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by Nat Hab

Explore with Purpose



# Whales, Dolphins & Whale Sharks of Baja

*Monitor Marine Life in Mexico's Sea of Giants & Snorkel with Sea Lions*

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**Trip Details:**

Days
7 Days / Nov–Feb

Price
From $6938

# Whales, Dolphins & Whale Sharks of Baja

*Monitor Marine Life in Mexico's Sea of Giants & Snorkel with Sea Lions*

Off the Baja Peninsula, the Sea of Cortez is one of Earth's richest marine ecosystems, attracting humpback whales and whale sharks in winter, and bottlenose dolphins year-round. Nutrient-rich currents rising from the deep ocean feed plankton and fish that sustain these ocean giants. On the Pacific side, humpbacks also frequent the waters off Todos Santos. But these marine environments are changing rapidly, altering animal behavior, migration routes and feeding patterns. Gain rare access to this habitat alongside researchers studying the impacts of environmental change. From small research vessels in La Paz Bay, photograph whale flukes and dolphin dorsal fins for identification studies and lower a hydrophone to listen to dolphin clicks and, if we're lucky, whale songs. Cross the peninsula to observe humpback behavior from clifftop stations overlooking the Pacific. When conditions permit, swim with gentle whale sharks, using underwater cameras to document the unique spot patterns researchers use to identify individuals.

## Expedition Highlights

### Track & Monitor Ocean Giants —and Swim with Whale Sharks!

Photograph and document humpback whales and bottlenose dolphins, and collect data on whale sharks while swimming alongside them

### Explore the Wild Pacific Coast of Baja

Off Baja's rugged Pacific shoreline near Todos Santos where humpback whales migrate offshore, conduct fieldwork and hike through coastal desert landscapes

### Listen to the Underwater World

Lower a hydrophone beneath the surface to hear humpback whale songs and dolphin clicks, revealing a submarine world most travelers never experience



Ready to Book? Call an Adventure Specialist at 800-548-7555

## Research at a Glance



### The Research Focus

Document how environmental shifts, such as marine heat waves and growing tourism, alter the migration, feeding and habitat use of humpback whales, dolphins and whale sharks across Baja California Sur.



