



Annual Report 2022

Year in Review

Azores Whale Watching & Wildlife Tours TERRA AZUL
Connecting People With Nature

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Dear clients and partners,

Pandemic, travel restrictions, economy disruptions, shifts in customer or employee behaviour, rising prices including senseless fuel costs, they all made 2022 very challenging.

Despite uncertainty, TERRA AZUL achieved upright results, growing in overall number of clients and business performance, compared to previous years. Our key success, together with a rise in Azores tourism, is based on a fantastic team that shares a vision, values and focus on high quality services. Once again, we were rewarded by our clients' best choice, empowering our drive to be "not the biggest", but the best wildlife tour operator of the island.

Our priorities remain unchanged since our beginning in 2001. Respecting the Ocean 100%, our purpose is connecting People with Nature, offering unique and unforgettable experiences to discover the wonderful world of whales and dolphins in Azores.

Responsible development is our thinking for the future. TERRA AZUL conducts business under the best practices for the environment, the community and governance, contributing each and every day for a better and sustainable world.

Miguel Cravinho,

TERRA AZUL Co-Owner
and Chief of Operations



Our Year in Summary

The year 2022 has come to a close and we have got a fresh 2023 ahead of us. In the last twelve months, TERRA AZUL continued to make strides towards connecting people with nature and showing the unique qualities of the Azores Islands. We have a lot to be grateful for and would like to thank all our followers, visitors and partners for their support!

01

Reaching New Heights

Nearly 20.000 visitors joined our educational and responsible marine wildlife tours, making 2022 the most successful year in the company's history. We also saw growth in the number of team members - TERRA AZUL hired three new full-time employees to cope with the increasing interest.

02

Cherishing Azorean Waters

We would not be without the rich biodiversity of our marine ecosystems. Though a spring baleen whale bonanza failed to materialise in 2022, we did have fascinating encounters with sei, fin and minke whales in later months. The year was also rewarding in terms of toothed whales and dolphins, marine birds, and even large predatory fish species.

03

Going Above and Beyond

Supporting science, society and the natural environment are integral elements of TERRA AZUL's philosophy. In 2022, we have continued our social responsibilities towards Science and Conservation, Education and Ocean Literacy, and Environmental Sustainability. It has also been a time of reflection, which culminated in fun and ambitious ideas for 2023!



Responsible with Wildlife

The year 2022 was the most successful in the company's 21-year history. Overall we spent 212 days at sea - covering 22.897 nautical miles - and close to 60 days exploring São Miguel island, engaging our visitors in unique wildlife experiences.

The TERRA AZUL team believes it is of immeasurable importance to practice and promote responsible wildlife interactions. We continue to reflect and improve our standards and actions, while we follow and support advancements in scientific research.

Conscious Tourism

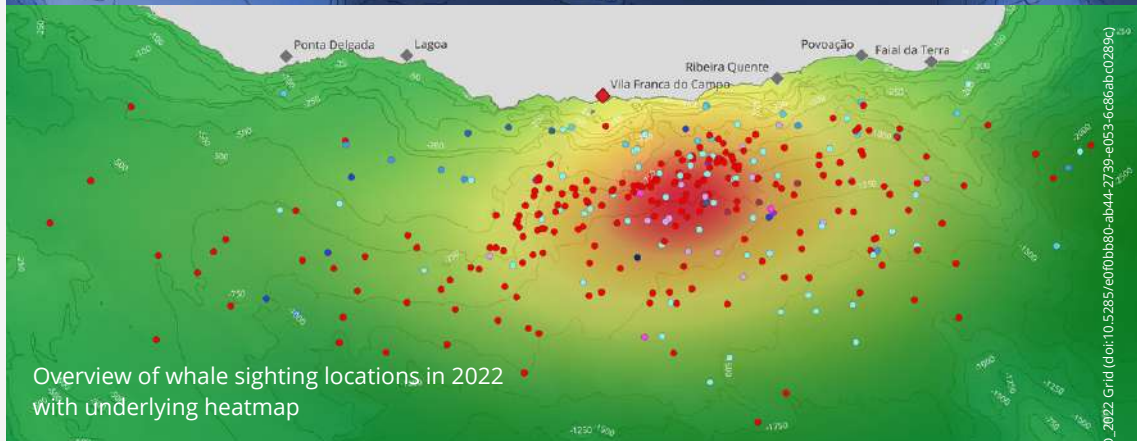
Many of our visitors opted for our educational Whale and Dolphin Watching tour. We accomplished an average success rate of 98% to see dolphins and 62% to see whales (due to a relatively low presence of baleen whales in spring). On average we saw 2-3 cetacean species per tour, with a maximum of 6 species during our most biodiverse tours! Most of our sightings were concentrated between Caloura and Ribeira Quente, which reflects our aim to sustain a more environmentally-aware approach towards fuel consumption.

Other visitors got to enjoy wildlife and the Azorean blue through a Swim with Dolphins experience. Coming from our ethical and sustainability standpoints, we 1) focused our in-water encounters on three species only: common, bottlenose, and Atlantic spotted dolphins, 2) limited the number of Swim with Dolphins tours, 3) made the effort to align our decisions and approaches with the animals' behavioural responses, and 4) continued to support the Azores Delphis Project's research to better understand the interactions between common dolphins and tourism activities. We laud all our swimmers for their care and their will to prioritise the dolphins' welfare.

