BLUE WORLD INSTITUTE

INTERNSHIP INFORMATION PACK

Blue World Institute

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www.blue-world.org

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Dear students,

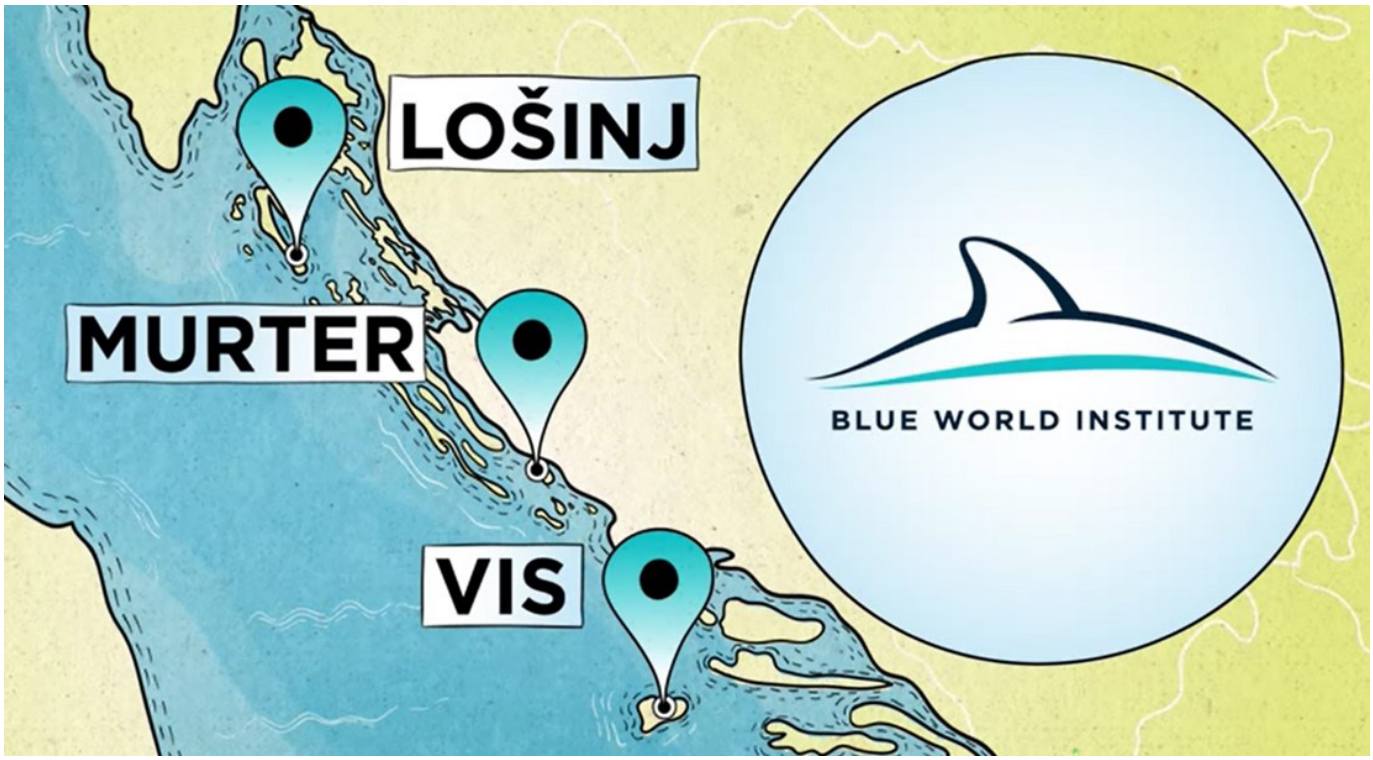
the purpose of this information pack is to give you information about our organization and the Internship Program we offer. We are a group of scientists working in a Non-Governmental Organization (NGO) named Blue World Institute of Marine Research and Conservation with the aim to carry out scientific research and conservation projects, and to promote environmental awareness. We run several projects, the Adriatic Dolphin Project is the longest lasting (over 30 years) and concerns the research on wild bottlenose dolphins in the Adriatic. In recent years, the Internship Program became recognized by students from all over the world as a way of getting experience in the field of marine biology and to fulfil university internship and project obligations. As an intern at the Blue World Institute, you will learn how data is collected, what equipment and software is used, how data is analyzed and what kind of results are produced. We encourage you to be independent and educate you to be future researchers. If you are passionate about the sea, marine organisms and ecology, this is the place to be! Just like you, I was looking for internship opportunities in 2011 and found this place on the Internet. One month here and a strong will to learn as much as possible, brought me to the position of a researcher and a member of this team. Now, if I got your attention, I advise you to read the following text carefully and contact me in case you have any additional questions.

I hope to meet you,
Tihana Vučur Blazinić, internship coordinator

WHO ARE WE AND WHAT DO WE DO?

