



**AIMM**

ASSOCIAÇÃO PARA A INVESTIGAÇÃO DO MEIO MARINHO  
MARINE ENVIRONMENT RESEARCH ASSOCIATION

# INTERNSHIPS



# ***The Practical Guide***

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# Welcome

## Bem-vindo !

Welcome to the Marine Environment Research Association's (AIMM) internship programme in southern Portugal.

This document collects all the information necessary for you to understand what is expected of you and how the project works.

You can also find helpful information to plan your trip to Portugal.

*If you have further questions after carefully reading this document feel free to ask them to [interns@aimmportugal.org](mailto:interns@aimmportugal.org)*

AIMM team



AIMM Portugal was found in 2010 and its area of action is in the region of Algarve, more specifically Albufeira. It's a non-governmental association, non-for-profit organisation with international scope. Our main field of activity is related with marine mammals in their natural environment.

AIMM aims to be a reference for research, education and conservation of the environment in Portuguese waters, promoting activities and partnerships, which empower our understanding of marine related issues, identifying threats and mitigate their effects in marine wildlife. AIMM works closely to sea agents, like dolphin-watching companies, administration and authorities, other NGO sea related associations and organizations and public environmental institutions. Jointly we develop scientific research in environmental topics and try to promote a healthier and safer environment for marine species.

Through field work at sea, education and research, AIMM gives space, time and room, to the participants in our programs, to face working at sea conditions, learn methodological skills when working with marine mammals in the wild. Participants will have the opportunity to exchange, research and work with experienced marine biologists, which enables them to broaden their perspectives, know their physical limits, and actively play a role in the future conservation of marine habitat.

# Join us

Many of our participants are motivated, hard-working, young individuals of different nationalities with a common interest for the sea and willingness to contribute to its conservation. While participating in a small/long term internship and working in a familiar and friendly environment, they enhanced their marine scientific skills, species knowledge, threats, social behaviours and structure and sea methodologies to collect data and interpret.



In the future, AIMM hopes to continue to collaborate with sea stakeholders, marine students and scientists and will explore new areas of study and will try to deliver a greater value to all parties involved in our association through high quality research and focussed effort from AIMM members.

To finish, AIMM wants to thank all those committed individuals that worked with us, people dedicated to our cause, from one week to six months, to drive forward sea conservation and shape this association.



## The Project

The distribution and population dynamics of whale and dolphin species (cetaceans) that inhabit the South of Portugal are poorly known. Cetaceans are top predators playing a very important role in their ecosystems, but they also attract people's attention making them ambassadors of the marine environment conservation efforts. These are the two main reasons why **AIMM Portugal** decided to focus most of its research efforts on the occurrence, distribution, and abundance of cetaceans in the Southern coast of Portugal, in terms of species and habitat use. This will help us verify their conservation status as well as assess the potential threats they face.



# Join us

The main recorded species and its behaviours are the short beaked common dolphin (*Delphinus delphis*) and common bottlenose dolphin (*Tursiops truncatus*). Less common, is the threatened harbour porpoise (*Phocoena phocoena*), as well as risso's dolphins, orcas (*Orcinus orca*), striped dolphins (*Stenella coeruleoalba*), the minke whale (*Balaenoptera acutorostrata*) and the fin whale (*Balaenoptera physalus*). Conducted in partnership with dolphin watching companies operating in the south of Portugal, the project plays a double function, raising awareness for the impacts that this touristic activity can have in cetaceans and incentivizing a responsible code of conduct.

## Conditions of Participation

Due to the nature of the work, **participants should:**

- Be 16 years-old or older;
- Stay for at least 1 week (7 days);
- Speak enough English to be able to communicate with other participants;
- Be in good health, physically fit and able to walk and climb easily;
- Be able to swim and feel comfortable on a boat;
- Tolerate hot weather and long periods of exposure to the sun.



Although previous experience is not required, **preference will be given** to those who have:

- Work experience with marine mammals;
- Experience in research and/or whale-watching boats;
- Experience with photo-identification;
- Professional photographic cameras that can be used for photo-identification;
- Availability to stay for longer periods of time.