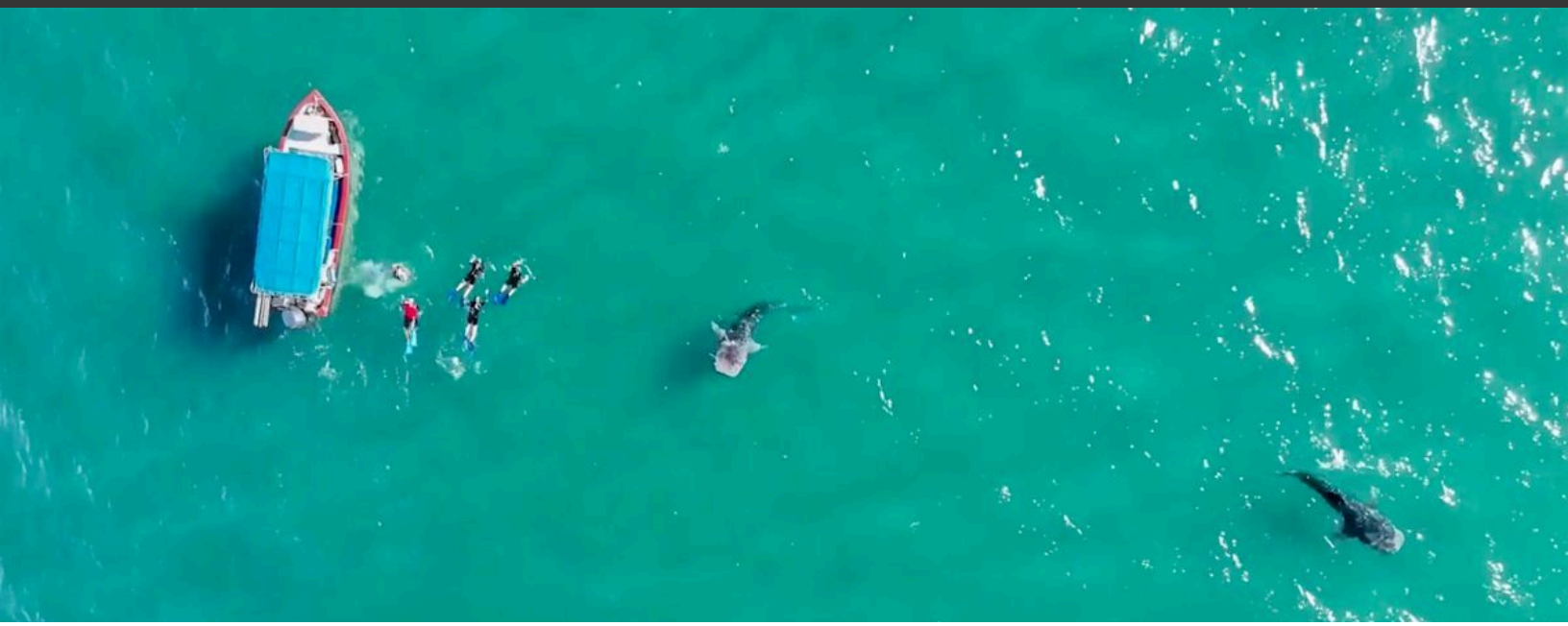
### What You'll Do

Conduct boat- and land-based surveys via multiple modes: photograph marine giants for identification, record behaviors, use hydrophones, and monitor ecotourism compliance to assess human impact.



### Why It Matters

Critical data gaps exist regarding how climate change and urbanization impact marine giants; policymakers need baseline evidence to develop sustainable conservation strategies.



# Whales, Dolphins & Whale Sharks of Baja Itinerary

*Monitor Marine Life in Mexico's Sea of Giants & Snorkel with Sea Lions*

### Itinerary at a Glance

| | |
|---|---|
| **Day 1** | La Paz |
| **Day 2** | La Paz Bay |
| **Days 3–6** | Sea of Cortez / Todos Santos |
| **Day 7** | La Paz |



Day 1

La Paz

## Arrive in La Paz on the shores of the Sea of Cortez

- Meet the research team and fellow participant scientists over a welcome dinner
- Walk the Malecon as frigatebirds wheel above the bay and fishing boats return at dusk

Arrive at La Paz International Airport in Baja California Sur where you are met and accompanied on your transfer to our hotel in the historic center of the city, our base for the week ahead. On the eastern edge of the Baja Peninsula, La Paz sits between desert mountains and the protected waters of the Sea of Cortez, where whale sharks gather seasonally in the bay and fishing skiffs launch each morning from the shoreline.

This evening, meet the research team and your fellow participant scientists over a welcome dinner introducing the journey ahead. Before returning to the hotel, walk the Malecon de La Paz, the city's waterfront promenade fronting the bay. Families gather here in the evenings as frigatebirds wheel overhead, fishing boats return to shore, and the last light settles across the water as we look toward Espiritu Santo Island offshore.

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Day 2

La Paz Bay

## Snorkel with sea lions and prepare for marine fieldwork

- Cruise past ochre cliffs, volcanic outcrops and desert shoreline into the Sea of Cortez
- Swim among curious sea lions in the clear shallows near San Rafaelito
- Learn the project's methods for behavioral observation, photo-identification and hydrophone research

This morning, board a boat and head into the Sea of Cortez for a first look at the marine environment of La Paz Bay. Cruise past ochre cliffs, volcanic outcrops and desert shoreline toward San Rafaelito, a rocky islet marked by a weathered lighthouse where sea lions haul out above the tide line. Conditions permitting, we enter the water to snorkel as sea lions dart through the shallows, amiable and curious about us. Then we continue across the bay toward Balandra Beach, a gorgeous protected cove of turquoise crystalline water and white sand shorelines backdropped by dry desert mountains. Spend time swimming, walking the shoreline, or simply soaking up the stillness before we gather for lunch on the beach followed by the return journey to La Paz.

