

ALNITAK

2024

OASIS TRAMUNTANA EXPEDITIONS

Monitoring the Open Sea



SINCE 1990 ALNITAK HAS BEEN CONDUCTING OPEN SEA EXPEDITIONS FOCUSING ON TOP PELAGICS (WHALES, DOLPHINS, TURTLES, ELASMOBRANCHS, TUNAS, MANTAS AND BIRDS) AND HUMAN ACTIVITIES.

THESE 7-DAY EXPEDITIONS ARE INTENSIVE, WEATHER-DEPENDANT AND NO TWO EXPEDITIONS ARE THE SAME. VOLUNTEERS JOINING ARE INTEGRATED QUICKLY AS PART OF THE CREW, EXPERIENCING OUR DAILY LIVES AS RESEARCHERS.



WE SUBDIVIDE OUR WORK INTO TWO LARGE PROGRAMMES: MEDTOP - SCIENTIFIC PROJECTS USING TOP PELAGICS AS UMBRELLA SPECIES FOR THE CONSERVATION OF THE OPEN SEA ECOSYSTEM, AND TODOS POR LA MAR - ENGAGING STAKEHOLDERS AND THE GENERAL PUBLIC IN PRACTICAL AND TANGIBLE CONSERVATION. ALNITAK PARTNERS WITH INSTITUTES SUCH AS THE US FISH AND WILDLIFE SERVICE, NOAA, THE BALEARIC ISLANDS COASTAL OBSERVING AND FORECASTING SYSTEM (SOCIB), OCEANCARE, SPANISH INSTITUTE OF OCEANOGRAPHY (IEO), IFREMER, EXETER UNIVERSITY AND MANY MORE.

RESULTS FROM EXPEDITIONS CONTRIBUTE DIRECTLY TO ONGOING RESEARCH AND CONSERVATION POLICIES.





Our impact

MEDTOP, constitutes one of the most extensive scientific databases in Europe and the Mediterranean biogeographic region for marine biodiversity conservation policies, as well as such as the sustainable development strategies of the 2030 Agenda.

Over the years we can highlight some of Alnitak's accomplishments:

- Design, management and monitoring of 14 MPAs both in the Mediterranean and beyond.
- Reconfiguration of IMO traffic separation schemes. Mitigating the risk of turtle bycatch (over 95% - estimated between 20 and 30,000 loggerhead turtles per year in long-lining).
- Mitigation of the risk of noise pollution.
- Contributing to species management plans, for example of the endangered Mediterranean common dolphin.
- “Train the trainers” programmes for fishers, scientists and stakeholders in the EU, Africa and Latin America.
- Contributing to policy frameworks, actively cooperating with UNDP GEF, FAO GEF, ACCOBAMS, NOAA, etc.



Balearic Islands • Tramuntana

During the Expedition we will be based in **UNESCO Heritage Site - Serra de Tramuntana mountain range**. Here we will immerse ourselves in our ongoing marine conservation and research programmes while enjoying the day to day of a Mediterranean rural lifestyle.

The volunteers of the “**Oasis Tramuntana expeditions**” will have the opportunity to be part of the Alnitak scientific team, collaborating with the artisanal fishermen of the Balearic Islands, and especially with Gori Mayol. Likewise, they will help Alnitak to promote the active collaboration of fishermen and navigators in the task of rescuing entangled fauna, as well as reporting and removing ALDFG (Abandoned, Lost or otherwise Discarded Fishing Gear) from the marine environment.

The Expedition base camp will be a small mountain “house” owned by a Gori, Ca’n Canyelles. During favourable weather conditions we will work either from Alnitak’s rib “T/T TOFTE” or onboard Gori’s small artisanal fishing vessel “Passador”.

During rough seas/windy days we will dedicate time to a variety of chores such as renovating our new home, data entry, and more. **We will do our best to live sustainably, acquiring our groceries from the local farmers markets, and breaking up daily chores between the whole team.**

Our main port will be the picturesque town of Sóller and transects at Sea will be designed to survey the Tramuntana escarpment, home to a variety of species such as loggerhead turtles, bottlenose dolphins, striped dolphins and Risso’s dolphins.

