

More information about:

“Whales of the Silver Bank” Expeditions

The Silver Bank

The Silver Bank is located about 100 km north of the Dominican Republic and about the same distance from the Turks and Caicos Islands and is one of numerous breeding and calving zones of humpback whales. Research indicates that the Silver Bank contains the largest population of humpbacks in the North Atlantic Ocean, if not the world. During 2005, NOAA, R/V Gordon Gunther took 1,680 different biopsies during a six-week period within a twelve-mile circumference of our mooring position. Conservative estimates believe between three and five thousand humpbacks will pass through the odd shaped, forty square miles encompassing the Silver Bank during a season. On October 14, 1986 President Joaquin Balagaer issued a declaration establishing the Silver Bank as a whale sanctuary. On July 5, 1996, by presidential decree No. 233/96, Article 22, the Silver Bank Sanctuary was enlarged and renamed the “Sanctuary for the Marine Mammals of the Dominican Republic”. The jurisdiction of the sanctuary now encompasses Samana Bay and the Northern and Eastern coastline of the Dominican Republic. From December until the middle of April the waters of the Dominican Republic are alive with migrating North Atlantic Humpback Whales enroute to the breeding and calving zones throughout the area.

The “M/V Turks & Caicos Explorer II”

The “M/V Turks & Caicos Explorer II” is a 124 ft. vessel with a 22ft. beam that sleeps 20 passengers. Jacuzzi. This is the nicest platform for whale watching on the Silver Bank. This awning-covered fly bridge is accessed via semicircular stairs from the boat deck, and features settee seating for 12 to 15, a barbeque, webt bar and helm station. The boat deck features a large sunning area with comfortable lounge chairs, and provides access via an outside walkway to the two VIP staterooms located amidships, as well as the pilothouse forward. Transit storage for the vessel’s tenders is located at the stern. A serving area for buffet meals is located next to the semicircular staircase leading up to the fly bridge.

The VIP staterooms 1 & 2 feature; individually controlled air-conditioning systems, as well as a queen-sized bed, desk, chair, and private bathroom and shower. The aft half of the main deck is where diving operations take place. The dive deck is equipped with individual gear lockers, camera table, recharging station, air and Nitrox filling station, tank racks and separate freshwater rinse baths for dive equipment and cameras. It also has a wetsuit hanging area, freshwater showers, and a bathroom. Large stairways lead down to the dive platform, where two in-water ladders hang for easy access to and from the water. Forward of the dive deck is the air-conditioned main salon, where breakfast and dinner are served. The salon also contains an

entertainment center with TV/DVD and stereo, as well as a boutique display and access to all staterooms and the galley. Staterooms 3 & 4 on the main deck each have twin beds, desk with chair, hanging closet, wardrobe, storage, individually controlled air conditioning, and private bathroom and shower. Staterooms 5, 6 and 7 on the main deck each have twin/queen beds, desk with chair, hanging closet, wardrobe, storage, individually controlled air conditioning, and private bathroom and shower. The lower deck of the vessel includes the compressor and dive gear storage room aft, accessed from the dive platform through two watertight doors. The passenger staterooms 8, 9, and 10 are accessed via a circular staircase from the main salon; each includes twin upper/lower beds, wardrobe, hanging closet, individually controlled air conditioning, and private bathroom and shower.

The "M/V Turks & Caicos Explorer II" crew is composed of certified dive masters and instructors who have undergone rigorous STCW 95 training in shipboard firefighting, sea survival skills, CPR, first aid and crowd control. 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 vessel is equipped with modern instrumentation and communications including 48-mile Simrad radar with proximity alarms, Autopilot, Global Positioning System (GPS) and location alarm, Digital Depth sounder with alarm, Digital bottom recorder, computerized chart system with GPS link, Satellite phone with data link, Cellular telephone, SSB Radiotelephone and VHF radios, engine and bilge alarms, internal telephone system. The electricity provided is 220 V and 110 V AC power (110 V AC 3 prong grounded outlets in all cabins and heads).

The chef and stewards will provide you an excellent variety of delicious cuisine in the scenic dining room and unparalleled service including daily steward service. 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 a gear locker and wet suit rack. Water, iced tea, coffee, assorted sugar free juices, fruit juices, and alcoholic beverages are provided. Happy hour daily on the sundeck offers daily snacks, green flash sunsets and starlit nights. Additionally, an onboard boutique with vacation videos is available throughout the week. You may pay for your onboard expenditures with credit cards, cash or by personal check. No travelers checks please.

