



# Wild Baja California Escape: The Whales of Magdalena Bay

JANUARY 26-31, 2025  
ABOARD NATIONAL GEOGRAPHIC SEA BIRD



**SPECIAL OFFER: 10% GROUP SAVINGS**

## BAJA CALIFORNIA

### BOCA DE SOLEDAD

"Grand Central" for California gray whales. Together with the savvy local fishermen, we will observe numerous cow-calf pairs.

### LORETO

The historic, seaside town where our expedition begins and ends. Home to Baja California's first mission, a lovely museum, and charming shops. A perfect place to experience the culture of the region.

### ISLA MAGDALENA

The beaches along the Pacific coast go on for miles, unmarred by any infrastructure. Hike or run along this scenic coast for as long as you wish.

SAN CARLOS

MAGDALENA BAY

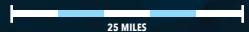
### SAND DOLLAR BEACH

At this point, the distance across the dunes from the bay to the Pacific is only a few hundred yards. Search for treasures on the aptly named sand dollar beach. These dunes are a great place for sunrise yoga or sunset cocktails.

### LA ENTRADA

*National Geographic Sea Bird* and *National Geographic Sea Lion* are the only ships of their kind operating in Baja California small enough to anchor in Magdalena Bay, a nursery for gray whale mothers and their calves.

Pacific Ocean



## Dear Carolina Alumni and Friends,

Over 20,000 California gray whales gather along Baja California's Pacific coast in the first few months of the year, during the winter leg of what is the longest migration of any marine mammal on the planet. They come to protected, saltwater lagoons like Magdalena Bay to give birth and raise their young—and it's here that travelers can get up close to these magnificent creatures to experience one of the world's most spectacular wildlife encounters.


The gray whales are as interested in us as we are in them—at times, they will even approach our small pangas for a closer look. Your expedition aboard the *National Geographic Sea Bird* is timed at the peak of the season to maximize our chances of communing with these gentle giants, known as “the friendliest whales in the world.”

Traditionally, visits to Magdalena Bay have been part of longer cruise itineraries around Baja California. Now, you have an opportunity to explore this remarkable place more fully and aboard a nimble and comfortable expedition ship that can navigate the shallow waters at the entrance to the whale birthing lagoons.

From towering cardón cacti and rivers of desert blossoms to miles of pristine beaches brimming with sand dollars, Baja California's stunning coastal landscapes are also not to be missed. Hike or bike over the spectacular sand dunes by day—and even by night, when all kinds of wildlife emerge. Kayak or join a Zodiac ride among intricate mangrove channels and spot large flocks of grebes, pelicans, and frigatebirds. You'll enjoy an in-depth look at the region's sheltered habitats, both above and beneath the waves.

Blissfully remote, yet close to home, Magdalena Bay is a peaceful sanctuary for wildlife and travelers alike. **To reserve your place, please visit [alumni.unc.edu/reserve](https://alumni.unc.edu/reserve) to complete our online reservation form or call Carolina Alumni at 877-962-3980.**

Go Heels and travel the world,



Audrey Liles '13, Catherine Nichols '89  
and Douglass Payne '04  
Carolina Alumni Travel Office

---

Participation in this tour is a Carolina Alumni member benefit. Join or renew today at [alumni.unc.edu/join](https://alumni.unc.edu/join). (\$50 for individuals, \$60 for couples). The Carolina Alumni Travel Office may be reached at (877) 962-3980 or [enrichment@unc.edu](mailto:enrichment@unc.edu).

### SPECIAL OFFER

Save 10% when traveling with Carolina Alumni. See page 12 for details.