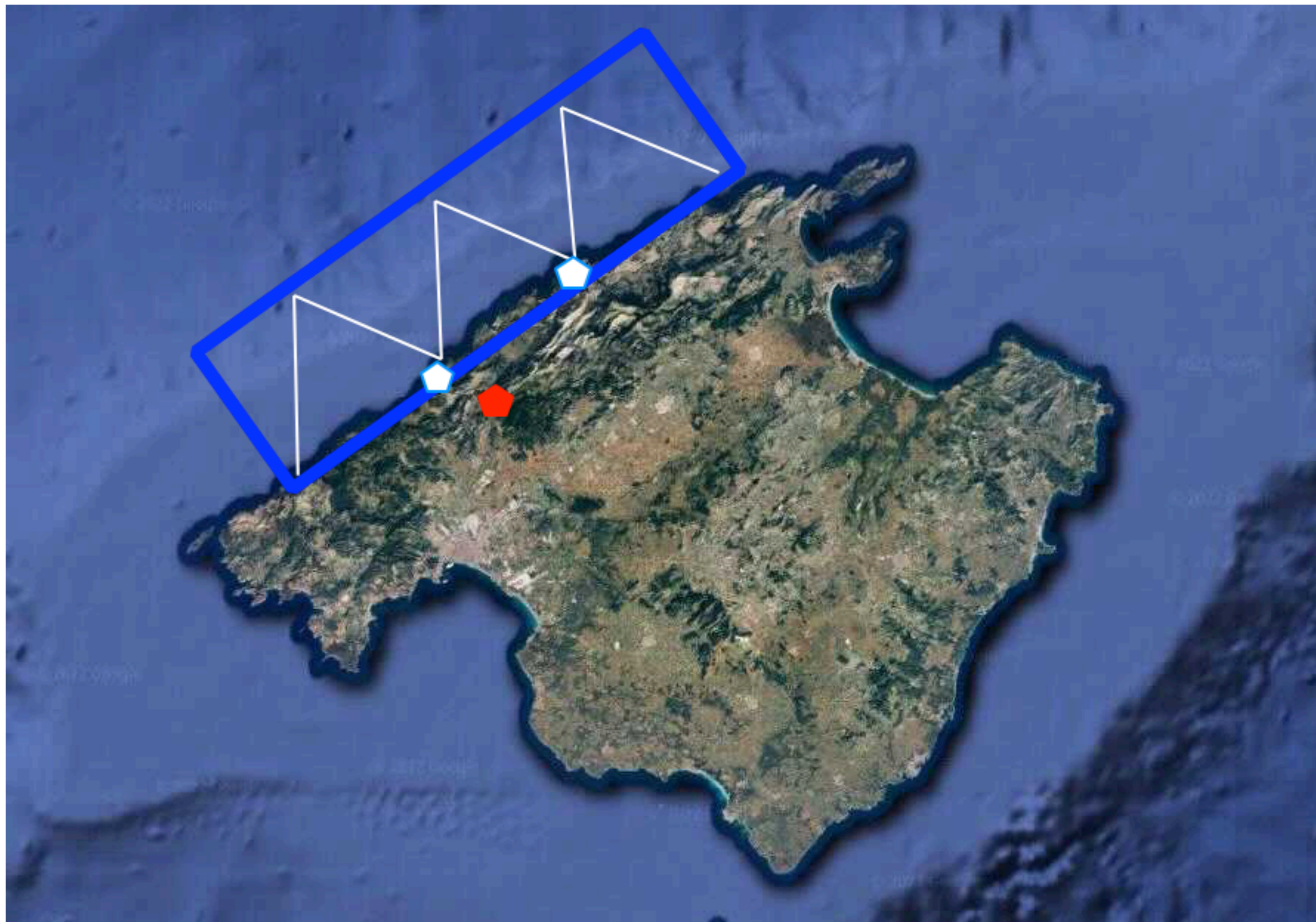
This is a new and exciting type of Alnitak expedition, in which volunteers actively participate in its development and hopefully success in years to come.