The Blue World Institute of Marine Research and Conservation was established in 1999 with dedication to secure the future of the Adriatic Sea. The aim is to ensure the long-term sustainability of marine ecosystems and species. Continuing the research initiated in 1987 (The Adriatic Dolphin Project), we developed three major programs: research, conservation and education.

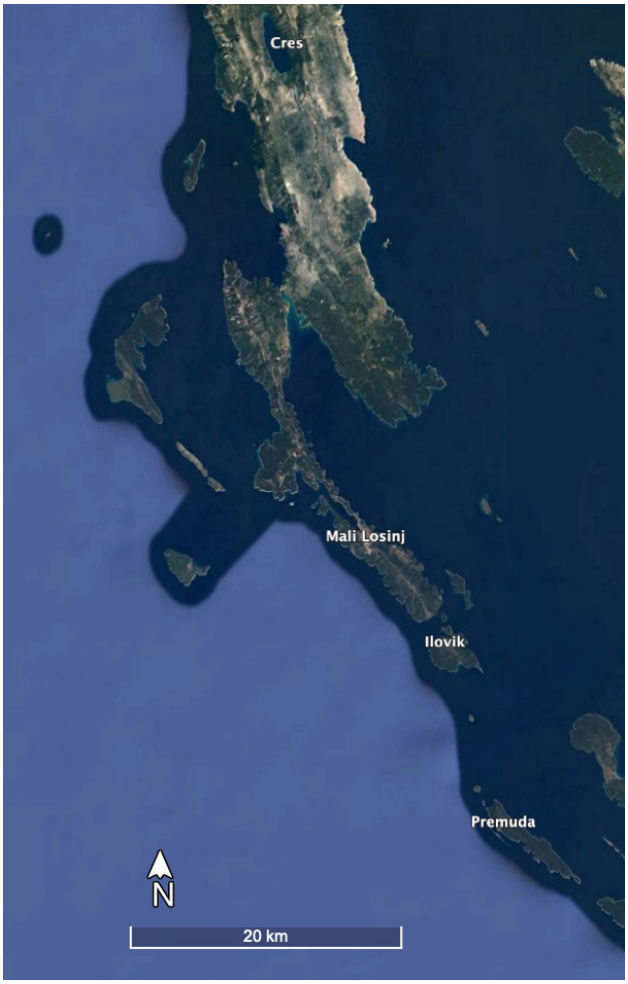
The Adriatic Dolphin Project (ADP) is the research program which aims to study the population ecology, genetics, acoustics and habitats of wild bottlenose dolphins and other cetacean species in the Adriatic Sea. It is the longest ongoing research program on bottlenose dolphins in the Mediterranean and operates throughout the three research stations: Lošinj (since 1987), Vis (since 2007) and North Dalmatia (Murter, since 2013). The Adriatic Dolphin Project is now recognized worldwide, which is reflected in numerous international partners and cooperation with experts in the fields of biology and ecology of marine mammals.


LOŠINJ
MURTER
VIS
BLUE WORLD INSTITUTE

ADRIATIC DOLPHIN PROJECT LOŠINJ

STUDY AREA

The main field base of the Adriatic Dolphin Project is situated on the island Lošinj, covering a study area in the North Adriatic, from Istria to the Sea of Vir which encompasses two Natura 2000 protected areas for bottlenose dolphins (Western Istria (HR500032) and Cres-Lošinj (HR3000161)). The value of the area is not just due to the presence of wild bottlenose dolphin community, but also because of the rich marine life, historical artefacts, bird nesting sites and marine turtle foraging grounds.



RESEARCH

Our research focuses on bottlenose dolphins and other large marine vertebrates (mostly cetaceans, sea turtles and cartilaginous fish) with an aim to contribute to their conservation and the protection of the marine environment. Results of the research are presented in a form of scientific publications, but are also translated into activities for raising public awareness and education.

METHODS AND DATA COLLECTION

Boat based surveys – We use a 6 m inflatable speedboat to conduct research on cetaceans and other marine vertebrates. When the weather conditions are suitable, boat-based surveys of the study area are conducted, starting from the port of Veli Lošinj. Upon spotting species of interest, everyone on board get instructions from researchers and data collection begins. During the sighting, the boat is carefully maneuvered at minimum speed, following the code of conduct in order to minimize the disturbance to the animals.