The Tenders

Aquatic Adventures provides two twenty-five foot long, ten-foot beam fiberglass Privateer Tenders to transport you during your days of whale watching. These extra-wide oceans going tenders are equipped with twin four stroke Yamaha 115hp environmentally conscious engines. These state of the art engines eliminate exhaust fumes and permit us to triumphantly complete

quiet approach techniques that are extremely important when successfully establishing *soft-in-water* encounters. Having twin engines for safety doubles our distance capabilities compared to other operators and permits us the luxury of not having to be in the same areas as these operators. This obvious advantage increases our probability in providing you with more encounters in areas that are more productive in the type of whale activity we're looking for throughout the season. These tenders furnish the best platforms for topside photography available on the Silver Bank. For your safety, a professional whale guide and divemaster will always operate the tenders.

The extras our tenders provide for comfort and safety during your six to eight hours a day whale watching exemplifies the design and philosophy of Aquatic Adventures. Each tender carries only ten guests with plenty of bench space for your comfort, splash rails to minimize spray into the tender, splash guards to protect your dry articles, an abundance of storage space for snorkeling gear, top side and underwater camera equipment, bimini tops to protect you from the sun, cushioned seating areas, heavy duty boarding ladders, first aid kits, life vests, VHF radios, GPS navigation and plenty of sandwiches, snacks, fruit, water to hydrate and energize you throughout the day. These are without a doubt, the most comfortable tenders on the Silver Bank.

Your Week

After boarding the "M/V Turks & Caicos Explorer II" and making your way on an overnight crossing to the Silver Bank you will awake with anticipation as we proceed to the "nursery", our mooring area. For the next five days you will be nestled up in the NE corner of the Silver Bank, an area protected by coral heads and host to the numerous females that have chosen the Silver Bank as their "nursery" for their newborn calves. The entire Silver Bank is riddled with coral heads, but the NE corner is congested with coral that break the surface, giving protection to you and the newborn calves with the only point of reference being a shipwreck, sitting high and dry, on top of these natural obstructions.

Each day at 8:30 AM the tenders depart the mooring area fully stocked and prepared for a full days worth of activity. Activity on the Silver Bank runs in cycles. Everyday there is a slack period and this slack period will vary day to day. Typically, lunch is served at 12:30 PM; if there is activity at this time we may delay or even skip lunch so we don't miss any opportunity to intermingle with these gentle giants. If this is the case, we will survive with the numerous sandwiches, snacks and beverages provided for your tender. Depending on the day's activities, your tender will return to the mothership between 5:00 PM and 6:00 PM just in time for you to enjoy the happy hour festivities on the sun deck. We will provide you with six to eight hours a day of whale watching opportunities. If for any reason you wish to return to the ship during the day, the capabilities of the tenders enable us to whisk you back to the "M/V Turks & Caicos Explorer II" with no inconvenience to the

remainder of the guests. Throughout the week, we will digitally record the songs and communications of the humpback whale, enabling you to hear first hand this incredible display of solicitation. During the evenings we will narrate slide shows, show videos, inform you about the behaviors you are witnessing and introduce you to the scientific terminology used in conjunction with these mammals. Afterwards, the deck offers a spectacle of stars rarely to be seen through the traffic and city lights experienced in our daily lives.

Cruising the Silver Bank looking for cooperative humpback whales can sometimes be frustrating, time consuming and tiring. On the other hand, when we're knee deep in surface activity and *soft-in-water* encounters, the little time spent "whale waiting" is soon forgotten. The majority of the time there are more than enough whales in the areas we explore, in fact, it's not "where is the whale", it's "which whale do we go to". Keep in mind, we have to take what we can get when we can get it, surface activity is as exciting as *soft-in-water* encounters they're just a different sensation. Surface activity is throughout the area and it is relatively easy to place the tenders in a pleasing position to be up close and personal to rowdy groups, breaching, fin slapping, lob tailing and other behaviors witnessed daily.

The biggest obstacle for the type of encounters that we're looking for is spending too much time with the wrong type of whale. We may approach a dozen whales before finding a whale that is interested in allowing us the opportunity to join them in their element, on their terms, in a *soft-in-water* encounter. Having 92 more weeks experience on the Silver Bank than any other operators gives us the knowledge and instinctive edge of knowing when to work a whale and when to leave them alone. Being able to distinguish body movements, blow patterns and behaviors enables us to place you in the water more often, for longer time periods, eliminating the chasing whales' tails syndrome and fly-by in-water encounters so often seen in the area.

