

20 Trips to Change Your World

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By Travel+Leisure



Azores, Portugal

Study population levels and migration routes of endangered sea animals—whales, turtles, and dolphins—in the Portuguese Azores islands in the Atlantic Ocean. The archipelago's rich waters are filled with some of the world's most threatened species, such as loggerhead turtles and sperm whales. With the help of an expedition leader and Dr. Matthias Hamer, participants learn how to tag loggerhead turtles, listen to dolphin sounds, and spot sperm whales. "Look for the flukes (tails); they are the whales' fingerprints," hints Hamer. Data are used by the University of the

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Azores and the International Whaling Commission, among other research organizations.

Trip Tip: The trip takes place in springtime, an ideal time for spotting the rare blue whale.

Luxury Level: For seven hours a day, you work on the 45-foot catamaran in rotational shifts. At night, you share your room with one other participant at the 10-room Azores eco-lodge, a B&B used exclusively for the expedition. Although the lodge is cozy, the accommodations (single beds) are simple.

Key Voluntourism Wildlife and Environmental

Conservation: 800/407-5761; biosphere-expeditions.org; April 7-19, April 21-May 3, May 5-May 17; \$2,622. *Jennifer Welbel*