Saga Cruise Survey Briefing Notes

Route/Sea Region	Cruise Company	Ships
Various	Saga	Spirit of Adventure / Spirit of Discovery

Saga cruises are ideal for Experienced Surveyors looking to enhance their species and surveying skills, whilst also delivering exceptional wildlife experiences to guests on board.

ORCA receives an incredible amount of goodwill from crew, officers and guests alike, many of whom have been on previous cruises with ORCA teams. Some guests will have booked purely because we are on board and therefore they know that there are wildlife enthusiasts around to help them get the most out of their trip. This document will give you an idea of what you can expect from being part of an ORCA team on board a Saga cruise and also what is expected of our teams.

The ORCA Survey Team

The survey team will consist of four volunteer Marine Mammal Surveyors; **Team Leader, Wildlife Officer and two Experienced Surveyors.**

To be eligible for Saga cruise surveys, all team members must have completed at least three ORCA ferry surveys, and have completed at least one ferry survey in the 12 months before their cruise departs.

The Team Leader should have extensive whale watching and survey experience across the area being travelled, have field experience of the cetaceans commonly seen and the rarer species, have conducted at least one Saga cruise ORCA survey as a Trainee Team Leader, and have extensive experience of team leading ORCA ferry surveys. The Team Leader is responsible for ensuring the scientific surveys are carried out as per the ORCA Protocol and that ORCA standards are maintained at all times. The Team Leader will act as the main contact for the on board crew.

The Wildlife Officer should have extensive whale watching and survey experience across the area being travelled, have field experience of the cetaceans commonly seen and the rarer species, have conducted at least one Saga Cruise Survey as a Trainee Wildlife Officer, and have extensive experience in delivering wildlife presentations to a range of audiences. The Wildlife Officer will give at least three PowerPoint presentations; one at the beginning of the cruise (provided by ORCA), a wildlife round-up talk at the end of the cruise that they and the rest of the team will create using photographs from the trip, and an additional presentation on a topic of their choice (can also be provided by ORCA). It is therefore essential that the Wildlife Officer is confident in creating presentations using PowerPoint. The Wildlife Officer is also responsible for ensuring the TV screens are updated daily (see Digital content on board section below).

The two Experienced Surveyors will ideally have whale watching and survey experience across the area being travelled, have field experience of the cetaceans commonly seen and have conducted **at least** three ORCA ferry surveys. These two surveyors will provide support to the Team Leader and Wildlife Officer, conduct scientific surveys, engage with guests, assist with the daily slides, presentation delivery, and other activities on board.

Although the Team Leader and Wildlife Officer have set responsibilities, it is in fact a **team effort** and **ALL** team members are expected to get involved with all aspects of wildlife guiding throughout the cruise, including talking about wildlife at any time and to anyone. Everyone in the team is responsible for ensuring the on board TV screens are regularly updated with information about ORCA and sightings from the cruise.

Life on board

All ORCA teams are guests of Saga and of the ship, so we are on show at all times. It is important that we maintain the good relations we have with all on board and Saga Head Office, so please be aware of this as the value of the hospitality they extend to ORCA is high.

Cruises can vary in length but are typically 10+ days. The lower guest age limit is 50 (although they can take a guest no younger than 40 on board). ORCA has a special dispensation so don't worry if you're younger than this, but **surveyors must be 21 years or over**.

Ships: To find out information about the Saga ships that ORCA teams will be sailing on, including deck plans, restaurants and facilities on board, please follow the links below:

Spirit of Discovery: travel.saga.co.uk/cruises/ocean/our-ships/spirit-of-discovery.aspx
Spirit of Adventure: travel.saga.co.uk/cruises/ocean/our-ships/spirit-of-adventure.aspx

Cabins: ORCA are allocated two twin cabins on board, this is part of ORCAs agreement with Saga Head Office and it is not possible to request additional cabins. There have been occasions where Saga have offered additional rooms (for example if they don't have a full ship) once the team is on board. It is fine to accept this but only if it has been offered to you, it is important that ORCA teams are not requesting additional rooms as this negatively impacts our partnership with Saga.
Cabin allocation is single sex, therefore if you are allocated a Saga cruise survey place with a partner or friend, please do not assume to be sharing a cabin with them as it all depends upon the composition of the team. All cabins are en suite with a balcony, towels and some toiletries.

