

**Edite Azevedo**

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**Assunto:** FW: whale watching activities advices

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**Para:** Assuntos Parlamentares <[assuntosparlamentares@alra.pt](mailto:assuntosparlamentares@alra.pt)>  
**Cc:** Steffen Ehrath <[steffen.ehrath@alra.pt](mailto:steffen.ehrath@alra.pt)>  
**Assunto:** whale watching activities advices

Dear Sirs,

in reply to the solicitation in object, here we bring to your attention the following considerations:

-1) islands where whale watching activity is already present and active are already saturated for disturbance on the cetacean populations. Even if guidelines of best practices have been established, they are not always applied, even by 'experienced' operators, resulting in harassment of the animals. Moreover, operators follow each others for convenience, increasing the pressure on the same pod found, instead of following a 'random' path. Some operators use boats that are not compatible with the definition of a sustainable whale watching activity: a boat of several dozens of passengers with high noise engines can't provide a natural close encounter experience and is highly disturbing and stressing these animals that use sound frequencies for all their life activities, from communication to predation to echolocation.

2) islands where whale watching activity is already present but not active or very rarely active should create pressure on the operators to choose if they are able to run a proper activity or let the possibility of running a nice business to someone more motivated.

3) new permits should be given only for islands where the activity is still not present to develop the economy.

4) incentives for new generation boats with zero impact such as innovative ergonomic designs equipped with electric engines should be given for all maritime activities to transition the sector to a real environmental sustainable activity. For example in the Canary Islands whale watching is already active with such zero impact boats from certain operators.

5) all operators must take a biannual reassessment of their knowledge and best practices as it is required for other activities.

6) inspectors should be placed randomly onboard during the season to verify that there aren't significant deviations from codes of conducts.

7) since whale watching activity is familiarizing the cetaceans with the boats, serious controls and enforcements should be performed off season for illegal artisanal activities such as dolphin fishing, unfortunately still performed by the older generations in name of traditional dishes in some of the islands where the whaler pride is still much alive, or even worse for cheap bait meat for traditional fishery.

We are available for further discussions on this matter.  
Thank you very much.

Best Regard,  
**Dr Alice Soccodato,**  
**Scientific officer and manager at European Marine Biological Resources Centre**  
**Advisor for Operations of Wahoo Diving**