Back at the hotel, meet with the scientific team for a detailed introduction to the research project and the field methods you will use throughout the expedition, including behavioral observation, photo-identification, hydrophone deployment and whale shark tourism assessments.



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Days 3–6

Sea of Cortez / Todos Santos

## Collect data on whales, dolphins and whale sharks across Baja

- Photograph dolphin fins, humpback flukes and whale shark markings for long-term identification studies
- Record behavior, movements and underwater vocalizations during boat and clifftop surveys
- Assess how boats and swimmers affect whale sharks alongside scientists and local operators

The next four days hold exciting discoveries as we work along marine scientists to collect important data. Daily schedules will shift with weather conditions, wildlife activity and research priorities, though boat-based surveys will generally take place in the mornings when wind and water conditions tend to be calmest. We divide our time between La Paz Bay and the Todos Santos area across the Baja Peninsula, where we monitor humpback whales from coastal lookouts. Participant scientists can expect to join the research team for these activities:

***Boat-Based Surveys in La Paz Bay***

Head into the bay aboard small research vessels searching for dolphins, humpback whales and other marine wildlife. Working alongside the research team, collect GPS, environmental, behavioral and respiratory data while documenting marine mammal activity. Photograph dolphin dorsal fins and humpback whale flukes for long-term identification studies that allow researchers to recognize and monitor individual animals over time. You may also record short videos used to verify behavioral observations collected during surveys.

***Listening Beneath the Surface***

Hydrophones are periodically lowered beneath the surface to capture humpback whale songs and dolphin vocalizations traveling through the water around the boat—sounds few people ever hear outside active marine research or in wildlife documentaries.

***Whale Shark Tourism Research***

Join a whale shark tourism assessment in La Paz Bay alongside local tour operators. Researchers evaluate compliance with wildlife-viewing regulations established by Mexico's environmental agency, SEMARNAT, while documenting how boats and swimmers influence whale shark behavior. When weather conditions allow, and depending on the presence of whale sharks,, you may also enter the water with underwater cameras to photograph these animals—the world's largest fish—for identification studies utilizing their unique spot and stripe patterns.

***Observing Whales from Coastal Lookouts***

On two research days, travel west across the peninsula to the Punta Lobos research site near Todos Santos, where coastal cliffs drop sharply into the ocean. Using binoculars, you'll record group size, movement patterns and environmental conditions. You may also assist drone operators documenting focal groups from above and communicate animal movements to research teams working offshore. After morning surveys from the clifftop, break for lunch in the town of Todos Santos before returning to conduct more observations in the afternoon. Todos Santos is recognized as a Pueblo Magico, or "magical town," an official designation awarded by the Mexican government to towns that possess deep cultural richness, historical relevance and natural beauty. Todos Santos is celebrated for its colonial architecture, cobblestone streets, local artisan culture, small galleries and shops, and its appealing oceansidesetting, backdropped by dramatic mountains.

***Evenings with the Research Team***

At the end of each day, review photographs, discuss field observations and process research data with the scientific team over dinners in La Paz and Todos Santos. On Day 6, gather with the research team for a final dinner overlooking the Sea of Cortez, reflecting on the week's sightings, discoveries and significance of the fieldwork we've been conducting. After days spent tracking marine mammals, photographing dolphin fins, listening to whales sing beneath the surface, and charting the skin patterns of whale sharks, our conversations now carry a deeper understanding of the wonder, fragility and importance of these "ocean giants" that our work is dedicated to protecting.

Day 7

La Paz

## Depart with a firsthand understanding of marine research in Baja

- Transfer to La Paz for homeward flights

We conclude our expedition knowing our observations, photographs and field studies have made a meaningful contribution to ongoing research tracking how whales, dolphins and whale sharks are responding to a rapidly changing ocean. And we take with us a deeper understanding and personal connection to the dedicated scientists working to protect these species, and these waters, for the future. After breakfast at your hotel, a transfer is included to La Paz International Airport for flights home.