Mapping Our Work

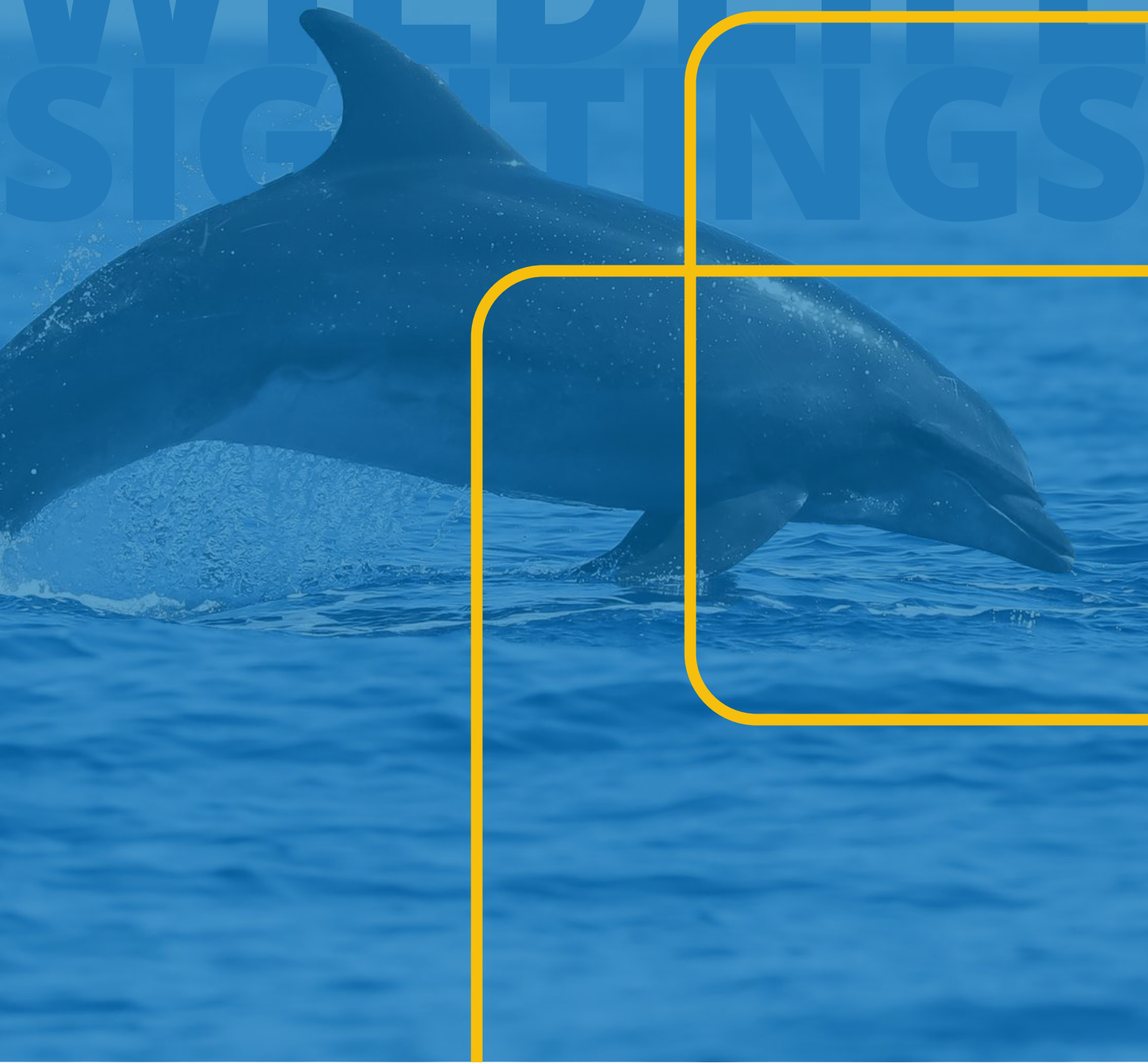


"Most of our sightings were concentrated between Caloura and Ribeira Quente..."



Bathymetric dataset: GEBCO Compilation Group (2022) GEBCO_2022 Grid (doi:10.5285/e010bb80-ab44-2739-e053-c86abc0289c)

WILDLIFE SIGHTINGS



Whales & Dolphins

It is no question that whales, dolphins and other marine life are our biggest "assets". What would we be without them? They make our tours come alive in expected and unexpected ways. In 2022, we were once again pampered with around 1,300 cetacean encounters of 18 different species!

Slow Start of the Year

The year 2022 started slow in terms of large whale species. Apart from two sightings of [sperm whales \(*Physeter macrocephalus*\)](#) and one sighting of a [fin whale \(*Balaenoptera physalus*\)](#) mother-calf pair, it were mainly [common dolphins \(*Delphinus delphis*\)](#) that accompanied us on our tours. Other delphinids were spotted on occasion, including [bottlenose dolphins \(*Tursiops truncatus*\)](#), [Risso's dolphins \(*Grampus griseus*\)](#) and even [short-finned pilot whales \(*Globicephala macrorhynchus*\)](#). However, the biggest highlight was a killer surprise - a pod of [killer whales/orcas \(*Orcinus orca*\)](#) - the largest dolphins in the world! We will never-ever get over the sight of the large bull with its towering dorsal fin...one of the most incredible sights in nature!



Killer whales/orcas
(*Orcinus orca*)

“

"We will never-ever get over the sight of the large bull with its towering dorsal fin!"

Blue whale
(*Balaenoptera musculus*)



Blainville's beaked whale
(*Mesoplodon densirostris*)



"...a baleen whale bonanza is not guaranteed every single year;"

Baleen Whale Bonanza?

Springtime is typically a great time to observe migrating baleen whales (Mysticeti) in the Azores, but their abundance and distribution are generally driven by food availability. This means that a baleen whale bonanza is not guaranteed every single year; some years are better than others. Though we did encounter all the typical mysticete species, a true bonanza failed to materialise.