Main objectives

- Reduce the mortality of sea turtles and other pelagic species due to ghost fishing, and the mitigation and prevention of the risk to marine biodiversity derived from drifting marine litter.
- Design, development and testing of the anchored Fish Aggregation Devices (FADs) prototypes.
- Studies on the “oasis effect” of biomass aggregation.
- Retrieval of dangerous drifting artefacts. We will be reporting on drifting ghost gear, such as “ghost FADs” which are rudimentary artefacts that often entangle and kill turtles and cetaceans.
- Monitoring the distribution and abundance of microplastics/plankton on the continental slope of Tramuntana.
- Awareness and training of the shareholders of the Med Ghost Fishing Network.
- Monitoring the distribution and abundance of cetaceans (photo - ID).
- Turtle satellite tagging.





Expedition programme

- Duration: 6 night /7 days
- Teams: Alnitak staff : 1 Fisher : 6 volunteers
- Vessels: T/T TOFTE (6.5m rib) / traditional Ilaüt - fishing vessel "Passador"
- Home base: Ca'n Canyelles - Fornalutx, Mallorca
- Rendez-vous: Sóller, Mallorca



- Included: Vehicle from Sóller harbour - home base Ca'n Canyelles, research and restoration equipment, fuel, port fees and meals-except meals taken outside.



Itinerary

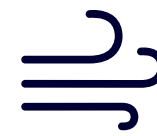
- **Day #1** Rendez-vous at 16:00, briefing and introduction
- **Days #2 to #6** Survey at sea/land activities Ca'n Canyelles /data and photo processing/off time
- **Day #7** Departure at 16:00



- Guided by locals that are working to preserve their cultural and natural treasures.
- The perfect combination of hard work, nature conservation and respect of the local culture in the magical surroundings of Tramuntana.
- **Skills required:** Passion and interest in playing an active role in the conservation of our natural and cultural heritage.
- **Special skills of interest:** Boat driving license, navigation, carpentry, painting, navigation, photography, video filming, drone flying, camping, star gazing, cooking,...



Activities based on the weather conditions



Calm sea days

The perfect days to work at sea. During these days we will try to be in deep water from dawn to dusk. Productive but also arduous days, in which rest, sun protection and hydration are fundamental aspects.

It is on these days that we hope to accomplish our main objectives and have the most productive encounters with cetaceans, turtles, pelagic fish and seabirds.

Days of slight - breeze (swell)

Combine sampling of microplastics and marine debris with experimentation of the prototype aFADs, analyzing the “oasis effect”.

There will be fewer hours spent at sea.

Land activities in Ca'n Canyelles:

- a) maintenance work on the farmhouse
- b) construction of furniture and preparation of research equipment
- c) processing of sampling data and images in sea
- d) pruning and burning of the olive grove, harvesting, and manufacturing.
- e) reparation of dry stone walls
- f) maintenance of the boats

Windy and or stormy days

These are when we will NOT be able to go out to sea and we can also focus on the land-based activities or assign one of these days as off time.



