

Field School
Research · Education · Exploration



8 day research
expedition

Live and learn
aboard a
**55' Research
Vessel**
in the
Bahamas

Sperm Whale Research Expedition from Grand Bahama to Abaco

Join Field School and The Bahamas Marine Mammal Research Organization (BMMRO) for an unforgettable 8 day expedition to track and learn about sperm whales.

As part of BMMRO's ongoing research, we'll be using an acoustic array to track sperm whales as they swim, feed, and dive—in the hopes of learning more about their Caribbean population. We'll also be deploying a few acoustic receivers in the northern Bahamas to record data for later collection (if you are scuba certified, you may also have an opportunity to help us deploy receivers).

Once we make contact with a pod of whales, we will be actively tracking and following them using an acoustic array towed behind R/V Garvin, and will have the chance to learn acoustic and marine mammal research techniques from BMMRO's experts while contributing to research that can aid the conservation of these amazing animals.

Learn more and enroll now at
www.getintothefield.com

\$3500/person
*covers all
activities, room,
board, and
transportation
once at the
RV Garvin.*



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During your week on the RV Garvin you will get hands-on training and experience in marine mammal research provided by the Bahamas Marine Mammal Research Organization (bahamaswhales.org) and Field School

Topics covered:

- Cetacean biology, ecology and conservation with an emphasis on sperm whales

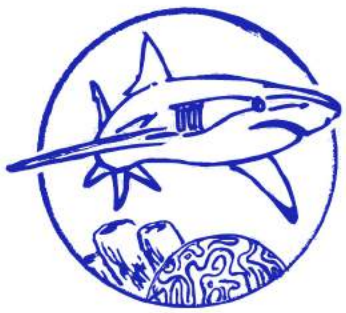
Boat skills:

- Knot tying, including bowline, cleat, tail rope
- Boat terminology
- Line handling and safety skills

Research activities you will be trained to participate in:

- Basic snorkeling and freediving techniques
- Acoustic tracking of sperm whales including deploying hydrophone equipment and using acoustic software to identify and track individuals
- Visual tracking of sperm whales including designing and deploying watch rotas, proper spotting technique using binoculars, and logging geolocated data
- Using photo IDs to develop a population database





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Preparing for your course

Travel arrangements to site:

Participants are responsible for travel to and from the study site of Sandy Point, Abaco. Flights are available in and out of Marsh Harbour which is approximately an hours drive from Sandy Point. Taxis are available or transportation may be arranged through BMMRO. Please contact as you make your travel arrangements to coordinate. You will need to be in Sandy Point by the morning of the first day of the expedition. Affordable overnight accommodations are available in town. We recommend staying at Oeisha's Resort. Arrangements and reservations can be made by email (oeisha1resort@gmail.com or oeisha.roberts@colina.com).

Travel insurance:

Weather in the Caribbean is temperate and beautiful but can sometimes be unpredictable. Our boat is freshly retrofitted and carefully maintained, but engine failure or other unexpected mechanical problems can occur. We strongly recommend that you purchase travel insurance in the event that the course needs to be cancelled, which is extremely unlikely but never impossible. If this happens you will of course receive a full refund for your course fees and we will provide you with the necessary documentation for receiving a refund on your flights.





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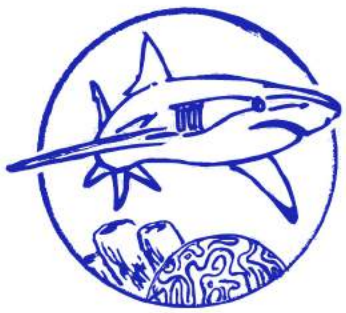
Medical Insurance:

We require that all participants in the course carry supplemental medical travel insurance. This is inexpensive and protects you and your family financially in the event of unexpected illness or injury.