Dress code: This is classic cruising therefore, the dress code is smart and formal. ORCA teams are required to change into smart or formal clothing for dining in the evenings and to wear their ORCA Marine Mammal Surveyor polo shirts at breakfast and lunch. Information regarding dress codes on board is found here.

Survey clothing: ORCA surveyors are on show at all times. As you are surveying outside you need to be practical and to stay warm, so please dress sensibly. You need to wear an ORCA Marine Mammal Surveyor polo shirt on board (essential uniform). These and other non-essential uniform items can be purchased directly through the ShirtWorks website, more information on how to do this can be found on the Surveyor Network, here (you must be logged into the Surveyor Network to access this page). Please do not contact ShirtWorks directly to place your order.
High-Vis vests with the ORCA logo on are provided in your survey equipment and these must be **worn at all times when surveying on deck**. Please ensure these are dried and packed away neatly prior to leaving the cruise - please look after these as they easily become damaged if screwed up. It is also requested that you do not wear clothing that promotes another charity or research organisation.

Dining: Although there are several dining options on board, priority is given to guests. The Team Leader will liaise with the Maître d' on board to arrange the best time and location for the team to dine, but most teams will eat in the Grill Bar and occasionally in The Dining Room. The team is encouraged to all dine together and to join guests for meals where appropriate.
Teams are not permitted in specialty restaurants. If you are invited to dine in a specialty restaurant by a guest, please politely decline and suggest the Grill or The Dining Room as an alternative location. ORCA Teams are not permitted to use the Cape Bar at busy times (before or after dinner), and are not able to order Room Service unless one of the team is unwell and unable to leave the cabin.

You will be charged for all alcohol bought at the bar and at meal times. When you receive your final bill you will receive a 50% discount on alcohol bought at these times, but this won't show on the bar slip or summary invoices. On some cruises wine with a meal is included for paying guests. As free alcohol is not your right as you're on board for free, please do not expect or ask for it.
Remember that you have agreed to adhere to the alcohol policy detailed in the Marine Mammal Surveyor Guide. Ensure you familiarise yourself with this.

Facilities & Excursions: ORCA teams are able to use the on board facilities such as the gym and laundry room, as long as this does not interfere with their role on board. Your Team Leader will coordinate your schedule on board and let you know when you are free to use these facilities; please do not use these facilities if they are busy with guests. ORCA teams will have busy days and long hours on Sea Days, we therefore recommend only using these facilities on Port Days and once all ORCA tasks are complete.

ORCA team members may have the opportunity to join organised excursions on Port days during their time on board. Excursions can be booked through the Explore Ashore desk and should be arranged the day before the excursion is due to depart. This allows guests ample time to make their own bookings and helps the Explore Ashore team identify which excursions still have

availability. Guests must always be given priority, and ORCA team members should be aware that places on excursions cannot be guaranteed.

ORCA team members may also have the opportunity to act as escorts on selected excursions during the cruise. If you hold a valid first aid certificate and would like to be considered for this role, please bring a copy of your certificate with you when you join the ship. A digital copy is perfectly acceptable. Once on board, speak with the Explore Ashore Manager, who will be able to provide further information about the available tours and the responsibilities involved in the escorting role. Escorting can be a great way to experience excursions that may otherwise be fully booked, and Saga greatly appreciates the support provided by ORCA team members who choose to get involved.

ORCA teams are not paying guests on board and should not be attending any organised daytime activities (e.g. crafting or lectures), however if there is space at any evening performances teams are more than welcome to attend as long as all guests have been seated first.

Logistics & Travel

Paperwork & insurance: Once your team has been confirmed ORCA will send an email to the whole team with specific details of your cruise. You will also be asked to complete a Passenger Information Form and to return this to ORCA along with a copy of your Travel Insurance that covers you for the duration of the cruise, and a headshot and biography (guidance on this will be sent to you in advance).

Information regarding your cruise will be sent to you from Saga via email approximately two weeks prior to your departure date. Boarding tickets are all electronic and are organised by ORCA in advance. You will need to complete the electronic forms sent to you by Saga and email them back to Saga. Whilst on board you are seen as Saga guests and non-paying passengers, therefore you are treated slightly differently and are expected to uphold various standards. Please respect this at all times.

Passport: You will require a passport that is **valid for at least 6 months** from the start of the cruise.

Pre-departure team call: Once your team has been selected and confirmed, ORCA will organise a Zoom call with the team a few weeks prior to departure. This short call will give you an opportunity to ask any questions and for ORCA to update the team on any relevant information about your cruise.

