

2026 – 2027 SEASON



TRADE MANUAL

WHALE WATCH KAIKOURA



Whale Watch is a multiple award-winning nature tourism company proudly owned and operated by the indigenous Kāti Kuri people of Kaikōura, a Māori sub-tribe of the South Island's larger Ngāi Tahu iwi. Established in 1987, Whale Watch emerged during a period of economic decline in Kaikōura, when Māori communities were facing significant unemployment and hardship. Visionary Kāti Kuri leaders, including the late Bill Solomon, believed the answer lay offshore with the resident sperm whales. Guided by whakapapa and tradition, they drew inspiration from their ancestor Paikea, who journeyed to Aotearoa on the back of the whale Tohorā. It felt only right that Paikea's descendants would once again find a pathway forward through the whale.

That belief proved transformative.

The founders of Whale Watch mortgaged their homes to secure the funding needed to begin. In the earliest days, passengers ventured out to sea aboard a small inflatable vessel. As the business grew, this was replaced by a larger boat with an upper viewing deck, Uruao. Today, Whale Watch operates a fleet of three purpose-built, state-of-the-art catamarans, each designed specifically for whale watching.

This growth also led to the development of an entire marina at South Bay, now the departure point for all Whale Watch tours.

Paikea and Tohorā remain at the spiritual heart of Whale Watch. Together, they symbolise the enduring bond between people and the natural world and reflect the possibilities that emerge when nature is honoured, respected and protected – rather than exploited.

2026 – 2027 SEASON



WHALE WATCH
KAIKOURA - NEW ZEALAND

OUR ORIGINS

Riding the back of the whale

2026 – 2027 SEASON



WHALE WATCH®
KAIKOURA - NEW ZEALAND



1 Railway Station Road, Kaikōura, 7300
South Island, New Zealand

Whale Watch Kaikōura is located 2.5 hours
north of Christchurch and 2 hours south of Picton, on
the spectacular East Coast of the South Island.

Renowned as Aotearoa New Zealand's ultimate marine wildlife experience

2026 – 2027 SEASON



Embark on a whale watching journey like no other. Join us in Kaikōura, and discover our deep cultural connection between tangata whenua and the giants of the sea. Experience for yourself a sacred encounter with unseen wonders.

Key Points:

- Vessels crewed by skilled staff capable of providing an indigenous, scientific and local interpretation making it a totally unique experience
- 95% success rate in sighting whales backed up by an 80% refund if the tour does not sight a whale
- Tours operate all year round along stunning coast environment with amazing mountains as a backdrop

Highlights Include:

- Close encounters with the Giant Sperm Whales
- A typical Whale Watch tour may encounter NZ Fur Seals, pods of Dusky Dolphins and the endangered Wandering Albatross
- Dependent on the season you may also see migrating Humpback Whales, Blue Whales, Pilot Whales and Southern Right Whales, as well as Orca

2026 – 2027 SEASON



WHALE WATCH®
KAIKŌURA • NEW ZEALAND

OUR WAKA

On-board at Whale Watch Kaikōura

Our vessels are purpose-built for whale watching, with the wellbeing of te moana (the ocean) at their core. Our modern catamarans are fitted with low-noise engines that minimise underwater disturbance and onboard systems designed to ensure nothing ever pollutes the sea.

Enclosed passenger cabins open onto generous outdoor decks, offering excellent viewing and photography opportunities. Inside, spacious, air-conditioned interiors provide comfortable seating, while large screens showcase our award-winning marine wildlife animations and 3D animated live tracking system, enhancing our manuhiri's (guests) understanding of the marine environment.

Passenger numbers on each tour are kept well below the vessel's certified capacity to ensure a more personal, relaxed experience for every guest.

Whale Watch Kaikōura Ltd operates to the highest safety standards and fully complies with all requirements set by Maritime New Zealand, the New Zealand Department of Conservation, and the Occupational Safety and Health Authority.