On Friday we will depart to your terminal port. Arrival time depends on the weather and typically ranges from 4 PM to 6 PM Friday. On Friday evening you'll have the option of having dinner on board or going to dinner at a restaurant in Puerto Plata. On Saturday morning you will leave the ship, the crew, the whales and the multitude of stars, feeling insignificant, in awe and disbelief, unable to convey the sensations you have experienced throughout the week.

Weather

Weather on the Silver Bank is usually affected by the weather patterns experienced by the Southern United States. A typical day on the Silver Bank has winds blowing out of the N to SE in the 15-knot range. This change throughout the day spans from 5 knots of wind to 25 knots of wind, blowing from the N to E to S to W, all depending on the fronts that are constantly moving through the area. The coral formations throughout the area provide

us with plenty of protection from the wind and sea conditions while we are located in the mooring area. The crossing to and from the Silver Bank can be uncomfortable at times until we reach the mooring area. Upon arrival, you will hardly notice the ship moving, no matter what the sea conditions turn out to be. This does not mean that it's always windy and rough on the Silver Bank, it just means we're 85 miles offshore, on an ocean frontier, subjected to mother natures many moods.

Visibility

Visibility on the Silver Bank varies from day to day, but averages from 40 to 80 feet around the mooring area with occasional particles suspended in the water. The wind, swells and slight current that moves the sea across the coral heads that surround the mooring area cause a run off from the coral which determines the amount of visibility in the area. As a whole, the Silver Bank is patchy in terms of visibility. One area may have only 50 ft. of visibility while 400 ft. away from that position we'll run across 80 ft. of visibility. The majority of the times we operate our tenders in areas that I have found over the years that are too far for the other operators to go to safely due to their tender restrictions. These areas increase our visibility an additional 20 to 50 feet and keep us away from the other operators, which seem to congregate in the same general area. During the month of March we will experience a thimble jellyfish bloom. This bloom is also patchy in appearance and will move through the area lasting several days to several weeks in duration.

Keep in mind; we do have our 100-foot days with the sunlight cutting through the water, highlighting the cuts, creases and curves of the humpback whale as it glides by you reflecting its image on the surface of the water. Water temperature ranges between 76 and 79 degrees.

A Soft-In-Water Encounter

"A *soft-in-water* encounter is not scuba diving, nor is it aggressive swimming or free diving. It is passive, non-aggressive floating at the surface, in mask, fins and snorkel, allowing the whale to develop an interest in humans. It is finding a cooperative, tolerant and/or curious whale and meeting that whale in the water, calmly and peacefully, permitting a rare and treasured encounter between human and cetacean" © Thomas L. Conlin.

This does not mean that everyone must stay glued next to each other, blocking each other's view and ruining each other's experience. The first several minutes of each encounter are extremely important. Humpback whales are acoustic. So noise is a relevant issue when preparing to enter the water, when entering the water and when in the water. If one person swims towards the whale as it approaches the group, more than likely, it will turn its pectoral fin and propel itself, with its fluke, out of everyone's view. But, if you follow your guide's instructions and adhere to the *soft-in-water*

encounter techniques, you will have a high probability of turning a fly-by into a *soft-in-water* encounter lasting hours.

When this happens it's a whole new ball game and your naturalist will instruct you on what you are able to do and what you are not able to do. Each whale is different and cannot be treated as we treated the whale before. Certain behaviors during this type of encounter are consistent from whale to whale, but it is up to your naturalists to distinguish what in-water approaches are not obtrusive to this particular whale. For example, when whales are infatuated with our presence in the water they become very acrobatic, spinning around and returning to our position with no need to swim after them. This allows us the opportunity to position ourselves in a pleasing position for photography or video recording, by free diving within our cubicle, being cautious not to swim toward the whale. Some whales don't mind this, while other whales will turn away as soon as someone attempts to go deeper than ten feet of water. It's up to your naturalist to distinguish between these idiosyncrasies between whales and direct you in your movements giving you every opportunity to elongate your encounter as much as possible. This knowledge is one of the reasons why our expeditions are so successful and why we have longer and more frequent *soft-in-water* encounters than all other operators in the area.

Your Cetacean Specialists

All of Aquatic Adventures expeditions are naturalist guided, with the utmost care taken in providing you a knowledgeable naturalist, delivering an exciting, educational and hassle free expedition. From furnishing you all the information needed to prepare for your journey, to placing you in the water with cetaceans around the world, everyone listed below is extremely passionate about what they do, and they love sharing their aquatic world with you. Meet the - Aquatic Adventures Team.