Cover photo: Gray whale surfaces near Zodiac, Baja California Sur, Mexico.  
Ship's registry: United States

# The Wild Beauty of Baja California

## Marine and Avian Wonders

The waters of Baja California are among the world's richest, and the sea and birdlife here is primed for performance. Picture a ballet of wheeling cormorants and diving pelicans, and the aquatic pyrotechnics of spouting whales. The *National Geographic Sea Bird* is perfectly designed to show you these wonders and take you deeper into more protected waters. You will be among the privileged few to enter the birthing lagoons of California gray whales for close encounters with gentle mothers and their curious calves. Playful and friendly, they occasionally approach the small boats we use for more intimate viewing.

## Terrestrial Surprises

Exploring by water alone would make for an incomplete voyage—on land, equally spectacular enchantments await. Desert islands shelter species like the spiny-tailed iguana and black jackrabbit, plus a surprising array of succulents, all backed by a striated gradient of rusty reds, ochres, and olives. Pockets of green poke out from gaps in the landscape and merge into mini-skylines of massive cardón cacti, some stretching 80 feet into the clear, cerulean sky. This is the magic of Baja California, where desert, sea, and sky meet in captivating contrast—all characters in their own wild form of drama.

*Opposite page (clockwise from top): Young guest learns about cacti on Isla Santa Margarita; American white pelicans in flight, Boca de la Soledad; guest explores the sand dunes on Isla Magdalena.*





# The Perfect Platform for Exploring

## Life On Board

The 31-cabin *National Geographic Sea Bird* is purpose-built to explore. She and her twin ship, *National Geographic Sea Lion*, are the only two expedition ships operating in Baja California, small and nimble enough to anchor



in the whale-rich waters of Magdalena Bay. Our itinerary draws on our expedition team's extensive experience in the region, and flexibility is their hallmark. If a flock of frigatebirds or pod of dolphins approaches the ship, we change course to welcome the encounter. After a day of exploring, you can unwind in the lounge and hear the naturalists discuss the wonders we witness each day, or visit the Bridge and watch the crew navigate these extraordinary waters.

## Actively Explore Every Day

Our itinerary features activities for every skill level, with each excursion designed to immerse you in Baja California's wild wonders. Board local pangas to experience up-close encounters with gray whale mothers and calves. Paddle a kayak or stand-up paddleboard along intricate mangrove channels for water-level views. On the secluded beaches, you can roam over the sand on a fat-tire bike. After active days, kick back in the lounge and view footage of the vibrant marine life all around you, shot by an undersea specialist. Listen to whale communications on our hydrophone, and use a video microscope to examine the intricacies of seldom-seen marine life.

*Opposite page: An up-close encounter with a bow-riding dolphin; kayaking among mangroves in Punta Lengua. This page: National Geographic Sea Bird.*

# Travel with Inspiring Experts

## A World-Class Expedition Team

Each of our guides—from our naturalists to our expedition leaders—is committed to making your experience unforgettable. We have curated this expedition team to ensure that you are getting in-depth perspectives from veteran and locally based experts who have deeply personal connections to Baja California. Exploring in small groups, you will have the opportunity to hear different perspectives every day, and because there are no group assignments, you can gravitate toward naturalists who share your interests.



## Take Great Photos with the Pros

On a voyage with Lindblad Expeditions-National Geographic, photography is never an afterthought—it's central to the expedition experience. A Lindblad Expeditions-National Geographic certified photo instructor (CPI) joins our voyage to help you with everything from camera

settings to composition. Every guest—from smartphone camera users to advanced hobbyists—can stand side by side with top photographers, pick up tips in the field, and return home with extraordinary images of Baja California's landscapes and wildlife that you can revisit for years to come.

*Opposite page (clockwise from top): A Zodiac landing in Magdalena Bay; capturing the vibrancy of a Baja California sunset; beach BBQ ashore; naturalists are always on hand to point out wildlife.*

*This page: A photography lesson with a certified photo instructor.*





# Voyage Itinerary

Revel in the company of majestic gray whales in Mexico's Magdalena Bay, one of the best places in the world to witness interactions between gray whale mothers and their calves. On this compact trip, we'll navigate the length of the bay aboard the nimble *National Geographic Sea Bird*, and set out by Zodiac or local panga for thrilling, up-close encounters. Kayak through mangrove forests and hike desert islands, watch pelicans and ospreys soar overhead, and soak up the sun on some of the Pacific's most pristine beaches.

