

Whale and dolphin conservation, Tenerife

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During the summer of my first year at University of Liverpool I took part in a weeks volunteer trip led by the organisation Frontier (coordinator@frontier.ac.uk). Frontier run many different volunteer trips abroad, I chose to join their trip to Tenerife where I stayed in their volunteer house and helped with the conservation of both Whales and Dolphins in the area.

Upon arrival to the volunteer house we were all given house tasks for the week as well as our weekly schedule. The timetable entailed the activities we had been assigned to each day, these activities included boat trips, beach clean ups, fish ID activities and a coastal session. On my first day I had 3 hours of training whereby we learnt what types of behaviours we should be looking out for when at sea, specific key terms and how to record the data. We were then tested at the end with the knowledge we had learnt in preparation for the week.

The boat trips consisted of two volunteers joining tourist boats in observing and recording on a check list the behaviours of both the dolphins and whales. We also noted human interaction including illegal boat use. The data gathered during each day was then written up in a large spread sheet to then be compared later.

During the beach clean up session the team managed to clear 12.5 Kilos of plastic bottles, bags, glass and metals from Playa Los Callados beach.

During the costal sessions we climbed to a high point along the cliffs on the coast and watched the activities of the cetaceans and the boat interaction around large fishing nets below us.

When I first started researching into volunteer opportunities, I wasn't sure what I wanted to do but I knew I was keen to make a difference first hand. Frontier were really helpful and were enthusiastic to take me on board. They were very reassuring with communication prior to the trip with any questions or queries I had. This meant I knew exactly what to expect before arriving and could look forward to it.

I study BSC Geography but have a keen interest in marine based topics, the trip gave me the opportunity to learn something new and gain skills I had not yet acquired.

