

# Inclusions

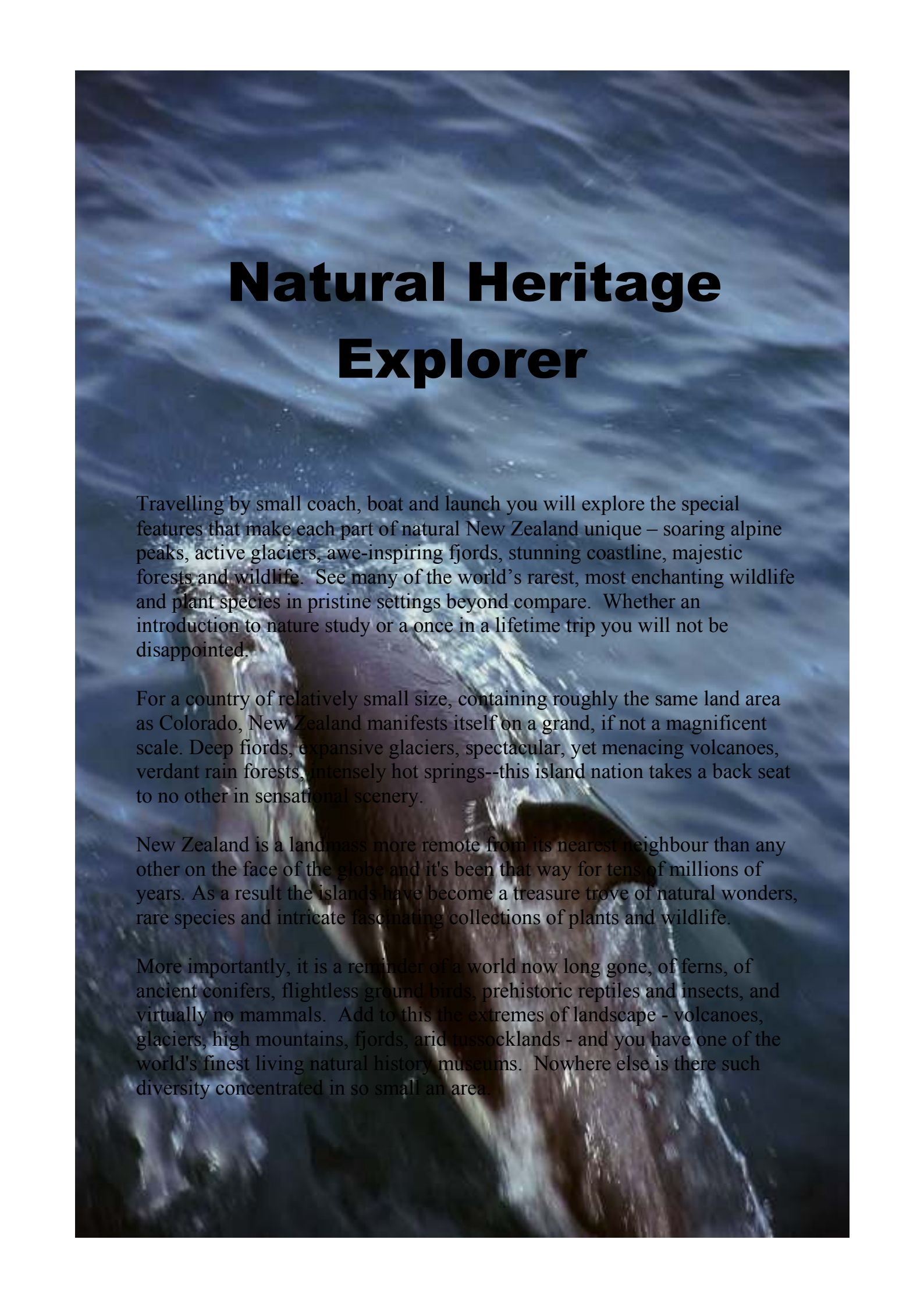
Departs from Nelson March 25 2009

Price Price per person twin-share \$(NZ)5255.00

Includes Services of tour naturalist.  
All tour travel departing from Nelson and terminating in Christchurch  
All Meals (three daily) excepting two dinners (in Christchurch, and in Te Anau).  
All accommodation, twin-share basis in quality hotels, motels and motor lodges, with private facilities in all locations.  
Ferry - Invercargill/Stewart Is./Invercargill.  
Charters - Otago Harbour, Kaikoura, Stewart Is., Marlborough Sounds.  
Kiwi Excursion, Stewart Island.  
On Board library  
Information folio including background ecological information and species lists for areas visited.  
Admission fees where applicable  
Goods and Services Tax of 12.5%

Add-ons For single room add \$(NZ)800.00 per person  
For Milford Sound cruise add \$NZ55.00 per person