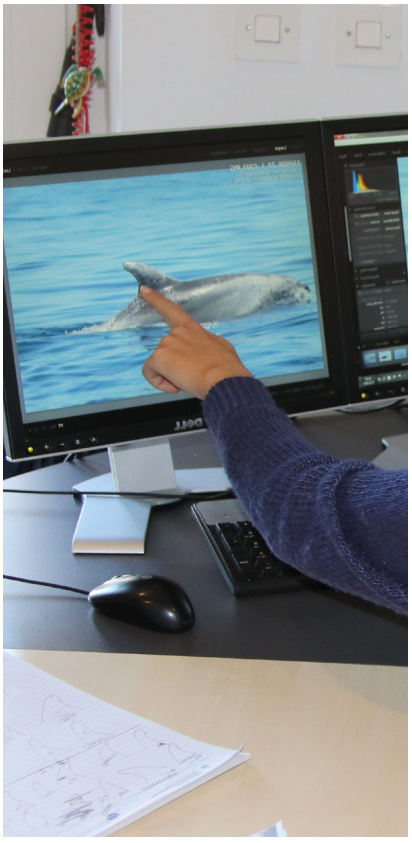
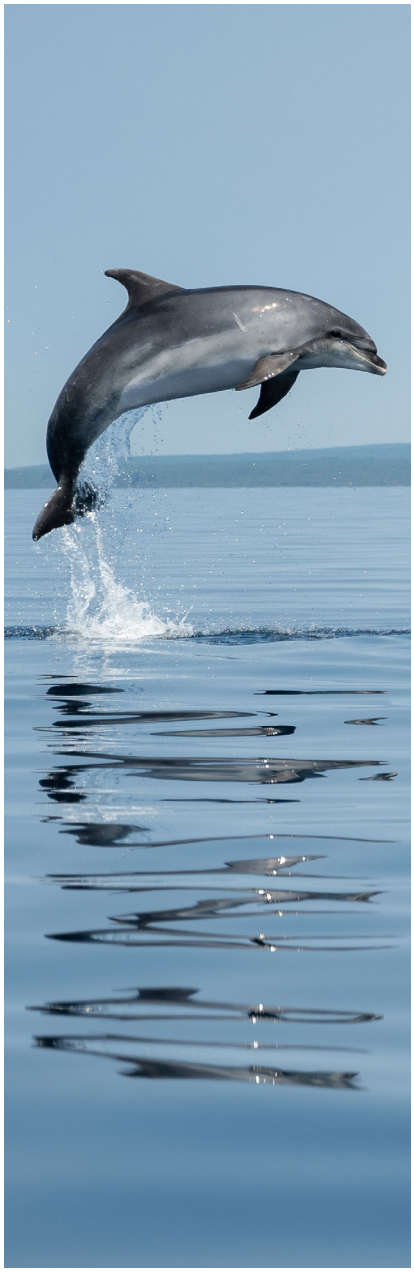


Photo-Identification - During encounters with dolphins, researchers take photographs of their dorsal fins. Notches and scars on dorsal fins occur naturally, during animal's interactions and are unique to each dolphin, like a fingerprint. "Capturing" fins on photographs is a non-invasive method that enables tracking of individuals in space and time. Data obtained using this method helps us gain a detailed insight into biology and ecology of the studied bottlenose dolphin populations. We often reencounter the identified individuals, which enables us to assess the birth and mortality rates of dolphins, population abundance and their social relations.

Behavior – At the very beginning and during the whole encounter, the behavior of the group of bottlenose dolphins is determined according to predefined behavioral categories. This provides us an insight into the behavioral budget and the influence of the boat traffic on the behavior of the population. It has already been proved that recreational vessels are a major factor influencing different aspects of the wellbeing of dolphins. In the presence of boats, dolphins decrease feeding and resting behavior and increase traveling behavior. To minimize the effects of the boat presence on the behavior of bottlenose dolphins, we developed a code of conduct for vessels during dolphin encounters.



Bio Acoustics – Many marine mammals have developed their auditory capabilities and rely on sound for communication, locating prey and navigation. Therefore, it is of great importance to assess the level of the sea ambient noise and the relationship between the underwater noise, the boat traffic and the seasonal spatial variation of the distribution of bottlenose dolphins. For that purpose, we use remote and stationary hydrophones.

SPECIES YOU MIGHT SEE

In the northern Adriatic, the bottlenose dolphin is the only cetacean species with a permanent and stable population and our systematic boat surveys are aimed at this species. However, other species may occur in this region, giving us the opportunity to collect data on the visiting species. Besides conducting research on cetaceans, Adriatic Dolphin Project crew is also involved in the research and conservation of loggerhead turtles in the Adriatic.

BOTTLENOSE DOLPHIN | *Tursiops truncatus*

This species is one of the most widely distributed species in the Mediterranean. Data from the boat-based surveys in the North Adriatic suggest that the local population counts 184 resident individuals present all year round. Their distribution changes depending on the season, due to the shift in prey distribution. Data from the aerial survey confirmed that the bottlenose dolphin is the most widely distributed cetacean species in the Adriatic Sea, with an abundance estimate of around 5.700 individuals. The Northern Adriatic has been recognized as an extremely important area for this species, with an abundance estimate of around 2.600 individuals.