# Whales, Dolphins & Whale Sharks of Baja Accommodations

*Monitor Marine Life in Mexico's Sea of Giants & Snorkel with Sea Lions*




## Hotel Catedral La Paz

This locally owned hotel beside the La Paz Cathedral overlooks the Sea of Cortez, with contemporary rooms, a rooftop pool and bar, and easy access to the waterfront promenade and historic center.

For detailed descriptions, visit nathab.com/earthwatch-expeditions/baja-whale-conservation-research-trip/accommodations.

# Meet the Scientists

*Whales, Dolphins & Whale Sharks of Baja*



## Lenin Oviedo, Ph.D.

**Research Associate & Associate Head of the Tropical Marine Mammals Ecology Lab**

Dr. Lenin Oviedo Correa is a Venezuelan researcher captivated by the diversity of marine animals in Latin America. As a marine scientist and research associate with the Centro de Investigacion de Cetaceos Costa Rica (CEIC), he studies whales, dolphins and broader ocean health across Latin America. He earned his Ph.D. in Marine Science from CICIMAR-Instituto Politecnico Nacional in Mexico, following earlier studies in marine and coastal science in Costa Rica and oceanography in Venezuela.

His work focuses on the behavioral ecology of cetaceans and how marine mammals respond to changing environmental and human pressures. By studying the movement, behavior and habitat use of dolphins and whales, he examines how these species navigate complex marine ecosystems and what that reveals about the health of ocean environments. His research contributes to marine conservation efforts across the region, particularly in areas where ecological importance overlaps with social and economic pressures. After nearly a decade of long-term monitoring in Costa Rica's Golfo Dulce, his work helped support the designation of the region as an Important Marine Mammal Area, strengthening protections for whales, dolphins and other marine life.

In the field, he combines ecological research with education and outreach, emphasizing the importance of connecting people to marine ecosystems through direct experience and observation. For him, some of the most meaningful moments come when dolphins remain calm and undisturbed alongside the research vessel—a sign that the animals feel secure enough to continue their natural behavior in the researchers' presence.

Through this work, he helps deepen understanding of marine mammals in tropical ecosystems, supporting conservation strategies that protect both biodiversity and the communities that depend on healthy oceans.

### Education

Ph.D. in Marine Science, CICIMAR–Instituto Politecnico Nacional, Mexico
M.S. in Marine and Coastal Science, Universidad Nacional de Costa Rica, Costa Rica
B.S. in Oceanography, La Salle Natural Science Foundation, Venezuela

# Research & Impact

*Whales, Dolphins & Whale Sharks of Baja*

Marine heat waves are reshaping the Pacific in ways scientists are only beginning to understand. In the waters surrounding Baja California Sur, researchers are tracking how warming seas, expanding tourism and coastal development influence the behavior, reproduction, food availability and habitat use of humpback whales, bottlenose dolphins and whale sharks. These animals act as living indicators of ocean health, revealing larger changes unfolding throughout the marine ecosystem. During this expedition, participants contribute to long-term monitoring efforts focused on wildlife behavior, whale shark tourism management and the ecological impacts of extreme climate events in the Sea of Cortez and along Baja's Pacific coastline.

## Research Focus

In 2014, a massive marine heatwave known as "the Blob" disrupted ecosystems across the Pacific coast, contributing to food shortages, harmful algal blooms and widespread shifts in marine wildlife behavior. Events like this are becoming increasingly common, raising urgent questions about how marine species adapt to rapidly changing ocean conditions. This project focuses on humpback whales, bottlenose dolphins and whale sharks because these animals reveal broader changes happening throughout the ecosystem. By studying how they respond to warming seas, tourism activity and coastal development, researchers can better understand how environmental change is impacting marine life throughout the Baja Peninsula.

## Conservation Impact

This project applies multiple research methods to a single question: how do humpback whales, bottlenose dolphins and whale sharks respond when ocean conditions and human activity change at the same time? By combining long-term photo identification, drone-supported behavioral observation, acoustic monitoring and tourism-impact studies, researchers can track changes that would be impossible to detect through short-term wildlife encounters alone.

