



Lynette's 'Hoiho' Wildlife trip

Guide's Choice winner 2006

**Hump Ridge Track Guided Walk • Cruise Doubtful Sound
Visit Dunedin – home to some of New Zealand's rarest wildlife!
Swim with dolphins • Whale watch in Kaikoura • Penguins in the Catlins
Hike Peel Forest, Kaikoura Peninsula, Aoraki/Mt. Cook National Park
Hike Castle Hill Basin • Visit Kiwi sanctuary**

14 days: Christchurch – Queenstown

Fare: US\$3999 + tax

Our guides often have great ideas for new activities and destinations for our trips, so in 2006 we created an annual competition giving guides the chance to design their own trip. The inaugural winner was **Lynette Warmington**, and her 'Hoiho' Wildlife trip was rated one of the top 25 new trips in the world by *National Geographic Adventure* magazine. As the flagship for Guide's Choice, in its first season, Lynette's trip was filled not once but twice, and we were thrilled by the positive responses from people who took the trip. We're now offering a limited number of departures of Lynette's itinerary in the 2009/2010 season. Though Lynette probably won't be guiding them herself – she's busy working behind the scenes and being mum to two-and-a-half-year-old Sara – the trip is still an amazing chance to see New Zealand through the eyes of one of our most experienced guides. You'll love the amazing experiences and secret spots on the rugged southern reaches of the South Island and your guides will make sure you have an unforgettable adventure.

This trip has a big wildlife focus – dolphins, seals, penguins, kiwi, kea, whales, albatross, sea lions – just a few of the many amazing creatures you can see on this trip. It's a great option for keen wildlife photographers, and those that enjoy seeing creatures in their natural environment. It's not all about watching though – you'll also hike in some of the South Island's most scenic areas, including the very remote and ruggedly beautiful Hump Ridge Track on the south coast with immense views over to Stewart Island. You'll sea kayak Doubtful Sound, swim with inquisitive dolphins, hike Aoraki/Mt Cook National Park on the trail of Sir Edmond Hillary's first summit, visit a locally-owned Kiwi Sanctuary and much more. Here's what Lynette says about her dream trip...

"My passions are tramping [that's the Kiwi term for backpacking] around New Zealand's wild and hard-to-reach places, and hanging out with unusually cool creatures – like penguins and dolphins – in their natural habitat. Having guided with ACTIVE NEW ZEALAND for the past six years, I've always had it in mind to design a trip that caters to both of these passions. So being able to combine three days of trekking the Hump Ridge Track, with some quality time in the Catlins where Little Blue and Yellow-eyed Penguins hang out, along with swimming with dolphins and checking out whales in Kaikoura makes this my ideal adventure!

Cheers! Lynette"

The Guide's Choice trips are a great option as a returner's trip if you've travelled with us before or if you've never been here and want to see a different side of New Zealand, away from the usual tourist trails and into the areas where real New Zealanders go when they're looking for an active adventure!

Monday

Arrive, whale watch in Kaikoura

Most people leave the Northern Hemisphere on a Saturday evening, arriving in Auckland early Monday morning. You'll lose a day crossing the dateline – but you get it back on the way home! You'll immediately take a short flight to Christchurch, in the South Island arriving by around 10am. We'll meet you there and travel up the coast to the seaside town of Kaikoura, where we'll board a modern catamaran and head out to the waters surrounding the Kaikoura coastline – a region commonly referred to as the "Serengeti of the South Pacific" owing to the amazing variety of whales, dolphins, and fur seals that feed in the krill-rich waters. Giant Sperm Whales are the stars of the show and year-round residents. We may also encounter New Zealand fur seals, pods of Dusky dolphins and the endangered Wandering

albatross. Kaikoura attracts the largest concentration and variety of seabirds on mainland New Zealand including 13 species of albatross, 14 varieties of petrel and seven types of shearwater. Today's cruise makes for a relaxed introduction to New Zealand, giving you a chance to recover from your flight. Depending on where you're coming from you'll probably find jetlag is no big deal. For instance, it's a 12-hour direct overnight flight from the West Coast of the USA to Auckland and there's only a 3-hour time difference between New Zealand and US Pacific time. If you're coming from further afield, you'll appreciate the gentle start to your New Zealand adventure.