STRIPED DOLPHIN | *Stenella coeruleoalba*

It is considered to be the most abundant cetacean species in the Mediterranean Sea, and this also appears to be the case in the Adriatic Sea. However, they are regularly sighted only in the southern part of the basin where they may occur in large groups of hundreds of individuals. In the northern Adriatic Sea they are occasionally seen, but in smaller groups, from one to three individuals. Using data from aerial surveys, their abundance was estimated around 20.000 individuals throughout the whole Adriatic Sea.

COMMON DOLPHIN | *Delphinus delphis*

This species has experienced a generalized and major decline in the Mediterranean region over the last 30-40 years. Today it is considered regionally extinct in the Adriatic Sea. However, since 2014 we have had records of occasional observations of this species in the Central Adriatic, with group sizes of up to 40 individuals. During the most recent aerial survey conducted in 2021, one group was recorded.

FIN WHALE | *Balaenoptera physalus*

It is mostly found in deep waters of the Mediterranean Sea. In the Adriatic Sea, most records rely on strandings and sightings of stray individuals in the northern and central part of the basin. Recent research indicates that fin whales regularly enter the Southern and Central Adriatic Sea, and that the abundance probably depends on the abundance of krill. During the aerial survey, only one individual was observed.

LOGGERHEAD TURTLE | *Caretta caretta*

It is the most abundant turtle species in the Mediterranean Sea. The Northern and the Central Adriatic represent one of the two largest neritic habitats shared by juvenile and adult animals originating from Greece and Turkey. Based on the data from aerial surveys, the abundance is estimated to around 27.000 individuals in the whole Adriatic Sea, with most of them, 18.000 individuals, recorded in the Northern Adriatic.

MEET THE STAFF

TIHANA VUČUR BLAZINIĆ, M.SC

Researcher and Internship and volunteering coordinator

I grew up on the coastline, so the sea was always my passion. From an early age, I knew I would be studying biology, so I mastered in Ecology and Nature Protection. I joined the BWI through the internship program to learn more about marine mammals and their research. I did not expect that this will be my permanent job and that dolphins will be constant part of my life. Besides conducting research at the Adriatic Dolphin Project, I am the volunteer and internship coordinator. As a highly personable individual, meeting people from all over the world is something I enjoy very much.

MARKO RADULOVIĆ, M.SC

Researcher

As a child I spent a lot of time with my family on the boat which defined my future career as a professional skipper and diver instructor. In order to specialize in marine biology, I decided to study at the universities of Düsseldorf and Hamburg in Germany. I completed my master's degree on the Spatial Distribution of Cetaceans in the North Adriatic with the BWI, and I mastered R statistical program. Besides bottlenose dolphins, I have great interest in cartilaginous fish (sharks and rays).

JEROEN HOFS, M.SC

Researcher

Driven by my interest in evolution and biodiversity, I studied Biology at Wageningen University in my home country, The Netherlands. I joined BWI for my master's Internship and quickly fell in love with the fieldwork and the photo identification method. I was delighted when BWI offered me a job and the support to pursue a PhD. In cooperation with the University of Groningen, I am studying the genetics of bottlenose dolphins in the Croatian Adriatic Sea.

MATEJA ZEKAN, M.SC.

Sea Turtle Rescue Centre Manager

I experienced my first encounter with Lošinj as a marine biology student completing a master thesis on "Habitat use of bottlenose dolphins in the Cres-Lošinj archipelago" at University of Trieste, Italy. After two years of internship, I was recruited by the Blue World Institute as a researcher and educator. In the meantime, the focus of my work shifted from cetaceans to sea turtles. The prospect of contributing to the conservation of one of the most endangered animal species - through both science and education - is something that completely fills me up.

MARTA LAGINJA, M.SC.

Researcher

As a kid I spent every summer with my grandparents in Croatia and therefore I spent a lot of time exploring the sea. Since then I always knew that I want to work in marine biology. I did several internships with the BWI, during which I wrote my bachelor and master theses about differerent effects on bottlenose dolphin ranging patterns and social structure. After that I was offered to work full time as a researcher at the BWI, which I happily accepted! My main interest lies in cetacean vocalization, so I am hoping to become an acoustic expert in the future.

INTERNSHIP PROGRAM

A TYPICAL DAY

There is no typical day. Schedule may vary depending on weather conditions and research priorities. It is important that you are flexible and bear in mind that dolphins are wild animals and working with them is not 100% predictable.

Day 1 - When you arrive to the base, we will give you the introductory lecture about the Blue World Institute and explain everything about duties on the boat. After that you will be introduced to our daily routine, duties and tasks.

