

Conservation International documentary *Whales in a Changing Ocean* wins award!



Richard Sidey has just received the Director's Award by the International Ocean Film Festival (IOFF) 2021 for his documentary '*Whales in a Changing Ocean*'. The film follows a study on the ecology of humpback whales conducted by the NGO, Conservation International, in the Antarctic aboard a PONANT ship.

Research mission in the heart of Antarctica

In February 2020, a Conservation International research team of six scientists spent three weeks on PONANT'S ship, *L'Austral*. With the assistance of the ship's captain and PONANT's naturalist-guides, their mission to gather and analyse information on the distribution, genetics and acoustics of whales was very successful, with a total of 60 whales identified and 16 hours of underwater recordings registered.

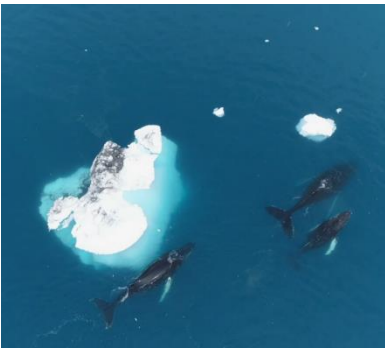
The purpose of the study is to gain a better understanding of how the sounds of whales, whose feeding habits play a unique role in the food chain, interact with the sounds of ice and ships. As an indicator, the study can help better understand how the ice changes have an impact on humpback whales, and more generally on the health of our oceans.

"This innovative polar science partnership model is based on international collaboration and will support tourism best practices in this unique and sensitive Antarctic ecosystem. Protection of Antarctica is not only critical for the adaptation of marine life to climate change but also as the resource on which polar tourism relies. Our work aims to the creation of essential marine protected areas in Antarctica, contributing to the long-term conservation and management of the polar seas" explains Olive Andrews, Conservation International's lead marine scientist and Antarctic expedition leader.

Pacific migration: the full picture

This research mission compliments broader ongoing research in the Pacific Islands. Andrews noted, *'By understanding whale ecology across their entire migration area, we can better understand how the whales are faring and consider conservation solutions. In the Pacific, the ocean underpins the way of life. Whales are an indicator of the ocean's health. Protecting whales helps to protect Pacific Islanders' wellbeing, and more broadly the polar seas upon which we all depend'*.

Find out more about this humpback whale preservation mission in this short summary [film](#)



Reportage in images: *Whales in a Changing Ocean*

[Richard Sidey](#), a veteran filmmaker specialising in wildlife, joined the scientists on this research mission for 20 days aboard *L'Austral*. Based in New Zealand, this nature lover has won numerous awards for his *Speechless* trilogy, the final chapter *Elementa* having been released last year to critical acclaim.

Whales in a Changing Ocean will be shown in San Francisco at the 18th IOFF, an international festival of independent ocean-related films which runs from 15 April to 2 May 2021. [Find out more about IOFF.](#)

[To see the whole documentary.](#)

PONANT Foundation and Conservation International

This mission to preserve humpback whales in the Antarctic is part of a wider ranging partnership between the PONANT Foundation and Conservation International. Their shared goal is to protect biodiversity and raise awareness of its importance. The other actions being taken in parallel are: to help protect coral reefs in New Caledonia and reforestation in the Amazon.

ABOUT CONSERVATION INTERNATIONAL

Conservation International works to protect the critical benefits that nature provides to people. Through science, partnerships and fieldwork, Conservation International is driving innovation and investments in nature-based solutions to the climate crisis, supporting protections for critical habitats, and fostering economic development that is grounded in the conservation of nature. Conservation International works in 30 countries around the world, empowering societies at all levels to create a cleaner, healthier and more sustainable planet. Follow Conservation International's work by visiting www.conservation.org on [Conservation News](#), [Facebook](#), [Twitter](#), [Instagram](#) and [YouTube](#).

ABOUT THE PONANT FOUNDATION

For over 30 years, PONANT has been taking guests to the most secret places on the planet where nature reigns supreme. This choice brings with it responsibilities towards the environment and the indigenous people encountered on expedition cruises. Not only does it take its profession and commitment to promote sustainable tourism seriously, PONANT also wants to further its efforts in areas that are close to the company's heart. That is why the PONANT Foundation was set up in 2019 to protect the oceans and polar regions and encourage exchanges between peoples. Its aim is to support projects focusing on research, awareness-raising and conservation.

ABOUT PONANT

Created in 1988, by officers of the French Merchant Navy, PONANT has created a new style of cruising, under the French flag, through a unique conception of sea travel and a commitment to promoting sustainable and responsible tourism. Accessing exceptional territories aboard yachts featuring refined design, on which the art of living and excellent cuisine take pride of place: such is the promise of a unique and authentic PONANT voyage.

For more information, visit www.ponant.com

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