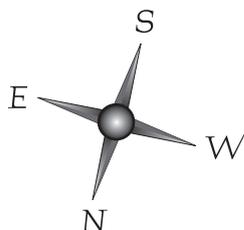


# AKAROA HARBOUR NATURE CRUISES



Route may vary depending on weather and sea conditions



## Welcome

**Welcome aboard the Black Cat. Your nature cruise will take around 2 hours. The commentary will be in English; we hope this information sheet adds to your enjoyment of your cruise by providing a summary of the information given within the commentary. You have two crew members - a skipper and a deckhand - please ask them if you require anything, or have any questions.**

## Safety Instructions

In the case of an emergency, lifejackets are located under the seats in the front part of the main cabin and under the seats in the wheelhouse. It is not necessary to wear lifejackets on a vessel this size unless there is an emergency. We have life buoys on the front deck & the aft deck and five large orange floats on the top deck. If somebody was to fall over the side - you need to yell out "man overboard" as loud as you possibly can, throw them a life buoy and keep your eyes on them at all times. We will then turn the boat around and pick them up. We have fire extinguishers positioned around the vessel and well as water pumping system in the case of fire. To prevent you from falling over the side we have safety rails around the outer deck. Keep your feet on the deck at all times. Do not stand on the seats. Be careful climbing up or down the stairs to the top deck and hold onto the handrails provided firmly. Be careful entering the main cabin, there is a high step at the door. It is painted yellow and black. In the main cabin is also found an emergency exit to the front deck. This boat also has controls on the either side of the wheelhouse. If you see the skipper away from the wheel it is because he is

controlling the boat from these stations. In the unlikely event of an emergency please follow the crew's instructions carefully.

## General Advice

There are two toilets in the main cabin. We also have a bar should you require drinks or snacks. Towards the end of the cruise we will be offering you free tea or coffee. You are welcome to wander around the vessel to find the best viewing spot. You are able to access the front deck by walking along the side deck. Do not take preschoolers to the front rails. Please avoid the bridge (where skipper is based) until the last 20 minutes of the cruise. If you have children with you, please supervise them at all times.



### Akaroa

You have just departed from the historical French flavoured village of Akaroa. The French attempted to colonise New Zealand from Akaroa in 1840 but were unsuccessful as the British declared sovereignty over New Zealand just before the arrival of the French. The early settlers decided to stay on so today you can see their influence everywhere, for

example street names like "Rue Jolie", which means "Happy Street". Nowadays fishing, farming and tourism are the mainstays of the township. Akaroa is home to about 1000 people.



### Historic Lighthouse

The original historic Lighthouse, initially located just outside the harbour entrance, is now located in Akaroa. It is only lit for special occasions and holidays.



### Volcanic Crater

It's hard to imagine it, but Banks Peninsula was once an island. In fact, for some 12 million years it lay separated from the South Island by 50km of sea. On this island, so high that snow dusted its surface most of the year round, was the huge cone of an enormous volcano. Of course the volcano is long extinct, last erupting 6 million years ago. The harbour you are cruising in is the crater of the ancient volcano and is known as a 'caldera', just like the Greek island of Santorini.



### Onuku Marae

This is the location of an historical Maori village in which one of the oldest churches in the South Island is to be found. In 1840 two Maori chief Tekau signed the Treaty of Waitangi here, which was the founding document of New Zealand. The village has a meeting house and a number of small cottages where local Maori live. It is still used today for many gatherings.



### Cathedral Cave

Known to the Maori as Te Anau O Kokiro, the cave was named after the Chief Kokiro. This is an example of how the rough sea has created a volcanic cave over thousands of years, and clearly shows the layers of different volcanic eruptions. Numerous seabirds nest here on the cliffs. The Cave is 100 meters or 300 feet high, which is about the same height as Big Ben.



### Nikau Palm Gully

This is the southern most point at which New Zealand's only native palm tree grows, known as the Nikau Palm in its natural habitat. There is a four hour return walking track from Akaroa to this point.



### Dan Rogers Cliff

One of the highest cliffs on Banks Peninsula it is

roughly 270 meters or 800 feet high, about the same height as the Eiffel Tower. Local legend has it that Dan Rogers robbed a bank in nearby Little River. A long horseback pursuit by the local police ended right here. The top of the cliff was shrouded in fog and as Dan anxiously looked behind him to see where the police were, he galloped right over the edge of the cliff and was killed on the rocks below.