2026 – 2027 SEASON



WHEKETERE & TE AO MARAMA

Total Passenger Capacity: 116pax

Our fleet of catamarans carry a full range of safety equipment. Each vessel holds a current Certificate of Survey and operates a Safe Ship Management Programme. Whale Watch vessels are crewed by experienced teams familiar with local sea conditions and well versed in all safety procedures. All skippers hold appropriate marine qualifications. All crew hold First Aid Certificates. Whale Watch staff constantly monitor the weather and respond professionally to any changes. This may mean a tour is cancelled or safety restrictions placed on children or passengers with medical problems.

Passenger comfort and safety are always our priority. Our vessels incorporate current and new technology to improve visitor experience, such as sickle bow hull design, adjustable hydrofoil system to improve vessel performance and sea keeping capabilities and Naiad Dynamic Active Interceptor Ride Control System to improve sea keeping capabilities by reducing pitch and roll motion.



2026 – 2027 SEASON



OCEANS CABIN

Ocean Cabin Capacity: 104 seats

The Ocean Cabin offers comfortable seating and sheltered views, providing a safe and enjoyable whale watching experience for all manuhiri (guests).

- Bus transfers to and from the marina
- Fully enclosed, air-conditioned space
- There are three large screen displays throughout the cabin that showcase our award-winning marine wildlife animations along with our latest 3D animated live tracking system
- Full use of the lower deck and amphitheatre viewing platform
- Passenger's life jackets are found underneath seats



2026 – 2027 SEASON



CAPTAINS CABIN

Captains Cabin: 12 seats

Enjoy an exclusive whale watching experience in our VIP Captain's Cabin, with premium seating, panoramic views and personalised service for a truly unforgettable journey.

- Exclusive transfers to and from the marina
- Priority embarking and disembarking of the vessel
- Situated in the wheelhouse alongside the skipper and watch-keeper
- Exclusive viewing deck situated on the upper deck
- A dedicated guide for the duration of the tour
- Locally sourced food boxes and non-alcoholic beverages included



2026 – 2027 SEASON



NAUSEA SUPPORT

Providing drug free, immediate relief at no extra charge

See-LEVEL is a patented breakthrough solution that harnesses the power of virtual reality to alleviate seasickness - fast. Developed in New Zealand and tested in Antarctic waters, See LEVEL offers proven relief in minutes.

The headset is easy and intuitive to use. Simply put it on, watch the scene inside and wait for your nausea and symptoms to subside (usually less than 10 minutes). Once you're feeling well again, you're free to remove the headset and enjoy your journey. Should seasickness symptoms recur, simply reapply the headset.

There are 10 headsets available per vessel.

2026 – 2027 SEASON



WHEEL CHAIR ACCESSABLE

Whale Watch Kaikoura has a Gold Trax Seal of Approval, New Zealand's benchmark of adaptive adventure travel & inclusive tourism. The Gold Seal marks Whale Watch Kaikoura as one of the best inclusive tourism companies in New Zealand.

We are willing and able to provide a tailored adaptive experience for different abilities when possible. From wider pathways to a specially built restroom, we have designed our vessels to be better cater for those with limited mobility.



FAQ'S

Do I need to book in advance?

Yes. There is a high demand for most of our trips so we advise that you book your seat 3—4 days ahead of time during peak season (November - April). During the off-peak season we recommend at least 2 days ahead.

If the tour is cancelled, are guests automatically transported to the next tour?

Unfortunately no. When a tour is cancelled, we will do our best to accommodate the guest on another tour — the guest does need to request this.

How long is the tour?

Time spent on the water is just over 2 hours. Including the check-in process, safety briefing and bus transfers you should allow 3 hours 15 minutes in total.

What are your tour times?

Summer months (November — April):
7.45am, 8:30am, 10.30am, 11.15am, 1.15pm,
2pm, 4pm, 4.45pm

Winter months (May — October):
We book the 10.30am tour first and then other tour times when demand dictates. Typically we would run 7.45am, 10.30am and 1.15pm.