Travel: You are responsible for your own travel to and from the ship. You need to be at the cruise terminal approximately three hours before departure – your arrival time will be confirmed by Saga. The Team Leader will then contact the team regarding the exact time and location to meet.

Parking: Free parking can be provided at most ports. ORCA will inform you if this is available for your cruise and if you wish to leave your car at the dock, you will need to supply ORCA with your name, the car reg, make, model and colour. Please be aware that some routes may depart and return to different ports within the UK.

Money: All purchases on board will be charged to your cabin and at the end of your cruise you will be required to settle your entire bill **via credit or debit card**, cash is not accepted on board. For purchases on shore, ensure you have the correct currency.

Disembarkation: The night before docking at the end of the cruise, guests are asked to label and place their main luggage outside their cabins as this is collected and transferred directly. **Only do this if you have requested a coach transfer and had it confirmed by reception.** If you wish to leave the ship independently (and this is recommended), then retain your luggage in your cabin and disembark when allowed by the crew.

Roles on board

It is advised that **ALL** team members familiarise themselves with ORCA's work and projects by visiting the website orca.org.uk so you can share this knowledge with the guests you engage with. Once your team has been confirmed ORCA will provide you with a Google Drive link, where a host of additional materials are provided specifically to support Saga cruise teams - ensure you access these in advance of your cruise.

Meet & greet: On the first day it is likely that the Cruise Director will arrange a meet and greet session with you all so that guests can meet the ORCA team and know what you'll be doing and where you'll be throughout the cruise. You will also attend a briefing on the first evening with the Cruise Director and other Guest Lecturers/Entertainers, it is important that all members of the team attend this meeting.

Presentations: Within the first two days the Wildlife Officer will give a 30-minute PowerPoint presentation about ORCA, why the team are on board and the cetaceans that may be seen during the cruise. This presentation will be provided by ORCA in advance of the cruise.

The Wildlife Officer is also required to prepare an additional 30-minute presentation on a topic of their choice, alternatively they could choose one of the additional presentations provided by ORCA in advance of the cruise to deliver. The title of this presentation should be provided to the Cruise Director during the teams first day on board, if the presentation has been created by the Wildlife Officer please make sure all slides are saved on the usb stick provided in the equipment before disembarkation.

Towards the end of the cruise, the Wildlife Officer will give a round-up presentation about what has been seen during the cruise. This will be created on board and it helps to have good photographs of the animals seen. Teams are sometimes asked to deliver additional presentations so the Wildlife Officer will need to have a couple prepared prior to the cruise.

Although it is usually the Wildlife Officer that gives the talks, there may be occasions where someone else within the team delivers or helps to deliver the presentations, and the whole team is expected to contribute to creating the round-up presentation.

Digital content on board: The team is required to provide daily content to be displayed on the TV screens around the ship. This can include information about ORCA, sightings from the cruise, daily reports, photos, species profiles and factsheets, maps or other information that you feel guests will find interesting. Ensure the content is engaging, easy to read and varied.
Content is to be created on a single PowerPoint slide (templates and examples will be provided) and emailed to the Broadcast Manager on board who will upload this to the screens. ORCA will provide guidance on the process to follow for this prior to your cruise.
These slides are also sent to Saga Head Office who post these out on their social media channels, therefore it is critical that all information is accurate, error free and that the slides are clear and engaging.
The responsibility of the above lies with the Wildlife Officer but the production, along with the development of information, is a **team effort**. Some teams have chosen to produce some of the slides before the trip. This is encouraged as it will save you time when on board, and may be especially useful for longer itineraries.

Additional Activities: Positive interactions with guests are our priority on board, therefore teams are expected to organise gatherings, ad-hoc Wildlife Clinics, drop-in sessions or other activities where appropriate. The Team Leader will organise these with the Cruise Director.
Wildlife Clinics - previous Wildlife Clinics have included mini-talks, ID sessions, photography workshops, sharing wildlife stories, helping guests to identify species in their own photos, species or area-focussed short-talks, wildlife videos, gatherings out on deck, surveying workshops, information about ORCA etc. Your Team Leader will organise when these can take place with the Cruise Director who will promote them for you.
Quizzes - on previous cruises we have been asked to deliver quizzes on board. These quizzes will be provided to you by ORCA, or teams can create their own. Saga has requested that **no prizes** are offered during these quizzes, so please respect this and do not make or purchase a prize for the winning team.
Solo Traveller Lunches - ORCA teams are encouraged to take part in any Solo Traveller Lunches. This is an excellent opportunity to promote our work on board, especially as solo travellers are often keen to get involved in on board activities such as Deck Watches. Your Team Leader will coordinate this with the Assistant Cruise Director and all of the team will be expected to attend.