OFF TIME

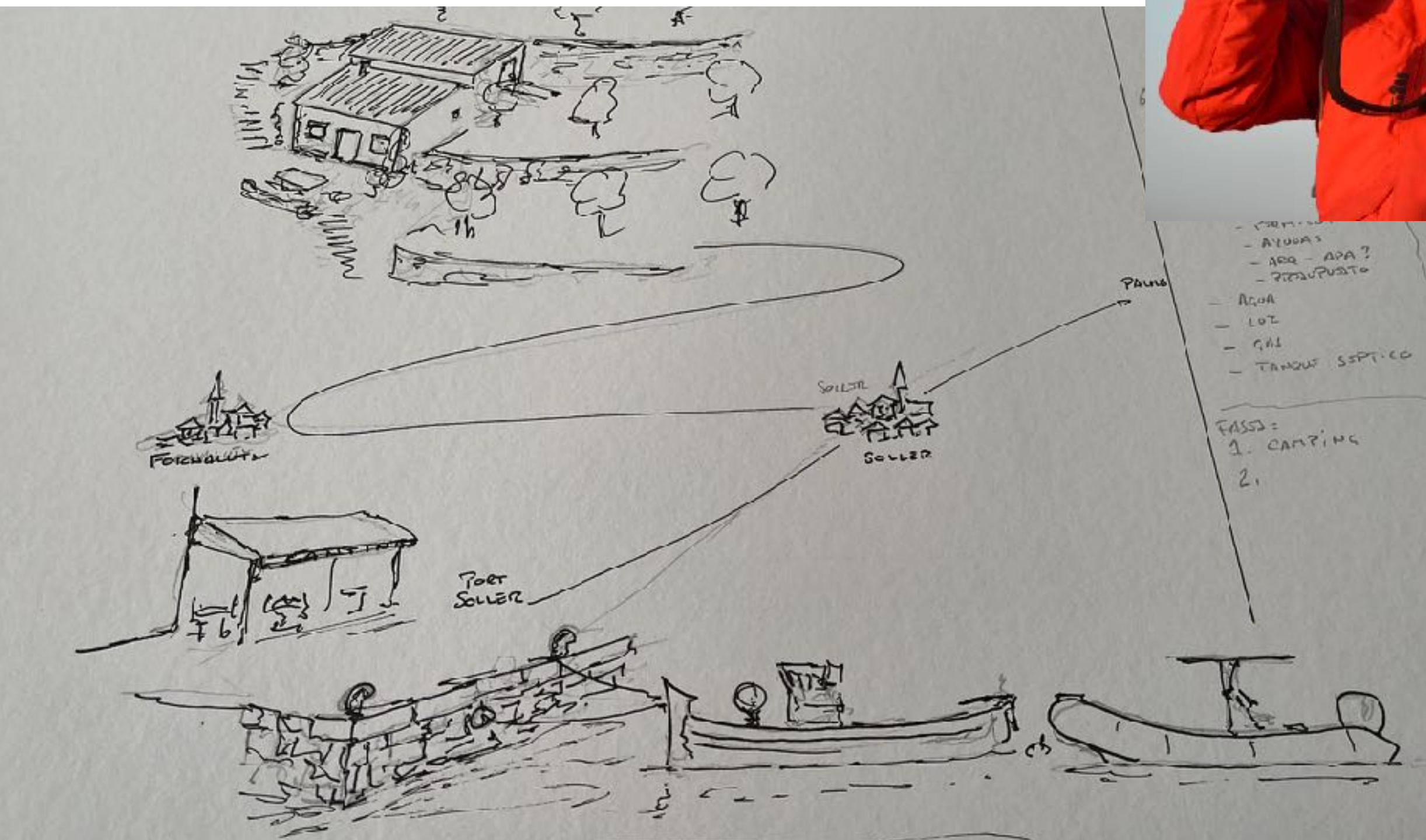
Even though you will have exciting experiences and, at the same time, help us achieve our goals as an organisation, free time is also essential to perfect your experience in Mallorca. The “Serra de Tramuntana” and its towns are well worth spending a minimum of time enjoying the landscape and exploring its natural and cultural treasures.

We will assign one of these days as off time. As stated previously, if we have stormy days/windy days and depending on the duration of the adverse weather conditions, we will focus on the land activities in Ca’n Canyelles but can also assign some time off.

Alnitak’s team may use this “OFF time” for office work. We are a very small team; therefore, please respect that during this assigned time, the team may need to continue their land-based work.

We will allocate time for a wrap-up session to discuss the results obtained during our last expedition day.







Day-to-day activities

- Meal times may vary depending on the activities carried out each day. Still, in principle, we always try to find a compromise between typical Mediterranean times and Western times, with breakfast around 07:00 (days at sea) and 09:00 (days without navigation), a lunch/snack at 11:00, lunch at 13:00 and dinner at 20:00.
- All team members will share the maintenance tasks, including boat cleaning and ensuring Ca'n Canyelles (our home base) is clean and tidy.
- Washing the dishes and preparing meals.
- The Alnitak / Ca'n Canyelles team will guide the preparation of meals to ensure maximum quality in the use of sustainable local products. There will always be options for dietary requirements (celiac disease, diabetes, allergies, vegetarian and vegan...).