ACCOMMODATION: *Panorama Motel, Kaikoura – with amazing views of the Pacific Ocean from your room* (L,D)

Tuesday

Swim with Dusky dolphins, hike limestone coastline

An early start this morning means we can greet the day with a pre-breakfast get together with some of Kaikoura's more famous local personalities – playful Dusky dolphins! With mask, snorkel and fins we'll have the opportunity to enter their world and swim among them. Or if you prefer, you can stay on the boat and marvel at their acrobatic displays from the deck. After a leisurely breakfast back at our accommodation you can take a stroll along the beach into town to explore this sleepy seaside settlement. In the afternoon we'll hike along Kaikoura Peninsula's limestone cliffs. There are great views of the Pacific Ocean and Southern Alps from here, and you'll likely see New Zealand fur seals cavorting in the waves along the rocky coastline and sea birds soaring above the cliff tops.

ACCOMMODATION: *Panorama Motel, Kaikoura* (B,L,D)

Wednesday

Hike Hanmer Springs Forest

After breakfast, we'll head inland on a scenic road past Mt. Lyford to the mountain village of Hanmer Springs, which is nestled right at the base of the mountains. It's a well-known spot for hiking and biking as well as its thermal hot springs. We'll head off into the hills for some hiking to get spectacular views back out to the coast. Hiking is optional today so, if you prefer, you can explore the small shops, bakery, golf course and walking tracks of Hanmer township. This evening you can soak, relax and take in the view of the snow-capped mountains and thick forests of the Southern Alps. The mineral spas at Hanmer Springs are great for a relaxing soak after hiking in the hills and, if you want a little bit of extra pampering, you can arrange a massage after your soak!

ACCOMMODATION: *Greenacres Motel, Hanmer Springs* (B,L,D)

Thursday

Hike Peel Forest, star-gaze in Aoraki/Mt. Cook National Park

From Hanmer Springs, we'll travel south to Peel Forest for a short hike through ancient podocarp forest, dense with over sixty different varieties of ferns. The fern is a national symbol of New Zealand, worn by our famous rugby team – the All Blacks. After lunch, we'll travel inland towards Aoraki/Mt. Cook, New Zealand's highest mountain. We stay near the shore of Lake Pukaki, a lake coloured an unworldly turquoise-blue by glacial sediment. It's the middle of nowhere out here! The wide open spaces, regular clear evenings and lack of artificial light gives us the perfect opportunity to check out some of the Southern Hemisphere's most well-known constellations, including the Southern Cross, the Coal Sack, and views of the Milky Way like you've never seen before.

ACCOMMODATION: *Mt. Cook lodgings, Aoraki/Mt. Cook* (B,L,D)

Friday

Hike near Aoraki/Mt. Cook

Aoraki/Mt. Cook is the highest mountain in New Zealand, and we have a stunning and little-known day hike (weather permitting) to the main ridge above Mueller Glacier, which is one of Lynette's favourite hikes from the *Rimu* trip. It's a tough slog up, but you'll remember the view of the Mueller Glacier and the surrounding peaks of the Main Divide forever! This area has a unique alpine environment, and includes endemic flora such as *Ranunculus lyallii* – the world's largest buttercup, more commonly known as the Mt. Cook Lily. There are also other hiking options if you'd like to take it a little easier. The weather conditions are very important in this area, as it's a true alpine climate notorious for sudden weather shifts. If we aren't able to do the Mueller hike, we'll take an impressive hike up the Hooker Valley to a glacial lake at the base of Hooker Glacier, complete with icebergs! Then we head back to our accommodation for dinner and a cold drink as we sit outside and watch the sun set on the Southern Alps.

A unique option today is to sea-kayak on Mueller's glacial lake! Upon arrival in the Mt. Cook Village, you'll be matched with a modern sea kayak and all the necessary safety equipment for paddling. You don't need any experience to do this option, but if you are an experienced sea kayaker, you won't be bored. After a thorough safety briefing, you'll head out with your guide for a paddle through glacial bays and around icebergs. From a safe distance in the water, you can watch avalanches as they thunder off the glaciers of Mt. Sefton! The views of New Zealand's highest peaks are incredible. You'll then park up on Mueller Glacier itself for a stroll up to an area dotted with fresh water springs and plunge pools for the daring! This is truly a unique trip. (Sea kayak option approximately US\$80 + tax per person; this option is available from mid October to late March)

ACCOMMODATION: Mt. Cook lodging, Aoraki/Mt.Cook

(B,L,D)

Saturday

Visit Moeraki boulders, hike overlooking Dunedin

After breakfast we'll follow the Waitaki River to the East Coast on a stunning drive alongside glacial melt-waters, lakes, and limestone country. When we reach the coast, we'll then head south to Dunedin, stopping along the way at the Moeraki Boulders. These large geological spheres have eroded from the nearby sea cliffs, forming a bizarre and alien-like landscape. Your guides will tell you more about the Maori legend surrounding this mysterious geological phenomenon.