# Join us



# Join us

## Dates

Our season starts in the **1<sup>st</sup> of May and ends on the 30<sup>th</sup> of November**. From previous experience we suggest our participants to stay for a minimum of two weeks and arrive preferentially on Sunday morning of the first day and departure the day after the internship finishes.

Our **minimum stay is 7 days** and the work is planned in a week basis, but we have some flexibility in order to meet your travel arrangements.

**Participation fees are usually paid to take part on our work and some of the reasons are:**

- Income to bear the administrative/ accommodation expenditures of the association: rent, energy, water, Internet, equipment, fuel, etc.;
- Income to bear food expenditures, as you'll be provided three meals per day in the accommodation;
- Income to support on-field activities and professional training.

In the meantime, AIMM is also taking actions to fund some activities through environmental funded projects and sponsorships to expand the sources of income for the association.



**Not included in the fee:**

- Transport to/from Albufeira;
- Meals in restaurant and snack-bar (including the restaurants at the marina);
- Free time activities;
- Personal insurance (all participants must have health/travel insurance);
- Personal expenses.

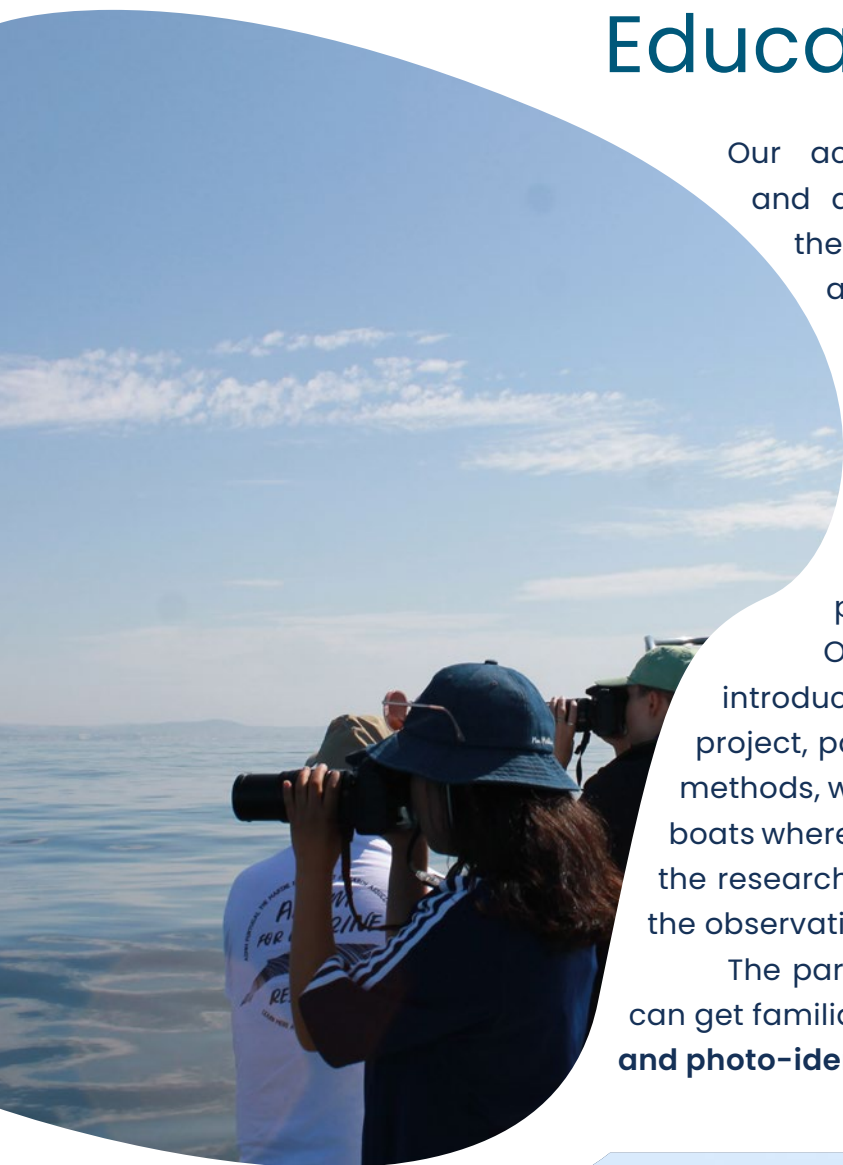
# Join us

## Educational Content

Our activities will have program training and a fully dedicated person to organize the work, logistics and provide practical and theoretical knowledge on specific topics sea related. Additionally, at **certain times of year, there would be other researchers working close by**, providing the possibility to exchange extra information and gain a good perspective in the marine biology profession.