We only had 27 baleen whale encounters between March and June. Interestingly, we saw more [humpback whales](#) (*Megaptera novaeangliae*) during this period than [blue whales](#) (*Balaenoptera musculus*) and fin whales, which are normally our prime targets. [Sei whales](#) (*Balaenoptera borealis*) were first seen in early May, but continued to play a huge role during our summer season.

The species diversity in spring not only increased thanks to the appearance of

baleen whales, we also registered a greater diversity in toothed whale (Odontoceti) sightings. Following expectations, the resident species - common dolphins, bottlenose dolphins, sperm whales and Risso's dolphins - ranked top of the list. We also saw a good number of occasional species: [striped dolphins](#) (*Stenella coeruleoalba*), [false killer whales](#) (*Pseudorca crassidens*), and again, orcas! What's more, our beloved [Atlantic spotted dolphins](#) (*Stenella frontalis*) arrived at the end of May!

Another fascinating species we had the pleasure of meeting was the [Blainville's beaked whale](#) (*Mesoplodon densirostris*). Our first sighting was in early March, and how they amazed us! One male with two females and their young came back and back again to investigate our zodiac. The same thing happened to us several times this year - precious moments with such an elusive species! How lucky are we?

Summer Whale Craze

The summer months came with such a wealth of highlights, we can barely put them in words! The summer started with some humpback whale action in June - elegant breaches and noisy pectoral fin slaps. Later in the summer, we chuckled at the sight of sei whales stalking spotted dolphins to find the next big feeding hotspot. The abundance of fish prey, including mackerel, sardines and snipefish, formed a nutritious buffet for big numbers of Atlantic spotted dolphins, hungry sei and [Bryde's whales](#) (*Balaenoptera edeni*), shearwaters, large tuna, and more! We witnessed sei whales lunge- and skim-feeding at the surface, and we saw them breaching in rough seas!! They were wildlife spectacles reminiscent of a National Geographic documentary!

Another baleen whale that showed up in summer was the much smaller [minke whale](#) (*Balaenoptera acutorostrata*). They can be tricky and elusive, but the first time we saw one this year was pure joy! It breached and breached and BREACHED...and then got the zoomies. Can you imagine your guide squealing with delight? It is the tell-tale sign that you witnessed something extremely special!

The cephalopod-favouring toothed whales took on a shining role as well. It was an excellent season for short-finned pilot whales, beaked whales (*Mesoplodon bidens*, *Mesoplodon densirostris*, *Hyperoodon ampullatus*) appeared regularly, and sperm whale sightings reached a peak. Not everyone was equally happy with the presence of short-finned pilot whales... Both our resident bottlenose dolphins and Risso's dolphins were having territorial disputes with these impressive visitors!



Sei whale
(*Balaenoptera borealis*)



Humpback whale
(*Megaptera novaeangliae*)



Sperm whale
(*Physeter macrocephalus*)



Minke whale
(*Balaenoptera acutorostrata*)



"...wildlife spectacles
reminiscent of a National
Geographic documentary!"

Working with the Weather

Who says the fun ends when summer does?! In the Azores, we can enjoy whales and dolphins year-round, and autumn 2022 turned out to be a good season too! Due to the passing of several storms, we had less tours between September and December. We had to work with the weather, seizing every opportunity to go to sea. Nonetheless, the diversity of our encounters was astonishing.

We got good views of (jumping!) sperm whales, super curious Blainville's beaked whales, and a range of dolphin species. Apart from common, bottlenose, Risso's, striped and Atlantic spotted dolphins, we carried on with seeing short-finned pilot whales. False killer whales reappeared off our coast and were seen several times - mostly in November. We were fortunate spectators of a rarely seen event: false killer whales harassing, or perhaps even attacking, a family of

sperm whales with young calves. Luckily, the whales were left unscathed.

With the start of autumn, most sei whales left the south coast of São Miguel, but the many baitballs in our area attracted other filter-feeding giants instead. Several fin whales - greatly lacking in springtime - discovered the São Miguel "food bar", along with a few minke whales. What can we say? Baleen whale migrations still hold many secrets and unknowns!

Our year slowly came to an end in December. We said our goodbyes to the Atlantic spotted dolphins, which were last seen at the beginning of the month. We said "see you in January" to our resident species AND we celebrated the end-of-year celebrations with the same family of four orcas seen on the 8th of January!!!!

“

"Who says the fun ends when summer does?!"

Sperm whale
(*Physeter macrocephalus*)



Other Types of Marine Wildlife

When we talk about the marine biodiversity of the Azores, it is not only about whales and dolphins. There is so much more to discover on the water!

Loggerhead sea turtles (*Caretta caretta*) were seen regularly throughout the year. One day was extraordinary - within 15 minutes, we counted at least 12 individuals peacefully basking in the sun! On another occasion, we found one munching on a Portuguese man o' war (*Physalia physalis*) with great appetite. The Portuguese man o' war, or "rainbow empanadas" as we now lovingly call them, were abundant in spring and early summer.

Fish species were also sighted in small numbers, including blue sharks (*Prionace glauca*), smooth hammerhead shark (*Sphyrna zygaena*), tope shark (*Galeorhinus galeus*), short-fin mako shark (*Isurus oxyrinchus*), whale sharks (*Rhincodon typus*), sunfish (*Mola* sp.), tuna and marlin.



Portuguese man o' war
(*Physalia physalis*)



Loggerhead sea turtle
(*Caretta caretta*)

We often say that "every year and every tour is different", and that we never know what we will see. It is true that many cetaceans find important foraging and reproductive habitat in the Azores, but these habitats are dynamic in nature. Moreover, whales and dolphin make decisions based on a lot of environmental, ecological, social and intrinsic factors. Just like us!