These are tour departure times. Guests need to arrive a bit earlier to allow for check-in and the collection of their tickets.

What happens if the sea and/or weather conditions aren't suitable?

Our manuhiri (passengers) safety and comfort are of paramount importance to us. If the conditions are not suitable, we will cancel the tour. Passengers, who are travelling to join us on the day of their tour, are advised to call the free phone number for a conditions update.

2026 – 2027 SEASON



RATES

Ocean Cabin

Adult: \$175.00

Child: \$60.00

Captain Cabin

Adult: \$255.00

Child: \$255.00

Valid until end of September 2027

Whale Watch operates using a performance based commission scale ranging from 5% to 20%. Rates are negotiated directly with the party concerned. Annual passenger targets are set to determine where each partner should be in terms of commission rates. We believe performance should be rewarded — as annual passenger numbers increase, so does commission.

Contracts must be received in writing and we request:

- An understanding of the distribution network that would be used to sell our product
- The provision of a complete company profile

Once we have the above we take into consideration:

- The ability to meet our agreed payment terms
- All operational aspects

- Any pre-existing business relationship and past performance
- The likely volume of expected passengers
- The inclusion of the Whale Watch product in advertising/promotional material
- Any requirements and/or condition for marketing contribution
- Focus on the company's target market

Whale Watch can offer a range of payment options to meet your needs including: Charge back voucher (to approved Inbound Operators in NZ and Australia only), cash or credit card. We are happy to discuss the options with you and tailor, where possible, a system that will suit your requirements.

2026 – 2027 SEASON



TOUR LEADER

The following structure is based on confirmed numbers and also based on the current rack rate.

Number of pax in group for tour leader discount:

- 1—5 (inclu.) = 20%
- 5—10 (inclu.) = 30%
- 11—14 (inclu.) = 50%
- 15+ = 100% + 1 free seat

One FOC for confirmed numbers above 15 pax.

This must be requested at the time the reservation is made.

A tour leader, escort, guide and/or coach driver may book on a *stand-by' basis at any time. During peak season (November — April) we recommend confirmed reservations be made due to high demand.



2026 – 2027 SEASON



EXCLUSIVE CHARTER

Exclusive tour charters are offered all year round, dependent on availability. Charter bookings can only be made directly with Reservations. Unless otherwise agreed to by Whale Watch, charters are only operated on standard tour times. An exclusive tour charter can be for 1—12 manuhiri (guests) in the Captains Cabin and 1—104 in the Ocean Cabin. Standard booking and payment conditions apply. Commission can apply to bookings made through an approved agent. Standard group discounts or any other deals and promotions do not apply for exclusive tour charters.

2026 – 2027 SEASON



CANCELLATION POLICY

If clients present a pre-paid voucher this will either, be transferred to another Whale Watch tour or they will be issued with a Verification of Cancellation Form to return to you for a full refund. Please note that sometimes your clients will not present their voucher at the counter when a tour is cancelled. Should they return to you requesting a refund without the Verification of Cancellation Form, please contact our Customer Service team for verification. Bookings cancelled by passengers within 24 hours of tour departure will be charged the full fare rate unless under extenuating circumstances.

Our guests safety and comfort is always our priority. We constantly monitor sea conditions along the coastline and respond professionally to any changes. This may mean: a cancellation of a tour. Restrictions may also be placed on passengers with medical issues or limited mobility. The child age limit may also be raised.

