (RD139 / 2011), in the Regional Catalog of the Canary Islands (L.7L / PPL-001 of 2009) and **is listed as "vulnerable"** by the International Union for the Conservation of Nature (IUCN). In the Canary Islands, the main threat to sperm whales is collision with fast ferries. The Canary Islands have one of the highest maritime traffic densities on the planet. Every year several cetacean strandings occur that show evidence of injuries caused by fast ferry collisions.

Between 2000 and 2018, 81 sperm whales were stranded in the Canary Islands. In 44 of these cases, the cause of death was attributable to collisions with vessels. These deaths have a significant impact on the populations of the species in the archipelago because the collision mortality rate exceeds the natural reproduction rate. Furthermore, this is not only a conservation problem in the Canary archipelago but a threat to species across the Macaronesian subregion. Due to the absence of studies, there is not much information on the biology and ecology of the sperm whales in this area.

Collision mortality could be reduced thanks to the approval of mitigation measures based on scientific studies. Nautical censuses using with **Passive Acoustic Monitoring (PAM)** and **Photo-identification technics** are used in the SECAC project to fill the scientific gap concerning this species in the archipelago, and understand the structure of the population, ecology, movements and use of the habitat to create a map on the possible risk of collision.



## COME WITH US TO THE SEA

The SECAC carries out a Citizen Science project called "**Come with Us to the Sea**", <https://www.cetaceos.org/citizen-project/> where up to 6 people can participate in our research campaigns embarking on a 14-meter sailboat and contributing to scientific research in the "**Canary Islands Sperm Whale Project**".

## LOCATION OF THE ACTIVITY

### HOME PORT

This study is based on the island of Lanzarote. The base port for this research is the port of **Puerto del Carmen, Lanzarote**.

This project is developed in the Marine Protected Area (MPA) Place of Community Importance (SCI) of the European Union's Natura 2000 Network: "**Eastern and Southern Marine Space of Lanzarote - Fuerteventura**" (ESZZ15002), declared for its rich marine biodiversity, the presence of 31 species of cetaceans, turtles, seabirds and the existence of seamounts.

### THE OUTING TO SEA

**The program may change due to weather conditions.** The sailing will be done with a sailingboat (15 m long). The duration is approximate and will depend on the state of the sea and the work to be done.

## 3-DAY EXPEDITION DATES

| Campaigns   | Dates                  | Places |
|-------------|------------------------|--------|
| Lanzarote 1 | 23-24-25 October 2026  | 6      |
| Lanzarote 2 | 27-28-29 November 2026 | 6      |
|             |                        |        |

Programs may vary depending on sea conditions and the tasks to be performed. This is a citizen science project and a scientific research effort, so participants are required to actively collaborate in team work and assist researchers with various tasks.

## FINANCIAL DONATION

The required donation for 3-Day Expedition is 500 €. This contribution will be used entirely to help defray the costs of the project (maintenance of the boat, fuel, berthing, research material, etc.). The donation includes food and accommodation on board. This financial contribution is a donation and not an economic consideration. We do not lead tours; but rather conduct scientific expeditions for research and conservation. The contribution does not include travel to and from the home port or other expenses. The SECAC recognizes each participant as a sponsor of the project. Also, each participant will be given a certificate of participation.

## WHAT TO BRING?

Space on the boat is limited; so please bring a small bag, and just the most basic items:

1. **Documentation** (do not forget your ID or passport and original or copy of your health insurance card)
2. **Sleeping bag** (very important for sleeping on board) and **a towel**
3. **Cap, sunglasses, and sunscreen 50** (very important)
4. Warm clothing or windproof jacket (on some trips it can be cold)
5. Comfortable footwear
6. Camera, video, binoculars (optional)

## RULES OF COHABITATION ON BOARD

The languages spoken on board are **Spanish** and **English**. There are a few basic rules that will facilitate coexistence on board during campaigns in a reduced space, as well as ensuring the safety of all, the performance of work and maintenance of the boat. Among them we highlight:

- Always follow scrupulously the directions given by the project manager and the boat's skipper.
- Always keep your life jacket on and respect the safety measures indicated.
- It is recommended to take something to avoid seasickness in advance of departure if you do not have previous sailing experience.
- Hydrate yourself by drinking water; protect yourself from the sun by regularly applying cream; and cover your head with a hat or cap.
- No smoking on board.
- No alcoholic beverages or narcotic substances are allowed.
- Absolutely nothing is allowed to be thrown into the sea.
- Maintain the order of the boat. Each person is responsible for their belongings.
- Be kind and respectful to our companions.

- Bathing in open ocean is not allowed.
- It is forbidden to take pictures or video of the project (including cetaceans, working procedures and people on board) without first asking and receiving permission from the project director.

## APPLY NOW!

To participate with us you must follow these steps:

1. Read this information document carefully, fill in and sign the forms: participation request and acceptance of conditions and signature (found at the end of this document). Send all forms to SECAC at the following address: [secaclanzarote@gmail.com](mailto:secaclanzarote@gmail.com)
2. We will contact you to confirm the provisional participation.
3. For the **3-Day Expedition**, you must transfer **500€** to the SECAC account (see box below) indicating your first and last name, and identify the transfer as: **"Donation Sperm whale"**

**Bank BBVA**

**ES3001820779670201727789**

**Swift: BBVAESMMXXX**

## CONTACT US:

For any consultation contact with us you can call us or send an e-mail :

**+34 684303503 / [secaclanzarote@gmail.com](mailto:secaclanzarote@gmail.com)**

**Francesca Fusar Poli**

**Canary Islands Sperm Whale Project Coordinator**