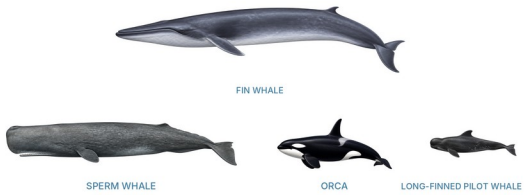
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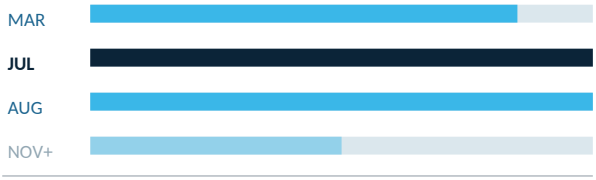
SPAIN · STRAIT OF GIBRALTAR

Tarifa, Spain

Long-finned pilot whale, orca, sperm whale and fin whale · year-round



SIGHTING PROBABILITY



BEST MONTH
July

SEASON
Year-round

§ 01 INTRODUCTION

Tarifa, the southernmost point of mainland Europe, looks out over the Strait of Gibraltar: 14 km of sea between Europe and Africa and one of Europe's richest corridors for cetaceans, with up to seven species.

The four resident species —long-finned pilot whale and bottlenose, striped and common dolphins— are seen on the vast majority of trips. In July and August the Iberian orcas arrive (around 40 animals), taking tuna from fishermen's lines; this is the population that interacts with sailing boats' rudders, worth bearing in mind if you sail independently.

§ 02 ETHICS

Whale-watching ethics

Regulated by Spain's Royal Decree 1727/2007: minimum distances, maximum viewing times and a ban on swimming with the animals. With such a small orca population, the choice of operator matters: the best ones support research, do not interfere with tuna fishing and do not chase the animals. Avoid anyone who promises a guaranteed orca.

§ 03 IN THE FIELD

Practical tips

01
Book orca trips ahead (July–August): they last about 3 hours and fill up quickly.

02
Check the wind forecast: the easterly Levante makes trips difficult; with the westerly Poniente or calm weather, conditions are better.

03
Many operators offer a free repeat trip if there are no sightings: ask about this policy when booking.

04
Bring a light jacket, sun protection, water and something for seasickness: you will feel the Strait's currents.

05
Outside the orca season, pilot whales and dolphins are easy to see almost all year.

06
Choose operators linked to research in the Strait that respect viewing times.

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