2026 – 2027 SEASON



DESTINATION KAIKŌURA ACTIVITIES



Dolphin Encounter

Dolphin swimming and watching tours offer the chance to see the Dusky dolphins, Hector's dolphins, Common dolphins and sometimes the Southern Right Whale dolphin.

www.dolphinencounter.co.nz



Albatross Encounter

Kaikōura's best kept secret is its incredible diversity of pelagic birds. Come along on a tour with us to study the Albatross's in Kaikōura. Kaikōura is the Albatross capital of the world, with up to 14 different species visiting the area throughout the year.

www.albatrossencounter.co.nz



Kaikōura Kayaks

Come and join us on a kayak tour here in Kaikōura, where the marine life outnumber the people and the mountains meet the sea. You'll witness some spectacular views and get the chance to see all sorts of marine life.

www.kaikourakayaks.nz

2026 – 2027 SEASON



DESTINATION KAIKŌURA ACTIVITIES



Whale Watching by Helicopter

Kaikōura whale watching, scenic tours and indulgent experiences by air — offering unique access to this incredible region.

www.gchaviation.com

www.southpacifichelicopters.co.nz



Glenstrae Farm 4 Wheel Adventures

Unforgettable guided off-road tours through native bush, with magnificent views of the Kaikōura coast.

www.4wheeladventures.co.nz



Seal Kayak Kaikōura

Pedal or paddle your way to Kaikōura's playful fur seals with a 100% sighting success. Discover Kaikōura's marine magic on the only pedal-powered kayak tours.

www.sealkayakkaikoura.com

2026 – 2027 SEASON



DESTINATION KAIKŌURA ACTIVITIES



Whale Watching by Plane

There is the opportunity to view Sperm whales and the Kaikōura coast by fixed-wing plane.

www.airkaikoura.co.nz

www.whales.co.nz



Kaikōura Museum

Our award winning Museum offers a modern and relaxed environment with a contemporary and fun approach to telling the stories of Kaikōura's natural, social and cultural history.

www.kaikoura-museum.co.nz



Eco Zip Kaikōura

New Zealand's best native forest and zipline experience.

www.ecozipadventures.co.nz

2026 – 2027 SEASON



DESTINATION KAIKŌURA ACTIVITIES



Clarence River Rafting

Clarence River Rafting offers a journey from the mountains to the sea, following nature's own highway, the Clarence River.

www.clarencerriverrafting.co.nz



Seal Swim Kaikōura

Join Seal Swim for a totally unique experience — seal swimming with Kekenos (New Zealand Fur Seals) in their own spectacular marine environment.

www.sealswimkaikoura.co.nz



Mt Lyford Ski Area

Lyford Ski Area offers a perfect family-friendly ski experience. With beautiful scenery and exciting activities, your winter getaway will be unforgettable. Enjoy everything from skiing to snow tubing.

www.mtlyford.co.nz

2026 – 2027 SEASON



DESTINATION KAIKŌURA ACTIVITIES



Moana Skies

The premier stargazing experience in New Zealand's largest dark sky sanctuary. With minimal light pollution, clear air and a spectacular ocean-to-mountain horizon, this region offers unparalleled views of the cosmos.

www.moanaskies.co.nz



Fishing Charters

Renowned for the abundance of marine life, jump aboard a fishing charter to pull crayfish pots and cast a line.

www.topcatchcharters.co.nz



Kaikōura Sauna Project

Nestled between the mountains and the sea, the wood-fired sauna offers a truly unique way to unwind while soaking in breathtaking coastal views. Warm up after an ocean dip, ease sore muscles or simply take a moment to reconnect with nature.

www.thesaunaproject.co.nz/kaikoura

2026 – 2027 SEASON



WHALE WATCH®
KAIKOURA - NEW ZEALAND

DESTINATION KAIKŌURA STAYS



The Fairways Apartments

Luxury accommodation nestled amongst Kaikōura's masterfully sculpted coastline, looking out to spectacular mountain peaks. Beautifully styled to reflect the bold natural environment.

www.thefairways.co.nz



Hapuku Lodge + Tree Houses

A contemporary country hotel providing luxurious accommodation on Kaikoura's rugged coastline. A place for guests to relax in its intimate indoor/outdoor setting.

