

Our Tours

Whale Shark Adventure

April to early July

Silver medallists 2009 Western Australian Tourism Awards

Join the award winning team at Three Islands Marine Charters as we take you on a snorkelling experience like no other, swimming alongside a whale shark on a day of adventure and discovery on Ningaloo Reef. From the moment you are welcomed aboard the 17 metre "Draw Card" you'll feel the warm and friendly environment which, coupled with personal service, sets the company apart from others. The Three Islands guiding staff, with natural science degrees, are absolutely passionate about their jobs and love to share their intimate knowledge of whale sharks and the marine environment with guests. Guests are safe in the hands of Richard, the skipper, and his offside Nos, who both have over 30 years of marine experience and operate the vessel with precision to ensure your safety.

From courtesy pick-up to drop-off the tour includes everything – delicious meals, high quality snorkel gear and wetsuits, support from friendly, qualified staff, spotter planes to locate whale sharks with up to 6 hours flying time and, importantly, a safety support vessel if required by swimmers.

In line with our Eco-certification we share our spotter plane/s with other operators to reduce our carbon footprint on the environment. By booking your tour with us you can be assured that your impact on the environment is as minimal as possible.

An added bonus for tour participants is a free one hour internet session at Three Islands' internet cafe.

A maximum of 20 guests can participate in the tour with ten snorkellers in the water at a time with a whale shark. All guests are welcome to participate in Ecocean's photo ID program by submitting "their" whale shark to the Ecocean whale shark library for identification. Interpretive material on whale sharks is readily available for guests to learn more about whale sharks and the knowledgeable staff, who have all participated in the Department of Environment and Conservation Whale Shark Interaction Course, are more than happy to share information and answer questions on whale sharks and the marine environment.

Your safety is our priority so we feel it is essential to have a safety zodiac on standby at all times when guests are in the water. A qualified staff member is always on watch in the safety tender, ready to help any swimmers who require assistance. Buoyancy vests, noodles, and lifejackets are available for those who like a little extra security.

A videographer is on board to film the day and create a DVD for purchase (\$50) as a lasting memento of your whale shark experience.

Non-swimming observers are also welcome aboard the modern, comfortable 17 metre vessel with its large shade deck area, perfect for aquatic activities. Observers are welcome to participate in the reef snorkels at no extra cost and upgrades to the whale shark swim can be made on board.

If you're only going to do it once, then do it with the best

Your day:

Passengers may swim with one, two or more whale sharks on any day and could also see dolphins, turtles, manta rays, whales and even dugongs while on the boat.

The day starts at 7.15am when the Three Islands' air conditioned courtesy bus picks up guests from their Exmouth accommodation and along the 36 kilometre journey to the departure point at Tatabiddi. On the drive to Tatabiddi guests are given a description of the day's activities by Andy, the company videographer. The tour takes place on Ningaloo Reef within 3 nautical miles of the coast.

Once on board the vessel, wetsuits and snorkel gear are fitted then passengers are briefed, ready for their introductory snorkel on Ningaloo Reef – a turtle may swim past, there's usually a ray resting in the sand, a myriad of colourful fish amongst the coral. Following morning tea and the whale shark briefing during which whale shark interaction protocol is explained, the vessel moves to the outside of the reef to wait for the plane to spot a whale shark. Once the whale shark is found, the boat moves into position and drops a group of up to ten swimmers into the water with their guide, 30 metres in front of the whale shark. Marvel at this giant of the ocean as it glides along with a gentle flick of its tail while you snorkel alongside. Groups are rotated through the water to snorkel alongside, always with the company safety zodiac following along behind in case anyone requires assistance.

You may have the opportunity to swim with manta rays if spotted (from late May). A delicious lunch is served buffet style and if time permits, another reef snorkel follows.

A fruit platter finishes off the day then back to the moorings and beach for the journey back to accommodation.

This family owned and operated company is staffed by a passionate, professional and interactive team which is dedicated to ensuring this unique marine wildlife encounter on Ningaloo Reef is extremely enjoyable and totally memorable from beginning to end.

No sighting policy:

In the rare event that a whale shark is not sighted on your tour, one free repeat tour is offered on the next available day. A non-transferable repeat tour voucher, valid for the current and following two seasons, can be issued to those passengers unable to repeat the tour. As we are dealing with unpredictable wild animals we regret there can be no refunds for no sightings.