Our first days will be dedicated to the introduction to the team, its members and project, partners in the marina, project and work methods, which will include the first trip on the tour boats where the interns are accompanied by one of the research team members to be guided through the observation techniques and data collection.

The participants will process the data, so they can get familiarized with **databases, GPS information and photo-identification method and analysis**.





# Join us

## Conditions

The climate in Portugal is temperate with mild springs and autumns, warm and dry summers and cold winters. During the field season, May to November, the temperature will vary on **average between 17°C and 29°C**. The fieldwork is conducted from a dedicated research boat (time at sea from 4h up to 6h) and dolphin-watching boats with trips that can last up to 2h30. During the fieldwork we are exposed to the sun with no protection from the elements, so participants should come prepared for it, however, even in hot days, it can get cold and windy at sea so it is advised to bring warmer clothes.

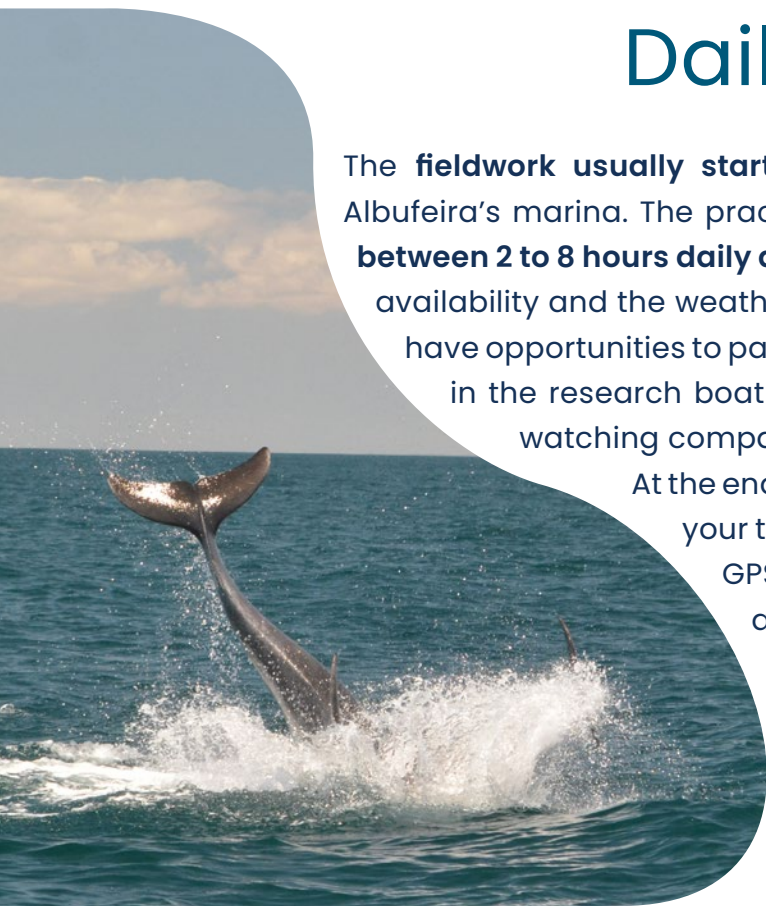


Although the sea conditions are generally relatively calm, it may sometimes get choppy and some water spray will occur. For this reason, **the fieldwork is not very appropriate for people with serious back problems.**

## Daily Life in the Field

The **fieldwork usually starts at 8:00** and is mainly conducted from Albufeira's marina. The practical component of the internship can vary **between 2 to 8 hours daily at sea**, according to the interns' interest, boat availability and the weather conditions. During your internship you will have opportunities to participate in several dedicated research trips in the research boat Ketos, and also in the boats of the dolphin watching companies that collaborates with AIMM.

