



TETHYS RESEARCH INSTITUTE

A non-profit research organisation supporting marine conservation through science and public awareness with a focus on large marine vertebrates



Cetacean Sanctuary Research **2024**



GUEST DIARY



🐬 Thank you for the opportunity to spend this time on board Pelagos, the amazing experience of seeing up close the majestic fin and sperm whales and the playful dolphins. It was fantastic to learn so much about the cetaceans of the Mediterranean from such friendly, enthusiastic and knowledgeable experts, and to play a small part in contributing to the valuable work you do.

Judith, 62, UK, CSR 02

🐬 An experience that changes the perspective of life. The crew is extremely hard working, knowledgeable and welcoming. I had an amazing time learning a lot of new things and getting to know the whole team and volunteers. There are long hours of work for the team but always they do show their passion for the job, really amazing people. Thank you for everything and especially thank you for the great food. I will come back for sure.

Elena, 38, Romania/UK, CSR 02

🐬 Had a great time on board Pelagos this past week! I've made new friends and had once-in-a-lifetime experiences; seeing a sperm whale dive down right next to us was amazing. I'm looking forward to being back on board soon!

Milo Moffitt, 18, UK, CSR 05

🐬 My week aboard the Pelagos was a really wonderful experience! Spotting bottlenose dolphins and seeing a sperm whale metres away was surreal, I think I stopped breathing. However, whether on land or on the water, the people I met made every moment special. Thank you for such a memorable time :)

Denali Gordon, 18, CA/FR, CSR 05

🐬 For the week on board the Pelagos was by far better than anything I could expect. The volunteers, the crew, and the sea will always have a place in my heart. The crew were always so helpful and kind, teaching us new things every day and even letting us help collect research data. Even though the weather wasn't perfect, we were still able to see bottlenose dolphins and a sperm whale that came right up to the boat. This is an experience I will never forget. Thank you to the crew and everyone who made it so memorable!

Celeste Duerden, 26 IN, USA, CSR 05

🐬 This week was unlucky in terms of sightings, but lucky in terms of having an amazingly fun time on board the Pelagos! A big thank you to the crew, who took very well care of us and made sure we'll have an unforgettable week regardless of the challenging weather conditions.

Helena, Hamburg, Germany, CSR 06

🐬 Thank you for this unforgettable and pleasant week! I really learned a lot and enjoyed spending time with all of you guys – such interesting and openhearted people! I wish you all the best in your further research-cruises and hope to see you soon again! 😊

Anina, 24, Zurich, Switzerland, CSR 06

🐬 Thank you for the opportunity to spend time on board of the Pelagos, an amazing

experience of seeing up close playful dolphins. It was fantastic to learn so much about the project, the sanctuary and the all the Mediterranean marine mammals. Loved our caring crew. Mario with his lecture full of expertise en fun, Leo always there for you and an excellent cook, Ali the sunshine of the crew, Manu the heart of the group. And the ever so charming Roberto sailing us to adventure. Such friendly, enthusiastic and knowledgeable experts. I felt like I was part of a team full of love, and made a small part in contributing to the valuable work you do. I whaly love you guys!

Lien, 38 Brussels, Belgium, CSR 06

🐬 Thank you so much for this amazing experience! I loved every bit of it, even the cleaning, which is really unique. Whether it was on the sea or in the harbour we always felt close to nature. The lectures were brought in an interesting and pleasant way. Wherever we where we were been taken care off so well. Alice was wonderfull from the beginning and Leo, Mario and Emanuel taught us that Italian men are the best cooks and very caring too. It will be an experiece to remember forever. Gracie Mille!

Charlotte, 34, Antwerp, Belgium, CSR 06

🐬 I am very glad, I stayed another week and got to witness the amazing and rare sighting of the Risso's Dolphins! We had a special week on board the Pelagos with lots of lovely people. Special thanks to the ever so handsome field assistant Manu, the equipment responsible Alice and the logistics responsible Guendalina! And of course thank you to Caterina for guiding us through an exciting week!

Helena, Hamburg, Germany, CSR 07

🐬 It was a really fun week with lots to learn and lots of interesting and amazing sightings including the Risso's dolphins. I am certainly coming back next year hopefully for two weeks! All the people on board have been very friendly and amazing and I had a great time looking for the cetaceans on the sighting platform. Thank you very much Caterina for all the lessons and information about these amazing marine animals! <33

Anita, 16, Lugano, Switzerland, CSR 07

🐬 I've been trying to think of another week in my life that's' been this exiting and interesting and i dont know if I can, i feel like I've been exposed to something I'll be thinking back to my whole life, and it's really made me think about what *i* want to do and, has potentially changed the direction of my life. So I'd like to say thank you so much to everyone involved and that everything you've done to allow me to have this experience has maybe changed the course of my life. So thank you

