

Trip Dossier

15 Day New Zealand South Island Wildlife & Wilderness Expedition



Accommodated Small Group Tour - Max 12 Passengers

Queenstown to Queenstown

24th February - 10th March 2023

Itinerary Highlights:

- Kawarau Gorge, Lake Dunstan - home to many species of waterbird.
- Lake Ohau - explore the Hopkins River.
- Aoraki Mt Cook National Park - spectacular views of New Zealand's highest mountain with Lake Pukaki in the forefront. Visit Tasman glacier lake.
- Hooker Valley - walk to the terminal lake of the Hooker Glacier.
- Otago Peninsula - Royal Albatross nesting site and home to fur seals.
- Orokonui Eco Sanctuary - the largest predator-free forest on the South Island.
- Catlins Coast - little visited coastal area with a variety of seals and sea lions, unspoiled temperate rainforest and waterfalls.
- Stewart Island - cruise for pelagic birds, including several species of Albatross, Cape Petrels, Shearwaters and Prions.
- Ulva Island - a bird sanctuary with unspoilt New Zealand bush.
- Mt Aspiring National Park, Matukituki River Valley.
- Mou Wahou - a pristine island cleared of predators. Take a short walk up to the summit for spectacular views.

Most New Zealand tours only visit the popular highlights, while we take you further to remote areas away from the crowds.

You will see spectacular high peaks, massive glaciers, glacial lakes with floating icebergs and wild alpine plants on the valley floor at Mt Cook National Park.

We visit the pristine Nothofagus beech forests of the Ohau and Mt Aspiring regions, home to many of New Zealand's native birds, such as the Tomtit, Bellbird, Rifleman, South Island Robin and Tui. Your naturalist guide knows the best places to search for endangered birds such as the Yellowhead, Black Stilt, Wrybill and New Zealand Falcon.

On the Otago coast, we will look for NZ fur seals and endangered Hooker's Sea Lions that have returned here to breed. The Catlins coast is captivating and comprises the last stands of the east coast temperate rainforest, home to many bird species. On past tours in Stewart Island, NZ's newest national park, we have seen endangered birds such as Kaka, Saddleback, Yellowhead and Red-Crowned Parakeet.

We finish the tour with three nights in Wanaka, where we will take a private boat cruise to the remote and pristine Mou Waho Island. A guided walk to the top of the island exposes a hidden lake on the summit, the perfect spot for an unforgettable view of the surrounding wilderness.

Your guide, Martin Curtis, is a well known New Zealand wildlife enthusiast, adventurer, mountaineer guide and folk singer. Martin lives in this part of the South Island and knows its natural history better than most. He loves sharing his "back yard" with our guests.



boasts the last unspoiled temperate rainforest on the east coast of the South Island. Here we undertake a number of bush walks through the forest.

Accommodation: Balclutha BLD

Day 8 Fri 3 Mar Balclutha - Catlins Coast - Balclutha

Today we continue our exploration of this region. Starting with an early morning visit to a bird hide to witness the Yellow-Eyed Penguins heading out sea. Following this, we spend more time in the forest and visit the MacLean Falls, which at 22 metres are perhaps the best falls in the Southland region.

Accommodation: Balclutha BLD

Day 9 Sat 4 Mar Balclutha to Stewart Island

We continue around this rarely visited coastal area before eventually reaching the southern city of Invercargill and the small port of Bluff. Here we park the bus for three days and board the evening ferry across the Foveaux Strait to Stewart Island. On the way we hope to see albatrosses, petrels and shearwaters that roam the Southern Ocean. We will stay at the island's only pub, the basic but iconic South Sea Hotel on the shores of Halfmoon Bay.

Accommodation: South Sea Hotel BLD

Day 10 Sun 5 Mar Stewart Island

Today we take a boat trip to see pelagic birds with a local wildlife expert. We'll sail out to a group of islands to see many birds that traverse the Southern Ocean, including several species of albatross, Cape Petrels, shearwaters and prions. For the other half of the day, you may choose to take an enjoyable two-hour walk along the coastline and through the native bush. (NOTE: The two days on Stewart Island may be switched around depending on weather conditions and the availability of the pelagic boat trip).

Accommodation: South Sea Hotel BLD

Day 11 Mon 6 Mar Stewart Island

A short trip this morning by water taxi will take us to Ulva Island, a bird sanctuary in the middle of Patersons Inlet. We will see the New Zealand bush as it was before humans arrived - full of native birds so tame that they will hop onto your boots and pack. We should see endangered species such as the Kaka, Saddleback, Weka, Mohua (Yellowhead) and perhaps even a Kiwi.

Accommodation: South Sea Hotel BLD

Day 12 Tue 7 Mar Stewart Island to Wanaka

After an early breakfast, we board the ferry back to Bluff, collect the bus, and drive three hours towards Queenstown. We can visit several places of interest around the area, including Lake Hayes, where there is a large population of ducks, grebes and swans. Another option is the old gold-mining town of Arrowtown, which dates back to the 1860s. Finally, we have a one hour drive over the spectacular Crown Range (NZ's highest public road) to the beautiful alpine town of Wanaka, situated on the shores of the pristine Lake Wanaka.

