



Diver spends 40 hours with whales in Sri Lanka



Thirty-eight year old Marianne Aventurier comes up for a breath of air during her 40 hours with the whales in Sri Lanka

These jaw-dropping photographs were taken while free-diving with whales in Sri Lanka.

The collection features stunning images of blue whales and sperm whales, along with free-diver Marianne Aventurier who spent 40 hours in the sea to capture her moments with them on film.

The spectacular shots were taken by friends Alex Voyer and Alex Roubaud, a duo from Paris who specialise in photographing the wonders of the deep under the name Fisheye.

They were able to capture Marianne, 38, a psychomotor therapist, as she swam alongside the giant graceful creatures.

Speaking about the once-in-a-lifetime experience Marianne said: 'One of our wildest and most inaccessible dreams was to swim alongside the blue whale.'

Making contact with a Sri Lankan tourism agency, who had previously used one of the trio's sperm whale pictures, they asked about cetaceans in Sri Lanka and were strongly motivated to visit after being told that 'the animals are particularly numerous this year'.

They rented a boat, obtained authorisation and set off.

Aventurier added: 'We were lucky to find a huge group of sperm whales. They could be between one and 15 subjects divided into groups but quite close to each other.'

'The goal was to go in the water with large school so that they are less frightened and we could make more impressive photos.'

'Some slept, most went a little deeper and one of them stopped to watch us for a few minutes. He lowered his tail and did not move. I was subjugat-

ed by the interest he had for us, that's the kind of moment that only worsened my addiction to cetaceans. After remaining motionless, I tried to dive, but I had less success because it made him flee.'

'And the best came last - the blue whale.'

'Finally, among those 40 hours in the sea, we were able to meet the eyes of the blue whale twice. Forty hours for a few seconds of meeting, but it was worth it.'

'The first time the whale was in the process of probing, she was very fast but [soon slowed down] and watched us before disappearing into the depths of the ocean.'

'My heart beat was strong from the shot of adrenaline, I apologise to the whale for the stress that we probably caused. These animals have no rancour, is it a purely human feeling.'

Especially after all the massacres they have suffered, it is a real issue.'

'The second meeting took place after ten unsuccessful water releases. We knew that the whale was coming right at us, we swim while waiting. Nothing. I thought "it's still messed up" and I was planning my return to the boat when suddenly, I found myself nose to nose with her.'

'She came towards me. I shifted, seeking its eye, not easy to find the eye in such large animals. She is covered with remora (suckerfish), she is sublime.'

'I find myself on top of her and I see that she moves her tail oddly. I'm afraid as I think she will hit us with her tail because at that moment a boat followed her. In fact, she turned away just because we were facing her. I regretted afterwards having been afraid.' - DailyMail