After lunch we'll continue on to Dunedin and hike up Mt. Cargill for 360° views of Dunedin city, Otago Harbour and a scattering of extinct volcanoes along the coast. This city is like a wee piece of Scotland in the South Pacific – it has a rightly deserved reputation as one of the best-preserved Victorian and Edwardian cities in the Southern Hemisphere. Along with beautiful architecture, you'll find all the comforts of civilisation here: massage therapists, restaurants, sidewalk cafés, window-shopping, and some great art galleries and theatres! You'll also find plenty of optional activities, such as a wildlife tour to Otago Peninsula to see the only mainland breeding colony of Northern Royal Albatrosses in the world, a visit to the historic Larnach Castle, or a trip to a colony of rare Yellow-eyed penguins – it's all here! There are also incredible windswept beaches to walk along, and numerous tracks through the native forest surrounding the city. Or you can do nothing if you prefer to just soak up the atmosphere.

ACCOMMODATION: Central Dunedin accommodations, Dunedin

(B,L)

Sunday

Free day in Dunedin

It's all up to you today – enjoy!

ACCOMMODATION: Central Dunedin accommodations, Dunedin

(B)

Monday

Explore Catlins coastline, view rare wildlife

Today we head down towards the South Island's most southern point. The Catlins region is a haven for rare wildlife. Hooker's sea lion, the rarest in the world, can be found here, along with Yellow-eyed penguins, New Zealand fur seals, Hector's dolphins, and even the occasional Elephant seal visiting from the sub-Antarctic islands south of New Zealand. We'll explore several of the stunning bays and points in this area, including Nugget Point (featuring a historic lighthouse), Cannibal Bay, Purakaunui Scenic Reserve, and Curio Bay (home to a fossilised forest from the Jurassic period). Later in the day, we'll continue onto our lodgings in Tuatapere, a small Southland country village. Before dinner, we'll also have a pre-departure briefing for the Hump Ridge Track Guided Walk.

ACCOMMODATION: Waiou Hotel, Tuatapere

(B,L,D)

Hump Ridge Guided Walk (Tuesday - Thursday)

The 3-day/2-night Hump Ridge Track in the southwest corner of New Zealand is the country's newest guided walk featuring a unique combination of bush, beach, alpine scenery and awesome viaducts. You'll stay in the two new spacious backcountry mountain lodges established along the 27 miles (43km) of track, and enjoy three days of exercise, good food and great scenery. With commanding views of the south coast, Lake Poteriteri, Lake Hauroko (New Zealand's deepest lake) and many mountain ranges in Fiordland National Park, you'll see why the Hump Ridge Track is becoming well known among New Zealanders as one of the 'must-do' tracks of the South Island. Because you are doing the Guided Walk, you don't have to carry a heavy pack. In fact, you'll just be carrying clothes for the day and a packed lunch, so your pack won't be much heavier than what you would bring on a regular day hike. The majority of your gear is taken by helicopter from hut to hut. Everything on the track is provided, including

excellent meals at the lodges and on the trail, hot showers, and everything else you need to make the Hump Ridge Track an unforgettable experience. Rooming is in 4- to 6-bed dorm rooms with all linen provided and shared bathroom facilities.

Tuesday

Hike to Okaka Hut

After an early breakfast at the Waiau Hotel, we'll start our journey along the deserted Bluecliffs beach. At Flat Creek we head inland and start the steady climb up Hump Ridge through the dense Waitutu Forest. Dr. David Bellamy described the Waitutu forest as "probably the most important forest in the world". As the views open up you'll see surreal sandstone towers peering down on a series of raised marine coastal terraces and views back towards Te Waewae Bay where we began the day. This ancient terraced forest rises out of the sea with each terrace 100,000 years older than the last. The thick vegetation eventually gives way to sub-alpine tussock grasses as we continue on towards Okaka Hut, our back country accommodations for the night. For the extra keen, a short loop track from Okaka Hut will lead you to views across Lake Poteriteri to the rugged mountain ranges in Fiordland.

