

The Best Whale Watching in Europe

Today in Berlin, WDCS, the Whale and Dolphin Conservation Society, together with Renate Künast, the Federal Minister of Consumer Protection, Food and Agriculture, Germany launch "*The Best Whale Watching in Europe*" a new, comprehensive guide to whale and dolphin watching in European waters. In the run up to the annual meeting of the International Whaling Commission, the guide provides a timely reminder of a valuable economic alternative to whaling that can both inspire and involve people in the conservation of these remarkable animals.

"The Best Whale Watching in Europe" focuses on high quality whale watch operators in 14 different countries, from Greenland to Greece. The guide offers a choice of location as diverse as Norway, with one of the most successful arctic whale-watch options, and the Azores, where you can laze on a sun-baked deck, watching massive sperm whales diving deep into the bluest waters imaginable. There are many opportunities to watch for free from special lookouts on land, or at the other end of the scale, you can spend £1,000 or more to watch whales on research ships, thus helping to contribute to whale and dolphin conservation. "*The Best Whale Watching in Europe*" helps whale watchers understand, identify and photograph the animals they see, whilst ensuring that their chosen whale watch trip does not harm the animals.

Some 36 different species of cetacean (whales, dolphins and porpoises) live in European waters, including the mighty blue and sperm whales and the distinctive orca (killer whale). Unfortunately these animals face a range of serious threats in these waters, including deliberate hunts and kills. WDCS believes that whale watching can offer an alternative to whaling, by providing coastal communities with a long term and sustainable source of income.

"High quality whale watching is great fun and it's inspirational" says Erich Hoyt, author of "*The Best Whale Watching in Europe*" and WDCS Senior Research Associate. "But, more than that it can also help to conserve the animals, by providing an economic alternative to whaling and by motivating people to care for the animals and their environment."

For more information, images, or to arrange an interview, please contact Georgina Davies, WDCS Communications Manager on 01249 449 509, or 0778 751 6635.

For more information please visit www.wdcs.org

“The Best Whale Watching in Europe” is available from WDCS, by calling +44 (0)1249 449 500.