



Swim with Whale Sharks, April to July

Photo thanks - James Morgan

Whale Sharks (*Rhincodon typus*) are slow-moving filter feeding sharks and the largest extant fish species, reaching a length of 12.65 mtrs (41.5 ft). The whale sharks cruise the world's oceans in search of concentrations of plankton to feed on; the Ningaloo Reef is one of the only places on the planet where they appear regularly in large numbers. Very little is known about the biology of these creatures, so research is ongoing.

The Whale Shark season at Ningaloo runs from April through July each year. Boats depart from Tantabiddi Boat Ramp, a 30 minute drive from Sal Salis.

Once on board you will be kitted out with wetsuit & snorkel gear. A spotter plane will already be in the air, searching for whale sharks as they feed. Morning tea and later a delicious lunch is served. There may be time for a snorkel at different sites along the Reef. Throughout the day, the crew will be searching for turtles, rays, dolphins, dugongs and sea birds.

Field work, contributing to vital scientific research programs in the World Heritage listed Ningaloo Marine Park, is conducted on each cruise. You can get involved with data collection and there will be presentations regarding biology and habitat of the Whale Sharks and other marine life.

The whale shark will be continually moving so swimming is required during interaction; you will need to be a confident swimmer, able to snorkel and able to swim freestyle. The whale sharks are found in the open ocean so you may be swimming in current and swell.

Government regulations allow a maximum of 60 minutes swimming with one shark. The duration of each swim is completely determined by the whale shark. If the whale shark "dives" we send the spotter plane up to search for another shark. A maximum of 10 people can be in the water with a whale shark.

RESERVATIONS

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You may be lucky enough to swim with more than one whale shark during the course of the day, however you should set your own pace and may choose not to swim each time. If you are not comfortable doing the swim you can participate as an 'observer'.

The minimum age for a child is 10 years old, however we can consider younger children if the parents are confident with their ability to snorkel in the open ocean. Parents are responsible for their children at all times both on the boat and in the water. Children can participate as an 'observer' however one parent must accompany the children on-board the boat at all times.

You will need to bring:

- ◆ Towel from Sal Salis (this is provided by the lodge on your arrival day)
- ◆ A few additional layers for use on board as it can get cold in between swims
- ◆ Hat, sunglasses and other personal items you may wish to use
- ◆ GoPro and underwater cameras may be used however poles are not allowed.



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