

# ITINERARY

## Thursday, March 5

**3 pm:** The *Royal Polaris* will be available for boarding. Arrive any time 3–5 pm to drop off your luggage, get your room assignment, meet your hosts, and see the boat.

**5 pm:** Wine and cheese reception, boat orientation, mandatory safety orientation. Dinner is on your own; we'll be happy to make suggestions!

**10:30 pm:** Everyone must be on board.

**11 pm:** Vessel sails. We will pass by the large bait tanks in the harbor, which are a magnet for seabirds and shorebirds.

## Friday, March 6

**A full day of travel.** We will pass by Todos Santos, a small island with a harbor seal colony and nesting birds. Excellent views from the boat. We frequently see whales and dolphins while traveling.

## Saturday, March 7

**Arrive at Isla San Benitos Oeste.** We'll spend most of the day here, hiking around the island (3-mile loop). As with all our island visits, hikes are led by our skilled naturalist at a casual pace. Those not wanting to do the entire hike have the option of doing a shorter version. Highlights of this island are the elephant seal rookery, nest burrows of Cassin's auklets, nesting osprey, the lighthouse, and the seasonal fishing village. Learn about desert ecology from our expert.

## Sunday, March 8, through Tuesday, March 10

**San Ignacio Lagoon.** Whale watching from *pangas* (Mexican skiffs); beach walks on both east and west shores; and dawn birdwatching in the mangroves. During our stay in the lagoon, all passengers will have multiple opportunities to go out in pangas for whale watching. Remember that the whales choose how close they wish to come to the pangas. Though you may not be able to touch a whale, extremely close views are very common. Spy hops are frequent, breaches are also seen, and some passengers are privileged to see surface mating activity.

Depart San Ignacio with the tide on Tuesday.

## Wednesday, March 11

**Arrive at Isla Cedros.** Board skiffs to see California sea lion and elephant seal rookeries, then land on a different part of the island to hike up a canyon to a waterfall, which may be dry some years. The hike is lovely, but the last third becomes somewhat challenging when the path goes over some large boulders.

## Thursday, March 12

**Arrive at Isla San Martin.** View harbor seals and their pups in a lagoon. See a breakwater formed of lava boulders.

## Friday, March 13

**Return to San Diego Harbor.** Check through U.S. Customs. Plane departures will be possible after 12:30 pm.