Daniel, CSR 07

🐬 I'm so very glad I got to participate in this research for this week, being able to be part of it. I'm not really able to put in words what I felt when I saw all the ceataceans, I was just so in awe but it was really a wonderful experience, with wonderful people that made it all even more enjoyable and memorable. Can't thank y'all enough for it all, excited to spend another week here. Defintely unforgettable and loved the lectures, I could listen to them all day. Thank you so much for everything you do! Will think of you in Sardegna <3

Virginia, 21, Sassari, Italy, CSR 07

🐳 This has been a week to remember. It has been a time of testing my courage with adjusting to a whole new continent and a whole new culture on my own. I can say I have met people that I hope to keep a lifelong friendship with and a newfound love of marine mammals. It has been a pleasure to be aboard the ship and has felt more like an amazing adventure than working on the research. If I ever find myself back on the eastern hemisphere I will gladly come back on board the Pelagos.

Olivia, 20, St.Louis, USA, CSR 07

🐳 Hello again,! I'm super happy I got to stay on Pelagos another week, it was awesome, had the best time of my life with all the participants and the amazing crew, they all were the best company I could ever ask for looking for marine mammals in the sea. Finally got to see a sperm whale and it was majestic, will treasure that sight forever! I really wish to this again next year, maybe as a volunteer or assistant, who knows. Still, I loved this two weeks, it's amazing what the researcher do and so very happy I got see their passion for their work and what they do, the lectures where also very interesting, took lots of notes, really enjoyed them! Hope to see y'all in Sardinia some day!! Lots and lots of love

Virginia, 21, Sassari, Italy, CSR 08

🐳 Back again! This week has added to the amazement of my time in Europe with the sightings of even more species. My love for aquatic life has grown tenfold and the goosebumps you get from seeing a sperm whale's fluke as it heads back down is unimaginable. I have loved this experience and I already know I will cry when I have to leave. If I could stay here forever I would in a heartbeat.

Olivia, 20, St.Louis, USA, CSR 08

🐳 Hello! I have loved the entire week onboard the Pelagos. It was such a memorable experience and an exciting opportunity. I have learnt so much and developed my interests in marine life. I look forward to similar experiences in the future as I have been inspired by the lovely people onboard and really enjoyed both the calm and busy times alongside them. I will be so sad to leave as this week has gone too quickly. Thank you!

Ronja, 16, Devon, England, CSR 08

🐳 Ciao everybody!

Thank you Tethys and all the amazing team that I had the pleasure to meet!

It was very nice to discover a lot more about cetaceus, and "my own" Italian sea!

Now I know how search for animals that I love. Next time I will be sailing around I will take you all with me! Untill next time.

Paola, Turin, Italy, CSR 08

🐳 It has been an incredible week with lots of wonderful encounters and many different cetaceans! The pilot whales were definitely my favourite ones. Thank you so much for another inspiring week. It was worth joining Pelagos for a second cruise. I'm always learning something new about the cetaceans or the research, thanks to the lovely and welcoming crew. I wish you all the best and good luck with finding the missing sperm whales ;)

Mattia, 24, Switzerland, CSR 09

🐳 Yes... We have been very lucky this week, we have seen many marine mammals, birds, and fish. We made the wish of seeing a Fin Whale from the head to the tip of the tale, feeling humble and small in front of such a majestic creature... and it came true. We did not dare to openly make the wish of seeing the Pilot Whales, it seemed too much to ask, something that you should really earn... but it came true.

But there is even more here on Pelagos, the moment you see a fin, a splash, or a blow (or you think you have seen), to try to understand what is the species, to wait that that animal decides if it wants to be admired, are short, powerful, intense emotions, from the first to the last. Each of them worth the trip.

Alessandro, Genova, Italy, CSR 09

🐳 Perfect week, wonderful crew and people from different countries. Lots of emotions and contact with great animals. Very thankful and going home with a great smile. Thank you all!

Roland 52, Bern, Switzerland, CSR 09

🐳 This was an extraordinary week! Amazing weather, people and crew. We had the possibility to spot Fin whales, Pilot whales and Dolphins. Not to mention the birds, fishes and rays 😊

It was way over my expectations! The wonder of nature, the magic of waiting for a splash of a fin, the excitement of all of us when we were around these amazing animals – I will never forget.

Melinda, 41, Budapest, Hungary, CSR 09

🐳 Grazie mille !

What a great week with you on board! Such a beautiful and hot weather with nice people to meet. I can't realize that I have seen so much fin whales, dolphins and three sperm whales for the last day. Thank you for sharing your knowledge with us, it was an amazing and such interesting week with Tethys team.

I will never forget it.