Captain Tom Conlin

One of the big differences between our operation and others is the experience and consistency of the naturalists on a year-to-year basis. As a naturalist I have had the opportunity of spending 206 weeks working with whales on the Silver Bank. My entire focus is on learning about whale behavior and supplying you with the type of experiences you're expecting. This experience builds year-to-year and improves our approach techniques and understanding of North Atlantic Humpback Whale behaviors over other operators. As a licensed 1600-ton U.S.C.G. Master, Master Diver Trainer and Advanced Free Diver, I have a thorough understanding of ships, boats and the sea, above and below the surface of the water.

Since 1990, I've relentlessly read everything I could get my hands on concerning humpback whales, but my real knowledge stems from spending

206 weeks in the field, watching, listening, and trying to discern the movements, behaviors and attitudes of the North Atlantic Humpback Whale. Recording behaviors and thoughts as they occur has helped me theorize and understand movement, breaching, lob tailing, communications, resting, rowdy groups, courtship and mother/calf interaction. Not to mention behavior changes due to time of season, wind and sea conditions, positions of the moon and the variable weather patterns we experience throughout this time period. This information is passed on to the College of the Atlantic and the Center for Coastal Studies for fluke ID's and behavioral studies. I digitally record the song of the humpback whales on a daily basis and send these recordings to Dr. Chris Clark, head of the Department of Ornithology at Cornell University. Students of marine sciences at Wheelock College receive three college credits by joining me on a one-week expedition and assisting me in collecting this information as well as fulfilling additional requirements set by the college.

This 20 year period that I have spent on the Silver Bank has given me the opportunity to contribute my work, associate and study with some of the leading organizations and researchers in the Cetacean community as well as working with and providing footage and images to film crews, leading magazines, newspapers and professional photographers from around the world: YONAH (Year of the North Atlantic Humpback, a three year DNA project with researchers from 7 nations), Malcolm Clarke, David McTaggart, Greenpeace International, NOAA (National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration), Caribbean Tagging Project (2008, 2009), Center for Coastal Studies, College of the Atlantic, Cornell University, Wheelock College, Atlantic Cetacean Research Center, Roger Payne's Whale Conservation Society, IFAW, Dolphin Research Center, Ashes and Snow (Gregory Colbert), BBC, Howard Hall Productions, Bob Cranston Productions, IMAX, NBC, The Today Show (2 times), MSNBC, 3 separate National Geographic Specials, Disney, Paramount, Crest Films, Segment Films, Sea Cam, 3 separate NHK of Japan specials, Amazing Animals, Discovery, Antenna 3, GBTV, PBS, CBS, ABC, UFO and The Sports Channel.

Being responsible for developing whale watching on the Silver Bank has led me in a direction from operator, to naturalist, to being actively involved with the Sanctuary Commission of the "Sanctuary for the Marine Mammals of the Dominican Republic". Prior to the 1996 season, the Comision Rectora appointed me as their representative on the Silver Bank. As the person with the most time and experience on the Silver Bank I have been placed in a position to assist the sanctuary commission by providing the proper information needed to improve the guidelines established as well as educate the crew members of the commercial vessels involved. My duties included: The surveillance of all applications in regards to the regulations of the Sanctuary Committee concerning all vessels located on the Silver Bank, assisting professional photographers and film crews, training and assisting all operators, captains and crews in approach and soft-in-water encounter techniques, coordinating and determining the permanent location of

anchoring and mooring positions for each vessel in the area and recommending the best mooring system for each site. I was responsible for informing and notifying the captains of all vessels of observations and adoptions of the regulations of the Comision Rectora, as well as, informing and recommending appropriate sanctions and/or withdrawing permits from any violators of the existing regulations. In 2007, I was asked by the Secretary of the Environment to rewrite the regulations, contracts and agreements for all operators and visitors of the Sanctuary. I'm happy to say that everything that I submitted was accepted.

During the 2009 season I once again assisted NOAA in placing satellite tags on seven adults prior to the migration north. I've learned many new insights concerning the behaviors of these magnificent mammals above and below the surface of the water. This year-to-year, day-to-day learning process has enabled me to provide our participants with an unmatched opportunity to experience sensational surface activity in tandem with unbelievable "soft-in-water" encounters.