At the end of each day you'll also be asked to introduce your trips data (e.g. behaviour, group composition, GPS position, weather conditions, reaction of the animals to the boats around) in our database and participate in the photo identification work and preliminary data analysis.



# Join us



**Every team member shares all the house chores**, such as cleaning, so the office work is combined with the house work at the end of the day. Since days can get quite long and heavy, all the activities are distributed by the team leader to avoid any work overload.

**You will have 1 day off during the week**, to relax, enjoy and to get the chance to do some tourism. On the rest of the days, when all the tasks have been completed, participants have some free time. The field base has a TV with USB reader so participants can bring movies or TV series to watch. A day with no available places on the

dolphin-watching boats or of bad weather can be a day off or an office day, it will be the team leader's decision according to the project's needs.

Albufeira is a very touristic city with famous beaches, cultural events, beautiful surroundings, amazing weather and food, and close from other interesting places like the natural reserve of Ria Formosa or the ancient castle of Silves, just to name a few.

## Below you can see an **EXAMPLE** of a typical **WEEKLY PLAN**

(During your stay the scheduling is weather depending and will be planned on a weekly basis.)

	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY	SUNDAY
08:30	field work	field work	DAY OFF	data analysis	field work	classes	field work
17:00							
17:00	data entry	equip. cleaning		data entry	equip. cleaning	data entry	equip. cleaning
18:00							
18:00	free time	cleaning time		cooking time	chickens duty (feed - clean)	free time	farm duty
20:00							
after 23:00	sleeping time	sleeping time		sleeping time	sleeping time	sleeping time	sleeping time



# Join us

## Participation Certificate

In the end of your experience **you'll be given a participation certificate** and, if you wish for curriculum purposes, a detailed description of your activities, including hours at sea and main species/aims targeted in the investigation. Also, you'll be given an AIMM researcher t-shirt.



# Join us

## Accommodation

Accommodation will be provided to all participants and will be shared by the whole team: participants, research assistants and researchers. The field station is a small farm in Albufeira, Algarve.

The house is equipped with Wi-Fi, TV, laundry room and everything needed for a working kitchen. Participants will share 3 rooms, 3 bathrooms, living room, dining room, kitchen, office garden with a swimming pool. The rooms are mixed gender, however whenever possible the distribution will be arranged as to have separate gender rooms.

The atmosphere is very informal and usually quite familiar. It provides a great environment for idea and experience exchange among the whole team so everyone wishing to participate in the programme should stay at the field station. It is very important to keep in mind that as an international team **we'll be mostly speaking in English** and some communication problems are common to arise as each one has different levels of English, so people need to be tolerant with each other.