Toothed Whales and Dolphins

Common dolphins are considered the most abundant cetacean in Azorean waters. In 2022, they once again took the first place with 359 encounters. The migratory Atlantic spotted dolphins - with a preference for warmer waters - came in second with 242 encounters, most likely due to the rich availability of fish prey. As in 2019 and 2021, they found heaps of feeding opportunities and remained in the area between late May and early December. Sperm whales came in third (n=210), followed by bottlenose dolphins (n=153) and Risso's dolphins (n=95). Interestingly, the offshore, deep water-loving striped dolphins were encountered only 23 times in 2022 - two to three times as little as in 2018 and 2019. Killer whales and false killer whales kept pretty stable (n=4 and n=5 respectively), but short-finned pilot whales had a peak year (n=40). We had a two- to threefold increase compared to 2019 and 2021, similar to 2018.

We also had the luck to spot deep-diving beaked whales on 25 occasions. Most of these could be identified to the species level, resulting in 15 Blainville's beaked whale sightings (a new record!), 3 Sowerby's beaked whale sightings, and 3 northern bottlenose whale sightings.

Prey availability and distribution are an important driver of cetacean occurrence. Some species, such as sperm whales, pilot whales, Risso's dolphins and striped dolphins, rely greatly on prey-aggregating topographic features present in the Azores, such as shelf slopes, canyons and seamounts. However, seasonal and interannual variations in the ocean environment impact sighting rates of all cetacean species.

Baleen Whales

The year 2022 clearly deviated from the famous "spring bonanza" years. Between 2019 and 2021, we recorded low numbers of blue and fin whales - in 2022 it was no different. We recorded only 27 baleen whale sightings between March and June. Humpback whales were sighted most often during this time (n=13), followed by blue whales (n=6), sei whales (n=5) and fin whales (n=3). However, baleen whale sightings continued in summer and autumn! It was a spectacular year for sei whales with 59 encounters between July and early September. Fin whales reappeared in September-October (n=6). Other species that were sighted in the second half of 2022 are the minke whale (n=5) and Bryde's whale (n=2).

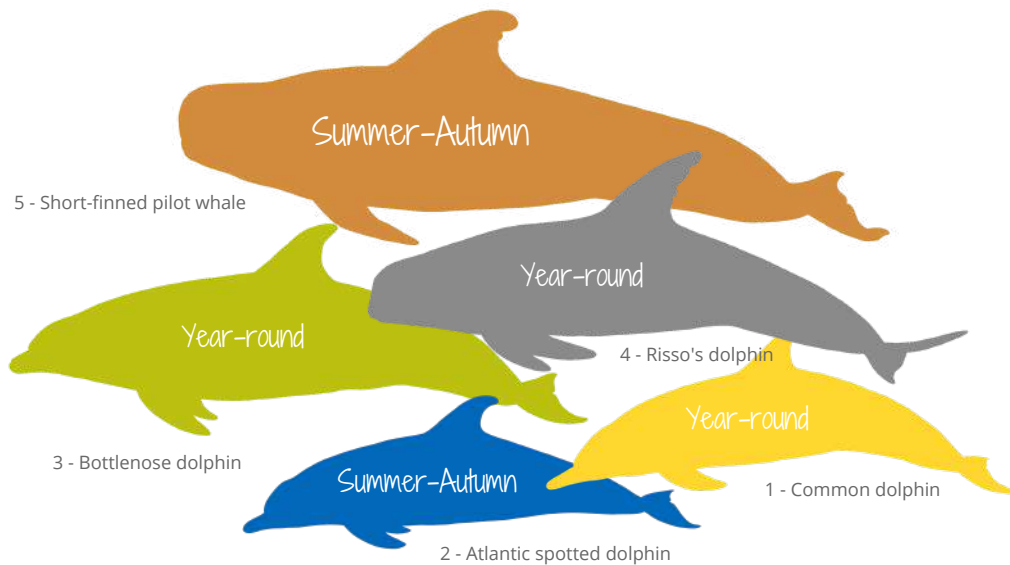
Through the years, scientists have learned more about baleen whales in the Azores. Blue whales and fin whales are known to perform "pitstops for feeding" in the Azores as they migrate to more northern feeding grounds in spring. They have been shown to prefer areas with highly dynamic oceanographic features, such as fronts and eddies. These have been found to aggregate prey, which would facilitate more efficient foraging for these giant whales. We could hypothesise that these two species did not find suitable foraging habitat off our south coast in spring 2022, or perhaps they found more optimal habitat in other places.

Although blue, fin and sei whales live in sympatry, their niches and life strategies differ. Blue whale sightings occur mostly between March and June. Fin whales are comparatively more flexible with low sighting rates in other times of the year as well. Sei whales usually arrive a bit later than blue and fin whales, and stay until later in the year. Sei whale migrations are poorly understood and it is hard to predict their presence. Sighting rates of this species may be high in spring, but there may be notable peaks in summer-autumn as well. Our observations in 2022 are in line with these findings.