Holly Berkower

In 2002, I began my journey with Aquatic Adventures. Each day I am thankful for knowledge that has been shared with me, whether it is related to the running of Aquatic Adventures, learning something new on the computer (Tom is a MAC wiz too), or helping me to grow as a person. I enjoy hearing guests relate their Whales of The Silver Bank experiences and that first moment when they saw a humpback whale, eye to eye. I know that exuberance they are feeling because I have felt it myself. Every time a guest relates their Whale Tale, I feel as if I am there with them. It is an experience I know they will never forget. It is fulfilling to know that I help make it possible for others to enjoy this unbelievable event. I may never meet the majority of passengers but I feel as though we have a connection through our many phone conversations and emails. In the 2009 Silver Bank season, my children had the awesome opportunity to share this experience as well. They loved it from beginning to end and you will, too. We hope to see you out there soon!

Nelson Riollano

My exposure to the underwater world began 21 years ago when I learned to scuba dive in Japan while stationed there with the U.S. Air Force. From the moment I took my first breath underwater I knew that I wanted to see and learn more about all the beauty the oceans have to offer. I continued my training and education by becoming a PADI Scuba Instructor with other formal training in marine biology at the University of Maryland (Okinawa, Japan Annex and College Park, Maryland).

In 2006, I began my relationship with Aquatic Adventures as captain of the vessel chartered for doing the whale excursions on the Silver Bank. Soon

after I began to learn the techniques of 'working' whales from Tom Conlin, whose experience in this field is simply unmatched.

Guiding our guests to the experience of snorkeling with humpback whales is not an easy task when we consider that they are wild animals, large, and though quite gentle, they are very powerful creatures. In addition, the conditions on the Silver Bank can be treacherous due to the coral pinnacles that come near to and sometimes break the surface (there are at least 1100 coral heads). Since the safety of our guests and the whales is paramount in our operation, we have adopted procedures that allow for the safety and comfort of the whales while giving our guests a safe and memorable experience.

Denise Lawrence

When I was a kid, all I dreamed of was working with wildlife. That dream has become a reality thanks to Tom. Humpback whales are gentle giants that we may never fully understand and for me the power of emotion seeing a whale underwater as well as on the surface is so strong it brings tears to my eyes. Sharing this experience and being able to help others experience such beauty is one of the most rewarding experiences I have had in my life.

One of the first times I went snorkeling 20 years ago in the Florida keys I got seasick but still enjoyed every minute of being in the water enjoying the beauty of the fishes and the reefs. Never did I think that those first experiences in the open water would lead to the most moving in-water experience I've come to have over the last 4 years on the Silver Bank with Humpback whales.

Lorenzo Martinez

Lorenzo represents the Secretary of the Environment of the Dominican Republic. He joins us the majority of the season while rotating between the different operators. Lorenzo has excellent spotting skills, in-water understanding and tender operating abilities..

When to Come

One of the most frequently asked questions concerning a "Whales of the Silver Bank" expedition is when the best time to come to the Silver Bank is. Honestly, anytime can be spectacular. As a general rule, the season progresses as follows; the humpback whales start to arrive on the Silver Bank as early as December with a large influx of whales arriving by mid

January, peaking by the third week of February, second week of March and deserting the area by the end of April. The arrival patterns of humpback whales from the northern latitudes are relatively consistent and can be characterized as follows: pregnant females, mother-calf pairs, mature females, immature females, mature males and immature males. Upon their departure, impregnated females lead the way, followed by all other classes of humpbacks, with the mother/calf pairs being the last to depart the Antilles for their four to six week journey home.

When making your decision concerning when to come to the Silver Bank there are two things you must take into consideration, weather and activity. Since this area is directly related to the weather patterns of the Southern United States you can never be guaranteed good weather no matter when you decide to join a "Whales of the Silver Bank" expedition. Every year is different and every year the good weather weeks will change making it impossible to assure anyone of optimal weather.

As outlined above, we arrive on the Silver Bank by the fourth week of January when the area is bustling with activity. From this point through February the whales are very energized, movements are very quick and chaotic, due to the sheer number of whales moving through the area on a daily basis. Numerous rowdy groups, individual females accompanied by escorts and mothers with calves are prevalent. Most of our encounters during this time frame are with individual whales or rowdy groups. We do have times where the mothers and calves are cooperative, but generally the mothers are very protective of their calves and the calves are very skittish because of their age. Keep in mind, we have guidelines for approaching whales and one of those guidelines is if a whale changes course two times, we leave them alone. One of my theories regarding mother/calf behavior is that once a mother/calf arrives on the Silver Bank they will stay in this area for the entire season, unlike the individual whales that cruise through the area. By March these mother/calf pairs are comfortable with the tenders, the mothers aren't as protective, and the calves are leading the group, displaying adult postures and being very curious. Mid March shows a decrease in whale population with rowdy groups being larger and more violent in nature. We operate only during the time frame in which I know, through years of experience, there will be plenty of activity to please our guests. Whether you choose January, February, March or April you will be placed with numerous whales on a daily basis.