- Document **how whale sharks respond to approaching boats and swimmers** in one of Mexico's busiest marine tourism areas
- Evaluate **whether tour operators comply with whale shark viewing regulations** established by Mexico's environmental agency, SEMARNAT
- Contribute to **long-term photo identification catalogs** that allow researchers to recognize individual whales, dolphins and whale sharks across years of observation
- Compare **how marine species behave in heavily visited waters versus more remote sections** of the Baja coastline
- Combine drone footage, acoustic recordings and behavioral observations to **study marine wildlife from multiple perspectives**
- Monitor **changes in whale and dolphin behavior** that may signal shifting prey availability or environmental stress
- Contribute **data used in peer-reviewed research supporting marine conservation** planning and sustainable tourism management in Baja California Sur

The research helps scientists and local authorities improve wildlife tourism practices, identify emerging ecological changes and make more informed decisions about marine protection in the Sea of Cortez.

### Your Role in the Research

Travel by boat and on foot between research sites in La Paz Bay and along the Pacific coast near Todos Santos, helping scientists document whales, dolphins and whale sharks from both the water and shore. Photograph dorsal fins, whale flukes and whale shark spot patterns for identification studies, record behavioral observations and assist with acoustic monitoring using hydrophones. Each sighting contributes to a growing long-term dataset used to understand how marine wildlife responds to warming seas, tourism activity and shifting ocean conditions in Baja California Sur.

### Life in the Field

Daily activities are influenced by weather, sea conditions and wildlife activity. When conditions are calm, teams head onto the water to survey dolphins, whale sharks and humpback whales from small research vessels in La Paz Bay. Other days focus on land-based observations from coastal lookouts near Todos Santos and Punta Lobos, where researchers track whale behavior from cliffs overlooking the Pacific. When visibility or ocean conditions limit fieldwork, attention shifts to processing photographs, reviewing acoustic recordings and identifying individual animals from long-term photo catalogs. Some days bring repeated wildlife encounters while others require patience, flexibility and concerted observation—an authentic reflection of marine field research in a dynamic ocean environment.

### Field Conditions

Fieldwork takes place aboard small boats, along coastal trails and at land-based observation points in Baja California Sur. Expect extended time outdoors in warm, sunny and often windy conditions, with temperatures commonly ranging from 70° to 90 °F. Activities are likely to include hiking on uneven terrain, boarding small boats from shore and spending several hours at sea or at exposed coastal lookouts. Daily plans shift with weather, wildlife activity and ocean conditions, making flexibility an important part of the experience.

# Discovery in the Field

*Whales, Dolphins & Whale Sharks of Baja*

1 **Gain Insider Access to Marine Wildlife Research**

Go behind the scenes of active whale, dolphin and whale shark conservation efforts with access to study sites throughout Baja California Sur. Join researchers in the field to photograph marine life, monitor species behavior and contribute to ongoing conservation work—experiences available to very few travelers.

2 **Track Humpback Whales From Coastal Lookouts**

Hike coastal trails near Todos Santos to observation points high above the open Pacific Ocean, to help researchers track humpback whale movements and assess breathing patterns—an indicator of stress levels—and group behavior along the coastline below. Use binoculars to help record marine mammal observations from shore.

3 **Capture Nature's "Fingerprints"**

Document the unique markings on whales, dolphins and whale sharks that allow scientists to identify individuals and monitor their movements and behavior over time.

4 **Help Decipher Tourism's Impact on Whale Sharks**

Collect data documenting how growing numbers of boats and swimmers in La Paz Bay may be altering whale shark behavior in one of Baja's most important seasonal aggregation sites. This information supports efforts to improve tourism management and better protect these vulnerable animals.

5 **Snorkel With Sea Lions in the Sea of Cortez**

In the protected waters near San Rafaelito, snorkel alongside tropical fish and playful sea lions in a shallow corner of the Sea of Cortez.

6 **Experience Baja's Desert-Meets-Ocean Landscape**

Cruise the turquoise waters of La Paz Bay, hike coastal trails above the Pacific Ocean near Todos Santos, and explore a landscape where arid mountains, volcanic shorelines and open ocean converge. Along the way, watch for mobula rays breaking the surface, seabirds wheeling overhead, and humpback whales migrating offshore.