### The Heads

The point on the left (North) is known to the

Maori as Te Ruahine meaning "Old lady". And on the right (South) is Timu Timu, which means 'cut off short' from this point it is 4000 miles to Chile, South America and 1600 miles to Antarctica.



### Scenery Nook

This volcanic amphitheatre is one of the most

stunning sea cliffs in New Zealand and possibly the world. The large grey rock which rises from the sea like a giant knife is actually a volcanic dyke. This is made of different, harder rock than the soft red volcanic rock around it, which has eroded over millions of years to form the beautiful area you see today.



### New Zealand Fur Seals

These native seals were almost

hunted to extinction during the 1800's when millions of seals were slaughtered for their fur. The fur is so dense that in just one square inch there is enough fur to cover a small dog. The seals fish outside the harbour and normally come ashore here to rest. You will see that the colour of their coat makes them very difficult to see amongst the rocks.



### Salmon Farm

Young salmon are farmed in Lucas Bay and sold to

the national and international market. The famous Akaroa Salmon is available in most Akaroa and Christchurch restaurants so if you are a fan of seafood then be sure to get a taste for dinner tonight.



### Paua (Abalone) Farm

Underwater caskets are

filled with Paua or Abalone. This shell is being used for jewellery but the most famous part of the farm is the blue pearls that form beautiful jewellery. A selection is available from the shop of the main wharf. The flesh of the Paua/Abalone is recognised world wide as a delicacy.



### Dolphins

The Hector's or New Zealand Dolphin is a

native species and is one of the smallest dolphins in the world. They grow to about 1.2m (4 feet) roughly the size of a 5-year-old child. This is compared to the bottlenose dolphins, which grow up to 3 meters in length, roughly the length of a small family car. They are located all around the South Island but the harbours of Lyttelton and Akaroa are where they are seen most often. This is one of the world's rarest dolphins with its total population being around 7,000. This is fewer than any other marine dolphin, and marks the species as endangered. A marine mammal sanctuary exists right around Banks Peninsula aimed at providing a safe habitat for the dolphins, no commercial set net fishing is allowed and recreation netting is allowed only during the winter.



### Little Blue Penguins

If you are lucky you may see the

White Flipped Blue Penguin, called Korora by the Maori. These will be swimming in the water and at first you may think they're small ducks. They are amongst the smallest and rarest of all the world's penguin species and are found only in Canterbury, mainly around Banks Peninsula. They spend all day at sea, coming ashore to moult and nest over summer. Their green-blue appearance keeps them well disguised from predators while at sea, but on land their white underbellies are a dead giveaway to their chief enemies - ferrets, stoats and cats. These have been responsible for decimating up to 70% of the penguin population. At sea, however, these penguins enjoy their freedom, literally flying through the water, their wings flapping like flippers, and feeding predominantly on zooplankton and small fish.



### Cormorants

One of the most common bird groups around

Banks Peninsula are the Cormorants which are commonly known in New Zealand as Shags. There are many- the family is made up of spotted, little, pied, and black shags all of which you may see today. These large birds are easy to spot and we'll probably see them either fishing or drying their wings. To hunt for fish they actually saturate their feathers to make them less buoyant, which enable them to swim freely underwater. Afterwards, however, they must spread their drenched wings and wait while the sun and wind restores them to a state of airworthiness! Shags nest in dry overhanging cliffs and generally have very large nests to cater for their fast growing chicks, which although young reach the size of an adult bird within 6 weeks of hatching.



### Sea Birds

You may also see Black Backed Seagulls, Red Bill

Seagulls, Welcome Swallows, Canadian Geese, Paradise Ducks, Mollymauks, White Fronted Terns and occasionally Gannets, Petrels and Albatross.

### Finally...

Why not purchase a small souvenir of your cruise for friends and family at home? In our shop located on the main wharf where you received your boarding passes, we offer a wide variety of gift ideas. Here you can also book other excursions, for example the exceptional opportunity to swim with the Hector's Dolphins or take an exciting guided kayaking tour of the harbour (November to March only).

We also recommend Christchurch Wildlife Cruises.

We thank you for your visit to Akaroa and hope that you will enjoy the rest of your stay in New Zealand. If you have any suggestions or feedback, please do not hesitate to get in touch.



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