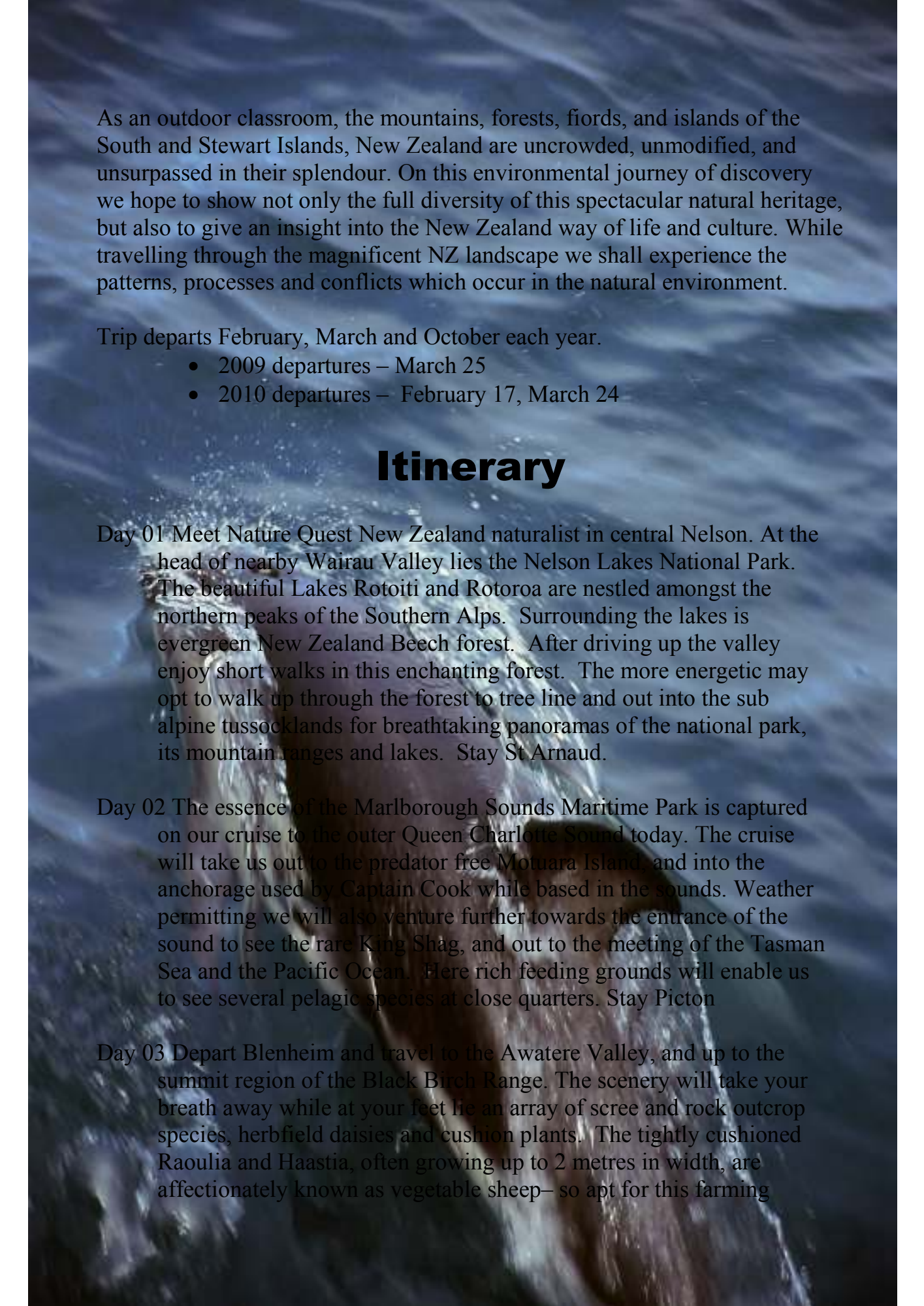
# Natural Heritage Explorer

Travelling by small coach, boat and launch you will explore the special features that make each part of natural New Zealand unique – soaring alpine peaks, active glaciers, awe-inspiring fjords, stunning coastline, majestic forests and wildlife. See many of the world's rarest, most enchanting wildlife and plant species in pristine settings beyond compare. Whether an introduction to nature study or a once in a lifetime trip you will not be disappointed.

For a country of relatively small size, containing roughly the same land area as Colorado, New Zealand manifests itself on a grand, if not a magnificent scale. Deep fjords, expansive glaciers, spectacular, yet menacing volcanoes, verdant rain forests, intensely hot springs--this island nation takes a back seat to no other in sensational scenery.

New Zealand is a landmass more remote from its nearest neighbour than any other on the face of the globe and it's been that way for tens of millions of years. As a result the islands have become a treasure trove of natural wonders, rare species and intricate fascinating collections of plants and wildlife.

More importantly, it is a reminder of a world now long gone, of ferns, of ancient conifers, flightless ground birds, prehistoric reptiles and insects, and virtually no mammals. Add to this the extremes of landscape - volcanoes, glaciers, high mountains, fjords, arid tussocklands - and you have one of the world's finest living natural history museums. Nowhere else is there such diversity concentrated in so small an area.



As an outdoor classroom, the mountains, forests, fiords, and islands of the South and Stewart Islands, New Zealand are uncrowded, unmodified, and unsurpassed in their splendour. On this environmental journey of discovery we hope to show not only the full diversity of this spectacular natural heritage, but also to give an insight into the New Zealand way of life and culture. While travelling through the magnificent NZ landscape we shall experience the patterns, processes and conflicts which occur in the natural environment.