Aurelie, 34, Nantes, France, CSR 10

🐳 Blow and splash...these words will stick to my mind 😊 I enjoyed the excitement when we were about to find a whale. The whole crew was staring at the sea and tried to find the BLOW or at least a part of the whale coming up. But also the other animals like sea turtles, devil's ray, mola mola and of course the striped dolphins visited us and I will collect the pictures in my brain forever. Thanks for all and i hope to see you soon again.

Amelie, 33, Leipzig, Germany, CSR 10

🐳 This has been a truly special week, I won't forget all the amazing sights. My favourite in particular was the seven fin whales surrounding the boat and I remember being excitingly overwhelmed by this.

Martha, 16, Norwich, England, CSR 10

🐳 How many spermwhales and finwhales we have observed this week? We had the great

luck to see so many and every animal was a very special and emotional touch. The moonfish was very fascinating for me, because I never have seen one before and I liked also the turtles. To swim in the deep sea in middle of a nice group was also a highlight and to sleep outside under the stars. Thank you to the staff and the group to make me staying well in this days full of adventures. My heart is full full of joy and impressions.

Marion, 63, Badalucco, Italia, CSR 10

🐬 These past two weeks have been nothing short of spectacular. The staff are so passionate about the project and are always happy to answer any question. I was able to connect with so many different people from around the world and learn so much new information about our great oceans, even picking up a little Italian along the way! From the smallest striped dolphins to the largest fin whales and everything in between, my love of the oceans has only grown. I hope that one day I can come back and do this all over again.

Diego, 17, Washington DC, USA, CSR 11

🐬 This past week was amazing and I will never forget it! We've seen so many animals and I've learnt so much about them! The biologists are so nice and willing to share with us everything that they know and I didn't expect to meet so many different species. I feel very grateful and so lucky! Being with other volunteers who are also passionate with sea animals is also enriching. I will definitely come back next year! Grazie mille!

Thalie, 37, Angers, France, CSR 11

🐬 My past two weeks on this boat have been extraordinary! I have never seen a whale, dolphin, sea turtle or sting ray before and therefore it was just unbelievable to have them just in front of me. We saw so many different species that I will never forget. I definitely hope to be able to come back to a research boat like this – maybe also as a researcher myself.

Sidney, 19, Thundorf, Switzerland, CSR 11

🐬 The past week has been a great experience which has interested me alot and made me think m ore about the problems in the sea that we dont see on the day to day basis. Thank you tethys team.

Freddie, 17, England, CSR 12

🐬 The past week has been superb and I am pleased to say I actively helped research and gain more knowledge about cetaceans in the Mediterranean sea. Thank you so much to all the team for your effort and humour even though the lanuage barrier was tough to engage with sometimes.

Daniel, 17 England, CSR 12

🐬 It is incredible how one week on this trip can change your whole experience on wildlife in the ocean. This week has made me feel connected to the animals and it has made me wish the best for the critical species. Thank you to all the team for making me feel included and they were always so positve. Thank you Tethys.

Matthew G, 17, England, CSR 12

🐋 My participation throughout this last week has truly changed the view I have on marine life. For someone who has never been able to see animals like this before, I would name it a once in a lifetime experience. The Tethys Team were extremely supportive and friendly throughout the week and I couldn't thank you more.

Matthew, 17, England, CSR 12

🐋 This week has been amazing and I have loved the experience. The crew were so welcoming and kept high spirits throughout the trip. The experience with the wildlife was also amazing and we were fortunate enough to see a lot of wildlife every day. Thank you so much for the experience.

Federico, 24, Italy, CSR 12

🐋 I wish I could properly put into words how much of an amazing time I had. In fact, I have, it's just over 150 pages in my personal journal, so I'll keep it short. Having the opportunity to experience these animals in their habitat is a gift. Not only did we get to learn hands on, but the sheer amount of information that was provided to us was incredible. It's such a humbling experience to be able to swim in the water and hear the clicks of a sperm whale yourself. My mom said to me over video chat, "I think this is the happiest I've ever seen you." All the best.

KB, 19, United States, CSR 13

🐋 Thank you so much to the wonderful team – Catherina, Alice, Alice and Catherina – and of course our great experienced skippers Roberto and Paolo for helping making this week on board The Pelagos a unique, invaluable, at times magical (!) (cf. Pilot Whales!) and immersive experience in that special rare marine world that is The Pelagos Sanctuary! Special thanks to Catherina, our top marine scientist, for sharing with us some of the fascinating results of years of dedicated research. An experience beyond all (my) expectations that I do hope many passionate sea and cetacean lovers and other novices can share and discover in the future!!! Wishing all continued success to the CSR15 Team in their inlappable efforts, beliefs and faith in conservation of that unique part of our world which foremost needs to be saved for generations to come.

Hopefully, looking forward to do this again!

Grazie ancora!

