



The Mizen Head Signal Station Wildlife Courses

Weekend breaks a little out of the ordinary



Risso's Dolphins

- > Always been interested in whales and dolphins?
- > Ever wanted to know more about how to identify the different whale and dolphin species from land and sea?

Yes? Then join Nic Slocum and Brendan Collins for The Mizen Head Whale and Dolphin Weekend. Two days of workshops, discussion and land and boat based watches designed for the wildlife enthusiast to give you further understanding of the key cetacean species that may be encountered around the Irish coast.



Short beaked common dolphins

Bottlenose Dolphins

The Mizen Head Whale and Dolphin Weekend with Nic Slocum and Brendan Collins will run over the weekend of **15th and 16th October 2016**. Land based workshops will be conducted at the historic Mizen Head Signal Station Visitor Centre whilst boat based excursions will run from the harbour of the picturesque West Cork village of Schull on board The Liscannor Star and Voyager, twin engined catamarans ideally suited to marine wildlife watching off West Cork . Land based watched will be organised from The Mizen Head.



Join Nic and Brendan for a weekend of learning how to observe, identify and record cetaceans (whales, dolphins and porpoises) from land and sea, their key behavioural characteristics and the ecology of these unique air breathing marine mammals. In addition you will get valuable insights into how to prepare for a whale and dolphin watching session.

The introductory price for this outstanding all inclusive weekend is €186

Sign up today for this amazing weekend of learning, exploration and enjoyment with like-minded people whose share your passion for these enigmatic and beautiful marine mammals.

What is included:

- Local B&B

- Lunches
- All refreshments tea and coffee breaks whilst at the visitor centre
- Dinner at The Heron's Cove Restaurant in Goleen
- Information pack to take away
- Boat based whale and dolphin watching excursion
- Land based whale and dolphin watching



Itinerary for your all-inclusive Mizen Head whale and dolphin weekend

Day 1.

10am. Arrival and welcome at the Mizen Head Signal Station and Visitor Centre

10.15am. Registration for the Mizen Head whale and dolphin course

10.30am. Nic Slocum of Whale Watch West Cork will address the following issues:

- > How best to watch whales, dolphins and porpoises
- > Choosing how you want to watch whales and dolphins
- > The challenges of identification / can you ever be sure?
- > How to recognise whale and dolphin behaviour and what it may mean
- > What do you do if you find a stranded whale or dolphin
- > What is responsible whale watching?

11.30am. Break for tea/coffee

11.45am. Nic Slocum will continue with a presentation on how to count, record and identify whales, dolphins and porpoises

1pm. Break for lunch at the Mizen Head Visitor Centre

2pm. Brendan Collins will give a short talk on how to prepare for a land based whale and dolphin watch. Brendan will cover issues such as personal preparation, clothing, preparing gear, what gear to take, where are you going to watch from, getting permission for access and safety equipment.

2.15pm. We will walk down over the famous Mizen Bridge to the signal station and out onto Ireland's most southwesterly point. There are a number of different viewing platforms allowing viewing out over Dunmanus Bay towards The Sheep's Head and Beara Peninsular to the north and south across Roaringwater Bay towards Cape Clear Island and the iconic Fastnet Rock and Lighthouse. Looking down from the bridge we may see Atlantic grey seal playing in the surf. Further offshore we will be looking for harbour porpoises, common dolphins and minke whales. For the bird enthusiast, gannets, Manx shearwaters and storm petrels may be visible surprisingly close inshore.

3.30pm. We head back to the visitor centre for a tea/coffee break

4pm. Nic Slocum will give a short recap of the day. There will then be a chance to ask Nic any questions you have about cetaceans.

4.45pm. Finish and a little free time to look around the Mizen Head visitor centre

5.30pm. Transfer to our excellent B&B accommodation

7.30pm. Dinner at Heron's Cove in Goleen.

NB. All presentations will be supported by slides and video clips of cetaceans observed around the Irish coast and also other parts of the world.

Day 2.

9am. Breakfast at our local B&B

10.30am Whale and Dolphin watching boat tour on board The Liscannor Star with Brendan Collins and Nic Slocum. This will be another chance to talk to

Brendan and Nic about the whales and dolphins of West Cork and elsewhere along the Irish coast. We will board The Liscannor Star at Schull Harbour.

