

Crystal makes conservation commitment with ORCA alliance

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Crystal is bringing ORCA experts on-board two of its Alaska voyages. Image courtesy of Crystal

By MICKEY ALAM KHAN

Cruise line Crystal is bringing conservation organization ORCA on-board to support its work to protect populations of whales, dolphins and porpoises.

ORCA wildlife experts will travel on Crystal Symphony to educate Crystal's bridge crew and passengers on the animals. Voluntourism has long been a part of Crystal's offerings to guests, and this latest initiative allows the cruise line to also give back.

"We are honored to join ORCA in its admirable work to monitor and protect the animals and the oceans we sail," said John Stoll, vice president of land programs and the 'You Care, We Care' program at Crystal, in a statement. "The passion of the expert cruise conservationists on their team is truly contagious and will certainly enlighten and inspire our guests.

"Crystal guests are inquisitive travelers who want to experience the world, rather than just see it, and understanding the wildlife and environments of destinations is key to that purpose," he said.

Cruise conservation

ORCA is slated to travel with Crystal on two trips through Alaska between Anchorage and Vancouver this August. The routes will take Crystal Symphony through the the Inside Passage and Hubbel Glacier, which are home to lots of wildlife.

The organization's head of science and conservation Lucy Babey and John Young, wildlife photographer and birding and natural history expert, will be representing ORCA on Crystal.

While on-board Crystal Symphony, ORCA's experts will guide the bridge crew through conservation practices as well as training them on collecting behavioral data about the species.

This data will then be passed on to ORCA as part of its OceanWatch program.



Crystal is working with ORCA on conservation efforts. Image courtesy of ORCA

For Crystal guests, ORCA will host Q&A sessions, deck watches, shore excursions and data collection workshops.

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"People who live and work at sea are the most passionate about protecting it, and having Crystal take part in ORCA OceanWatch this year is a fantastic opportunity to get their crew directly involved in protecting whales and dolphins," said Sally Hamilton, director of ORCA, in a statement. "Having the chance to showcase these incredible animals to guests aboard Crystal Symphony is an added bonus that will allow us to spread our marine conservation program to a whole new audience."

As travelers become more environmentally conscious, luxury hotel brands are introducing more sustainability initiatives that prove hospitality does not need to sacrifice upscale experiences to achieve ecological and social responsibility.

Hospitality groups such as the Peninsula Hotel and Marriott International have been increasingly transparent with their guests about their newest sustainability efforts, which aim to benefit people and the planet. Environmental efforts do ultimately impact brands' bottom lines, whether through additional expenses or appealing to more travelers ([see story](#)).

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