## DAY 1 • Loreto, Mexico/ San Carlos/Embark

Arrive in Loreto by early afternoon and transfer to the port town of San Carlos. In the evening, embark *National Geographic Sea Bird*, anchored off the coast of Isla Santa Margarita. (D)

## DAY 2 • Bahía Almejas/Rehusa Channel/Isla Magdalena

Our day starts in the southernmost waters of Bahía de Almejas. With luck, view a large frigatebird colony on Isla Santa Margarita, then board a local panga to explore the Rehusa Channel, where the whales tend to be very active. Later, enjoy an opportunity to pedal across the sands on fat-tire bikes. During lunch, head to Isla Magdalena on a cross-island walk over the ever-shifting sand dunes. Then take a stroll or tally treasure found on what we affectionately call "sand dollar beach." (B,L,D)

## DAY 3 • Transit the Hull Canal/Boca De Soledad

Spend the morning transiting the scenic, winding Hull Canal. Within narrow channels bordered by mangroves and sand dunes, spot wildlife and hear expert commentary from our keen-eyed naturalists. Kayak or take a Zodiac inside the vast mangrove system, weather permitting. Among the birds we might see are diving pelicans and fishing cormorants, as well as terns, great blue herons, ibis, whimbrels, and willets. This afternoon, explore the whale-rich waters of Boca de Soledad. (B,L,D)

## DAYS 4-5 • Boca de Soledad

Each winter, gray whales migrate south from their Arctic feeding grounds to breed and give birth to their calves in these sheltered waters.



Together with local fishermen, we'll venture out in local pangas in this area known as the "Grand Central" for California whales. On land, enjoy a walk along the pristine beaches. (B,L,D)

**DAY 6 • San Carlos/  
Disembark/Loreto**

After breakfast, disembark and transfer to Loreto's city center. Schedules permitting, choose to visit the first mission in Baja California, as well as the nearby museum. After lunch, transfer to Loreto Airport for flights home. (B,L)



**Loreto + Blue and Fin Whale Experience Post-Voyage Extension •  
3 Days / 2 Nights • From \$1,344**

Add an in-depth exploration of Loreto to your coastal expedition, and discover the region's history through its missions and villages. Visit stunning San Javier, a mission built by Jesuits in the 1700s. Explore the surrounding town, with its streets and buildings largely untouched since 1875. Then board local boats at the Loreto National Marine Reserve for a chance to see magnificent blue and fin whales, the two largest animals on Earth. Top off the journey with a hike through the fascinating canyons of the Sierra de la Gigante.



# National Geographic Sea Bird



Nimble and intimately scaled, *National Geographic Sea Bird* can easily navigate places inaccessible to larger ships. She can venture into fast-moving channels where whales come to feed, nose up to waterfalls in secluded coves, and sail into small bays perfect for snorkeling and kayaking. Inviting public spaces foster a sense of shipboard life where everyone is integral to the adventure, engendering a rewarding sense of community.

## Capacity

31 outside cabins accommodating 62 guests.

## Registry

United States.

## Overall Length

152 feet.

## Public areas

The ship features a library; global market; lounge with full-service bar and facilities for films, slide shows, and presentations; observation deck; partially covered sundeck with chairs and tables; and LEXspa. An open Bridge provides guests an opportunity to meet the officers and captain and learn about navigation.



The lounge is the center of life aboard ship.

## Meals

Served in single seatings with unassigned tables for an informal atmosphere. Menu emphasizes local fare.