Frequently Asked Questions

How is Alnitak committed to my safety?

Risk is an inherent part of our work. Which is why volunteers are given a safety briefing upon joining and project staff are trained in appropriate emergency response procedures. If needed and despite cruising in open waters, we can typically get to land in under 30 minutes.

Do I need to have any prior scientific or boating knowledge?

No, you will be taught everything you need to know. Part of the immersive experience is to partake directly in boating manoeuvres and scientific research.

What kind of physical shape do I need to be in?

Prepare for long days at sea and living in rural conditions. These expeditions are no pleasure trip, and there is a “rough and tough” aspect to them.

What is included in the cost of my contribution?

When you join, you do more than contribute your valuable time and effort. Your contribution is also vital to help cover project costs, crew, locally sourced food, restoration and other key expenses which get us out of the port and into the open sea.

How does my contribution make an impact?

All Alnitak’s research is applied science, so data collected on these expeditions is used to inform environmental policy-makers and for management plans.

Can I travel alone?

Yes! One of the great thing about Alnitak expeditions is that you get thrown in with a community of like-minded adventurers who have signed up to make a tangible contribution to marine conservation and preservation of cultural heritage.

How old do you have to be to volunteer?

Some volunteer opportunities will require a minimum age of 18 although on occasions we taken on volunteers of at least 16 years of age. Volunteers under the under the age of 18 must send along a signed Permission Form by a parent/guardian in order to participate.

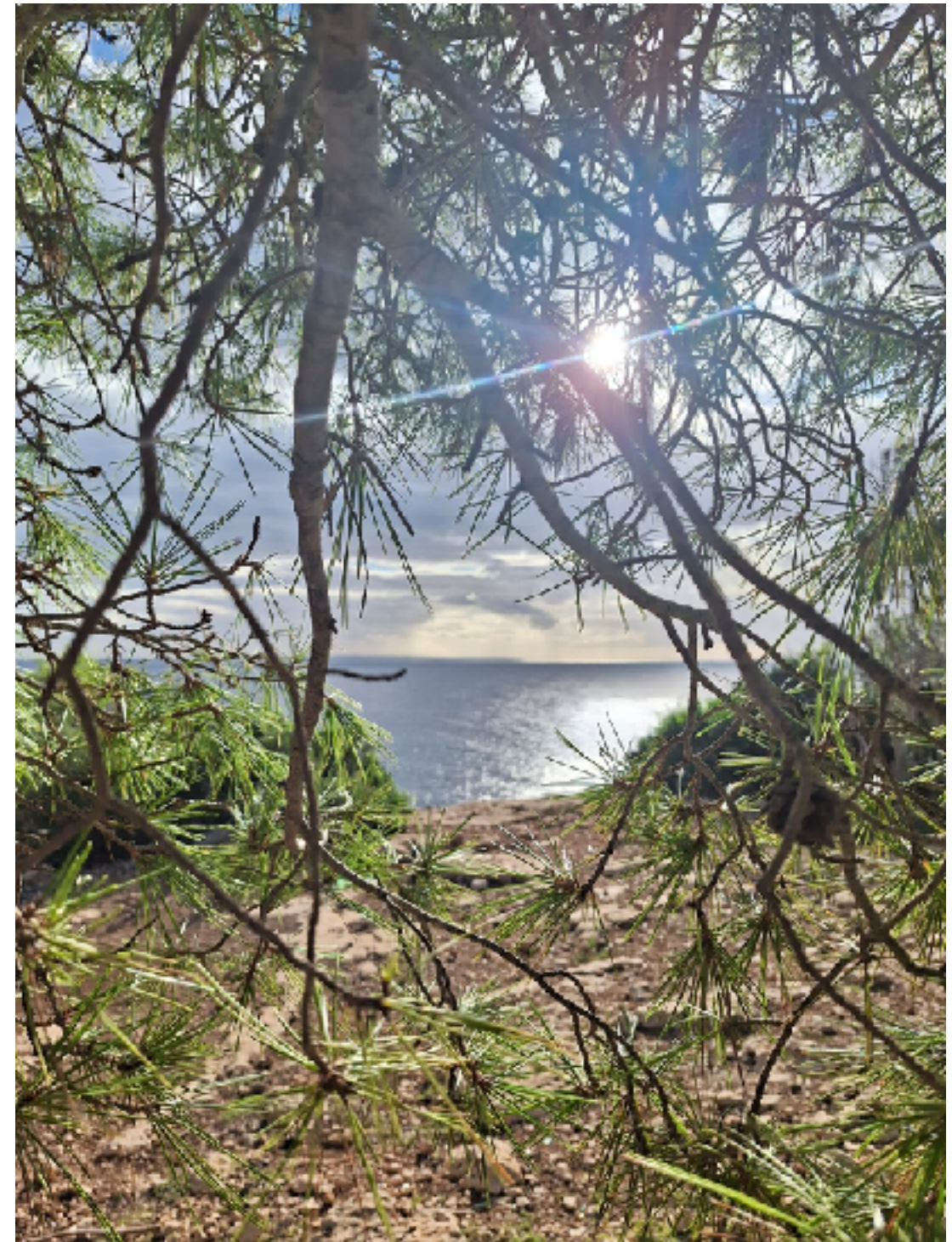
How do I get to the rendez-vous site?