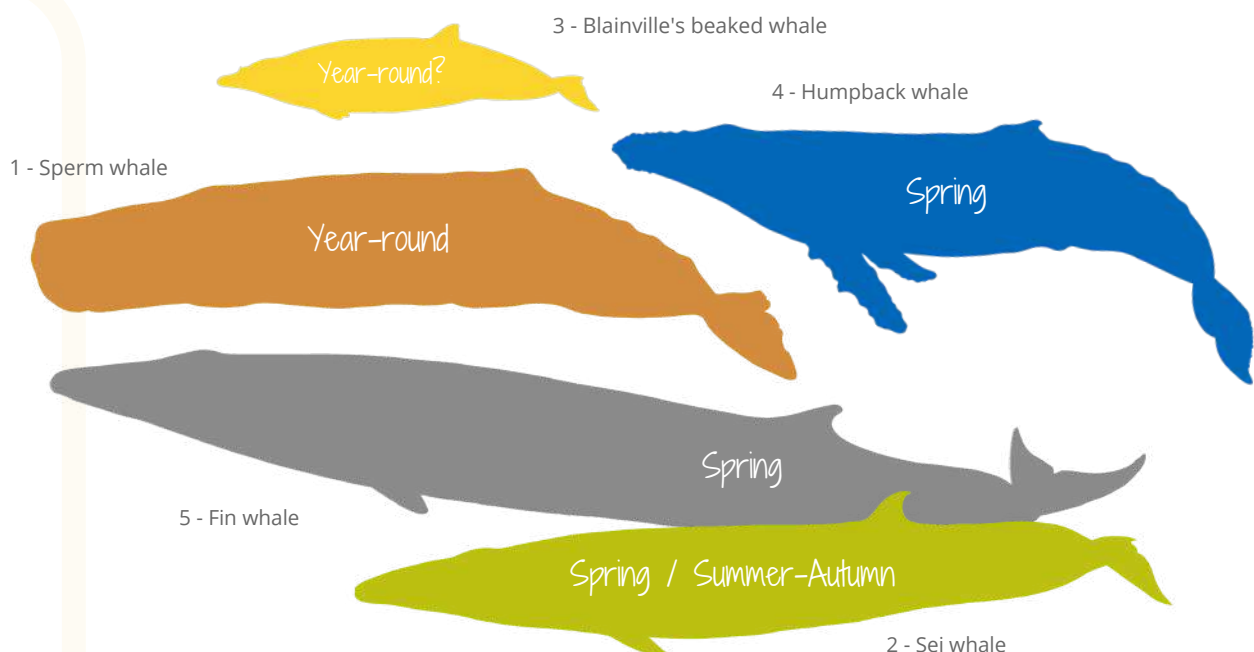
At least three studies have reported that feeding was less of a priority for sei whales in the Azores, but in 2022 we noted indications of feeding during 40% of our sightings. We had quite a few observations of sei whales lunge- and skim-feeding on baitfish at the surface. Perhaps the abundance of fish prey can explain the high number of sei whale sightings during the summer months.