www.hapukulodge.com



Kaikōura Sudima Hotel

Brand new Sudima Kaikōura is located on the shoreline with stunning sea and mountain views. This stylish Hotel features well appointed rooms, restaurant and bar, gym, pool and conference room for up to 180 people.

www.sudimahotels.com/en/hotels/kaikoura

2026 – 2027 SEASON



WHALE WATCH®
KAIKOURA - NEW ZEALAND

DESTINATION KAIKŌURA STAYS



Top 10 Holiday Park

Relax in park-like settings with mountain vistas at the award-winning Top 10 Holiday Park. The central location makes it the perfect base whilst exploring Kaikōura.

www.top10.co.nz



Clifftop Cabins

A unique accommodation experience, these three cabins are nestled on the cliff's edge with unparalleled panoramic views over the ocean.

www.clifftopcabins.co.nz



Pure Pods Kaikōura

An intensely personal deep immersion into Pure New Zealand. Private, secret pockets of amazing beauty filled with unique plants, birds and animals. To stay in a PurePod is to totally engage all five senses.

www.purepods.com

DESTINATION KAIKŌURA EATS



Zephyr

A modern contemporary restaurant featuring fresh, locally sourced, French inspired cuisine.
www.zephyrrestaurant.co.nz



Hiku

The name 'Hiku' comes from the Māori word 'whale tail' and is inspired by Kaikōura's most iconic attraction. Serving kai moana, fresh produce and dramatic sea and mountain scapes.
www.hiku.co.nz



Hapuku Kitchen

Hapuku Kitchen is focused on reconnecting the kitchen to the land and sea. Offering a hands-on, farm-to-table cooking experiences, private cooking classes or seasonally evening feasts the their Supper Club's.
www.hapukukitchen.co.nz

DESTINATION KAIKŌURA EATS



The Pier

Rated one of the best seafood restaurants in the region, The Pier is also proud to offer an extensive wine list featuring local wines of distinction.

www.thepierhotel.co.nz



Karaka Lobster

A uniquely equipped restaurant dedicated to serving customers with delicious seafood lunch, baked treats and beverages.

www.karakalobster.com



The Whaler

The tapas and mains menu is designed with sharing in mind presenting an interesting range of flavours and produce.

www.thewhaler.co.nz

DESTINATION KAIKŌURA EATS



Nin's Bin

20 minutes north of Kaikōura you will find the iconic Nin's Bin - a favourite stop for kiwis heading up the coast for generations. The menu is simple — locally-sourced wild crayfish and mussels.

www.ninsbin.co.nz



Donegal House

Irish bar and restaurant serving delicious, hearty food with good company whilst having a laugh over a pint.

www.donegalhouse.co.nz



Middlehurst Farm Store

Embodying the essence of community, Middlehurst Farm Store provides a warm and inviting space to discover a delightful blend of homegrown meat alongside an array of fresh local produce and a thoughtfully curated selection of home goods.

www.middlehurst.co.nz

2026 – 2027 SEASON



DESTINATION KAIKŌURA EATS



Kaikōura Seafood BBQ

A truly authentic Kaikōura experience. One of the most affordable places in town for getting your hands on world-famous crayfish.

www.thekaikouraseafoodbbq.com



The Beach House

A character filled house comes to life on the Main Road in Kaikōura. Boasting C4 Coffee, best of Aotearoa's brews, and offering a twist on many of the classics both in cabinet and on menu.

www.beachhousecafe.co.nz



Bernie's Diner

An American style diner with retro style furniture and music and serving up freshly made donuts and specialty milk shakes.

www.berniesdiner.co.nz



2026 – 2027 SEASON

WHALE WATCH®
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BOOKING ENQUIRIES

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+64 03 319 6767

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2026 – 2027 SEASON



WHALE WATCH
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Conservation – Kaitiakitanga Community – Iwi Whanui Company – Tino Rangatiratanga
 Culture – Whakapapa Customer – Manaakitanga



2026 - 2027 SEASON



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www.whalewatch.co.nz

