



“Marine Interpretation and Training of Marine Guides”

Workshop

26th April, 09:00-13:00 at the Aquarium

ECS 2007 Donostia – San Sebastian, Spain

Registration Fee: 10€

Contact: Deborah Benham [deborah.benham@wdcs.org]

Objectives:

To discuss and share ideas regarding interpretation of the marine environment and training of marine guides. Anyone interested in marine mammal tourism and education is welcome to attend. We would particularly value the participation of those who have worked as marine guides and educators, or those who would like to. Tour operators, tourism researchers, educators/interpreters, NGO's and management agencies would also be very welcome.

Rationale:

The Whale and Dolphin Conservation Society recognises that guides on cetacean watching trips play a key role in sustainable, positive cetacean watching. In some parts of the world negative impacts on cetaceans and other marine mammals have been observed in response to tourism activities. WDCS believes that cetacean watching trips should be an example of Ecotourism at its best, i.e. sustainable, having conservation value, supporting local economies and being educational. High quality interpretation from guides enhances the conservation value of cetacean watching trips by raising awareness of environmental issues and encouraging more environmental attitudes and behaviours. Guides can encourage responsible interactions with wildlife and can conduct scientific research. High quality guides also play a key role in customer satisfaction. At present marine guides appear to be an under appreciated community. In many places they receive little training, support or financial reward for their valuable contribution to cetacean conservation. WDCS are interested in developing a training and accreditation programme for marine guides to help professionalize and empower this community. This workshop will provide an opportunity to share ideas and expertise on marine interpretation and guide training and to hear what guides and other stakeholders in marine mammal tourism feel is needed to improve marine interpretation and current training provision.



Organising Entities: Whale and Dolphin Conservation Society.

Workshop Organiser: Dr Deborah Benham, Project Officer, Dolphin Space Programme, WDCS