7 **Help Protect the Future of Baja's Marine Wildlife**

Take part in a marine monitoring effort that has contributed to peer-reviewed scientific publications focused on conservation, ecosystem health and sustainable tourism management in Baja California Sur. The data collected helps scientists better understand how climate change and human activity are affecting marine ecosystems over time.

8 **Travel in a Small, Focused Group**

Because we deliberately limit group size, each guest gets quality time in the field, enjoying meaningful interactions with the scientific research team, and playing an active role in daily research activities.

9

### Explore With Purpose

Rather than observing from the sidelines, contribute directly to the scientific work helping researchers better understand and protect marine wildlife in the Sea of Cortez.



**Dates & Pricing Summary:**

Price
From $6938

Group Size
Limited to 12 Travelers

# Whales, Dolphins & Whale Sharks of Baja Dates, Pricing & Info

*Monitor Marine Life in Mexico's Sea of Giants & Snorkel with Sea Lions*

## 2027 Departures

| Departure – Return | Pricing | Notes |
|---|---|---|
| **Jan 16 - Jan 22, 2027** | **$6938** | Natural Habitat Explorers Pricing Available |
| **Feb 6 - Feb 12, 2027** | **$6938** | |
| **Feb 13 - Feb 19, 2027** | **$6938** | |
| **Nov 6 - Nov 12, 2027** | **$6938** | Natural Habitat Explorers Pricing Available |
| **Nov 13 - Nov 19, 2027** | **$6938** | |
| **Dec 3 - Dec 9, 2027** | **$6938** | |

## 2028 Departures

| Departure – Return | Pricing | Notes |
|---|---|---|
| Prices and dates not confirmed for 2028 | | |
| **Jan 16 - Jan 22, 2028** | **From $6938** | |
| **Jan 23 - Jan 29, 2028** | **From $6938** | |
| **Jan 30 - Feb 5, 2028** | **From $6938** | |

| Departure – Return | Pricing | Notes |
|---|---|---|
| Prices and dates not confirmed for 2028 | | |
| **Feb 6 - Feb 12, 2028** | **From $6938** | |
| **Feb 13 - Feb 19, 2028** | **From $6938** | |
| **Nov 6 - Nov 12, 2028** | **From $6938** | |
| **Nov 13 - Nov 19, 2028** | **From $6938** | |

See https://www.nathab.com/earthwatch-expeditions/baja-whale-conservation-research-trip/dates-fees for the latest pricing details.

## Included

Accommodations, services of Earthwatch Expeditions' professional Expedition Leaders, research staff, equipment and permitting, all meals from dinner on Day 1 through breakfast on final day, some alcoholic beverages, some gratuities, airport transfers on Day 1 and final day, all activities and entrance fees, all taxes, permits and service fees.

## Not Included

Travel to and from the start and end point of your trip, some alcoholic beverages, some gratuities, passport and visa fees (if any), optional activities, items of a personal nature (phone calls, laundry, etc.), airline baggage fees, airport and departure taxes (if any), required medical evacuation insurance, optional travel protection insurance.

## Mandatory Insurance

Since the areas we travel to are remote and wild (that's why we go there!), we require that all guests have, at minimum, medical evacuation insurance for this program. This is for the safety of all guests. We require that your chosen independent insurance plan includes a minimum of $250,000 in medical evacuation coverage.

To protect your investment and to provide peace of mind while you travel, we also strongly recommend purchasing comprehensive travel insurance. Plans may cover everything from medical treatment to trip cancellations and delays and lost luggage. Please contact our office if you would like more information about the medical evacuation and comprehensive travel insurance policies we offer by calling 800-548-7555.

## Getting There & Getting Home

This trip begins and ends in La Paz, Baja California Sur, Mexico.

Guests must **arrive in La Paz by 4:00 p.m. to join the welcome dinner by 6:00 p.m**. You will be met at the airport and brought to the hotel.

**Guests can depart at any time on the final day**. If you plan to have breakfast at the hotel before your flight, it begins at 7:00 a.m.

