



Tarifa, January the 28<sup>th</sup>, 2008

## 2008. A SUSTAINABLE YEAR



A whale watching journey in “Jumbo II”, the boat of Whale Watch España.

This year starts within a great expectation about the environment protection, the massive acceptance of the climate change, and the renewed attitude of some celebrities around the world in agreement of the Sustainability and the pollutant emissions control.

Best wishes for dolphins and whales, which have celebrated 2007 succeeding in the Japanese’s hunting fleet hold-up.

In 2007, has been also a wonderful year for the resident and migratory dolphins and whales in the Strait of Gibraltar. Within wreckages and oil spills, cetaceans have surprised us by arriving more and more to our seas and coasts, breaking the seasonality we have checked for more than 10 years. This is showing to the whale watchers that the paradise still exists. The persistent Nature, the encounter between the Atlantic and the Med, is truly paradise for observing cetaceans in liberty.

We have to celebrate the presence of some sperm whale mothers and their calves, which have stayed at least two weeks in August in the Strait of Gibraltar, when we used too see only the lonely males. In the same way, we have to congratulate “Macho Morales”, the orca male which has created its own family, and to which

we have seen growing every year of our whale watching seasons.

The couples of sperm whales, dolphins and pilot whales have been an endless spectacle in front of our passenger’s eyes. The whale watching operators try to give the participants the most amazing experience in open sea waters no-



Pilot whale. Photo: David Alarcón

one could ever imagine. Recently, the Department of Environment has admitted the worth of the resource that our Organisation, Whale Watch España, has discovered for Tarifa, Andalusia, Spain, and its people, as a truthful Andalusian politician has said.

Furthermore, several surveys of the whale watching socioeconomic impact in Andalusia have been made. This appears to move money, which should be taken into account.

From my position as the President of Whale Watch España, a non-profit organisation for the protection of cetaceans in liberty, I allow myself to propose a **Sustainability Pact**. The paradise is threatened due to huge planned and necessary infrastructures. This, together with the daily life, could change our paradise into a rubbish dump. Just here, in the Strait of Gibraltar, the Intercontinental Reserve of the Biosphere and Natural Park of the Strait, in adscription process to the European Sustainable Tourism Policy.

My binnacle notebook, which the loneliness of sailors is driven mad by the “levante” and “poniente” winds (eastern and



western winds), reveals the dolphins and whales unknown future. With so many threatening factors, and only one thing needs to be protected: the cetaceans of the Strait of Gibraltar.

Who will help us? We have this only chance to get together and take the control of the species protection. The same place where the new projects, the new pollution control laws, the new “Kyotos”, and the new sustainable development plans will be signed.

No-one wants to be denied of their daily bread, but if we do it properly, by stopping the development’s bad habits, the massive consumerism and the environmental chaos, we will achieve a just future for all us: humans and animals.

“The environment impact is always irreversible”; “No-one should believe itself to be immune to climate change”; “We all are responsible for this sustainable development”. Those are some of the cliché everybody talks about.



Bottlenose dolphin. Photo: Juan Melchor Flor

It is time to agree on the development conditions in the Strait of Gibraltar, within social organisations and with the neighbour countries, in order to avoid the death of the Med, as well as



Orca couple of the Strait of Gibraltar.  
Photo: David Alarcón

to establish sea protection, as the guide of the ecological balance, as necessary as demandable to the industries, to the politicians, and to the social organisations in general.

The **Sustainability Pact in the Strait of Gibraltar** won’t be an obstacle for development, but the future guarantee for one of the most strategic geographic points. To measure the efficiency of the protection agreements, the citizen’s life quality, and the environment balance, is all necessary for the conservation of the still alive flora and fauna of this paradise.

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