

SNORKELING WITH SPERM WHALES

From the moment Francis, the marine biologist, lowers his hydroponic microphone into the water, the unique clicking of echolocating sperm whales in search of tasty squid or octopus is a sound you will never forget.





**“ A good encounter is one when the whales remain.
When this occurs, the other twosome follows into the water.”**

Sperm Whale Encounters – Our snorkeling begins with two guests led by expedition leader Amanda Cotton. A good encounter is one when the whales remain. When this occurs, the other twosome follows into the water.

Our past experience has observed Dominica’s west coast hosting approximately five sperm whale families, each with five to nine cetaceans. Females and their calves comprise the majority of these groups. Occasionally we will encounter a male, 45 to 55 feet long, easily recognizable being thirty percent larger than the females. Frequently a family will socialize playing in the water, while other times they may remain stationary, totally vertical in the water. Sometimes the pod will swim slowly allowing us to fin with them, while other times their speed picks up as we follow them until they abruptly stop, apparently waiting for us. Each encounter offers a different opportunity, one more exciting than the next.

The recent discovery of this sperm whale winter migration in the Caribbean Windward Islands of French Dominica brings this unique and incredible expedition even closer to paradise. Primarily feeding on squid and octopus, the sperm whale has a narrow lower jaw with up to twenty-six cone-shaped teeth on each side of its lower jaw, which fit into upper jaw sockets. While the teeth can be functional, they do not appear to be necessary for capturing or eating squid. These “gentle giants” are the most approachable of all whales.



Its unique body shape makes the sperm whale differ from other cetaceans. Some of its distinctions include a block-shaped head that is a third the size of its body, an S-shaped blowhole on the left front of its head which creates a distinctive, spewing forward-angled spray, thick triangular flukes, ridges on its caudal rather than dorsal fin, and a wrinkled prune-like skin on its back.

A century ago, the sperm whale, one of the largest whales hunted for oil, was on the brink of extinction. Unlike orcas, pods of sperm whales do not exhibit any significant tendency to mingle with genetic relatives. Females and calves spend the majority of their time foraging. Any brief socializing, fining, breaching, and other playful actions that provide great photo ops, usually occur during the afternoon.

Their ability to dive to a depth of more than 7,000 feet (2,250 meters) for a period of up to ninety minutes, makes them one of the deepest diving mammals, second only to the Cuvier’s beaked whale.

The most sexually dimorphic of all cetaceans—males are significantly larger than females—we may hear echolocating or their unique clicking, which travels through the water for miles, before we get our first glimpse of the pod. The directional beams of these broadband clicks are generated through their phonic lips, also known as “monkey lips,” located below their blowhole. If we are extremely lucky, we might even see an albino.

Toothed whales using echolocation to search for food send out high-pitched clicks. The sound, which bounces off the object, allows the whale to interpret the returning echo to determine the object’s shape, direction, distance, and texture. These clicks, which are called a train, pass through the melon or fat-filled head organ that directs the sound wave.





“ Nature at its Best. Listen to Your Heart Pound ”

From the moment Pernell Francis, a marine biologist lowers his hydroponic microphone into the water, the unique clicking of echolocating sperm whales in search of tasty squid or octopus is a sound you will never forget.

Unlike humpbacks, whose incredible songs sound a bit like an unsynchronized orchestra of out-of-tune instruments, the sperm whale's clicking is more like an intense sound of chattering teeth. If you've joined us in Norway's 34° water observing orcas, a possible personal flashback might be similar to that of your chattering teeth.

The sperm whales distinctive sound, Dominica's warm (78° to 80° F) water, and 80-foot water visibility, enhances excitement to the point that you can't wait to enter the water. Our expedition is located on the western or lee side of Dominica. Protected from the wind, calm, warm waters greet us each eight-hour day we spend photographing sperm whales. We will also be on the lookout for pilot and false killer whales, those large members of the dolphin family sometimes called pseudo killer whales, true orcas and other dolphins.



The diving order will be two divers by two. Each team of two slide gently into the water to be "eye to eye" with the sperm whales. Excellent blue water visibility allows us to admire the pod from an arm's reach distance as they arrive. Our silence increases our chances for better and closer encounters.