If you have connections in your flights schedule, especially in Mexico, please allow ample time for customs and potential lines (two hours or more is recommended).

# Know Before You Go

*Whales, Dolphins & Whale Sharks of Baja*

Whether you're preparing for your upcoming expedition or simply want to learn more about Baja California Sur, these resources provide a closer look at the marine life and ecosystems you'll encounter along the way. Learn about humpback whales, bottlenose dolphins and whale sharks, explore the waters where researchers conduct their studies and discover how environmental change is shaping the future of Baja's coastal ecosystems.

### Why Is Baja California Sur One of the Best Places in the World to Study Marine Giants?

Baja California Sur is one of the best places in the world to study humpback whales, bottlenose dolphins and whale sharks. Nutrient-rich waters in the Sea of Cortez and along the Pacific coast support exceptional marine biodiversity, making the region a global hotspot for marine wildlife.

The area is also an important center for marine conservation research. Scientists monitor how whales, dolphins and whale sharks respond to changing ocean conditions, including marine heatwaves, coastal development and tourism activity. Participants on Earthwatch's *Whales, Dolphins & Whale Sharks of Baja* expedition contribute to this research by helping scientists observe wildlife and support long-term monitoring efforts.

With abundant wildlife, accessible marine habitats and ongoing scientific studies, Baja California Sur offers a unique opportunity to contribute to research while helping scientists better understand a rapidly changing ocean ecosystem.

### Quick Facts—Sea of Giants: Monitoring Marine Life in Baja

- **Location:** La Paz and Todos Santos, Baja California Sur, Mexico
- **Primary species:** Humpback whales, bottlenose dolphins and whale sharks
- **Key activity:** Boat- and land-based marine wildlife monitoring
- **Conservation focus:** Marine ecosystem change, sustainable wildlife tourism and long-term marine monitoring

### What Wildlife Will I See on a Sea of Giants Expedition?

Humpback whales, bottlenose dolphins and whale sharks are the primary focus of the expedition, but Baja California Sur supports an extraordinary range of marine wildlife shaped by nutrient-rich ocean currents and the meeting of desert and sea. Wildlife sightings on the *Sea of Giants* expedition may include whales, dolphins, whale sharks, California sea lions, mobula rays and a variety of seabirds.

Wildlife sightings vary with ocean conditions, migration timing and weather, making each day on the water different.

Participants may encounter:

- Humpback whales migrating along Baja's Pacific coast
- Bottlenose dolphins traveling through La Paz Bay and coastal waters
- Juvenile whale sharks gathering seasonally near La Paz
- California sea lions resting on rocky islets and swimming through shallow bays
- Mobula rays leaping from the water in large schools

- Seabirds such as frigatebirds, pelicans, gulls and other coastal species
- Tropical fish and reef life while snorkeling in protected bays

The Sea of Cortez is one of the most biologically productive marine ecosystems in North America, supporting rich food webs that attract whales, sharks, dolphins and other marine wildlife throughout the year.

**What Is the Climate Like During a Baja Expedition?**

Baja California Sur has a warm, dry coastal climate with strong sun exposure and generally mild winter temperatures. Conditions on the water can change quickly, with wind and ocean conditions influencing daily fieldwork.

| Condition | What to Expect |
|---|---|
| Daytime Temperatures | 70–90°F |
| Nighttime Temperatures | 55–70°F |
| Sun Exposure | Strong, especially on open water |
| Wind | Common in coastal and offshore areas |
| Rainfall | Generally low, though brief showers are possible |
| Sea Conditions | Can range from calm to rough depending on weather |

Fieldwork takes place in exposed marine and coastal environments where heat, wind and sun can feel more intense during long hours outdoors.

## Frequently Asked Questions

### Do I need research experience?

No prior research experience is required. Scientists and field staff provide training and guidance in marine wildlife observation, photo-identification methods and field data collection techniques used throughout the expedition.