Most Sighted Species

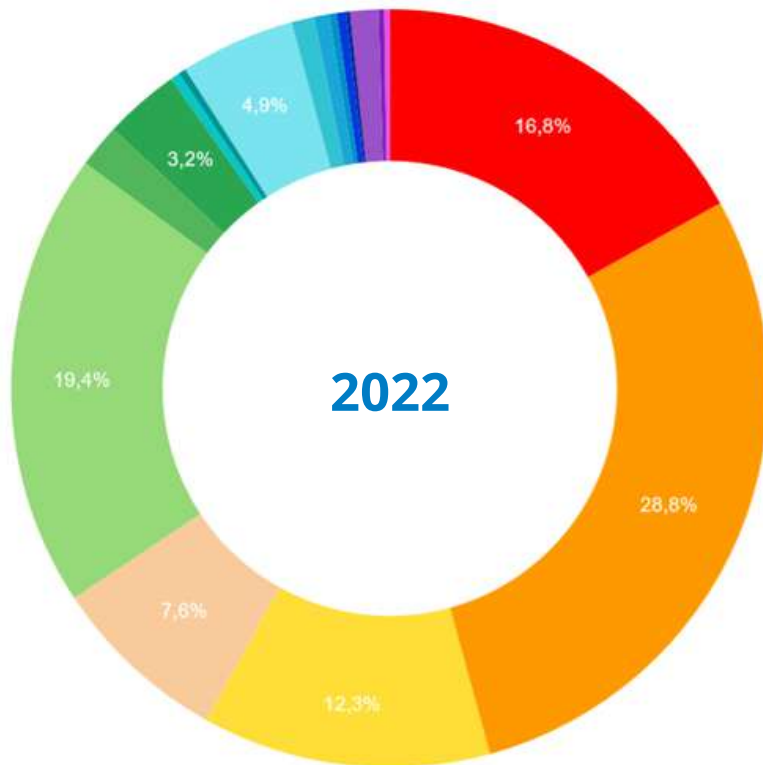
Top 5 Dolphin Sightings in 2022



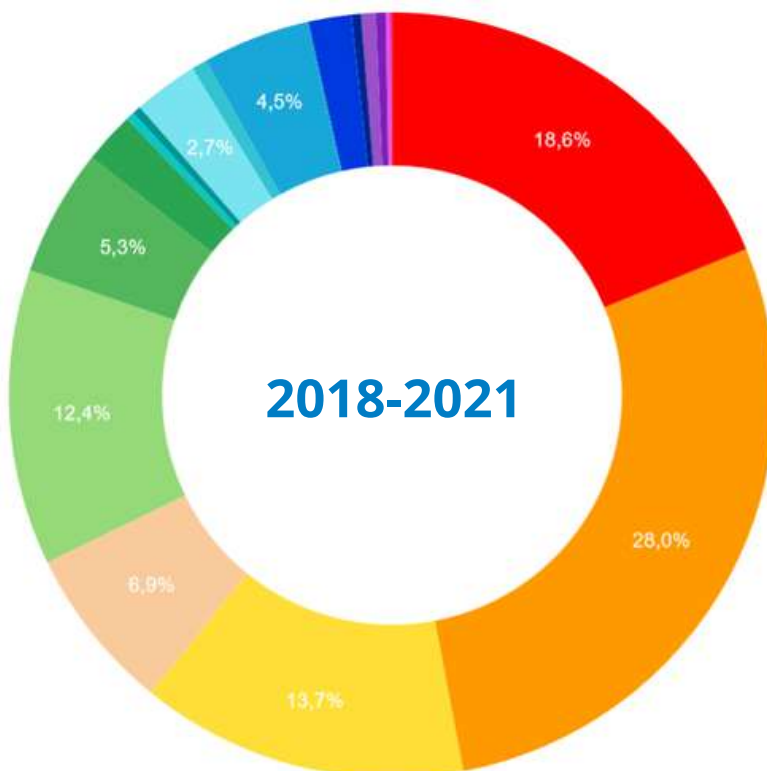
Top 5 Whale Sightings in 2022



Sighting Statistics



- Sperm whale
- Common dolphin
- Bottlenose dolphin
- Risso's dolphin
- Atlantic spotted dolphin
- Striped dolphin
- Short-finned pilot whale
- False killer whale
- Killer whale
- Sei whale
- Humpback whale
- Fin whale
- Minke whale
- Blue whale
- Bryde's whale
- Blainville's beaked whale
- Sowerby's beaked whale
- Northern bottlenose whale
- Cuvier's beaked whale



Marine Birds

The Azores Islands are an important breeding area for marine birds, including several Procellariiformes ("tubenoses"). The region also receives migratory and rare vagrants. Seabirds are an integral part of our coastal and pelagic ecosystems. They are frequently seen during our whale watching tours, marine birdwatching tours, and visits to Vila Franca do Campo's Princess Ring islet.

Procellariids and Terns

The Azores harbours the largest breeding population of [Cory's shearwaters](#) (*Calonectris borealis*). Not surprisingly, they were the most frequently encountered procellariids and second most sighted seabirds in 2022. We observed them foraging, resting in rafts, and feeding alongside dolphins, tuna, and other marine birds. We even spotted an individual with anomalous white speckled pigmentation!

The peak of summer and early autumn turned out to be exceptionally good for [great shearwaters](#) (*Ardenna gravis*). They were most likely attracted to our coast by the abundance of mackerels, sardines and other fish. During this period, we also saw a few sooty shearwaters (*Ardenna grisea*), [Manx shearwaters](#) (*Puffinus puffinus*; seen also in March), and several [Bulwer's petrels](#) (*Bulweria bulwerii*).

[Common terns](#) (*Sterna hirundo*) were the third most sighted species in 2022, but we also had regular sightings of [roseate terns](#) (*Sterna dougallii*). One of our favourite sights was a tern testing his luck with a tiny balloonfish!



Bulwer's petrel
(*Bulweria bulwerii*)



Common tern
(*Sterna hirundo*)



Manx shearwater
(*Puffinus puffinus*)



Cory's shearwater
(*Calonectris borealis*)



Common tern
(*Sterna hirundo*)



"The Azores Islands are an important breeding area for marine birds, ..."

Gulls and More

The winter months were relatively quiet, but were the most diverse in terms of gull species. Apart from the regularly sighted yellow-legged gulls, we observed black-legged kittiwakes (*Rissa tridactyla*), and black-headed gulls (*Chroicocephalus ridibundus*).

During the year, we also recorded several other beautiful visitors, including Atlantic puffins (*Fratercula arctica*), long-tailed duck (*Clangula hyemalis*), black-necked grebe (*Podiceps nigricollis*), great skuas (*Stercorarius skua*), and northern

gannets (*Morus bassanus*). The long-tailed duck and black-necked grebe were both spotted just outside our doorstep, inside the marina of Vila Franca do Campo!

Besides seabirds, we regularly observed shorebirds on the Princess Ring islet. Ruddy turnstones (*Arenaria interpres*), sanderlings (*Calidris alba*), whimbrels (*Numenius phaeopus*), and little egrets (*Egretta garzetta*) were typically found foraging between the rocks. We even spotted a purple sandpiper (*Calidris maritima*).



"The region also receives migratory and rare vagrants."



Great shearwater
(*Ardenna gravis*)



Northern gannet
(*Morus bassanus*)



Black-necked grebe
(*Podiceps nigricollis*)



Black-legged kittiwake
(*Rissa tridactyla*)