ACCOMMODATION: Okaka Hut, Hump Ridge Track

(B,L,D)

Lynette: "After hiking along the coast, you turn and head inland for the uphill section – it's a tough slog, but the views in all directions from the top are worth the climb! I also recommend the hour-long loop section around tors and tarns of Southern Fiordland – it's wild!"

Wednesday

Hike to Port Craig Hut

As Kaka parrots chatter above us in the trees and the morning mist clears, we begin the day by traversing the Fiordland side of Hump Ridge towards the south coast. We'll soon be passing Luncheon Rock, where spectacular views of the Southern Ocean and surrounding forest are laid out in front of us. On a clear day, those with keen eyes might be able to make out Solander Island, an isolated volcanic pillar sticking out of the ocean, and beyond to Stewart Island. At midday we reach an old logging track and arrive at the 410-foot Percy Burn viaduct, the largest wooden viaduct in the world. The Percy Burn stream cuts a deep gorge beneath the viaduct and great views abound. It's a couple hours along an old tramway to our accommodation for the night. Built amongst the remains of an abandoned logging village, Port Craig hut has a lot of history as it was once a major port town for the South Coast.

ACCOMMODATION: Port Craig Hut, Hump Ridge Track

(B,L,D)

Thursday

Hike from Port Craig to trailhead

We spend our last day on the Hump Ridge track hiking along the coastline back to the Track Burn ('Burn' is the Scottish term for a stream) where we started a few days ago. If the tide is out, we can hike along the foreshore to Breakneck beach, otherwise we'll take the inland route through the coastal forest. Either way, by early afternoon we'll be back at the Track Burn for our journey back to civilisation. Not many people venture this far south, so this will have been a true wilderness experience! We'll head back to Tuatapere for a celebratory drink before continuing on to Manapouri for the evening. We'll stay at the Lake Manapouri Inn, beautifully located on the lake's edge where you can enjoy great views out over the lake and the surrounding mountains of Fiordland National Park.

ACCOMMODATION: Lake Manapouri Inn, Manapouri

(B,L,D)

Friday

Overnight cruise on Doubtful Sound

We've kept this morning pretty relaxed after your big hike. You can have a sleep in, relax on the lakefront with a book and a cuppa, or if you have the stamina, take a morning run surrounded by rolling hills and farmland. At midday we'll take the ferry across Lake Manapouri, disembarking at the head of the lake and travelling over the Wilmot Pass towards Deep Cove and the start of Doubtful Sound. As we reach the top of the pass, we get our first glimpse of Doubtful Sound stretching off into the distance.

Both Doubtful Sound and the more well-known Milford Sound are within the Fiordland National Park. The main difference between them is that Doubtful is much more remote and chances are there will only be one boat on the water – yours! You'll stay overnight on the Fiordland Navigator, a charming vessel that has all the mod cons, but still has that old-world charm. Rooming is in 4- to 6-bed bunk rooms with shared bathroom facilities. A great option, if you

prefer your own space, is to upgrade to a private twin, queen or single room with private bathroom facilities (private room option, as available). You'll have the chance to explore the fiord by sea kayak or tender craft, and then we'll sail west to watch the sun set over the Tasman Sea and visit the local seal population lazing on the rocks. At some point along the journey, we'll probably be visited by Doubtful Sound's local pod of dolphins who like nothing more than to play in the waves made by the boat's bow.

ACCOMMODATION: *Fiordland Navigator, Doubtful Sound*

(B,L,D)

Saturday

Explore Doubtful Sound, visit Queenstown Kiwi Sanctuary

Wake to the silence and serenity of Doubtful Sound. After breakfast there will be time to explore the sound once again before returning to Deep Cove. We then continue the journey through to Manapouri where we started this time yesterday! After lunch we'll then pass through Southland's rolling sheep and deer farming country and on towards Lake Wakatipu and Queenstown. This afternoon we'll head to the Kiwi Birdlife Park. The park is a hidden sanctuary of trees, bush and native trails in the middle of Queenstown, and is unique in that you'll get to see New Zealand native forest and birdlife and real conservation in action. You are also guaranteed to see New Zealand's national bird – the rare and endangered kiwi! Later we'll meet up for our final dinner together.

