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PhD Student

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Research Interests/Experience:

I am particularly interested in marine mammal conservation and in understanding the impact of anthropogenic activity on cetacean populations.

As part of my current research I am interested in acquiring knowledge about the behavioural ecology of common dolphins in the Azores where currently poor information is available and in investigating the effects of the local tourism industry on their behavioural patterns. Prior experiences in marine mammal research include: photo-ID in Iceland (Húsavík Whale Museum), California (Okeanis) and the Azores (University of the Azores), distribution studies (Iceland), pathology studies focused on skin lesions assessment (Iceland and California) and anthropogenic impact assessment in the context of entanglement rate of humpback whales (Iceland).

In addition, I have attended a Marine Mammal Medic Course (MMM) with the British Divers Marine Life Rescue and an additional pinnipeds rescue seminar at The Marine Mammal Center, in California.

Thesis:

Multi-aspect approach for managing whale watching activity and swimming with dolphins programs in an area of high cetacean diversity: implication for wildlife conservation

Supervision:

Prof. José Azevedo (cE3c, University of the Azores, Ponta Delgada)

Dr. Jonathon Gordon (SMRU, University St. Andrews, UK)

Dr. Karen Stockin (CMRG, Massey University, Albany)

Study Aims:

- ❖ understanding the baseline behavioural patterns of common dolphins (*Delphinus delphis*) in the Azores
- ❖ assessing the short-term effects of the tourism industry on their behaviour

- ❖ providing scientific support to ensure a local sustainable use of natural resources

Funding:

- ❖ Regional Fund for Science and Technology Scholarship: FRCT/2011/312/001 - M3.1.2/F/036/2011

Publications/Reports:

Bertulli C, **Cecchetti A**, Van BresseM M-F & Van Waerebeek K. 2012. Skin disorders in common minke whales and white-beaked dolphins off Iceland, a photographic assessment. *Journal of Marine Animals and Their Ecology* 5(2): 29 - 40.

Maldini D, Riggin J, **Cecchetti A** & Cotter MP. 2010. Prevalence of Epidermal Conditions in California Coastal Bottlenose Dolphins (*Tursiops truncatus*) in Monterey Bay. *AMBIO* 39(7): 455 - 462 doi: [10.1007/s13280-010-0066-8](https://doi.org/10.1007/s13280-010-0066-8)

Maldini D, Ward C, **Cecchetti A** & Riggin J. 2010. Southern sea otter diet in a soft sediment community. *Journal of Marine Animals and Their Ecology* 3(1): 27 - 36.

Cecchetti A, Stockin K, Gordon J & Azevedo JMN. (in review) Short-term effects on the behaviour of short-beaked common dolphins (*Delphinus delphis*) in the Azores. *Journal of Marine Biological Association of the UK*

Bertulli C, **Cecchetti A**, Basran C, Rasmussen M, Barr BW & Robbins J. (in prep) First estimate of entanglement rate of humpback whales (*Megaptera novaeangliae*) off Iceland

Cecchetti A, Stockin K, Gordon J & Azevedo JMN (in prep) First insight of the activity budget of common dolphins (*Delphinus delphis*) in the Azores

Conference presentations:

Cecchetti A, Stockin K, Gordon J & Azevedo JMN. 2015. Effects of tour boats on the behaviour of short-beaked common dolphins in the Azores. *The II Conference of the Ethological Portuguese Society, Lisbon, Portugal.*

Cecchetti A, Gordon J, Fernandez M & Azevedo JMN 2014. Behavioural patterns of short-beaked common dolphins (*Delphinus delphis*) in the Azores. *The 28th Annual Conference of the European Cetacean Society, Liège, Belgium.*

Bertulli C, **Cecchetti A**, Bárðarson H & Robbins J. 2011. First assessment of entanglement rate among North Atlantic humpback whales (*Megaptera novaeangliae*) off Iceland. *The 19th Biennial Conference on the Biology of Marine Mammals, Tampa, United States.*

Bertulli C, **Cecchetti A**, Van BresseM M-F & Van Waerebeek K. 2009. Prevalence of cutaneous disorders in common minke whales (*Balaenoptera acutorostrata*) and white-beaked dolphins (*Lagenorhynchus albirostris*) in Faxaflói and Skjálfandi Bays, Iceland. *The 18th Biennial Conference on the Biology of Marine Mammals, Quebec City, Canada.*

Brooks V, Allen J, **Cecchetti A**, Sewall R, Stevick P.T, Víkingsson G.A & Wald E. 2009. Migration Rate of Humpback Whales Feeding off Iceland to the Breeding and Calving

Grounds in the West Indies. *The 18th Biennial Conference on the Biology of Marine Mammals, Quebec City, Canada.*

Iversen M, Rasmussen MH, **Cecchetti A**, Sigurðardóttir V, Wald E & Víkingsson GA. 2009. Seasonal occurrence and potential movement of feeding area of blue whales (*Balaenoptera musculus*) around Iceland – Preliminary studies. *The 23rd Annual Conference of the European Cetacean Society, Istanbul, Turkey.*

Cecchetti A, Tetley MJ, Wald E & Björgvinsson Á. 2008. Preliminary results of relationships occurring between humpback whale (*Megaptera novaeangliae*) dive time rates and environmental parameters in NE Iceland. *The 22nd Annual Conference of the European Cetacean Society, Egmond aan Zee, Netherlands.*

Tetley MJ, Cooper D, **Cecchetti A**, Wald E, Björgvinsson Á & Mitchelson-Jacob EG. 2008. The predictive habitat suitability mapping of minke whales, humpback whales and white-beaked dolphins in northeast Iceland. *The 22nd Annual Conference of the European Cetacean Society, Egmond aan Zee, Netherlands.*

Cecchetti A, Tetley MJ, Wald E, Björgvinsson Á, Mitchelson-Jacob EG & Goold J. 2007. The spatial and temporal distribution of cetaceans within Skjálfandi Bay, northeast Iceland. *The 21st Annual Conference of the European Cetacean Society, San Sebastián, Spain.*