



Information Sheet – Rakiura Adventure Snorkel Day 2019/20

Stewart Island’s remote and untouched coastlines are a thing of beauty and have long been luring adventurers and explorers alike. Dive beneath and find yourself amongst some of New Zealand’s most diverse and beautiful marine life. Learn about biodiversity, history and conservation of Rakiura, while following a theme of sustainability and effective ocean management . We will be visiting fragile, pristine, and undisturbed natural areas, ensuring we make zero impact by operating a small scale alternative to standard commercial mass tourism providing you with, an informative and exciting adventure.

When: Saturday 15th of February 2020
 Back up date of Sunday the 16th of February 2020.
 You need to be free for the back up date as well.
 10am-3pm (exact timing TBC)

What: Join EMR and [Stewart Island Adventures](#) for a guided snorkel and tour of Ulva Island marine reserve. We will be leaving from Golden Bay Wharf and travelling by water taxi for a day of snorkeling/freediving at two locations. Read more below.

Where: Ulva Island marine reserve – Leaving from Oban, Rakiura (Stewart Island)

Getting there: Transport to Rakiura (Stewart Island) is not included in the cost. Please see below for information on how to get onto the island.

What to bring: Togs, towel, sunhat, warm clothes and lunch. If you have your own snorkel gear you are welcome to bring it along – please note it needs to be fit for purpose (no full face masks). Medication: if you suffer seasickness - take medication first thing in the morning.

Payment: EMR is assisting Stewart Island Adventures to provide the snorkeling.

	Cost
Adventure Snorkel	\$200pp + Booking fee



For more information email Lorna on lorna@emr.org.nz or call her on 02102732339



Picture taken by Stewart Island Adventures.

FAQ

Q: What's involved in a tour?

A: The tour is broken up into a few different parts and will take approximately 4.5-5 hours.

- Golden Bay wharf is the starting location where the guides will be waiting to meet you. They will take you to the gear storage shed to get changed into your snorkeling gear and give an initial brief outlining the tour.
- Once gear has been fitted and you have been fully briefed, we will board the water taxi and make our way across Patterson Inlet/Te Whaka a Te Wera to where we will be snorkelling. While all the snorkel sites we use hold exceptional amounts of fish, they do perform differently in varying weather patterns/tides, so the site used will be determined by the guides on the day.
- Upon arriving at the snorkel site, you will disembark the boat and be given a small presentation by your guides outlining possible hazards, marine life encounters, basic freediving techniques and any information relevant to the location.

- We will then enter the water working our way around rock reefs and kelp forests in search of native underwater marine life. Your guides will give information on anything you find interesting or entertaining and help with equalisation/freediving techniques whilst in the water, maximising your adventure and making sure you are able to view as much as possible.
- After spending approximately 1 hour in the water at each site, we will reconnect with the water taxi and make our way back to Golden Bay where you will change out of your snorkeling gear.
- Once changed we will have tea/coffee and biscuits to warm up, and a debrief where we can discuss how the trip went, marine life encounters and any other happenings in the trip. We also encourage you to stay after for a chat about conservation and how we can all help the health of our oceans.

Q: What's included in my \$200?

A: We will provide all the equipment that you will need during your snorkel which includes a warm wetsuit, a hooded vest, gloves, booties, weightbelt, fins and a mask.

EMR will have the underwater camera rig getting stills and video footage from the day which will be accessible to all. Stewart Island Adventures will have two go-pros on site that will be used to get additional footage of the dive.

We will provide transportation to and from the snorkel locations of our choosing based on the weather. All you have to do is to meet us at the wharf!

Each tour has two local guides providing a commentary and snorkelling/freediving instruction.

Q: What do I need to bring?

A: When joining us on the snorkelling tour, all you need to bring is a towel and a swimsuit to wear under your wetsuit. We recommend wearing the swimsuit under your clothes when arriving at Golden Bay to save time getting changed. We also advise bringing a packed lunch and a bottle of water for warming up between snorkels.

Q: Who are Stewart Island Adventures?

Stewart Island Adventures is a small company situated on an island at the bottom of New Zealand. It is run by two passionate guides, Ollie and Johnny, who want to share the underwater world they are privileged to freedive in every day, and share a message of conservation along the journey. We are lucky to have a large body of water around us that is managed effectively and keeps the ecosystem healthy, one that we love to share with Rakiura's visitors and show them there is hope for the world's oceans. Having small group sizes gives us the ability to deliver a more personal, informative experience, diving around New Zealand's most beautiful island, revealing the colourful life-filled world beneath.

Q: What happens if the weather is bad?

In Stewart Island, the weather is not always perfect, and if the wind is strong, snorkelling can be risky and unenjoyable. We will cancel our tour if the weather turns bad. Your payment will be refunded in full. Please note that the minimum number of participants to run the event is 4 – if we have less than that we would refund bookings in full and you are able to book in on a standard 1 site tour with Stewart Island Adventures.

Q: How do I get to Stewart Island?

A: There are 2 main transport options to choose from when planning a trip to Rakiura/Stewart Island with the first and most popular is the ferry service. With 2 ferries in service there are 3 sailings from the mainland in the summer months, departing 9:45am, 11am and 5:15pm. All boats leave from Bluff Harbour ferry terminal, which is located on foreshore road in Bluff, just a 30 minute drive from Invercargill (it is important to remember to check in 30 minutes prior to departure!). The sailing will take approximately 1 hour departing Bluff and arriving in Oban, Stewart Island. While the Foveaux Strait can often be a little bumpier than first expected, the trip across can be quite an adventure and an entertaining ride, with the exception of the crystal clear glass days that leave the strait one big mirrored pond! Booking a ferry is simple and can be done so by clicking the link below, it isn't uncommon for the ferries to fill up so it is recommended to book in advance to secure your spot. If you aren't traveling by car there are many shuttle options from Queenstown, Te Anua and Invercargill you can add to your ferry booking.

