

## Whale and dolphin conservation, Tenerife

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Hi! I'm Owen, a third year Ocean Scientist from the University of Liverpool. Last Summer I took part in a two-week conservation programme in Tenerife with 3 friends from University and a whole bunch of other volunteers from all around the globe. The project we volunteered on concerned the conservation of the Whales and Dolphins species that are resident to Tenerife. The project was run by a non-profit organisation called Frontier who are a great company for anyone looking to get involved in some part time work/volunteering abroad. We took part in a variety of jobs during our time there on top of being given plenty of time to do our own exploration of the island.



The first few days of the project involved us being trained about the species and the reasons for the conservation so that we were equipped with the background knowledge needed to carry out the work with a sense of purpose. The main aspect of their conservation looked in to sustainable tourism of cetaceans (whale and dolphins) as their natural habitats are being invaded by non-verified boats that are causing distress through the medium of noise pollution. Frontier are fortunate to have a good relationship with the verified tourist boats and luckily for me I was allowed on to a tourist ship to record data as a scientist onboard in return that I did a speech during lunchtime to educate the tourists on the boat about the importance of conservation. This was a bit out my comfort zone as I am not fond of public speaking however with the help of a fellow volunteer, we gave a great presentation and all the tourists seemed very engaged by what we had to say.

It was a very rewarding and humbling experience being able to volunteer helping whales and dolphins as they're such an intelligent and majestic species. It has certainly inspired me to work in the environmental sector as my career choice as I want to feel that same rewarding experience when I know I am contributing to make the planet a better place. It is an experience I will treasure forever and the things I learnt there have changed my life forever. For example, I now understand how immoral it is to hold these intelligent creatures in captivity in addition to understanding how noise affects these creatures under the water, as noise pollution in water is something us humans don't appreciate to its full extent as we do not rely on echolocation for survival. It was great to see the direct impact our work was doing, especially during beach cleans where our team made a huge difference to the point

locals would come over to thank us for our work. I look forward with great anticipation the next opportunity where I can work abroad. Our joint blog for our experience in Tenerife can be found on Frontier's website at <https://frontier.ac.uk/blog/2019/08/16/from-ragnarok-to-el-teide?fbclid=IwAR3avezAwunvGp7RSaugBICWi4gvAwtavB0g9b8trdt4fPwQBs6K7GbnbyA>