Trip departs February, March and October each year.

- 2009 departures – March 25
- 2010 departures – February 17, March 24

## Itinerary

Day 01 Meet Nature Quest New Zealand naturalist in central Nelson. At the head of nearby Wairau Valley lies the Nelson Lakes National Park. The beautiful Lakes Rotoiti and Rotoroa are nestled amongst the northern peaks of the Southern Alps. Surrounding the lakes is evergreen New Zealand Beech forest. After driving up the valley enjoy short walks in this enchanting forest. The more energetic may opt to walk up through the forest to tree line and out into the sub alpine tussocklands for breathtaking panoramas of the national park, its mountain ranges and lakes. Stay St Arnaud.

Day 02 The essence of the Marlborough Sounds Maritime Park is captured on our cruise to the outer Queen Charlotte Sound today. The cruise will take us out to the predator free Motuara Island, and into the anchorage used by Captain Cook while based in the sounds. Weather permitting we will also venture further towards the entrance of the sound to see the rare King Shag, and out to the meeting of the Tasman Sea and the Pacific Ocean. Here rich feeding grounds will enable us to see several pelagic species at close quarters. Stay Picton

Day 03 Depart Blenheim and travel to the Awatere Valley, and up to the summit region of the Black Birch Range. The scenery will take your breath away while at your feet lie an array of scree and rock outcrop species, herbfield daisies and cushion plants. The tightly cushioned Raoulia and Haastia, often growing up to 2 metres in width, are affectionately known as vegetable sheep– so apt for this farming



country! Back down at sea level continue to Kaikoura. Stay Kaikoura two nights.