Christine da Parigi, Francia e adesso Londra, Inghilterra, CSR 15

🐋 This was our second time on the Pelagos and it was as amazing as if not more than the first time! We were very lucky and saw pilot whales and got deep insight into the research. As future biology students this very immersive experience making us part of a scientific data collection once again sparked our interest and motivated us to pursue a career in biology. A big Thank you to the crew, we hope to see you again soon :)

Sophie (20) and Max (19), Switzerland, CSR 15

🐋 This was an incredible experience! Every night we had the choice to sleep outside under the stars and we watched the sunrise in the morning. We were able to learn about how they track down the whales and we even saw a baby sperm whale. My favorite aspect of the experience was jumping of the boat in to 1000+ meters deep ocean; we put our ears under

and we were able to hear the whales noises. We were also lucky enough to have devil rays swim so close to the boat and it looked so magical, like something out of a movie. The staff were so welcoming and knowledgeable and are what makes this experience amazing!!
Grace (17) and Amelia (17), England, CSR 16

🐬 As someone who in his job sits all day in an office behind a screen without any connection to biology it was super interesting to see how scientists work out in the field. Besides during their work Katharina, Katharina, Alice and Tiberio did an amazing job in making us feel very welcome. Always willing to answer all our questions and show us how they work. Also when we had bad luck with the weather and couldn't go out for two days they took very good care about us. Gave us an interesting lecture on cetaceans and even organized a trip to the back country where we saw some cute village, swam in a river and could buy local products. On top of all of this Katharina the younger got up early every day and went to bed late to make sure we always had tasty food and the kitchen was clean, impressive. When we finally managed to go to the sea we saw so many great things: baby sperm whales, baby dolphins a fin whale, mantas. Truly impressive was to be able to hear the clicks of a sperm whale while swimming. And when I suddenly detected the sperm whale sounds on the hydrophone, after we only saw dolphins I felt a bit proud. The trip was an amazing experience thank you so much for making this possible for people who are not at all connected to the field and for being such an welcoming team. All the best for your work in helping to protect this magnificent creatures!
Matthias (42), Switzerland, CSR 16

🐬 A big thank you for the hospitality of the wonderful crew, the great food, for all the information and great lectures on the whales and the much increased understanding of the global connections that effect them and us directly. An awareness rising experience I would recommend to everybody. These miracoulous touching beings telling us unheard stories, being here already a long time before we evolved on this planet. Feeling deeply moved by the way they live together and organize their existence on earth by developing own cultures. In the hope that we as human animals will manage to help that they can go on existing. Thank you again for all this generosity!
AnnA B., CSR 18

🐬 Thank you so much for this incredible experience and all the things we could learn from you about marine mammals and the methods used to carry out research on them!! We had the best time. You are all doing a crucial job in increasing awareness on marine conservation and it's something everybody should know more about.
Muchas gracias,
Lara and Mar., CSR 18

🐬 Thanks Tehtys for the experience making the best out of the bad conditions, we manage to get out at sea couple of times and it was great to see dolphins and mola molas. It was super interesting to get to know better about the research program and the methods used to take samples in the field. The cherry on top was the delicious italian food and the funny and lovely crew. Hope to be back on board soon!
Flo & Nicoletta, CSR 20

🐳 Thank you for such a lovely experience. I felt welcome and had a magical time. See you next time.

Darren, 59, UK, CSR 21

🐳 A brilliant week at sea. I've never spent so long on a boat before and it was a pleasure sharing it with this crew. I learnt a lot about cetaceans and was inspired by everyone's passion on the subject. Thank you very much for a wonderful week.

David, 32, UK, CSR 21

🐳 Well, let's be honest, we didn't see whales – so we thought that the whole thing might be a marketing scam. Kidding! We saw a bunch of pilot whales and despite having to stay in the harbour 2,5 of 5 days, we had such a good week. The crew is incredibly kind and made us feel at home. It's impressive how they orchestrate field research next to a bunch of volunteers on a holiday. I will come back next year and bring my aunt and even more friends.

Eva, 37, cultural worker from Switzerland, CSR 21

🐳 Thank you very much for such a beautiful experience! Although we stayed for some days in the boat, I really enjoyed the time with the crew and participants. I liked a lot that the crew was so passionate about the work they do, in fact I learned and got interested in many topics that they told us about in the lectures. I hope this is not the last time I have one of this experience. Many lucks for the future research work guys, keep it going!

Aldo, 30, El Salvador/Austria, CSR 21

🐳 I'm so grateful for this experience. The crew is really passionate about their work and let me feel like at home. I have learned many new things about cetaceans and marine biology research. I am already planning to join you again next year! I have seen incredible animals, I am totally in love with pilot whales! Also, I met wonderful humans on board, thank you guys from the bottom of my heart. I hope be so fortunate to meet you again!

Marta, 32, Italy/Austria, CSR 21