## Accommodations

All cabins face outside with windows, private bathroom, and climate controls. Cabins are equipped with Wi-Fi and multiple electrical and USB outlets. Botanically inspired shampoo,



Category 2 cabin with single beds.

conditioner, shower gel, and lotion are all available in cabin bathrooms, as well as an Expedition Essentials Kit. Hair dryers, complimentary insulated water bottles, and an atlas are available in each cabin.

## Expedition Equipment

Zodiacs, kayaks, bow camera, hydrophone, splash-cam, underwater video camera, and video microscope.

## Staff & Crew

Every member of our staff is committed to ensuring our guests have an unforgettable experience. Many of our veteran guides and naturalists are locally based in your destination and have worked with us for decades. A full-time medical professional, Lindblad Expeditions-National Geographic certified photo instructor, and undersea specialist (except on river expeditions) are on board. With a low staff to guest ratio, you can hear different perspectives and gain new insights every day.

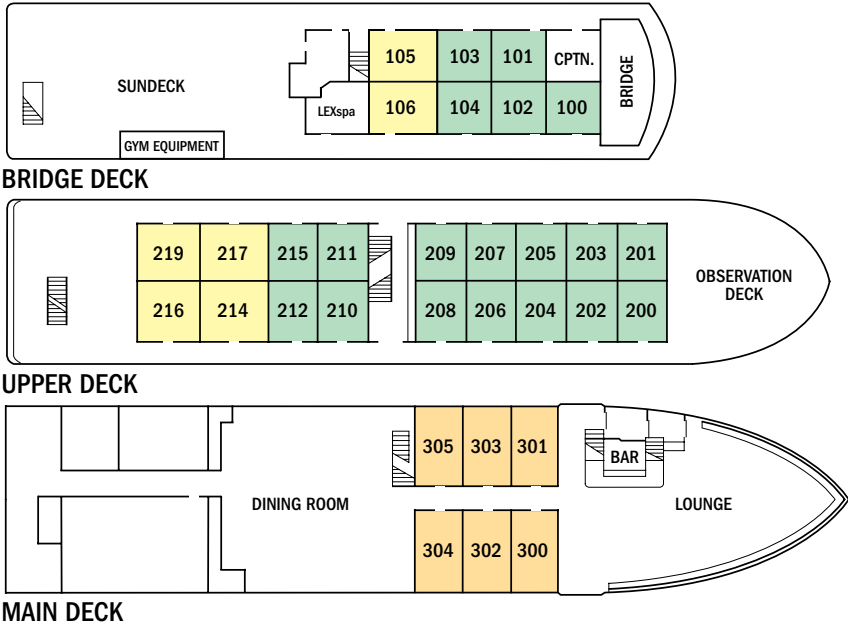
## Wellness

The vessel is staffed by a wellness specialist and features exercise equipment, LEXspa, and outdoor stretching area.

## Sustainability

From our carbon neutrality initiatives to the locally sourced food we serve on board, our expeditions are designed around the well-being of our world. Travel with peace of mind, knowing that green practices are embedded in our operations and that each voyage gives back to the places we explore.

# Ship Deck Plan & Pricing



## Voyage Dates

January 26-31, 2025

## Advance Payment Details

15% of the cabin fare, per person

Costs are per person, double occupancy unless indicated as solo.

10% Savings

<b>Category 1</b>	<b>\$3,867</b>	<b>\$3,481</b>
Main Deck #300-305 – Conveniently positioned between the dining room and lounge, these cabins feature two single beds and a large view window.		
<b>Category 2</b>	<b>\$4,787</b>	<b>\$4,309</b>
Bridge Deck #100-104; Upper Deck #200-212, 215 – These well-located cabins include two single beds and a window.		
<b>Category 3</b>	<b>\$5,537</b>	<b>\$4,984</b>
Bridge Deck #105, 106; Upper Deck #214, 216, 217, 219 – These cabins feature a seating unit with table and two large view windows. Upper Deck cabins include two lower single beds which can convert to a double bed and a pull-out single bed for a third person; Bridge Deck cabins include two lower single beds only.		
<b>Category 1 Solo</b>	<b>\$5,797</b>	<b>\$5,281</b>
<b>Category 2 Solo</b>	<b>\$7,177</b>	<b>\$6,460</b>

**Note:** Solo occupancy cabins are available in Categories 1 and 2 only. Third person rates are available in certain categories at one half the double occupancy rate.