Other days - Typically, days are spent in the office, where students help researchers, Lošinj Marine Education Centre (LMEC) or in the Turtle Rescue Center (TRC). During the office days you will have different workshops to explore new software used by scientists in a field of marine biology. Also you will help in photo-identification of dorsal fins, prepare presentations and reports, help with injured turtles (if there are some on the recovery) and working on whatever is actual at that moment in the research department. In other words, you will be assisting researchers in everyday tasks and will contribute to better

understanding of ecology of target species and their conservation.
The weather is unpredictable, so it may happen that we are on the sea every week or only once in the whole month. Area surveys are conducted from a 6 m long inflatable boat. On the boat you will mainly be scanning the horizon in search for dolphins or other large marine vertebrates. While with the dolphins, you will help with collecting navigation and behavioral data and determining the group size and composition.

- When going on the fieldwork, it is important that you bring water, food and appropriate layers of clothing on the boat. Although the climate on the island is mild, it can get very cold driving for hours on the sea.

- Working hours when in the office are from 9 to 16. When on the sea, there are no working hours - it can happen that the trip lasts between 3 and 14 hours. Weekends are generally free.

Keep an open mind while you are here and you may just find the research of your dreams. Although dolphins are our primary focus, there are many opportunities for exploring fields related to the sea.
In your free time, you may explore the island, enjoy the beauty of discovering new paths and beaches. There are many hiking and biking trails and seasonal activities like asparagus foraging in the spring and olive harvesting in the fall.

SOME USEFUL INFO

- We do not know in advance where the dolphins are, our methodology is to cover certain area and record if any large marine vertebrates are observed.
- Their distribution depends on prey availability and anthropogenic pressure.
- Working hours when on the sea depend on the area that needs to be covered.
- Working hours when in the office are usually from 9 am until 16 pm.
- It is forbidden to touch, swim with or feed the dolphins.
- Even though dolphins seem nice, bear in mind that they are wild animals and therefore their behaviour is unpredictable.
- When we are on the boat, bring food and water with you. If we have the opportunity, we might stop on one of the small islands to take a break, but it can happen that during the field work we are on the boat the whole time.
- While on the boat, follow the instructions from researchers.
- It is forbidden to smoke cigarettes on the boat.

ACCOMMODATION

Kaciol 17, 51551 Veli Lošinj

The house provides two bedrooms for interns, two bedrooms for volunteers, two bathrooms, the kitchen, and the terrace.

Beds, sheets, blankets and towels are provided.

There is a washing machine in the house which you can use.

Daily household duties include cooking, dishwashing and general housekeeping. All participants alternate in house-keeping and cooking shifts.

Food is not included in the price, and you can buy it from the local grocery shop in Veli Lošinj, or you can use the car for shopping in supermarkets in Mali Lošinj, which is a 10 minutes' long drive.

There are some local restaurants where you may choose to eat dinner at your own expense.

There are supermarkets nearby.

Smoking is not allowed within the accommodation.

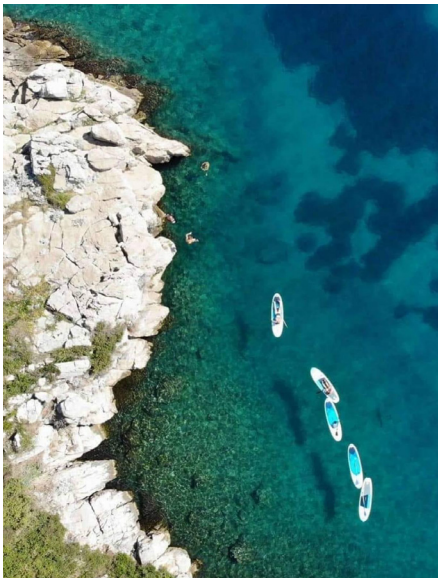
The project is also advertised in many countries, so it is possible that your colleagues will be from different European countries, or even further.

The house and the office have free Wi-Fi. In addition, some bars and restaurants offer Wi-Fi access for their guests.

There may be up to 10 people sharing the accommodation so it is important that you have a positive attitude and can adjust to different situations.

ISLAND OF LOŠINJ

The coastline of Lošinj is very diverse; it consists of many bays and underwater caves. The house and the office are located in the old village of Veli Lošinj (3 km distant from Mali Lošinj — the biggest island town in Croatia), on the sheltered east coast of the island. There are more than 95 species of fish found in the waters around the island, and other top predators such as tuna and swordfish regularly visit this area. The marine environment around Lošinj is one of the cleanest parts of the Northern Adriatic Sea with water transparency consistently over 20 meters. We encourage you to explore the island and take advantage of the pristine natural environment that surrounds you.



Students applying for internship must:

- Currently studying or recently finished (marine) biology, ecology, veterinary medicine or related fields
- Over 18 years old
- Able to tolerate hot or cold weather
- Able to tolerate long periods on the boat (in the sun, wind, and waves)
- In a good physical condition
- Speak English
- Enthusiastic about marine wildlife

*Be aware that the project director or project manager has the right of expelling you from the field base, in case your behaviour and attitude may obstruct the normal research activities.