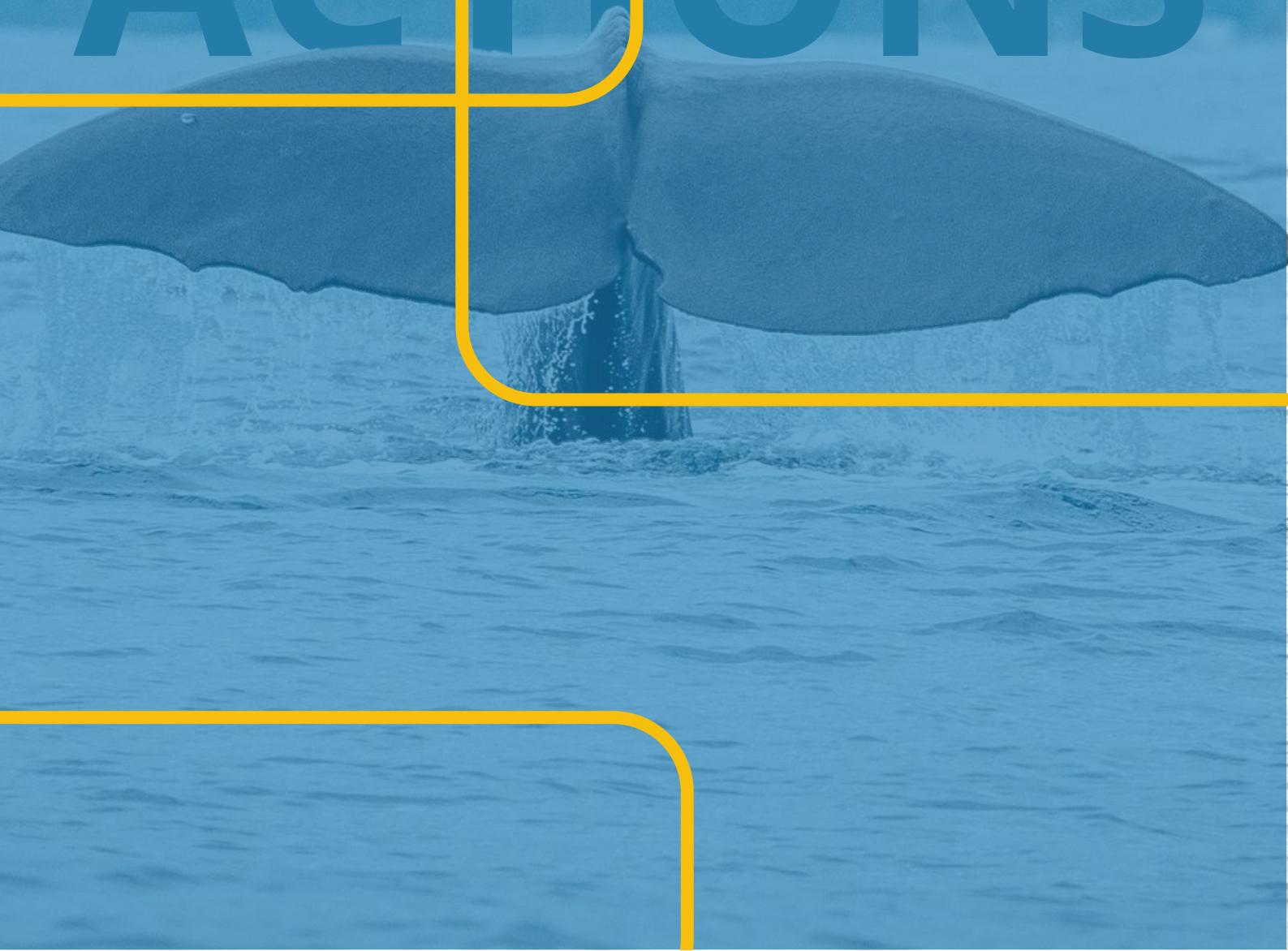


Atlantic puffin
(*Fratercula arctica*)



Long-tailed duck
(*Clangula hyemalis*)

OTHER ACTIONS



Social Responsibility For a Bright Future

The TERRA AZUL team feels it is everyone's responsibility to make the world a better place. We can all make small changes in our lives! This is why **Science and Conservation, Education and Ocean Literacy**, and **Environmental Sustainability** are fundamental to TERRA AZUL's identity. We are a relatively small team, but we think big! So what happened in 2022?



Science & Conservation

Scientific research is fundamental to grow our understanding of cetaceans and develop conservation measures. Together with the University of the Azores, TERRA AZUL is a proud founding member of Monicet. Since 2009, we have contributed thousands of sighting records. In 2022, we expanded the database with 1207 new cetacean sightings. We also had the pleasure to use and test the new Monicet phone app for improved data collection!

We further contributed to conservation efforts with 5 S.O.S. Cagarro pre-patrols in and around the marina of Vila Franca do Campo between 11th-15th of October. We then continued to participate in 20 official patrols with SPEA. Together with volunteers and SPEA staff, we helped rescue hundreds of juvenile Cory's shearwaters to give them a chance of life.

Finally, for our other collaborators, we registered 50 sightings of loggerhead sea turtles. We gathered 4 cephalopod samples for Project Moniceph, of which 2 samples were picked up for analysis; one was surprisingly identified as an umbrella squid (*Histioteuthis bonelli*). Last but not least, our vigias contributed 19 hours of lookout support to Azores Delphis Project's fieldwork.



Education & Sustainability

Education and sustainability are core values for the TERRA AZUL team. This is why we aim to increase our sustainability and educational offer over the next few years. After the "COVID years", we saw a peak in tourism, which naturally resulted in a higher fuel consumption. However, our data shows that, overall, we did reduce our resource consumption and waste production! Moreover, with 2022 as a representative baseline, we can now better compare future years.

In terms of education, we enrich our tours with didactic information about species and the environment, hydrophones, miniatures, and species info sheets.

Moreover, the **Vigia da Furada** used by our lookouts is more and more becoming an educational space; we devote our expertise to training new responsible whale watching guides every year; and we have developed **WhalezoneTV educational videos**.

To increase awareness and appreciation of nature, we also carry out actions involving the community. Beach cleanups were difficult to organise in 2022 due to staff availability, but we organised one in April. Moreover, we invited 87 children and supervising teachers to join our educational activities. First up was the School of Vila Franca do Campo on the 4th of April, followed by Expolab on the 3rd of June, and the School of Ginetes on the 10th of October. Though the whale watching excursions were cancelled due to unfavourable sea conditions, the presentations and games were greatly enjoyed.

Finally, on the 19th of October, we were invited to present a short talk - subject: working as a marine biologist and being connected with the ocean. The event was organised by Will Sparks with the help of João de Macedo, as part of the International Ocean Film Tour. More than 60 school children and others attended the event.



Future in Our Heart

Did you know that to keep providing you with the best experiences, we have made big and small improvements to our boats, vehicles and equipment? Sometimes love is in the details.

First of all, we replaced our hydrophones, which are used to listen and search for whales and dolphins. Trust our words, it is a beautiful thing to be in touch with the acoustic world of cetaceans! Secondly, wooden steps were added to *TERRA AZUL I*'s boat ladder - to make getting out of the water during Swim with Dolphins tours more comfortable and easy. Apart from regular maintenance and a radio replacement, we have equipped our 28-seat zodiac "*TERRA AZUL 0*" with two new engines. Our two vans also got a tiny revamp - they were branded with TERRA AZUL logos and contact information. Also the team was fitted with brand-new TERRA AZUL work uniforms!