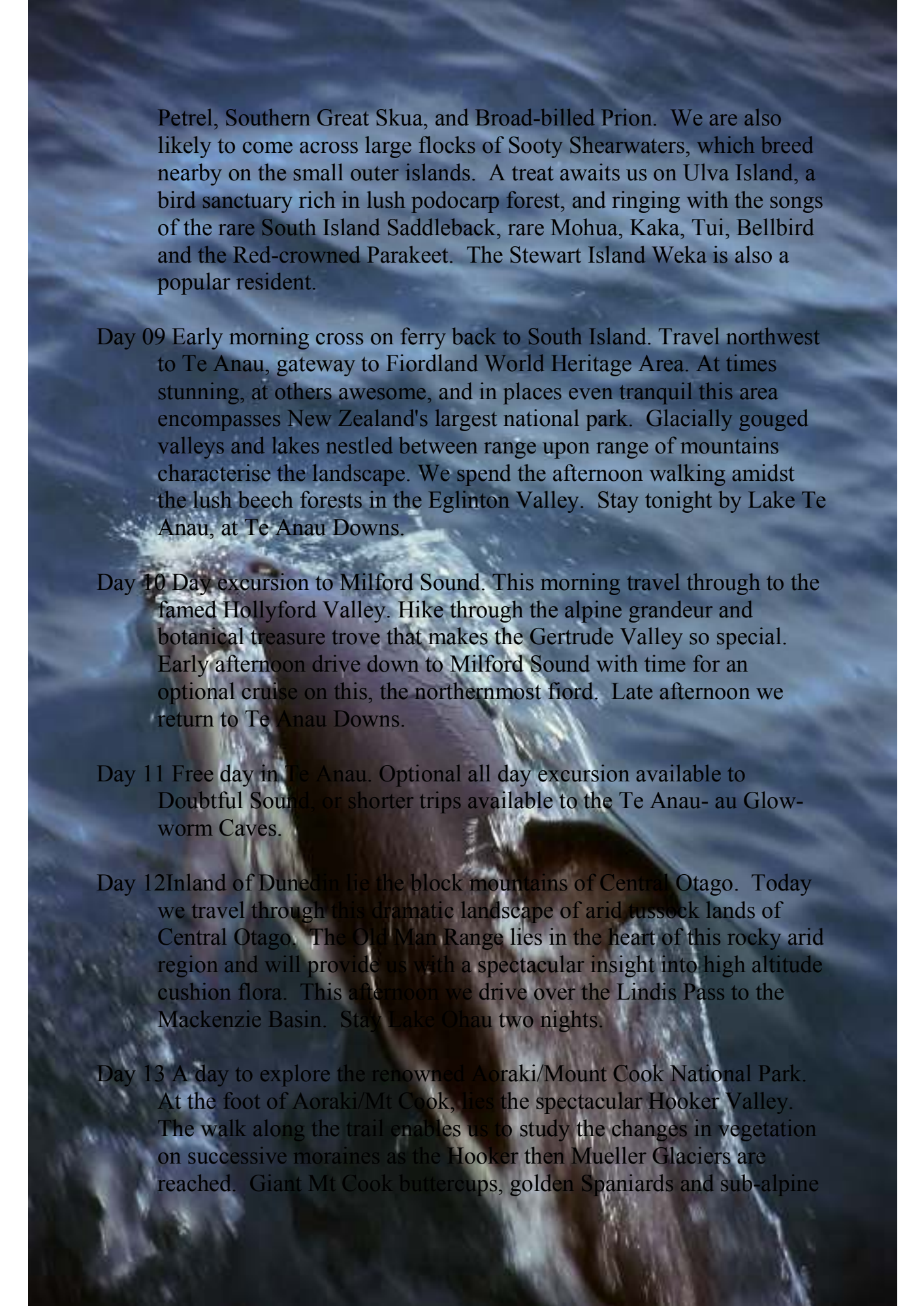
Day 04 Kaikoura is a breath-taking place where snow-iced mountains reach down to a turquoise sea. The continental shelf drops abruptly very close to shore, resulting in the up-welling of nutrients from the sea's depths, attracting a rich and abundant marine life. An excellent opportunity for bird lovers and generalists alike is a seabird excursion, where one can see flocks of cawing albatrosses (4-5 species), and numerous petrels and shearwaters, just metres from the boat.