# Join us

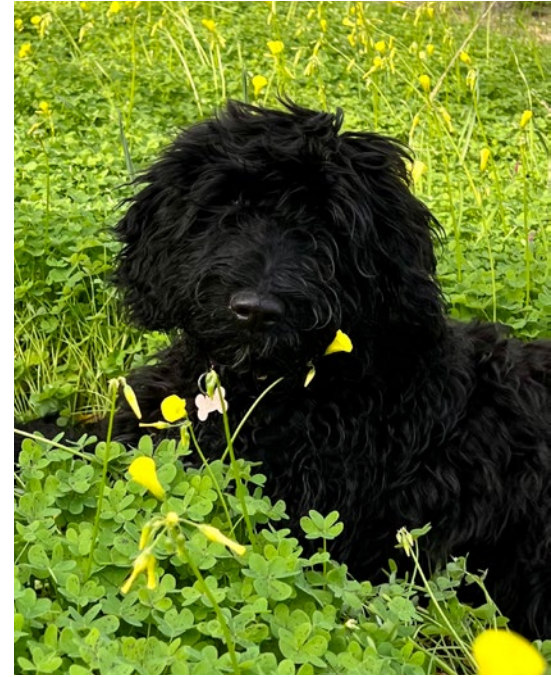
Scuba,  
the  
fluffiest  
teammate





# Join us

Maré,  
the youngest  
teammate





# Join us

Thinking of following a more sustainable and healthy way of living we began to **grow and harvest our own vegetables** in this little farm. We water and harvest the vegetables daily. We also have a mini-flock of **chickens to provide us fresh eggs**. Daily we clean, gather the eggs and let them out of the hen house.

In their free time, interns are welcome and encouraged to help us taking care of the chickens and the farm.



## Meals

The internship programme fee covers the food prepared at home, including breakfast, lunch and dinner. Dinners out will be considered a personal expense as well as special treats, snacks, beverages and alcoholic drinks.

All **special dietary requirements will be respected** (veganism, vegetarianism, intolerances, etc.), however it is important to **inform about any of this requirement** when applying.

# Travel Planning

## Insurance

All participants are **required to have health insurance**. European citizens are entitled to free healthcare or eligible to the payment of only a very small fee. The European Health Insurance Card gives access to this healthcare and is free so we advise participants to get one ([+ info click here](#)). The non European participants will need some other type of insurance that covers medical care.

Although not mandatory **we recommend getting a travel insurance** for the duration of the stay as well, to cover for repatriation, alteration of travel plans, etc. Get informed in a travel agency.

## Arrival & Rendezvous

### Contact Person:

Joana Castro  
(00351) 912 596 211

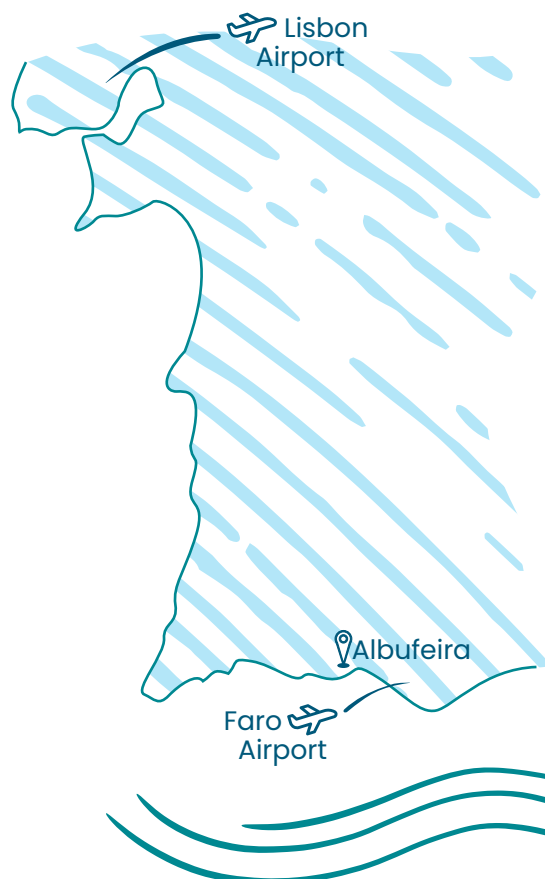
Participants are responsible for making their own travel arrangements to the rendezvous site, [the AIMM Research House](#). Times of arrival can be arranged with the intern coordinator to better suit travel plans and sometimes we can pick you up at some locations.

**We advise flying to Faro** as that is the closest airport. Lisbon airport is also a option special for flights outside EU.

From Lisbon, you can catch a direct bus or train to Albufeira.

If, arriving at Faro Airport, participants need to take a bus that leaves from the airport and stops at the train station. The **bus is called Próximo** and the number 16 makes that connection, the ticket should be about 2,35€ ([+ info click here](#) or for the [timetable click here](#) - but the info is in Portuguese).

Other option we recommed is that you take an Uber or similar service from the airport directly to our Research House. The costs are around 30€ to 42€ (depending on the service availability).