1pm. Stop at North Harbour on Cape Clear island for refreshments. Cape Clear Island is Ireland's most southerly community and part of the Gaeltacht.

3pm. Return to Schull Harbour and The Mizen Head visitor centre. Here you will have some free time for further viewing from land or simply a relaxing walk down to the signal station to view some of the exhibits documenting the important and vital role this station played in maritime history over the last 100 years.

5pm. The Mizen Head whale and dolphin weekend finishes



Fin Whales

Who will conduct this exciting weekend of whale and dolphin learning and observation

Nic Slocum PhD, FRGS



Nic Slocum has been watching whales from boats for 30 years. Humpback whales in Maui; Southern Right whales in Patagonia; Pacific gray whales and blue whales in Mexico.

Dr Slocum is an experienced naturalist and wildlife guide and is best known for his escorted tours taking enthusiasts out, both in Ireland and overseas, to view and photograph whales and dolphins. He has been instrumental in putting together one of the most comprehensive codes of conduct for boat based human - whale interactions right down to the species level. He is an established authority on the threats currently faced by this unique group of marine mammals.

A zoologist by training, Nic Slocum has maintained a lifelong passion for the conservation of our wildlife and wild places, has published articles on conservation related issues in both regional and national newspapers and has appeared as an expert commentator on RTE, Channel 4 and ITV. An experienced presenter he is regularly called on to comment on wildlife related issues on Irish national radio.

Nic has won internationally recognised awards for his work from the Responsible Whale Watching Partnership and the Irish Centre for Responsible Tourism and divides his time between West Cork, Ireland and other iconic whale watching destinations around the world.

Nic is the director of *Whale Watch West Cork* which runs boat based tours to watch and photograph whales and dolphins off the coast of West Cork and has been a passionate exponent of responsible whale watching protocols.

No stranger to adventure Nic led an expedition across the Sahara Desert to Central Africa in 1976 which earned him Fellowship of the Royal Geographical Society. His hard work ethic, easy presentation style and detailed knowledge of the species and the locations where they are found ensures his guests have a wildlife watching experience second to none.

Brendan Collins



Brendan Collins is a native of West Cork. Helping with his father's lobster and crab fishing business as a boy on the waters of West Cork, has instilled in Brendan a deep love and understanding of the sea. His enquiring mind and years of detailed observations has led him to develop a wide knowledge and abiding passion for West Cork's marine wildlife, especially the marine mammals that make the waters off southwest Ireland their home. Brendan is widely acknowledged for his knowledge of the short beaked common dolphin and its unique behaviour. He is currently contributing to a guidebook about the whales and dolphins of West Cork due to be published in 2017.

Through his company *West Cork Coastal Tours* Brendan offers boat based whale and dolphin watching excursions off the coast of West Cork. Dedication and commitment to developing a responsible ethos towards boat based marine wildlife encounters has earned Brendan the acknowledgement and admiration of his customers and colleagues alike. He played a pivotal role in developing a detailed, species specific, code of conduct for boat based whale and dolphin watching; the first of it's kind in Ireland. Brendan is increasingly accepted as one of the most experienced boat skippers in West Cork and is a leading protagonist of responsible whale and dolphin watching.

Brendan Collins has observed first hand the challenges faced by whales, dolphins and porpoises, not only in West Cork but worldwide and has been a driving force promoting the sustainable and responsible use of the marine environment in West Cork. He has participated in the successful rescue of marine mammals entangled in static fishing gear.

When not on the water, Brendan runs *West Cork Marine Services* where he maintains, services and repairs boats all over West Cork and Kerry. He is known for his hard work and dedication both on and off the water.

Important Information

The Mizen Head Whale and Dolphin weekend has no restrictions, everyone and all ages are welcome. Children under the age of 18 must be accompanied by an adult.

All boat tours are subject to suitable weather and sea conditions.

Clothing

Warm and waterproof clothing and footwear are advised.

Equipment

Bring any binoculars, telescopes and cameras you want to

Booking Enquiries

Please call or email Carolyn Daly

Tel: 00 353 86 158 4763

Email: carolyndaly.mizen@gmail.com

NB. Whales and dolphins are wild animals and roam freely in the waters off West Cork. We cannot guarantee you will see whales and dolphins while on this course.



Humpback Whale