From the International Airport of Palma de Mallorca (PMI) you can take a cab (we recommend the taxi driver Gabi, +34 608 638446) or take the bus to Plaza de España and from here bus to the village of Sóller. You can also take the very special wooden train to Sóller at the Palma train station.

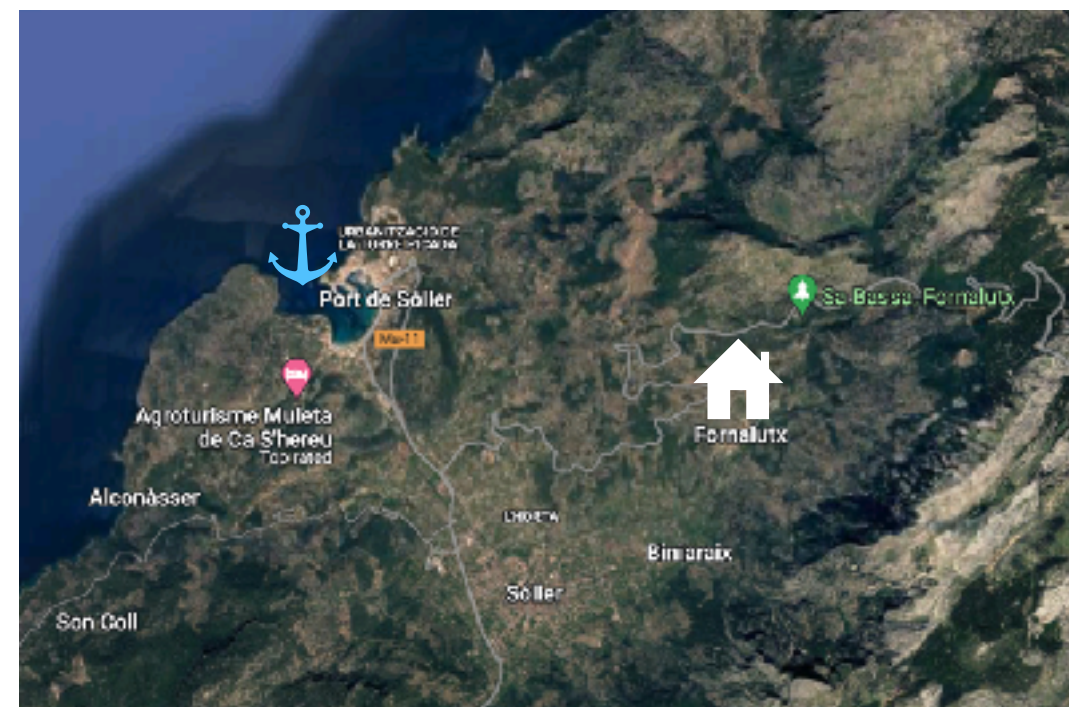
The rendez-vous of each expedition is at 16:00 at the bar in the central square of the village of Sóller. Here you will meet a member of the Tramuntana Expeditions research team who will shuttle you to Ca'n Canyelles, just above the village of Fornalutx, 15 minutes from Sóller.