Accommodations - our recommendations is you select the places you want to stay along the west coast of Dominica Fort young hotel - 4 stars - <http://www.reservations.com/hotel/fort-young-hotel>. With our update operation in Dominica and new vessel, we will pick you from this hotel doc

The vessel

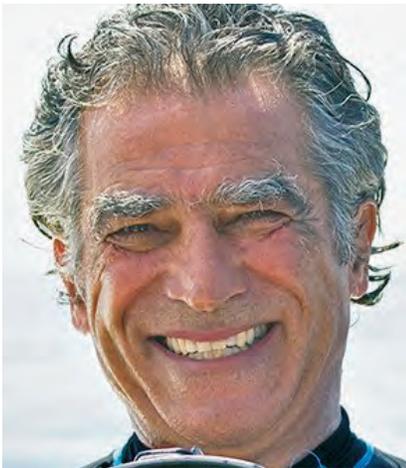


Our Boat -

The vessel owned by Dive Dominica the most experienced dive establishment in Dominica. Pernell Francis- Sperm whale Research specialist on Dominica. I have been affiliated with Dominica sperm whale project for the past 10 years. Pernell have been actively involved in sperm whale photography and expeditions for the past 6 years. I know these sperm whales better than any one on the island. Their moods..behaviours etc. The boat is 20ft long, and 12ft wide with a F'overhead cover and diving platform.

There is covered space for 4 guests, GPS, VHF radio onboard.Life jackets fresh drinking water with ice (daily)





AMOS NACHOUM
Owner & Director
Expedition Leader

Amos, twice recognized as BBC's Wildlife Photographer of the Year, has been featured on National Geographic, the BBC, and Discovery Channel show-casing his adventurous worldwide explorations. He has spent more than 18 years studying, experiencing, and snorkeling with Sperm Whales. There is no one who can meet his talent in sharing the use of wide-angle lens and ambient-light photography in a one on one situation, along with other techniques required for getting the best resolution, imagery, and color throughout the trip.

Amos uses his leadership and photography skills to artfully capture the lives of Ocean Giants whose existence is under threat, but whose hope of survival is linked to us communicating the truth.

BigAnimals Expeditions are designed to add value to your life experience, to generate attention for endangered species, to aid in their preservation and to provoke public awareness and opinion.



AMANDA COTTON
Expedition Leader

I) 3/11- 17, II) 17 - 23, III) 24 - 30, 2019

Amanda is a professional underwater photographer, an avid scuba diver and ocean enthusiast. Her goal is to help the general public embrace the beauty below the waves, in hopes that with awareness comes concern.

Amanda runs a design /media company, A COTTON PHOTO Creative Works LLC, and also enjoys working with like-minded organizations that genuinely care about the planet and its inhabitants. Amanda is a member of many prestigious organizations and has received numerous photography awards with her images being featured in major publications and news sources worldwide.

Amanda is a wide-angle specialist with many years of experience photographing sharks and other big marine animals.



Snorkeling with Sperm Whales in Dominica

I) March 7 - 12, 2020

II) March 12 - 18, 2020

WORLDWIDE SPERM WHALE EXPERIENCE: 18 years

WHERE: Dominica, Lesser Antilles, Portsmouth

DATES: I) March 7 - 13, 2020, II) 12 - 18, 2020

DURATION: 7 days

MAX NO. OF GUESTS: 4

AVAILABILITY:

PRICING: \$8,800 per pers

REGISTRATION: Deposit \$2,900

ACCOMMODATION: Not included in trip price...

TEMPERATURE: Water 80 to 82°F
Air 76-84°F

TRIP PRICE INCLUDES:

- 5 days of searching for and swimming with sperm whales
- Expedition Leader: Amanda Cotton
- Whale Whisperer: Pernel Francis
- Only four guests
- Whale swimming permit
- Lunch onboard
- All Taxes

TRIP PRICE EXCLUDES:

- International airfare
- Hotel accommodations
- Meals not specified above
- Extra activities not specified above
- Gratuities to crew
- Rental gear
- Personal items: alcohol, phone, etc.