In Summary

As you can see the Silver Bank is truly a marvel of nature, hosting the largest concentration of humpback whales during the mating and calving season in the world. Coupled with the "M/V Turks & Caicos Explorer II's" ability to provide you with comfort, safety, service and professionalism guarantee you a superior experience during your stay on the Silver Bank. Our tenders are incomparable to all other tenders in the area, modified on a

yearly basis, assuring you guest oriented improvements to maximize your comfort and enjoyments throughout your day of whale watching. During your week on the Silver Bank you'll be provided with more whale watching opportunities than any other operation in the area. From sunrise to sunset we will give you every possibility to capture on film or in memory that sought after experience you've been looking to behold. The educational aspect of your week is by far the most thorough presentation of slides, videos and support material offered in the area. By the end of your week you will have a comprehensive knowledge of the behaviors, anatomy and temperaments of the North Atlantic Humpback Whale. The weather and sea conditions you'll experience on the Silver Bank are variable from day to day. Visibility is patchy, but we will transport you to areas that will provide you with the best visibility available at the time. We will get you up close and personal to surface activity and eye-to-eye during *soft-in-water* encounters. Being responsible for developing *soft-in-water* encounters and training all other operations in this technique places us in the forefront of establishing the guidelines for all operators and improving on those guidelines on a year-to-year basis. Your naturalist for your expedition set the standards that all operators are expected to meet. Being involved only as a whale naturalist permits me the freedom of observation without the day-to-day stress of vessel operations. We will show you more surface activity and place you in position for *soft-in-water* encounters more often than any other operator in the area, no matter which week you choose. Every week that we have scheduled departures has been chosen for activity and guest satisfaction. Please keep in mind, you're dealing with nature and there are no guarantees.

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 "Whales of the Silver Bank" expedition you will not be disappointed.

We'll see you on the Silver Bank!

The Aquatic Adventures Team

The Price

Our "Whales of the Silver Bank" expeditions run from January 29, 2011 through April 16, 2011. These expeditions are 7 days in duration. One of the days included is your arrival day. A 7-day expedition gives you 5 days on the Silver Bank with a minimum of 4 1/2 days of tender time. A 7-day expedition ranges from 2995.00, \$3095.00 or \$3295.00 per person based on your choice of stateroom. In addition, there is a \$200.00 port, cruising and sanctuary fees and \$200.00 fuel surcharge (\$200.00 to be paid onboard in cash). All staterooms are double occupancy.

What's Included

Three meals a day, snacks throughout the day and evening, all coffee, tea, juices, alcoholic and non-alcoholic beverages (premium liquor is at a charge). Of course if you have a favorite, please bring it with you. Linens and towels, hot showers, air conditioned staterooms and amenities including: shampoo, conditioner and liquid soap, video library, CD library, and all tender activity.

What's Not Included

Airfare to/from your terminal port, tourist cards needed for arrival, (a tourist card can be purchased upon arrival in Puerto Plata for a cost of \$10.00 (cash), transfers to and from the ship or hotels, land tours or bus stations, excess baggage charges, departure taxes at airport, cruising, port & sanctuary fees, fuel surcharge, equipment rental, vacation videos, sundries, gratuities (15%-20%) for boat crews.

Deposits and Refunds

Verbal, faxed or written reservations will be held for 7 days. A \$1,000.00 **non-refundable deposit** per person is required within 7 days to confirm a reservation. Your application and Liability Release forms are needed along with your deposit. Please go to the attached link to download all of the necessary forms as well as our information packets.

http://www.aquaticadventures.com/silver_bank/information.htm

Payment in full is required 90 days prior to your "Whales of the Silver Bank" expedition. Substitution of guests is permitted with approval of Aquatic Adventures. Trip cancellation insurance is suggested and available through Aquatic Adventures. All rates and conditions are subject to change. If payments are not received at the designated times Aquatic Adventures reserves the right to sell those spaces in question with forfeiture of all monies to date. The \$200.00 port, cruising and sanctuary fee and \$200.00 fuel surcharge fee is non commissionable. **All payments are non-refundable.**

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