RESEARCH

Background/Overview

All members of the co-ordinator team support each other in running the volunteer programme; making sure our volunteers have a grounded experience is paramount. This includes thorough training and induction as to our methods, ethos and goals, and the provision of a platform and inspiration to follow their own individual contribution.

Additionally, each co-ordinator will have their own area of specific responsibility.

Research in General

The AWdF has maintained three separate photo identification databases over the past 25 years. Volunteers have observed interactions using the whale watching boats as research platforms.

Key databases;
- Short Finned Pilot Whales
- Bottlenose Dolphins
- Migratory Species

Additionally, the AWdF is adding acoustic data on resident pilot whale and bottlenose dolphins as well as on migrating baleen whales.

The Research Co-ordinator has 5 different areas of work;
- Research
- Support
- Projects
- AOCN
- Personal Reports

Research

Research Related - Key co-ordinator tasks

- training and supervision of research volunteers
- collating and processing data collected
- ensuring integrity of collected data
- backing up and keeping datasets safe
- producing weekly reports on number of animals identified (including new individuals)
- producing weekly updated family matrices for both short finned pilot whale families and resident bottlenose dolphin community
- producing monthly updated photo identification catalogues
- maintaining excellent relations with boat crews
- producing monthly and quarterly reports for boat owners and crews covering cetaceans seen, expected to be seen and relevant international news.

Support

The Research Co-ordinator will be responsible for supporting research volunteers in their research efforts. AWdF datasets are open access and students are encouraged to write papers based on the data. Many thousands have done so from A-level to PhD level.

Support Related - Key co-ordinator tasks

- helping students set research questions that are realistic given our data
- helping develop appropriate research methodologies
- supporting students in their literature reviews with relevant papers printed and added to our research paper folders
- helping students to analyse their data and write academic reports
- printing off all reports and adding them to our research

Projects - Current

- Adding datasets to INaturalist or similar to develop Citizen Research
- Developing Humpback Whale project for Sao Tome
- Writing report on impact of illegal boats on cetaceans watched

AOCN

Building the AOCN (Atlantic Ocean Cetacean Network) and networking with organisations across the Atlantic Oceans interested in cetacean research, education and conservation. Finding ways to support and collaborate with them.

- Attending conferences and building direct links with organisations.

Personal Reports

Personal research project with paper to be presented to ECS