ACCOMMODATION: *Heartland Hotel, Queenstown*

(B,L,D)

Sunday

Depart for home

This is the last day of your two-week trip around the South Island. See the itinerary for the *Kauri* trip if you want to take a few more days to see the North Island. After breakfast, we can drop you at the airport for late-morning flights back to Christchurch or Auckland. Or if you prefer to stay a couple of extra days, we can help you arrange accommodation in Queenstown. You'll be refreshed and invigorated from the good food, exercise, rest, and great times you'll have had with us in New Zealand!

(B)

Important Information

ACCOMMODATION: Lynette's *'Hoiho' Wildlife trip* is an activity-oriented trip around the South Island. Lynette has chosen interesting and comfortable accommodations throughout. Some places are quite luxurious, but many of the other places we stay are off-the-beaten-track and don't have many accommodation options – but they are really spectacular. We think you'll love the places we stay! We prefer comfortable bed and breakfasts, lodges and apartments. As there's such a variety of accommodations on this trip, some places will have ensuite bathrooms and some will have shared bathrooms, so we may ask you to share a bathroom with other group members on occasion.

RECOMMENDED FLIGHTS: If you're flying in on the first day of the trip, or out on the last day, we recommend arriving in Christchurch by approximately 9 - 10.30am on Monday, and departing from Queenstown after 12 noon on Sunday. If you are considering alternative flight times please let us know so we can help make your trip as smooth as possible.

TRIP START: On the first day of the trip we can either pick you up from the Holiday Inn City Centre in Christchurch at 10.30am, or at the Christchurch domestic airport in front of the information desk at 11am.

TRIP END: On the last day of the trip we can drop you off at the Queenstown airport in time for the flights above, or anywhere in downtown Queenstown in the early afternoon.

FITNESS: You must have a reasonable level of fitness to enjoy yourself on Lynette's *'Hoiho' Wildlife trip*. You don't have to be young and extremely fit (although if you are, you won't be bored) but you should be in the habit of doing at least some exercise. Age and experience are not important. For example, a person in their 50s who hikes every couple of weeks will be happier than a 22-year-old couch potato. If you're concerned about your fitness level, have a chat with us so we can help you choose between the *Hoiho* and our other trips.

EXPERIENCE: You don't need any outdoor experience at all to enjoy our trips. All our trips allow you to make the most of New Zealand's incredible environment. Our experienced guides are highly trained, and will look after you! You don't have to carry a heavy pack. You don't need to have been in a sea kayak before to enjoy kayaking on Doubtful Sound. All we ask is that you be energetic and in reasonable shape and you'll have an incredible time. We manage the level of commitment to suit your experience, and we have an impeccable safety record and we hold all relevant government licenses.

FLEXIBILITY: Because of the off-the-beaten-path and non-commercial nature of some of our accommodations on this trip, we sometimes need to change a night stop. We try to make as few changes as possible, but we ask that you know we retain the flexibility to make sure your trip is as good as it can be.

INCLUDED: The trip fare is US\$3999 + 12.5% NZ government taxes. We quote all prices in US dollars, so our guests from all over the world can more easily relate prices to their own currencies. You can also join for shorter periods of time, at a pro-rated fare. The trip fare includes just about everything, specifically:

- All guiding services. We have two guides per trip: a lead guide/driver and a co-guide who is responsible for meals and accommodations. This means we can really make sure you have a great time! We operate with small groups.
- Comfortable accommodation for the entire period you are with us. We can also organize accommodation for you if you want to arrive earlier or leave later.
- Transport as required, in comfortable vehicles, cruise boats and whatever else is required.
- All your meals, except in Dunedin where your guides will point out the wide range of restaurants. Alcohol is not generally included, although we do spring for a few drinks here and there!
- All hiking, kayaking, dolphin swimming and other activities described in the itinerary, except the optional extras. There are many optional activities available at extra cost, particularly in Dunedin. None of these activities are compulsory, and nor will your trip seem less awesome if you do the cheap or free options.

NOT INCLUDED: This is your holiday, and we are serious about not nickel-and-diming you! You'll have a few meals and drinks to cover, extra activities if you choose them, and you'll probably feel like tipping your guides at the end of a fabulous time, but you won't be pulling out your wallet every few minutes on your ACTIVE NEW ZEALAND trip!

We'll see you soon!

Itinerary valid through April 2010