**Shared Accommodations:** Shares can be arranged at the double occupancy rate in Categories 1 and 2 only.

## INCLUSIVE PRICING

---

- All accommodations aboard ship
- Excursions and airport transfers, as indicated in the itinerary
- The guidance and company of our leading expedition staff
- All meals as indicated in the itinerary, both aboard and onshore. Meals and hors d'oeuvres are inspired by regional cuisine and locally sourced where possible
- 24-hour access to snacks, premium coffees and teas, non-alcoholic beverages, and filtered water
- Beer, wine, cocktails, and spirits. We are also pleased to offer a selection of super premium wines and liquors, available for purchase
- Basic Wi-Fi, with the option to upgrade
- Gratuities to local guides
- Presentations by our expedition staff
- Complimentary reusable water bottle
- The services of a medical professional
- 24-hour access to the lounge, observation decks, and other shared spaces
- Morning stretch classes and 24-hour access to fitness equipment
- Access to the OM System Photo Gear Locker with the latest gear to try out on loan
- Assistance by the onboard photo instructor
- Special access permits, park and site entrance fees, and port taxes

## TAKE ADVANTAGE OF OUR SPECIAL OFFERS

---

**SPECIAL 10% GROUP SAVINGS:** Save 10% on the cabin fare (as indicated) when traveling with the University of North Carolina, General Alumni Association. Valid on this departure date of *Wild Baja California Escape: The Whales of Magdalena Bay*, for new bookings only, subject to availability, may not be combined with other offers, and is not applicable on airfare or extensions. Call for details.

**CELEBRATE LIFE'S MILESTONES:** Celebrate a milestone with a group of eight or more and enjoy a special amenity package including: 5% savings on voyage fares, custom group photo, \$150 shipboard credit for the group, and other special gifts. Milestone celebration to be communicated at time of booking. Valid for new bookings only, subject to availability, not applicable on airfare or extensions, and may not be combined with other offers. Deposit, final payments, and cancellation policies for group travel vary from our regular policies. Call for details.

**BRING THE KIDS:** Sharing the expedition with your kids or grandkids is a life-enhancing experience. Take \$500 off the double-occupancy price for each person under the age of 18. Not applicable on extensions or airfare.

## TERMS AND CONDITIONS

---

Prices quoted in this brochure are per person based on double occupancy in USD. Prices quoted are valid at the time of printing, March 25, 2024, are subject to change and availability at time of booking. Under normal conditions the total expedition price is guaranteed at the time advanced payment is made. However, our expedition pricing is determined far in advance of initial departure on the basis of then-existing projections of fuel and other costs. In the event of increases in those costs, including but not limited to increases in the price of fuel, currency fluctuations, increases in government taxes or levies, or increased security costs, we reserve the right to adjust the price of your expedition or add a surcharge to cover such unexpected increases. We will always provide an explanation of the reason for increase in costs.

**COST INCLUDES:** All amenities listed in inclusive pricing above. Unused services or items included in this program are non-refundable.

**NOT INCLUDED:** Airfare; pre- and post-expedition extensions; additional hotel nights; travel protection plan; crew gratuities; passport, visa, and immigration fees; spa treatments; items of a personal nature such as laundry, enhanced and premium Wi-Fi plans, and phone services.

**AIRFARE:** Airfare is an additional cost. Lindblad Expeditions will gladly assist in making your air arrangements for a \$50 per person service fee.

**RESERVATIONS:** To confirm your place, an advance payment of 15% of the cabin fare, per person is payable by Visa, MasterCard, American Express, Discover, or check. Receipt of advance payment indicates your acceptance of the terms and conditions.

