



Australian Geographic Society

MINKE WHALE EXPEDITION

17–24 June 2010



Join the Eye to Eye Marine Encounters team on an official Australian Geographic expedition as they get up close and personal with the world's friendliest marine mammal, the dwarf minke whale. Snorkel and dive the remote northern tip of the Great Barrier Reef between educational and awe-inspiring encounters with these inquisitive animals. Interpretive lectures on whale biology, behaviour and identification by Minke Whale Project researchers will enhance your experience and allow you to connect with nature as never before...





The research

ONLY DISCOVERED IN the 1980s, dwarf minke whales migrate to warm Great Barrier Reef waters each winter. Scientists believe that they may come here to breed. For the past 13 years, John Rumney of Eye to Eye Marine Encounters and Dr Alistair Birtles and the late Dr Peter Arnold of the Minke Whale Project (James Cook University) have been conducting research into their biology, behaviour and interactions with humans. The code of practice they've developed for close in-water encounters is now recognized as world's best practice for safeguarding whales in the wild. On this exclusive expedition with Australian Geographic, you'll have the opportunity to observe these magnificent creatures in their element. You may also participate in data collection by capturing valuable images for individual identification and documenting key behaviours. Onboard researchers will also collect information to gain a better understanding of the species' population structure, life history and movement patterns. A special guest, a dwarf minke whale expert and an AG Society trustee will also be on board to share their comprehensive knowledge, enthusiasm and passion for these charismatic whales.



In addition to an unforgettable wildlife experience, your contribution to this project (both monetary and as a member of the research team) will aid in the collection of valuable data for a species that is newly discovered and poorly understood.



The experience

TO LOOK INTO THE EYES of a dwarf minke whale is an inspirational and humbling experience. Encountering such an intelligent animal in the wild can have a profound effect on the soul as you hover quietly, watching them watching you.

Based on years of experience and research, this trip will offer you the ultimate in-water whale encounter along with the added bonus of diving along the northern Great Barrier Reef.

Encounters often last for several hours with a continual flux of individual whales engaging with the boat and swimmers in their own special way.



Weather

The water temperature ranges from 24°C to 26°C, and a full 5 mm wetsuit is recommended. All diving and snorkelling will be within the shelter of the outer ribbon reefs.





The vessel

Mike Ball's *Spoilsport* is a 30 m luxury motor yacht that offers accommodation in a selection of air-conditioned cabins. It is the Great Barrier Reef's most awarded live-aboard vessel. Features include:

- Twin hulls to reduce seasickness and maximise stability, space and privacy
- Spacious dining room, lounge and alfresco deck and sundeck
- Huge dive deck with convenient entry/exit platforms
- Photographer friendly, with three large camera tables
- Video and TV (Pal and NTSC)
- Underwater digital camera and videos
- Marine reference library with computer CD burner
- 240V (AUS) and 110V (USA) power points in cabins and throughout
- Two air compressors
- Two inflatable dive tenders
- Desalinator
- Nitrox available



Food & beverage

Sensational chef-prepared meals and snacks with complimentary soft drinks and Australian wines (with dinner). There is also additional beer, wine and soft drinks available on board. You can enjoy your choice of hot beverage with morning wake-up call. Special dietary needs catered for (please advise when booking).



COST

Cabin types in Australian dollars, including GST

CABIN	OCEAN VIEW	BEDS	BATHROOM	COST
Premium	YES	Double	Private	\$4526
Standard	YES	Twin	Private	\$4118
Club	NO	Twin Bunk	Private	\$3562
Budget	NO	Twin Bunk	Shared	\$3038

The package includes 6 full days (departing evening of Thursday 17 June and disembarking morning of Thursday 24 June) and includes:

- Twin share/double accommodation for 7 nights
- All meals, from breakfast on day 1 until breakfast on day 7
- 2–3 dive/snorkels per day (depending on conditions)
- Daily interpretive presentations
- Tanks, weights, airfills
- Additional scuba gear is available for hire on board:
wetsuit \$8/day; BCD \$10/day; reg/computer \$27/day; computer only \$12/day
mask/snorkel/fins \$5/day; dive light \$10/day; full set of gear \$40/day

CANCELLATION FEES

120 days prior to departure – \$100 administration fee.
60–30 days prior to departure – 50 per cent of full price.
Under 30 days prior to departure – no refund.



Medical

If you have a specific medical condition, please be sure to state its nature on the diver profile form provided upon booking. also, please take extra supplies of your required medication. all crew are qualified in senior first aid.



JOIN THE AUSTRALIAN GEOGRAPHIC SOCIETY

AS THIS IS an official Australian Geographic Society expedition preference of bookings will be given to Australian Geographic Society members. To become a member of the Australian Geographic Society simply subscribe to the Society's award-winning journal, AUSTRALIAN GEOGRAPHIC – membership is automatic. To subscribe phone 1300 555 176, or click a “subscribe now” link on our website: www.australiangeographic.com.au

WHAT TO BRING

- Sunscreen • Dive certification card
- Swimsuits • Casual clothes
- Deck towel
- Batteries (for dive light and camera)

All members must have diving emergency insurance. We recommend DAN Insurance. If you are an international traveller Mike Ball Dive Expeditions can arrange 30-day Travel Assist cover for AUD16 at check-in.

- For more information please contact Eye to Eye Marine Encounters: info@marineencounters.com.au. A 30 per cent deposit is required to secure a booking. The balance is due 60 days prior to the expedition's start. For bookings contact Mike Ball Dive Expeditions (+61 7 4053 0500, or resv@mikeball.com). Places are limited and will be allocated on a first-in, first-served basis.



Eye to Eye Marine Encounters

Is a special company that offers nature lovers the ultimate marine experience by combining adventure diving and science. Eye to Eye Marine Encounters inspires and educates through hands-on learning and intimate wildlife experiences in the company of leading marine researchers.