# Travel Planning

After that there are several **ways to go to Albufeira: train, bus and transfers**. All of the means of transportation are less regular on weekends and might not work on Sundays so keep that in mind when booking flights.

## Bus

It is very easy to get a bus to Albufeira from Faro. The journey lasts between **55min and 1h30min** depending on the type of bus and the tickets are **4,70€**. You can look for tickets, prices and online bookings [here](#).

## Transfer

This would be **the most expensive way** to come to Albufeira, but it's the easiest one. There are a lot of private shuttle companies that make the connection between Faro airport and Albufeira, in minicars of minibuses, and can usually drop passengers in a chosen place. If you decide to take a transfer, the drop out should be at the bus station (either Albufeira Caliços, or Albufeira Center).

Some examples of the companies:

- [Polotur](#)
- [Yellowfish](#)
- [Sunline Transfers](#) (recommended)

If you choose to use [Sunline Transfers](#) to come to our Research House your destination address should be the following: **N269 222A, Guia, Portugal**

The road number where the house is situated is N269 and our house number is 222A.

## Train

There are regular trains from Faro city centre to Albufeira-Ferreiras.

There are 3 types of trains in Portugal: Alfa-Pendular, Intercidades and Regional. The first two are long distance fast trains, they get to Albufeira in about **20 min** but tickets are much more expensive (**12€**). Ask for the Regional train, the journey lasts about 40 min and the price should be about 4€. You can look for tickets, prices and online bookings [here](#).



# Travel Planning

## Packing List

We prepared a list of items that you should bring with you:

### ESSENTIALS

- Copies of your passport, flight itinerary and credit cards in case the originals are lost or stolen (remember to pack them separately from the originals)
- Passport/National ID Card
- Personal insurance document
- Driver's license (optional)

### PERSONAL ITEMS

- Bath towel
- Toiletries (gel, shampoo, tooth brush, etc)
- Personal medications;
- Ear plugs
- Adapter EU standart for electronic equipment (optional)
- Charger for electronic equipment (cell phone, camera, iPod, laptop, etc.)
- USB pen drive (to bring photos home or other interesting files)
- Computer (optional but helpful for the work as the project has limited laptops)

### FIELD WORK

- T-shirts / long-sleeved shirts
- Quick drying trousers and/or shorts
- Warm jackets or sweater
- Comfortable shoes (ideal if boat adapted, sandals or flip-flops)
- Wind stopper/ rain coat
- Sunglasses with UV protection (preferably polarized)
- Hat (one that won't fly off)
- Watch (preferably waterproof)
- Sunscreen (SPF 30 desirable)
- Medium backpack
- Sealable bag if you want to carry any electronic equipment to the boat (i.e. camera, cell phone)

### FREE TIME

suggestions

- Pocket money
- Night out clothes
- Warmer clothes for the evening
- Hiking boots
- Binoculars
- Beach items (swim suit and towel)

# Travel Planning

## Useful Information About Portugal

### LOCAL CURRENCY

Euro € – check [here](#) for exchange rates

### SAFETY

Portugal is considered to be a **very safe and hospitable country**. Nevertheless, you should be aware of your belongings and pickpockets, especially in the more touristic areas.

### ELECTRICITY

The electrical supply in Portugal is **220-240 volts with a two-pinned plug**.



### PERSONAL FUNDS

Participants **should bring enough money for transportation to and from Albufeira**, free time activities, drinks and meals at restaurants and souvenirs. The major banks have branches in Albufeira and there are also currency exchange offices.


### LANGUAGE

Portugal's official language is Portuguese. However, being Algarve a very touristic region, **almost everyone speaks a good English**. All research team member speaks very good English.

### TIME ZONE

UTC +00:00 with one hour ahead during the summer.

We hope you can  
join us and be part of  
**AIMM for this season !**



Have any questions/suggestions?

Send us an e-mail: [interns@aimmportugal.org](mailto:interns@aimmportugal.org)

Updated information at: [www.aimmportugal.org](http://www.aimmportugal.org)

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