

More information about:

"Dolphins in the Wild"

The Bahamas

The Bahamas are located 50 miles East of the United States and encompass over 650 islands that spread over hundreds of miles to the North, East and South of Florida. Located north of the island of Grand Bahama is an area known as the Little Bahama Bank, with a portion of this locale called the White Sand Shoals. This area is an aquatic wonderland boasting Bahamian blue waters, healthy reefs flourishing with marine life and an underwater playground for wild spotted (*Stenella frontalis*) and bottlenose (*Tursiops truncates*) dolphins.

The "M/V Caribbean Explorer II"

The "M/V Caribbean Explorer II" is a 115 ft. aluminum commercial vessel. Cruising at ten knots and weighing-in with 176 tons of displacement, assures you of the most comfortable cruise available to and from Port Lucaya Marina, Grand Bahama. The electrical outlets are standard U.S. 115 V household current with 220V available. The "M/V Caribbean Explorer II" is proud to be one of the best maintained and service oriented vessels in the market today. With its professionally trained crew, rigid maintenance schedule and abundant spare parts stock she can assure you of a trouble free adventure during your stay aboard.

The "M/V Caribbean Explorer II" can sleep 18 guests in comfort. The upper deck features a large sunning area with comfortable lounge chairs, as well as the semi-enclosed, air-conditioned salon with entertainment center, seating areas and wet bar. Forward of the salon is the galley, as well as crew accommodations and access into the pilothouse. The aft portion of the main deck is where diving operations take place. The dive deck is equipped with individual gear lockers, a large camera table with low-pressure air hose, recharging stations, air filling station, tank racks and separate freshwater rinse baths for dive equipment and cameras. Also located on the dive deck are a wetsuit hanging area, two freshwater showers, and a bathroom, as well as a drinking fountain. There are two ladders leading down to the dive platform itself, where two in-water ladders hang for easy access to and from the water.

Forward of the dive deck is a wide hallway which accesses the main deck passenger staterooms in addition to the boutique and pilothouse. A central staircase leads down to the passenger staterooms and machinery spaces below.

The main deck staterooms consist of:

Master Stateroom (1, 2, and 3) - Queen beds, window, cabinet, private bathroom - 2 and 3 have twin upper beds as well.

Twin Stateroom (4) - Upper and lower twin beds, window, cabinet, private bathroom.

The lower deck is accessed via a stairway on the port side from the main deck hallway, and contains the machinery spaces, and accommodations for four crew and five air-conditioned staterooms. Each stateroom has a private bathroom, and the forward stateroom has portholes. The forward staterooms are located up half a level from the rear staterooms.

The staterooms consist of:

Owner's Staterooms (5,6) - Two twin beds (or one queen bed), private bathroom, portholes, cabinet with drawers.

Double/Twin Staterooms (7, 8, 9) - Double lower and twin upper beds, private bathroom, cabinet (Stateroom 7 has a double bed only).

The chef and stewards will provide you an excellent variety of meals. If you have a general request regarding diet, please let us know so that we may advise the ship directly. They will do their best to accommodate your wishes. Each passenger has his own gear locker and wet suit rack in close proximity to the camera workstation. A complete complimentary self/full bar service is available aboard ship. Water, ice tea, coffee, carbonated beverages and juices are plentiful. Happy hour daily on the sundeck offers daily drink specials, barbecues, green flash sunsets and starlit nights.

Enjoy your spare time by utilizing the onboard alternatives including; high-tech entertainment center with CD, VCR and digital players, ships library, or at the partially shaded Sky Deck with chaise lounges and beverage cooler. You may pay for your onboard expenditures with credit cards, travelers' checks or cash. No personal checks will be accepted.

Your Week

Boarding begins at 3PM; you will then be shown to your stateroom where you'll have the opportunity to unpack and set-up your dive gear. Dinner will be served at 6:30 PM and shortly there after you'll be briefed on the specifics of the vessel, services offered, amenities and the safety aspects Explorer Ventures so diligently adheres to.

Typically we'll leave Port Lucaya Marina in Grand Bahama at 3AM Sunday morning to arrive on the Little Bahama Bank/White Sand Shoals 5 hours later, depending on the weather. The "M/V Caribbean Explorer II" at 176 gross tons provides a stable platform, but if you're prone to seasickness we recommend bringing some scopolamine patches or a seasick preventative to your liking.

The primary focus during the week is to get you in-water encounters (snorkeling) with wild spotted (*Stenella frontalis*) and bottlenose (*Tursiops truncates*) dolphins. From Sunday through Thursday your day is typically spent diving one to three dives and cruising back and fourth on the "M/V Caribbean Explorer II" in areas known for dolphin activity.

When an encounter occurs, there could be one to twenty or more dolphins dancing in the bow wake prior to us entering the water and surrounding us for a few minutes, or a few hours. It's completely up to the dolphins on how long they decide they want us to entertain them, we're dealing with nature. Once you enter the water you need to keep them amused by free diving, spinning and turning to keep their interest. We must not be aggressive, just entertaining, let them come to you. Keep in mind, this is a snorkeling experience, except for those occasions when we remain in one specific area for a long time, we'll then permit you to make use of your scuba gear.