It is often possible to combine travel/flight coverage with medical insurance for a trip, and comprehensive insurance coverage usually costs between \$100 and \$150. Diver's Alert Network (www.diversalertnetwork.org) and companies like Allianz are worth considering for this purpose, although you are welcome to use whatever insurer you wish.

Field School staff are trained to respond in the event of a medical emergency, and we do have a first aid kit on board for student use that contains essentials, but we also strongly encourage you to bring ibuprofen, seasickness tablets (we recommend bonine) and any other medications you may need, in addition to any necessary prescription medication. **If you have serious allergies or other medical conditions that may impact your safety and well-being while on the boat, please let us know.**





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What to pack

The R/V Garvin is a working Research Vessel, and so storage onboard and in sleeping quarters is at a premium. As such it is very important that you pack light and focus on essentials. In addition to essentials like toiletries, medications, and undergarments, we recommend the following:

Functional swim wear (2-3)

Shorts (2-3)

Shirts (2-3)

Rashguard or wetsuit (1-2)—you'll be snorkeling and a shirt/wetsuit can help keep you warm in the water, avoid jellyfish stings, and prevent sunburn

Windbreaker/rain jacket (1)

Pants, preferably of a fast drying material (1)

Light long-sleeved shirt (1)

Shoes: one pair of sandals and (required) one pair of close-toed rubber-soled shoes that you can securely attach to your feet

2 towels (1 beach towel/ 1 shower towel)

Snorkel, mask and fins (if you have not opted to rent from us)

Sunglasses (polarized preferred) and hat

Sunscreen (We have some onboard but we cannot stress this enough - people often underestimate the strength of the Bahamas sun)

Earplugs/eyemask, especially if you have difficulty sleeping with background noise—boat engines are not that quiet!





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A few other things to keep in mind when packing:

All together everything should fit inside a larger backpack or small duffel bag. Hard or rolling suitcases are not recommended as there isn't a lot of space to store them and they're less convenient in the confines of a boat than smaller, more flexible bags.



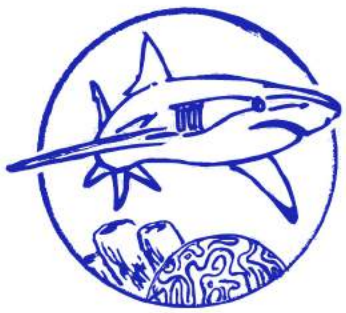
You want to bring clothing that is comfortable for you to move and work in, and that you do not mind getting dirty (i.e., possibly ruined). Remember that we will also have field shirts for you when you arrive, one of which is yours to keep as part of your trip. Additional field shirts are also available for purchase.



Things we need from you:

1. Signed and completed waivers (which will be sent out to you a few months before your trip)
2. Dietary information, if any (vegetarian, vegan, allergies)
3. Medical information, if any (relevant medical conditions, allergies)
4. Flight and travel details
5. Proof of travel emergency medical insurance
6. Shoe size (only if you are renting snorkel gear from us)





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A few frequently asked questions

Who may participate in this course?

Generally this course is for students 18+ though we will make some exceptions for mature 17 year old students. Please sign up for our newsletter to hear about upcoming opportunities for younger students. There is no upper age limit on this course. We often host students who are changing careers or expanding their training for graduate school, or interested members of the general public

Can I receive course credit?

Field School does not offer credit directly, but we are happy to provide whatever documentation your institution requires so that you may receive credit for independent study.

What will I see on this trip?

We will be specifically tracking sperm whales on this expedition, but you may also have an opportunity to see some of the spectacular wildlife and natural beauty that the Bahamas has to offer including sea turtles, sharks, and pods of dolphins.

Is any research experience needed?

This is not a whale watching cruise - however, no experience with marine mammals is needed. All necessary training will be provided by the staff onboard. The participant spots on this expedition are also very limited so there are more opportunities to engage in the research and learn from the scientific staff onboard.

If you have other questions about the expedition, do not hesitate to ask.