EXPANSES AND WHAT IS INCLUDED IN THE PRICE

The cost of the program is **28 EUR per day**. The payment can be made on the spot to avoid any additional costs.

INCLUDED

1. Accommodation
2. Utilities
3. Scientific supervision
4. Boat-based surveys
5. Internet access in the house and in the office
6. Internship certificate
7. Lectures by researchers

NOT INCLUDED

1. Food and beverages
2. Travel expenses
3. Alcoholic drinks and cigarettes
4. Personal expenses (e.g. telephone, cosmetics)
5. Insurance (We recommend you to take travel health insurance).

AVAILABLE PERIODS

- Spring (**February 1st to May 31st**) and Autumn (**September 1st to November 30th**).
- We prefer you to stay the **whole period**.
- We accept **2 Interns** at a time.

Additional note:

- Check with your University if you could be awarded with ECTS points
- If you are from EU country apply for Erasmus scholarship
- If you are staying for longer than three months, you have to apply for a temporary residence in Croatia which requires additional paperwork and costs (Internship coordinator can provide you more details)

HOW TO APPLY

1. Contact us

Those interested should fill in the online application form on our website. Please, tell us what period you are interested in, what are you studying (current year) and enclose your CV in English. We will contact you back.

2.Payment

You can make payment via bank transfer or PayPal. The fee for money transfer is covered by you.

BANK TRANSFER	PAYPAL
Erste&Steiermärkische Bank cid Jadranski trg 3A 51000 Rijeka SWIFT/BIC: ESBCHR22 [BAN: HR7824020061100937954	Please send the required amount to this address: info@blue-world.org

WHAT TO PACK

- Please, try to bring no more than one large bag and a backpack as space is limited in our flat during the summer
- Take your warm clothing for the boat (multiple layers will be needed)
- Bear in mind that there will be a washing machine at your disposal
- Sunscreen (SPF 50+), sunglasses and a hat
- Sneakers /boots / non-slip shoes
- Windproof / waterproof jacket
- Laptop, Camera (if you wish)
- Headphones
- Umbrella
- Insect repellent spray or lotion
- Ear plugs for light sleepers
- Any necessary medication
- Documents and insurance (Valid ID card or passport and a travel insurance)

DOCUMENTS

- EU citizens need only a valid ID card. Please check the requirements for other countries. In any case, we suggest you take your VALID passport
- We advise you to take travel and health insurance
- It can come in handy for EU citizens to have European Health Insurance Card

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

- Official language is Croatian, but almost everyone can speak at least basic English. Young people generally speak English well, while many also speak German and Italian.
- Official language among the team is English.
- Croatia is generally a very safe place for tourists and crime rate is very low.
- Croatia is using the Euro.
- Time zone In Croatia is +1UTC in winter; +2UTC in summer
- Power standard is 220V/50Hz and you will need a power plug for a Schuko socket (CEE 7/3)

ARRIVAL AND DEPARTURE

- **You should inform the Internship coordinator about your travel plan preferably a few weeks before your arrival. Due to the traffic schedule, we tolerate the arrival to be +/- 2 days from the start of the Internship program.**

- **The information given here was correct at time of publishing. Please check timetables, connections and routes personally. You will have to make your own travel arrangements.**

1. BY BUS

Arriva is the bus company that drives to Veli Lošinj. On the following website you can check departing cities, timetable and prices: **https://www.arriva.com.hr/en-us/home**. Members of the team can welcome you on the bus station in Veli Lošinj and walk you to the accommodation.

2. BY PLANE

There are cheap flights to **Pula, Rijeka, Split, Zadar and Zagreb** in Croatia, and **Venice** and **Trieste** in Italy. For timetables of flights, you can check **Croatia Airlines** (https://www.croatiaairlines.com/), **easyJet** (https://www.easyjet.com/en), **Ryanair** (https://www.ryanair.com/hr/en), **Wizz Air** (https://wizzair.com/en-gb#/), **Eurowings** (https://www.eurowings.com/en.html). You should make your own travel arrangements from the airport.