Once at Ca'n Canyelles the Principal Investigator will guide you through the home base Can Canyelles and show you your bunk, your storage space and the WC. Once settled in, we will give you a safety briefing and the introduction talk of the expedition, where we will go over the weather forecast that will condition the itinerary and daily routine of the following days.

After this, you will have some free time to wander around Fornalutx before dinner at the restaurant.



Project location



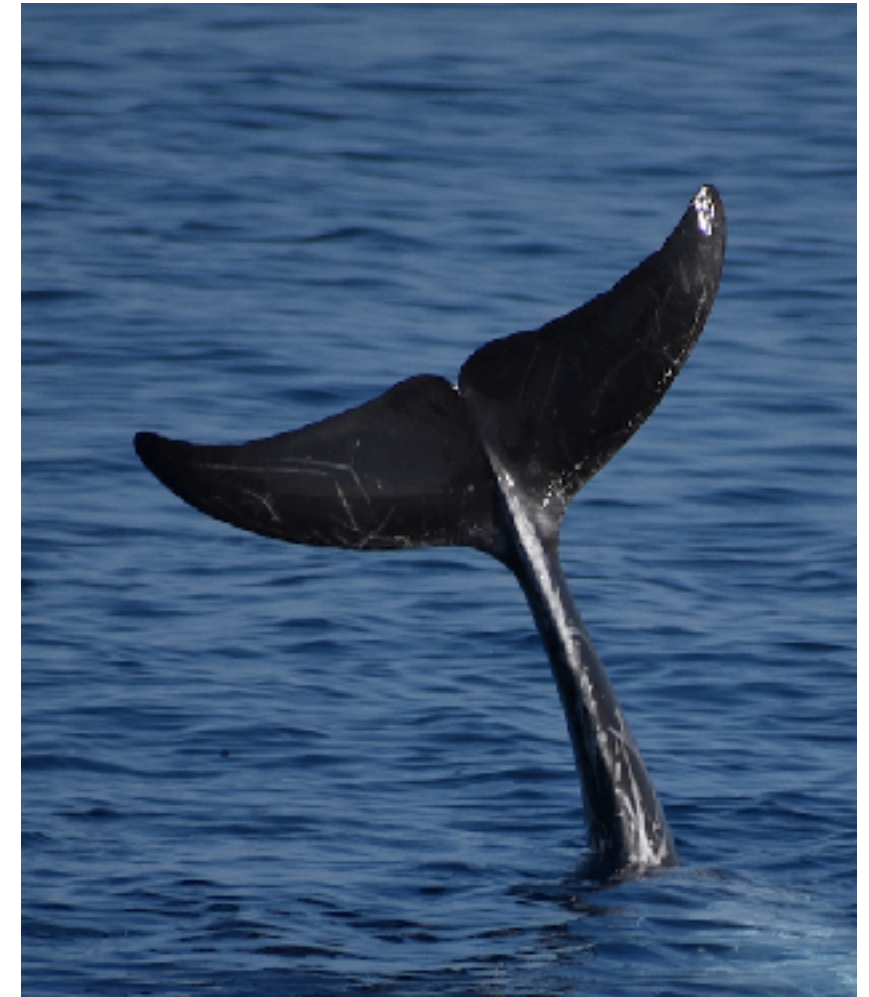
Quick reference sign-up checklist:

- 1) Visit our alnitak.org website
- 2) Click on “Get Involved - Join the crew as volunteer”
- 3) Fill out and submit the online application
- 4) Make the deposit

...and you're done! You will receive an email from us within 48 hours.

Upon signing up you will receive a BRIEFING document with further details as well as a check-list of appropriate things to pack, and other information to enhance your experience as well as our policy which are important documents to read through.

You will also be asked to fill in online forms regarding diet, health information, etc. so everything is ready pre-departure.



Our email: info@alnitak.org