Accommodation: Lake Wanaka Hotel BLD

Day 13 Wed 8 Mar Mt Aspiring National Park

The world heritage listed Aspiring National Park is regarded as the most pristine and untouched national park in New Zealand. We drive up to the spectacular Matukituki River Valley in the national park to enjoy the natural scenery and sense of wilderness. We then continue to the roads end at Raspberry Creek while exploring the area along the way. We should get back to Wanaka in the late afternoon.

Accommodation: Lake Wanaka Hotel BLD

Day 14 Thu 9 Mar Lake Wanaka

We have several options for the morning in this lovely lake-side town, including a visit to the outlet where the lake becomes the Clutha River, NZ's most significant river by volume. After lunch, we will take a boat trip with a local eco-guide up the lake to the unique island of Mou Wahou. The island has been cleared of predators and was extensively replanted with native bush, encouraging the return of its birdlife and natural fauna, including the cheeky Buff Weka, who will be waiting for us at the landing stage. We'll take a short walk up to the island's summit to a small lake and magnificent views of the surrounding mountains.

Accommodation: Lake Wanaka Hotel BLD

Day 15 Fri 10 Mar Wanaka to Queenstown

Your New Zealand wildlife and wilderness experiences come to an end this morning. Your group transfer to Queenstown Airport will depart from the hotel after check out at around 10.00 am. It is about a one and a half hour drive to the airport and we will arrive at approximately 11.30 am. B

Although this is not a walking tour, some walking is necessary to get to the places where the flora and fauna are at their best.

This itinerary is subject to change due to weather or sea conditions.



Tour Costs

Cost:	TBA	Per Person Twin Share
	TBA	Single Supplement (only a limited number of single rooms available)
Departs:	Queenstown	24 February 2023
Finishes:	Queenstown	10 March 2023

Tour Payments

Deposit:	At time of booking \$1,000.00 per person
Final Payment:	On or before 24 January 2023

Note: The \$1,000.00 deposit is non refundable and the final payment is non-refundable after the 24 January 2023.

Travel insurance covering all payments is **VERY** strongly recommended.

Prices are based on all known costs and current rates of exchange. Any significant changes beyond our control will be passed on to passengers.

Included

- Coates tour leader/driver;
- Specialist wildlife/botanical guide;
- Land content as set out in the itinerary;
- Accommodation and breakfast, lunch and dinner as shown in the itinerary;
- All national park entrance fees;
- Entrance fee for the Royal Albatross nesting site at Taiaroa Head;
- Ferry (Stewart Island);
- Entrance fee for Orokonui Eco-sanctuary;
- Stewart Island Pelagic Bird Cruise.

Not Included

- Return airfares, airline and airport taxes from home port to New Zealand;
- Airport transfer on arrival in Queenstown;
- Travel insurance (strongly recommended);
- All other private expenses;
- Alcoholic or carbonated drinks;
- Pre and post tour accommodation.

Tour Information

New Zealand Naturalist Guide: Martin Curtis
Coates Leader/ Driver Guide: TBD

Flights:

The tour starts and ends in Queenstown. The airfare is not included in the tour price. You can book your flights online, or your travel agent will be able to arrange this for you.

Please make sure that you are in Queenstown on or before 24 February in time to meet your guides and fellow passengers at 7.00 pm for dinner.

When you book your departure flight from Queenstown on the 10 March, please allow enough time to travel from Wanaka, which is about one and a half hours. The group transfer to Queenstown Airport will depart from the hotel after check out at around 10.00 am and should arrive at the airport at approximately 11.30 am.

Once you have made your bookings, please send us a copy of your flight itinerary.

Pre & post Tour Accommodation:

The tour includes your accommodation in Queenstown on 24 February. Please contact us if you would like to spend extra days either before or after the tour.

Passport:

Australian residents will require a valid passport with at least three-month validity.

If you do not hold an Australian Passport, please contact the office to advise your requirements.

Travel Insurance:

I **very strongly recommend** that travel insurance be taken out to cover the entire time that you will be travelling.

Vehicles:

Coaster bus and ferry.

Accommodation:

Hotels and lodges. We chose our properties for their location, quality and either their historical or general interest features. Accommodation is on a twin share basis. Single rooms are usually available at all the properties.

Meals:

All meals as shown on the itinerary are included (B = breakfast, L = lunch and D = dinner). We can cater for special dietary requirements with prior notice. Please contact the office if you have special dietary needs as a surcharge may apply. Note: trail mix or any other snacks required during the walks are at passengers own expense.

Trek Grading:

Moderate with some steep inclines and many steps in some places.

N/B All walks are optional.

Weather:

Summer in New Zealand is from December to February, and average temperatures on the South Island range from 10 - 22 degrees Celsius. The weather can change unexpectedly as cold fronts blow in, so be prepared for sudden changes in climate and temperatures. There is also the risk of rain.

Clothing:

A suggested list of items to pack will be included in your pre-departure information which is sent to you about one month before departure. However, we recommend that you pack comfortable casual clothing. Sturdy and comfortable enclosed walking shoes are essential.

For detailed Terms and Conditions please visit the FAQ page on our website.

To make a booking or further information please contact:

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