

## Whales

Most of us have witnessed the disturbing images at some point. Whales, bleeding heavily, being dragged onto a Japanese Whaling ship.

You may also have noticed the Greenpeace volunteers and their efforts to thwart this barbaric and unnecessary hunting of defenceless and peaceful creatures. In fact at one point the media made much ado about supposed shots fired between Greenpeace and the Japanese hunting ships. Similarly the “Sea Shepherd” vessel seeks to prevent and block any whaling attempts.

Which begs the question of the Japanese. Why? It’s interesting to note that the Japanese claim that they are hunting for “scientific research purposes.” So where are the white coats? The IWC or International Whaling Commission has in fact publicly stated that such scientific research is unnecessary, and the data not needed. But this doesn’t stop the hunters. In fact the Japanese have pledged to hunt down and kill a minimum of 50 whales per year.

Many groups and individuals are strongly opposed to whaling. Anna Evington, Founder and Tour Director of Blue Pacific Whale Watching in Tonga is one such advocate. Says Anna, “The continuation of whaling at any level, particularly in the Antarctic and Pacific waters (in addition to the many other threats posed by shipping and commercial fishing practices etc) is sure to impact on the Tongan whale population and could lead to their demise.”

Blue Pacific Whale Watching, is one of the only tour operators in the world offering the unique experience of swimming with the whales, as opposed to observing from a boat. Guides lead limited numbers of people (two groups of 4) towards the whales, only going where Whales will allow them. In fact the website states “All our guides are trained to take people to being with the whales in the safest and most respectful and least intrusive way possible.” Find out more about this unique and breathtaking opportunity at <http://www.blue-pacific-whale-watching.com.au/>