



# *Voyage to the Whales of Laguna San Ignacio*

## **Day to Day Itinerary:**

### **Day 1: San Diego Embarkation / Departure**

**4:00 – 7:30pm** Boarding

**9:00 – 10:00pm** Departure

### **Day 2: Customs Clearance Ensenada / Todos Santos Islands / Travel Day**

After a brief stop in Ensenada to clear customs we head out across the Bahia Ensenada enroute to Todos Santos Islands.

Todos Santos Island is home to fantastic birding, sea lion and harbor seal viewing opportunities! From the deck of Horizon you will take in the sights and sounds of small island living, while being serenaded by the local animals. Pull out your cameras as the photographic opportunities are fantastic.

After a brief stop we will start our trek southward toward Islas San Benito, 220 miles to our south. Initially we will be close to the Baja coastline, but as the day progresses land will fade into the distance and you will notice the change from near coastal birds and mammals to the offshore variety.

Pelagic Birding, whale watching and relaxation are the main course for today. Get to know your fellow adventurers and enjoy the beauty of a day at sea. But keep your camera and binoculars close as you never know what will be just over the next swell!

The captains and naturalist will be on the lookout for all varieties of offshore animals including: California gray, blue, minke, sperm and humpback whales. We commonly see common dolphin, Pacific whitesided dolphin and Risso's dolphin this time of the year as well. Shearwaters, petrels, albatross, terns, kittiwake and auklets along with multiple species of gull are quite often seen offshore as well.

### **Days 3 - 4: Islas San Benito**

We arrive mid-morning to this offshore oasis, 279 miles south of San Diego and 40 miles from the Baja peninsula. The first morning you will have the opportunity to join our naturalist for a hike to the old lighthouse, take in the sites of a California sea lion and northern elephant seal colony, enjoy Pacific island birding and botany! You'll also have a chance to socialize with the local fishermen that call San Benito their home.



During lunch we may reposition Horizon to the central or eastern islands. Afternoon will be dedicated to the ocean where you'll have the opportunity to scuba dive, snorkel or kayak in a beautiful kelp forest. California sea lions and Guadalupe fur seals call San Benito home and provide fun interaction opportunities. Unique to this section of Baja, temperate and tropical fish species intermingle. This experience should not be missed for the ocean lover in all of us!

The second morning at this offshore oasis will be spent kayaking, snorkeling and scuba diving one of the secluded coves with sea lions and Guadalupe fur seals. If conditions allow we may be able to visit an offshore seamount for an out of this world snorkel or dive experience.

During lunch we'll pack up and start south for Laguna San Ignacio. The path we'll be traveling is quite often frequented by blue, fin and minke whales plus common, bottlenosed, Risso's and white sided dolphin. Keep your cameras handy and your binoculars close as the next amazing experience could be just over the next swell.

### **Days 5 - 7: Laguna San Ignacio**

Laguna San Ignacio is one of the largest breeding and calving grounds of the Pacific gray whale and each winter these whales make the 12,000 mile round-trip trek in order to give birth in the lagoons warm, protected waters.

We are honored to be allowed in among the whales and during our time in the lagoon you will have the opportunity to experience face to face "friendly" encounters with these whales. The friendly behavior displayed by these whales is unique, magical and experience to never be forgotten!

But Laguna San Ignacio holds more than whales, it is a life magnet attracting dozens of bird species, aquatic and terrestrial. Trips to the mangrove forests will highlight the bird life with up to 30 different species being seen in one tour! Plus, if weather and tides allow, we may be able to offer kayak tours into these mangrove forests canals and channels. A quiet kayak into these areas is the best way to truly appreciate all that the lagoon has to offer.

### **Day 8: Cedros Island**

With peaks rising over 3000 feet from the sea, Cedros is the largest of Baja's Pacific coastal islands. You'll have the opportunity to join our naturalist for a beautiful hike to experience desert island botany and fantastic topographic scenery in the morning. If you'd like to have an ocean experience, strap on your mask and fins in the afternoon and explore a magnificent kelp forest teeming with temperate fish life along with sea lions and if your lucky...northern elephant seals!



### **Days 9: Isla San Martin**

This speck of an island is tall in stature. If you're feeling strong and adventurous, take a naturalist lead hike to the rim of the islands crater, explore lava tubes along the way and enjoy the view from the top! This hike takes you past a quiet harbor seal filled lagoon and terminates with a beautiful view of the entire island and the Baja coastline.

If you'd like to relax today, try snorkeling, diving or kayaking through the kelp forest. This island is home to inquisitive sea lions and harbor seals.

### **Day 10: Ensenada / San Diego / Disembarkation**

After an overnight steam from Isla San Martin we will enter Ensenada harbor early, clear customs out of Mexico and proceed to San Diego arriving mid afternoon.

Disembark after clear United States customs.

*This is a tentative itinerary that will be controlled by Mother Nature. Destinations, arrival and departure times may need to be adjusted accordingly.*