There will be times throughout the week that we'll sit at anchor at locations known as feeding areas waiting patiently for the dolphins to arrive. At times when the activity is scarce we'll proceed to nearby reefs or wrecks for additional snorkeling or scuba diving. Being close to the Gulf Stream, the dive sites in this area are extremely healthy and teaming with marine life. Drift diving along walls, clusters of coral heads and shallow wreck dives promises to keep you excited, exploring from site to site. During certain evenings, night dives will be offered, while on other nights we may cruise out to the 1000-foot line (weather permitting), drifting in the Gulf Stream with our floodlights beaming into the water. These high intensity lights draw small fish into

the area followed by bigger fish and hopefully dolphins feeding offshore. When the dolphins arrive, a bait ball is formed and they proceed to dart in, out and through the fish, a feeding behavior well worth the attempt to see. Later in the evening, sit back and relax as we present to you slide shows and videos about dolphins, whales, marine life and other destinations offered by Aquatic Adventures.

On Friday morning we'll cruise the area one last time for a memorable encounter with the spotted (*Stenella frontalis*) and bottlenose (*Tursiops truncatus*) dolphins in the area. En-route to Freeport Grand Bahama we'll stop for our last dive on shark reef, a shark feeding experience to add to an already fantastic week. Our arrival in Freeport will be between 4PM and 6PM, plenty of time to go shopping, enjoy restaurants, play games at casinos or enjoy a barbeque on the sundeck. On Saturday morning you will leave the ship, the crew, the dolphins, the diving and the multitude of stars reminiscing the experiences you encountered during the week.

Please note: The itinerary listed above will be followed to the best of our ability. Please keep in mind that this is only a reference to give you an idea of how your days will be scheduled. By no means is this to be considered a true and accurate itinerary.

Weather & Visibility

Weather on the White Sand Shoals and Northern Bahamas is typical of the weather patterns experienced by the Southern United States. Days are warm, skies are blue and in the afternoons we experience a brief rain shower. Winds are steady with an occasional brisk breeze causing our snorkeling experiences to be a bit challenging. Keep in mind while on the White Sand Shoals, we're typically protected since the prevailing winds are blowing across the bank. The important thing is to remember that "M/V Caribbean Explorer II" is stable and sea sickness is rare under the normal conditions we'll experience in the area.

Visibility on the White Sand Shoals varies from day to day but averages from 40ft. to 100ft. Keep in mind; we do have our 150 ft. days with the sunlight cutting through the water, highlighting the cuts, creases and curves of the dolphins as they zip by you reflecting their image on the surface of the water. Water temperature ranges between 80 and 84 degrees.

In Summary

As you can see the Little Bahama Bank and White Sand Shoals offers a unique opportunity to experience wild dolphins in their natural habitat along with some of the nicest diving available in the Bahamian archipelagos. The mixture of dolphins and diving provides you a memorable blend of plush reefs, abundant marine life and the most cooperative dolphins available for in-water encounters and frolicking surface activity. Numerous snorkeling sites enable you to divide your time with other activities and fully enjoy what the White Sand Shoals has to offer. Having a knowledgeable group leader with fifty-six weeks experience working the dolphins in this area, as well as, 222 weeks working marine mammals in other parts of the world assures you of increasing your chances of quality encounters.

With Explorer Ventures you're confident of receiving the highest standards of safety, service, amenities and professionalism offered in the industry. Utilizing the "M/V Caribbean Explorer II" guarantees you the most comfortable vessel offering dolphin and diving experiences on the Little Bahamas Bank/White Sand Shoals.

In closing, I would like to thank you for taking the time to read this information. I assure you if you decide to join us on a "Dolphins in the Wild" expedition you will not be disappointed.

Happy Whales Tails,

Tom Conlin

The Price

Our "Dolphins in the Wild" expeditions run from September 19, 2009 to September 26, 2009. These expeditions are 7 nights and 8 days aboard the vessel. A 7-night expedition gives you 5 days on the White Sand Shoals. A 7-night expedition is \$1,695.00 per person plus Bahamian port fee (*US\$85) and fuel surcharge (*US\$95) to be paid in cash onboard. * Non-commissionable

What's Included

"M/V Caribbean Explorer II" provides three meals a day, snacks throughout the day/evening, all coffee, tea, carbonated beverages, juices and alcoholic beverages, all linens, hot showers, air conditioned staterooms and amenities, video library, CD library use, of tanks, weights and belts and all tender activity.

What's Not Included

Airfare to/from your terminal port, all transfers, excess baggage charges, departure taxes at the airport (US\$25), *Bahamian port fee (US\$85) and fuel surcharge (US\$95) to be paid in cash onboard, equipment rental, vacation videos, sundries and gratuities for staff.