3. BY BOAT

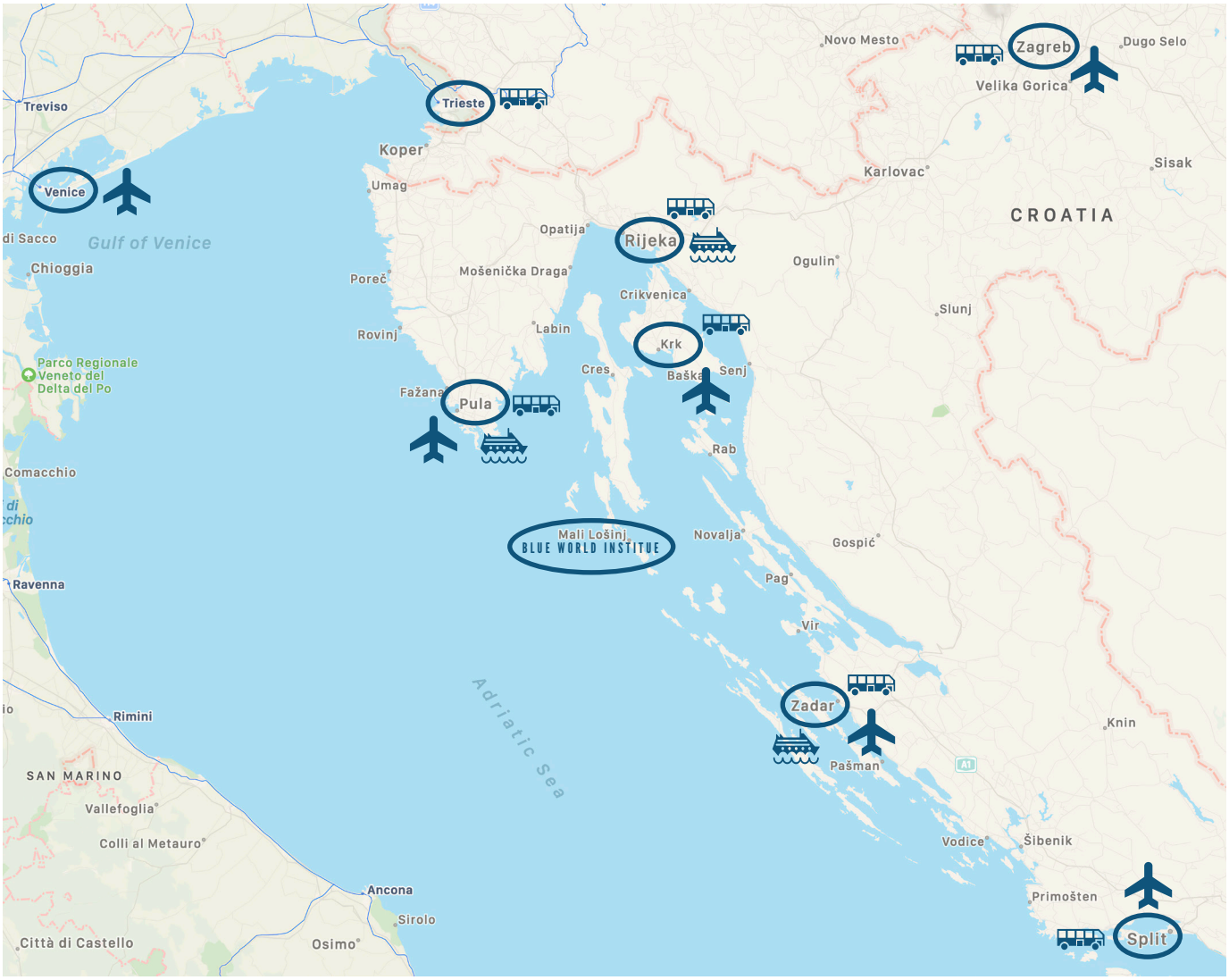
There is a catamaran line operating every day from **Rijeka** to Mali Lošinj. Please visit the following website for further information: www.jadrolinija.hr/en/. You can also reach Mali Lošinj from **Zadar** by ferry (www.jadrolinia.hr/en/) or catamaran (https://www.krilo.hr/en/). There is also a catamaran line from **Pula** to Mali Lošinj (https://www.krilo.hr/en/). If you are arriving by ferry or catamaran, please let us know and we will organize that somebody picks you up on a ferry/catamaran station.

4. BY CAR

If you prefer to travel by car, you can drive to the ferry port **Brestova** (Istria, close to Opatija) if coming from Italy/SIovenia directions. However if you are coming from Zagreb direction you should go to the ferry port **Valbiska** (Krk Island) where ferry will bring you to the island of Cres. From ferry ports on Cres there is approximately 1.5 hours' drive to Veli Lošinj. Please check the ferry schedule on www.jadrolinija.hr/en/ under the sailing schedule, District of Rijeka, or contact us through email if you need any advice. When you arrive to Veli Lošinj, there is a parking place 15 minutes' walking distance from the accommodation.

5. BY TRAIN

There are trains coming from most of the major cities of continental Europe to **Zagreb, Rijeka** or **Trieste**. Please enquire at your departure point. The train station in Rijeka is 200 m west of the bus station where you can take a bus to Veli Lošinj.