Surveying: Surveys take place on the forward facing outside decks with guests and can involve long hours, especially in the northern latitudes with early sunrises and late (if at all) sunsets. It is vital that protocol is adhered to for rest periods, your Team Leader will ensure that you have enough time to relax. Please let the Team Leader know if you need a break. The team will break for lunch and dinner together.

When surveying on the open decks it is the ORCA OceanWatchers Protocol that is used rather than the Distance Sampling Protocol used on ORCA ferry surveys. The only difference is that you are not required to take angle board readings, all other aspects of the ORCA Survey Protocol and rotations remain the same. The individual on Rest and in the Recorder position are the main points of contact with guests out on deck, whilst the Port and Starboard Observers survey their 100-degree area.

Data is collected with the ORCA OceanWatchers app and a tablet device is provided in the survey equipment for you to use for this (a Handbook will be provided for you). In the unlikely event that there is an issue with the ORCA tablet, please ensure that the OceanWatchers app is downloaded on your smartphone to enable continued data collection. The OceanWatchers app protocol can be found on the Surveyor Network Documents page and it is advised that surveyors familiarise themselves with this in advance of the cruise and ensure they also have access to the ORCA OceanWatchers app on their smartphone.

Remember that the primary reason you are on board is to interact with guests, therefore ensure there is a good balance between surveying and engaging with the public. If you are on effort and someone starts talking to you, it may help to say you are listening, but apologise for needing to keep your eyes on the sea – they will understand. If the weather is uncomfortable for the team out on deck, then it will be uncomfortable for guests too. In these circumstances move inside and engage with guests through workshops, wildlife clinics, quizzes or surveying from inside.

Bridge surveys: ORCA teams on Saga cruises are also required to conduct bridge based distance sampling surveys as part of their role on board. These surveys will take place on the bridge of the ship and will follow the ORCA Distance Sampling Protocol, the same as when on an ORCA ferry survey. These surveys will take place on all itineraries, but only when sailing through Important Marine Mammal Areas (IMMAs), high risk vessel strike areas and Marine Protected Areas. More information will be provided by ORCA prior to your cruise.

Equipment: All survey equipment is provided for you. When on effort surveying, you **must** use the ORCA reticle binoculars provided to keep effort consistent, but can use your own binoculars when off-survey.
Camera **-** Photographs of wildlife are useful for the daily slides, guest engagement and the final round-up presentation, therefore **the team should ensure at least one person has a camera**. All wildlife photographs taken during the cruise need to be provided to ORCA for use in promotions, social media and reports and should be saved onto the USB stick in the survey equipment for ORCA.

Laptop **-** Presentations will be delivered from your own laptop on board therefore **at least one member of the team will need to bring a laptop that has PowerPoint functionality.**

Membership: Guests know that ORCA is a charity from the presentations delivered and some will be interested in becoming a member or making a donation so please provide them with this information. Ensure you are familiar with the membership options ORCA offer, this information can be found on the ORCA website:
https://orca.org.uk/get-involved
https://orca.org.uk/support-orca/make-a-donation

Feedback: Teams will be given feedback scores by both Saga and by guests on board. These scores will be passed on to ORCA after your cruise. ORCA will also request feedback from all team members, this feedback form will be sent to you by email a few days after your cruise returns. If guests would like to provide feedback during your time on board, please encourage them to email Saga and ORCA directly, this will help to secure our on board programme for future years and is much appreciated.

All presentations, daily TV slides and any photos taken from your trip, should be clearly labelled and saved on the ORCA USB stick for review. Members of the ORCA team may contact you during your cruise to provide feedback on any content being provided to Saga for use on their social media channels. ORCA will use all the above information to provide teams with feedback after the cruise.

Enquiries on board

The Team Leader is responsible for the ORCA team on board. If you are uncertain of anything, please ask the Team Leader and other members of your team. If you are put in an uncomfortable situation either by other members of the team, guests or ship's crew, please discuss this with your Team Leader who will act appropriately. If you feel anything requires addressing urgently and that you cannot sort it out on board, please contact ORCA on survey@orca.org.uk or 02392 832565.