Day 05 Morning free for optional Kaikoura wildlife excursions seeking out Sperm Whales, or Common and Dusky Dolphins. Afternoon travel down the spectacular Kaikoura coastline to arrive in Christchurch. Stay Christchurch

Day 06 Depart Christchurch and travel south across the Canterbury Plains. Now one of New Zealand's most intensive agricultural regions the plains run down from the foothills to the central Southern Alps. Early afternoon arrive in Dunedin. This afternoon we embark on an unforgettable cruise on Otago Harbour to Taiaroa Head, home to a small colony of the giant Northern Royal Albatross. What a trip highlight as these birds wheel overhead, then touch beaks with their mate before taking over nesting duties. And there's more for just below NZ Fur Seals, Little Blue Penguins, and thousands of Shags roost. Stay Dunedin.

Day 07 Depart for Invercargill via the Catlins coast. Walk within pristine lowland podocarp forest backing on to long sweeping beaches. Enjoy lunch on Tautuku Beach before continuing through to Invercargill. A short ferry trip will convey us from Invercargill to Stewart Island. We will head out on an evening excursion, by boat and foot, to experience the Brown Kiwi in its natural habitat. Stay in Oban for two nights.

Day 08 A half day marine charter to Paterson Inlet and into the South Pacific will invigorate us with opportunities to observe a rich diversity of seabirds. Among the bays of the inlet we will scan for two rare penguin species: the Yellow-eyed Penguin and the Fiordland Crested Penguin. Out at sea we may encounter several species of albatross, including Shy, Black-browed and Buller's, and the Southern Giant



Petrel, Southern Great Skua, and Broad-billed Prion. We are also likely to come across large flocks of Sooty Shearwaters, which breed nearby on the small outer islands. A treat awaits us on Ulva Island, a bird sanctuary rich in lush podocarp forest, and ringing with the songs of the rare South Island Saddleback, rare Mohua, Kaka, Tui, Bellbird and the Red-crowned Parakeet. The Stewart Island Weka is also a popular resident.

Day 09 Early morning cross on ferry back to South Island. Travel northwest to Te Anau, gateway to Fiordland World Heritage Area. At times stunning, at others awesome, and in places even tranquil this area encompasses New Zealand's largest national park. Glacially gouged valleys and lakes nestled between range upon range of mountains characterise the landscape. We spend the afternoon walking amidst the lush beech forests in the Eglinton Valley. Stay tonight by Lake Te Anau, at Te Anau Downs.

Day 10 Day excursion to Milford Sound. This morning travel through to the famed Hollyford Valley. Hike through the alpine grandeur and botanical treasure trove that makes the Gertrude Valley so special. Early afternoon drive down to Milford Sound with time for an optional cruise on this, the northernmost fiord. Late afternoon we return to Te Anau Downs.