**FINAL PAYMENT:** Due no later than 120 days prior to departure. Lindblad Expeditions reserves the right to cancel your reservation if payment has not been received by final payment due date.

**TRAVEL PROTECTION PLAN:** Optional insurance to cover trip cancellation, trip interruption or medical coverage is available. Information for USI Travel Insurance Services, Carolina Alumni's trip insurance partner, will be shared with you after you make your reservation.

**ENTRY AND VISA REQUIREMENTS:** Guests are advised to verify travel documents (passport/transit visa/entry visa) for the country(s) through which they are transiting and/or entering. Reliable and most current information regarding international travel can be found by contacting the consulate/embassy of the country(s) you are visiting or transiting through. We will not be responsible if you are denied entry or transit into a country if you are unable to provide valid documents as per the country's requirement.

**RESPONSIBILITY AND OTHER TERMS & CONDITIONS:** Certain other provisions concerning, among other things, limitations of Lindblad Expeditions' and National Geographic Expeditions' (a division of National Geographic Partners, LLC) liability for loss of property, injury, illness, or death during the voyage will be provided to all guests on the ship's ticket sent prior to departure or upon request. By registering for a trip, the guest agrees to all such terms and conditions.

## CANCELLATION FEE POLICY (PER PERSON)

---

**120 or more days** prior to expedition start: **No penalty:** Advance Payment will be credited toward your next expedition\*\*

**119-90 days** prior to expedition start: **50% of trip cost\*\*\***

**89-0 days** prior to expedition start: **100% of trip cost\*\*\***

\*\*Advance payments will be credited in the form of a Lindblad Expeditions Travel Certificate, valid for 12 months from the date of cancellation, and which may only be applied towards final payment on any future booking.

\*\*\*Trip cost is total price paid including extensions, charter airfare and other additional services.

We strongly recommend that you purchase a travel protection plan.

**Photo Credits:** Alberto Montaudon Ferrer, Ralph Lee Hopkins, Sven-Olof Lindblad, Jeff Litton, Michael S. Nolan, Marco Ricca, Rikki Swenson, David Vargas.

# Reservation Form



## Contact Information

**Carolina Alumni Travel Office**  
alumni.unc.edu/travel  
**Ph:** (877) 962-3980  
**Email:** enrichment@unc.edu

## Wild Baja California Escape: The Whales of Magdalena Bay

**JANUARY 26-31, 2025**

**ABOARD NATIONAL GEOGRAPHIC SEA BIRD**

### Passenger Information

Please reserve \_\_\_\_\_ place(s).

Guest 1: \_\_\_\_\_ Date of Birth: \_\_\_\_\_  
*(Name as it appears on passport)*

Guest 2: \_\_\_\_\_ Date of Birth: \_\_\_\_\_  
*(Name as it appears on passport)*

Street Address: \_\_\_\_\_

City: \_\_\_\_\_ State: \_\_\_\_\_ ZIP: \_\_\_\_\_

Preferred Phone (please indicate Home, Cell or Business): \_\_\_\_\_

Email: \_\_\_\_\_

Accommodations:  Double  Single  Twin share with a friend  
 Share with roommate assigned by tour operator.

Please indicate choice of cabin category in order of preference:

1st choice: \_\_\_\_\_ 2nd choice: \_\_\_\_\_

**Advance Payment Information:** 15% of the cabin fare per person.

- Reserve online today at [alumni.unc.edu/reserve](http://alumni.unc.edu/reserve). Once received, the Carolina Alumni Travel Office will forward your reservation form to Lindblad Expeditions and a member of their Guest Services team will contact you to collect your payment.
- If paying by check, please make deposit checks payable to the **Lindblad Maritime Enterprises, Ltd.** and mail with this form to: Carolina Alumni Travel Office, PO Box 660, Chapel Hill, NC 27514-0660.