Novo Mesto
Zagreb
Dugo Selo
Velika Gorica
Treviso
Trieste
Koper
Umag
Venice
Gulf of Venice
Chioggia
Karlovac
Sisak
CROATIA
Opatija
Rijeka
Ogulin
Poreč
Mošenička Draga
Crikvenica
Slunj
Rovinj
Labin
Krk
Parco Regionale Veneto del Delta del Po
Cres
Senj
Fažana
Pula
Rab
Comacchio
Mali Lošinj
BLUE WORLD INSTITUE
Novalja
Gospić
Ravenna
Pag
Vir
Adriatic Sea
Zadar
Rimini
Knin
Pašman
SAN MARINO
Vallefoglia
Colli al Metauro
Vodice
Šibenik
Ancona
Primošten
Sirolo
Split
Città di Castello
Osimo

OUR IMPACT

Since 2008, more than 100 students have participated in our internship program. Some students joined us just to get the experience, while with some we have developed thesis and dissertation projects.

List of theses and dissertations:

Aljinović B. (2005) Utilizzo dei marchi naturali nello studio della popolazione di tursiop i (Tursiops truncatus) residente nell'arcipelago di Cres e Lošinj (Croazia). University of Padua, Italy.

Capitanio S. (2016) Effects of boats on surfacing patterns of bottlenose dolphins (Tursiops truncatus) in Northeastern Adriatic Sea (Croatia): analysis of group behaviour. p. 92. University of Padua, Italy.

Ceni I. (2017) The effect of antropogenic noise on acoustic behaviour of Tursiops truncatus: The Kvarner area case study. University of Padua, Italy.

Colancon J (2021) Population analysis of wild common bottlenose dolphins (Tursiops truncatus) in Istria region, Croatia. University of Liege, Belgium.

Cukrov M. (2010) Population size estimation of bottlenose dolphins, Tursiops truncatus (Montagu, 1821), in the Vis island archipelago. University of Zagreb, Croatia.

Dvorski K. (2019) The effect of dolphin observation programmes in the Cres-Lošinj archipelago on encouraging pro-environmental behavior. University of Zagreb, Croatia.

Filideijr. E. (2004) Stime di abbondanza di specie di delfinidi costieri e pelagici; loro significato scientifico e diconservazione nell'ottica delle leggi Nazionali e degli accordi Internazionali di protezione dei Cetacei. In: Biological sciences. University of Florence, Italy.

Fortuna C.M. (2006) Ecology and conservation of bottlenose dolphins (Tursiops truncatus) in the North-Eastern Adriatic Sea. In: Sea Mammal Research Unit, p. 275. University of St. Andrews, UK.

Granziol L. (2018) Variability of signature wistles of bottlenose dolphins (Tursiops truncatus) of Lošinj archipelago. University of Padua, Italy.

Holcer D. (2012) Ecology of the common bottlenose dolphin, Tursiops truncatus (Montagu,

1821) in the Central Adriatic Sea. In: Faculty of Sciences, p. 208 + LIV. University of Zagreb, Croatia.

Kammigan I. (2007) Vorkommen und Verteilung des Großen Tümmlers (Tursiops truncatus) im Nationalpark Kornati, Kroatien. In: Biozentrum Grindel, p. 105. University of Hamburg, Germany.

Mackelworth P.C. (2007) Convergence of marine protected area policy with common pool research theory, acase study: The Lošinj Dolphin Reserve, Croatia. p. 358. University of London, UK.

Maitrel C. (2021) Home range and movements of common bottlenose dolphins (Tursiops truncatus) in the Northern-east Adriatic Sea. University of Burgundy, France.

Nimak M. (2006) Behavioural responses of bottlenose dolphins, Tursiops truncatus to boat trafic in the Kvarnerić, north - eastern Adriatic Sea. In: School of Biological Sciences, p. 87. University of Wales, UK.

Pleslić G. (2010) Effects of sea moveme nts on growth direction and distribution of red sea -squirt (Halocynthia papillosa, Lynnaeus 1768). University of Split, Croatia.

Pokupec D. (2020) Predictability of diurnal movements of common bottlenose dolphins (Tursiops truncates) in coastal waters of Cres-Lošinj archipelago. University of Split, Croatia

Prihoda J. (2005) Group characteristics of bottlenose dolphins (Tursiops truncatus) in the Kvarnerić (northern Adriatic Sea) in the presence of trawling vessels. In: Department of Ecology, p. 63. University of Szeged.

Proietto A. (2005) Valutazione dell'home-range del tursiopi (Tursiops truncatus) nell'Adriatico centrale: confronto tra quattro popolazioni (Italia, Slovenia, Adriatico settentrionale e centrale in Croatia). University of Torino, Italy.

Radulović M. (2013) Parasitic fauna of fish species belonging to the food spectrum of bottlenose dolphins (Tursiops truncatus) in the northern Adriatic. In: Abteilung für Zoomorphologie, Zellbiologie und Parasitologie. University of Düsseldorf, Germany.

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