### What type of research will I assist with?

Participants assist scientists studying humpback whales, bottlenose dolphins and whale sharks in Baja California Sur. Activities may include photographing whales and dolphins for identification studies, recording behavioral observations, assisting with hydrophone deployment and monitoring whale shark tourism activity.

### What is the conservation impact of this research?

This expedition supports long-term marine monitoring focused on how climate change, tourism and coastal development affect marine wildlife behavior and habitat use. Data collected in the field contributes to ongoing research used to support marine conservation planning and sustainable wildlife tourism management.

### How physically demanding is the expedition?

Participants should be comfortable spending long days outdoors in warm, sunny and sometimes windy conditions. Fieldwork includes extended time on small boats, hiking to coastal observation points over uneven terrain and, in some cases, optional snorkeling activities in open water.

### Can weather affect research activities?

Yes. Ocean conditions, wind and weather strongly influence daily schedules and marine wildlife activity. Boat-based surveys and whale shark work are especially dependent on suitable conditions, and research plans may shift throughout the expedition.

### What happens in case of an emergency?

Participant safety is a priority on all expeditions. Field teams follow established safety procedures during all marine and land-based activities. Boats are equipped with appropriate safety equipment, and staff maintain communication while in the field. If medical care is required, staff coordinate transportation to the nearest appropriate facility.

### Do I need travel insurance?

Travel insurance is strongly recommended and should include coverage for trip cancellation, interruption, medical expenses and emergency evacuation. Earthwatch provides travel medical insurance for participants.

### What immunizations & travel vaccinations do I need?

Participants should consult a healthcare provider before travel and ensure routine vaccinations are up to date before visiting Mexico. Guests should also prepare for strong sun exposure, dehydration risks and extended time outdoors.

### What should I bring?

Participants receive a detailed packing list before departure outlining recommended clothing, field gear and personal supplies. Essential items include sun-protective clothing, quick-drying layers, footwear suitable for boats and rocky terrain and gear appropriate for marine fieldwork. Snorkeling equipment and wetsuits will be provided for those who do not bring their own.

### What Should I Pack for a Baja Expedition?

Participants should pack for warm, sunny marine conditions and active days spent both on the water and along Baja's rugged coastline. Strong sun exposure, wind and changing ocean conditions make lightweight layers and secure gear especially important.

Recommended items include:

- Lightweight, quick-drying shirts and pants
- Long-sleeved sun-protective clothing
- Lightweight waterproof jacket or windbreaker
- Closed-toe shoes with good traction for boats and rocky terrain
- Sandals or water shoes with secure straps
- Wide-brimmed hat
- Polarized sunglasses with a securing strap
- Sunscreen and SPF lip balm

- Small daypack or dry bag
- Refillable water bottle
- Swimsuit and towel
- Snorkeling gear if participating in optional in-water activities
- Motion sickness medication if prone to seasickness

Layering is helpful during boat-based fieldwork, when wind and ocean spray can make conditions feel cooler than expected. Dry bags and secure straps are recommended to protect electronics and loose gear on the water.

**What Will I Experience on Whales, Dolphins & Whale Sharks of Baja?**

Participants assist scientists with ongoing marine wildlife research across the waters of Baja California Sur, contributing to studies focused on humpback whales, bottlenose dolphins and whale sharks. Work may include photographing whales and dolphins for identification catalogs, recording behavioral observations, listening to whale vocalizations through hydrophones and documenting how marine wildlife responds to tourism activity and changing ocean conditions.

Traveling between La Paz Bay, offshore waters and Pacific coastal lookouts near Todos Santos, participants experience Baja's striking desert-meets-ocean landscape while contributing to long-term marine conservation research.

**What Does Daily Fieldwork Look Like?**

Fieldwork combines boat-based marine surveys with land-based observation from coastal research sites. Mornings are often spent on the water searching for whales, dolphins and whale sharks while assisting scientists with behavioral observations, photography and environmental data collection.

Afternoons may shift to cliffside observation points overlooking the Pacific, where participants scan for whale activity from shore and help document movement and behavior. Depending on weather and wildlife conditions, some days may also include hydrophone work, whale shark tourism assessments or snorkeling activities in protected coastal waters.




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