Enclosed is my advance payment of \$ \_\_\_\_\_

I understand that reservations will be available on a first-come, first-served basis. I accept the conditions as stated in this brochure and submit my reservation(s) as indicated. I understand that the balance is due by September 28, 2024.

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

*Carolina Alumni and the travel agency reserve the right to decline to accept or to retain any person as a tour member should such a person's health, mental condition, physical infirmity or attitude jeopardize the operation of the tour or the rights, welfare, or enjoyment of other participants. Refunds will be made in accordance with the cancellation policy listed in the brochure.*

# Wild Baja California Escape: The Whales of Magdalena Bay

## Expedition Highlights

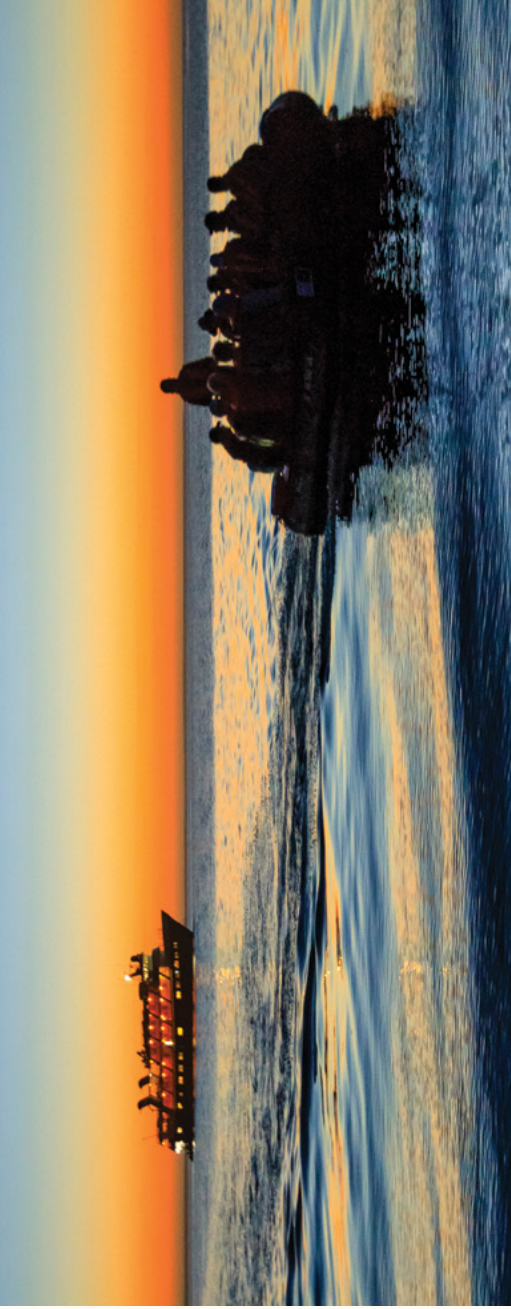
- Delight in close encounters with gray whale mothers and their calves.
- Kayak and paddleboard through stunning mangroves.
- Hike diverse landscapes, from windswept sand dunes to cactus groves.
- Ride a fat-tire bike along remote Pacific beaches.
- Learn about desert ecosystems and whale behavior from expert naturalists.
- With the National Geographic Global Explorers program, kids and teens can learn about the region through immersive, hands-on activities.

### 100% CARBON NEUTRAL AND COMMITTED TO BEING SINGLE-USE PLASTIC FREE

We have chosen Lindblad Expeditions because they care deeply about the planet and see travel as a powerful force for good.



Printed on 100% recycled content paper with soy-based inks. We recommend that you pass this along for others to enjoy or recycle.



Carolina Alumni Travel Office  
P.O. Box 660  
Chapel Hill, NC 27514-0660

PRSRT STD  
U.S. POSTAGE  
**PAID**  
LINDBLAD  
EXPEDITIONS