Finally, our gorgeous 1945 whaling boat "*Senhora da Fátima*" is getting a new lick of paint and restorative woodwork on the hull. TERRA AZUL is the only whale watching company in the Azores that invested €35.000 in the **restoration of a whaleboat** and continues to contribute to this special project. *Senhora da Fátima* - the sole "active" whaleboat in São Miguel island - is nowadays used to offer rowing and sailing to the local community, promoting local culture and tradition through the Traditional Whaling Boat Class Association (ACBBA).

OUR TEAM



Guides Team

Our employees, volunteers and interns are the heart and voice of TERRA AZUL. Their dedication and enthusiasm were the driving force behind this year's splendid tours. Volunteers and interns are fully integrated in all aspects of our work, and as they learned from us, we learned from them. Meet the guides, skippers, vigias and office staff of the TERRA AZUL team!



Sanne Bakkers

Head Guide (Dutch, English), Scientific-Technical Director,
445+ hours at sea

Favourite moment in 2022: Being surprised by a 'mystery whale' breaching close to our boats, completely unexpected. It turned out to be an extremely curious minke whale, scarcely sighted in the Azores!



Alexandra Pires

Guide (Portuguese, English), Sustainability Officer, 350+ hours at sea

Favourite moment in 2022: Watching a humpback whale breaching and slapping its pectoral fins very close to the coast in June. Seeing false killer whales interacting with our boat was a very close second.



Marylou Feat

Guide (French, English, Portuguese), Education Officer,
215+ hours at sea

Favourite moment in 2022: Observing an unusually behaving sei whale... to finally discover three ridges on top of the head: it was a Bryde's whale!!! The whale turned around our boat so many times and so close!

Guides Team



Reine Morison

Volunteer Guide (French, English, Spanish),
305+ hours at sea

Favourite moment in 2022: There were many good sightings, so it is hard to choose, but one of my favourites was seeing a sperm whale mother together with her calf for the first time!



Aurora Crucianelli

Volunteer Guide (German, French, Italian, Spanish, English),
285+ hours at sea

Favourite moment in 2022: Seeing a minke whale breaching multiple times, almost completely out of the water. Definitely that one!



Ana Botelho

Volunteer Guide (Portuguese, English), 210+ hours at sea

Favourite moment in 2022: There were a lot of good moments, but my favourite would probably be the humpback whale I saw breaching, for the first time in my life.



Frankie Beard

Volunteer Guide (English), 15+ hours at sea

Favourite moment in 2022: First of all, seeing false killer whales swim underneath the boat, and secondly, two massive sperm whales breaching in one trip.

Guides Team



Wiebke Stülpner

Intern Guide (German, English),
50+ hours at sea

Favourite moment in 2022: Since everything was kind of new to me, it was all awesome to see. All in all, the Atlantic spotted dolphins were my favourites (and most funny). The sperm whales were impressive too!



Lisa Hoekema

Volunteer Guide (Dutch, English), 50+ hours at sea

Favourite moment in 2022: Seeing a small group of false killer whales harassing or attacking a sperm whale family with calves, absolutely.



Andrés Arona

Volunteer Guide (Spanish, English), 90+ hours at sea

Favourite moment in 2022: Finding three blue whales in front of Vila Franca do Campo. It was a very good day.



Nathan van Zalen

Volunteer Guide (Dutch, English), 90+ hours at sea

Favourite moment in 2022: My first solo tour as a guide, watching a sei whale swim by right underneath our boat!

Skippers & Vigias

Working with the right skippers and lookouts makes all the difference! Our skippers aim to make your ride as comfortable as possible. They respect the ocean's wildlife and ensure you have the best views. Thanks to the vigias - our spotters on land - we can make the very best out of each tour!



Jorge Amaral

Head Skipper, 580+ hours at sea. Favourite sighting in 2022: Sei whales lunge-feeding at the surface.



Tiago Batista

Skipper, Media Manager, 730+ hours at sea. Favourite sighting in 2022: Curious false killer whales close to the boat.



José Pedro

Skipper, 390+ hours at sea. Favourite sighting in 2022: Humpback whale breaching again and again.



João Correia

Skipper, 265+ hours at sea. Favourite sighting in 2022: Humpback whale jumping in front of Caloura Hotel.



Filipe Ferreira

Vigia/Lookout. Favourite sighting in 2022: Minke whale jumping close to the boat, but sperm whales are a favourite!



Nicole Pereira

Vigia/Lookout. Favourite sighting in 2022: Humpback whale close to the coast and breaching sei whales!

Office Team

TERRA AZUL would not be complete without the wonderful team at our marina base. You may have even seen Stephanie, Daniel (also a skipper), Sr. Carlinhos, or Miguel (also a skipper) at sea this year. Last but not least, let's not forget about the skillful people working behind the scenes: Filipe Sousa (Business Developer), Ruben Cabral (B2B Sales Manager), and of course, António Brás (Co-Owner, Chief of Finances).



Stephanie Almeida

Director of Operations.
Favourite species: Killer whales.



Daniel Paiva

Assistant of Operations, Skipper.
Favourite species: Humans and
Ryanair-birds!



Andreia Costa

Front Desk Representative.
Favourite species: Fin whales.



Sr. Carlinhos

Employee of the Year.
Favourite species: Yellowfin tuna.



Miguel Cravinho

Co-Owner, Chief of Operations.
Favourite species: Cory's
shearwater.



**Think you are a good fit for
our team? Contact
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Acknowledgements

We are proud of TERRA AZUL's collective achievements, which would not have been possible without the commitment of our team, our partners and collaborators, the people involved in our activities, as well as the many ocean lovers from around the globe. Thank you everyone!

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MT 39/2009
REG/VAT PT512070423
RNAAT 131/2015