SPERM WHALES ITINERARY > I) March 7 - 13 II) March 12 - 18, 2020

DAY 1 - DEPARTURE

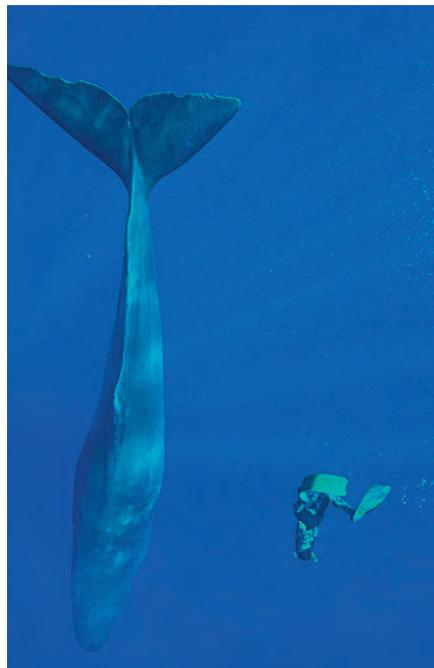
- March 07 or March 12
 - DEPART your hometown via Puerto Rico (if you arrive from the USA).
 - ARRIVE Dominica, Melville Hall airport. The most economical and efficient way please use one of the many local taxi at the airport ready to take you to the hotel of your choice

DAY 2-6

- March 8-12, or March 13 - 17
 - Five full days daily search and swim with sperm whale including all other cetaceans in Dominica's waters. We will have plenty of water and lunch on board for you. You will need to bring maximum sun protection, including sunscreen, sunglasses, hats, etc. We also recommend warm clothing such as long sleeve shirts, warm hat, and waterproof windbreakers, for the 8 + hours per day on board and long distance cruising. Sea conditions are mostly calm to moderate, with rising wind in the afternoon.

DAY 7- RETURN

- March 13, or March 18
 - DEPART Dominica for home. We will provide you the return transfer to the airport according to your needs.



Trip details, e.g., dates, prices, vessel, accommodations, are subject to change without prior notice — unless deposit is received and application is approved

PAYMENT POLICY AND DEPOSIT:

A non-refundable deposit of 33% of total trip price is required. Once deposit is received, a comprehensive and detailed trip preparation confirmation will be sent to you.

Prior to reservation confirmation, BigAnimals reserves the right to change trip costs without prior notice.

Full payment is due no later than 90 days before departure.

Space not paid in full 60 days prior to departure will be offered to those on waiting list.

If a written cancellation and refund is requested, and if that space can be filled, unrecoverable sales including administration and special promotions, will be deducted.

If cancellation is made 180 days prior to departure, deposits are non-refundable including any unused part of the itinerary. Destination circumstances may make dates and prices subject to change without prior notice. These policies afford the best possible adventure for the few who are able to secure our limited space.



APPLICATION FORM

Expedition Snorkeling with Sperm Whales | Expeditions Dates: I) March 7 - 13 II) March 12 - 18, 2020

PERSONAL INFORMATION

First Name _____ Last Name _____

Date of Birth _____ Gender: Female Male

Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

Work Phone _____ Home Phone _____

Email _____

Citizen of _____ Passport # _____ Place Issued & Date _____

Trip price \$8,800 p.p. Deposit of 1/3 of trip price is required to secure space = \$2,900 Non-Refundable. Final payment due 90 days before departure. \$ _____

Please make your check payment to BigAnimals Expeditions, 189 Evans Ave #A, Pacific Grove, CA 93950. Overseas payment can be done via bank wire, instructions will be sent to you upon receipt of this application. Promotional code _____

Travel insurance:

YES NO Provider _____

Travel insurance is **prerequisite and mandatory** on BigAnimals adventures. We need to have your policy number. _____

The activity on this expedition, is free diving only. You need only to swim. No SCUBA certification is needed

Do you carry diving insurance? YES NO Provider _____ Policy # _____

How do you rate your Photography and/or Video skills?

No interest Beginner Inter Advanced Expert