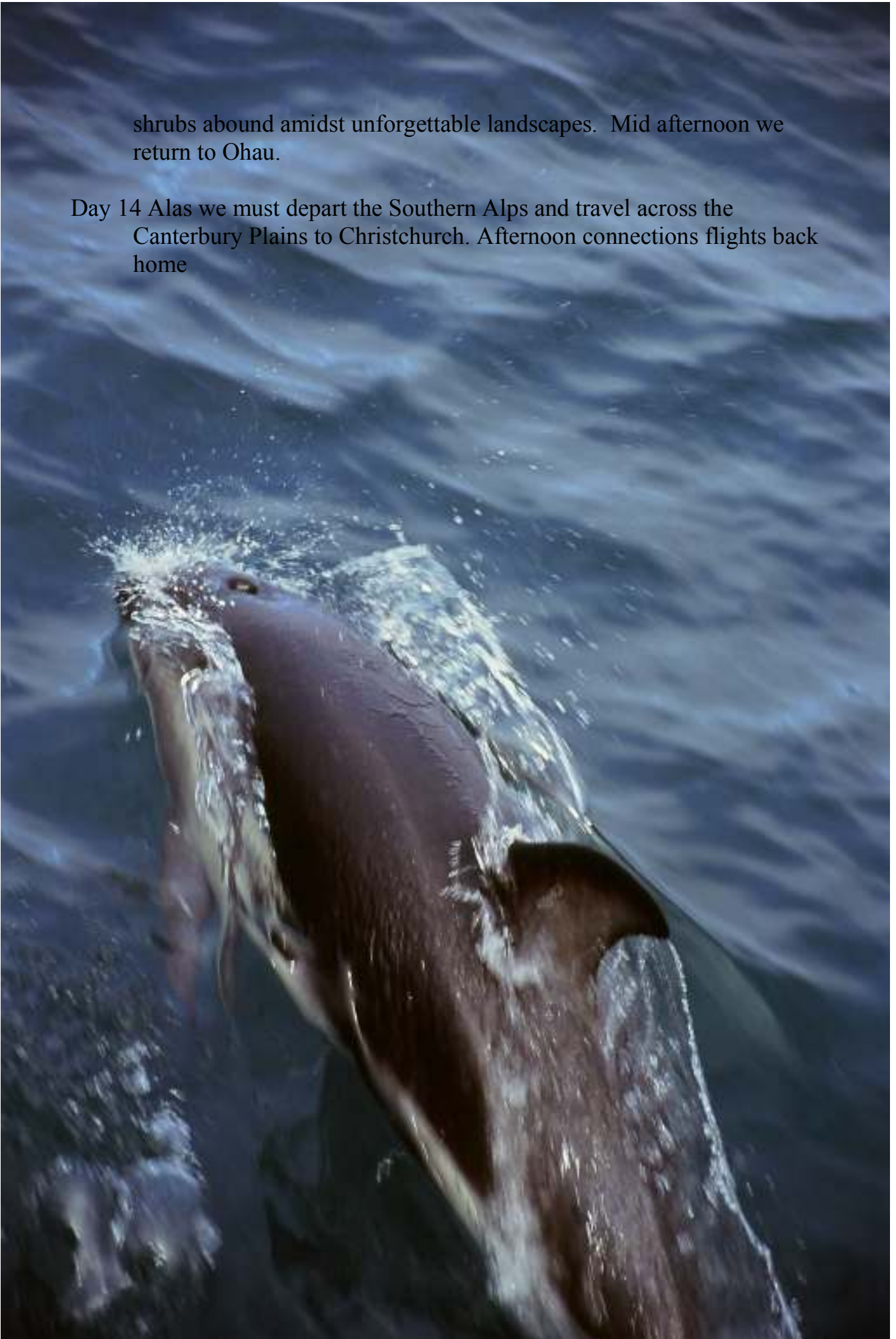
Day 11 Free day in Te Anau. Optional all day excursion available to Doubtful Sound, or shorter trips available to the Te Anau- au Glow-worm Caves.

Day 12 Inland of Dunedin lie the block mountains of Central Otago. Today we travel through this dramatic landscape of arid tussock lands of Central Otago. The Old Man Range lies in the heart of this rocky arid region and will provide us with a spectacular insight into high altitude cushion flora. This afternoon we drive over the Lindis Pass to the Mackenzie Basin. Stay Lake Ohau two nights.

Day 13 A day to explore the renowned Aoraki/Mount Cook National Park. At the foot of Aoraki/Mt Cook, lies the spectacular Hooker Valley. The walk along the trail enables us to study the changes in vegetation on successive moraines as the Hooker then Mueller Glaciers are reached. Giant Mt Cook buttercups, golden Spaniards and sub-alpine

shrubs abound amidst unforgettable landscapes. Mid afternoon we return to Ohau.

Day 14 Alas we must depart the Southern Alps and travel across the Canterbury Plains to Christchurch. Afternoon connections flights back home



# **Natural Heritage Explorer**