<https://www.stewartislandexperience.co.nz/getting-there/stewart-island-ferry-services/>

The second option you have when traveling to Stewart Island is the flight service. It can be a little more convenient if you are flying into southland to travel to Rakiura by plane as it removes the need to travel to bluff to catch a ferry. It is a little more expensive, however, the extra cost cuts 40 minutes off travel time, arriving to the Island in only 20 minutes. There are 3 scheduled flights a day over the summer months at 8am, 1pm and 5pm on weekdays and at 9am, 1pm, and 4pm on weekends. All flights leave from Invercargill airport and arrive at Stewart Island where the shuttle will be waiting to transport you to town. While the plane can be a less traumatic experience for those who have a strong dislike for the water and boats, it isn't uncommon to have a little turbulence while traveling over Foveaux Strait. The scenes as you fly over this little island paradise will be worth it though, as you touch down in one of the only rainforest free parts of Rakiura, the airstrip! Booking a flight is simple and can be done so by clicking the link below.

<https://www.stewartislandflights.co.nz/>

Q: Where do I stay?

A: Affordable accommodation can be found at the Stewart Island Backpackers.

<https://www.stewartislandbackpackers.co.nz/>

Q: What else is there to do on Rakiura?

A: There are many things – check out some of the options below.

Ulva Island bird sanctuary

We are truly lucky to have one of New Zealand's best open sanctuaries right on our doorstep, Ulva Island. This iconic island is one of the few "open" pest free sanctuaries in NZ, meaning that access to the public is unrestricted allowing for amazing viewing of some of our most threatened bird species. At 267 hectares, Ulva is rather large but all of her trails are well maintained by DOC staff and other volunteers that visit the island wanting to lend a hand. Having never been milled (unlike most of Rakiura) Ulva boasts some amazing primeval forest that allow at risk species to thrive in conditions similar to what they would have had 1000 years ago, some of these species include the Saddleback-Tieke, Stewart Island Kiwi-Rakiura Tokoeka (NZ's only diurnal kiwi!!), Yellowhead-Mohua, Red Crowned Parakeet-Kakariki and many more!!

Ulva Island is an excellent place to spend the day or even just a few hours exploring the forests and its picturesque beaches (a great place to stop for lunch!). Being pest free since 1997, Ulva Island is now at

carrying capacity which means all available space has now been filled by the birds, it also means (due to lack of predation) the birds have all become more forthcoming for photographs, not seeing humans as a threat to their existence.

Getting to Ulva is simple and can be done by catching the Ulva Island ferry, which departs Golden Bay at 9am, 10am, 12pm, 2pm, and 4pm, returning the same hours +15 minutes.

Price is \$20pp return.

Rakiura Museum

A visit to Stewart Island isn't complete without a browse through the Rakiura Museum, located at 8 Ayr Street. Established by volunteers, the museum houses an extensive collection of items and photographs of Rakiura's early history, including Moari settlement; muttonbirding; whaling, fishing, timber milling, mining, boat building, transport, schools and churches. Included in the exhibits is an extensive collection of Stewart Island shells and crustacea.

Price is \$2 per adult and 50c per child.

Walking

Having only 28km of road network on Stewart Island, there is a saying... "Where a road ends a walking track begins". With a network of tracks spanning nearly 300km and ranging from simple minute long well gravelled paths, to week long thigh deep mud backcountry tracks (such as the 11 day northwest circuit), there is something for everybody. If a short work to a nice secluded golden sand beach is what you're into, there are several amazing locations only minutes from the town centre of Oban. If something a little more adventurous is your style then there are options for great day walks or even the 3 day great walk, the Rakiura track, which can of course be done in just one day if you have a decent level of fitness! Whatever your level of fitness or drive for adventure, walking is one of the best activities you can do whilst visiting Rakiura, its free, there's lots of it and around each rocky outcrop is another hidden beach waiting to be explored! Visit the Rakiura Department of Conservation for all the information you will need to get out and explore this amazing landscape.

Free

Quiz

One of Stewart Islands more popular attractions, South Sea Hotel (the pub) hosts a quiz night each Sunday for both locals and visitors. This is an excellent way to finish off a day exploring Rakiura, competing with others for the much coveted bragging rights and also the \$50 bar tab! Starting at 6:30pm you will battle it out with usually a packed hotel, answering 35 questions ranging in topics from world geography to music, literature and sometimes a few odd ones as well. It's best to arrive around 5:30pm to secure a table or find a team/teammates if you are short (6 per team). The quiz is also a great way to meet a few of the locals and hear some of the (tall) tales that frequently echo the walls of the local meeting place, there is also a donation jar that gets passed around during and all proceeds go to that week's chosen charity.

Free

Jade workshop

Located on the waterfront in Oban is Rakiura Jade, a local carving experts workshop. Dave is an extremely talented carver and has many works done in bone, pounamu (jade) and wood displayed in his studio. He is a welcoming man, inviting travellers and locals alike in to see his amazing creations and even assisting you if you wish to make your own.

It is free to have a look around, price of creating your own piece varies and must be discussed with Dave.

Kiwi Spotting

One of Stewart Islands most noteworthy attractions is of course its huge population of Kiwi! The Rakiura Tokoeka or Stewart Island Kiwi outnumber people here 35/1, so it's safe to say your chances of spotting one of these feathered ground dwellers is pretty high! There isn't too much you need to know in order to spot one, even a simple walk around the village after dark can yield some awesome results. What you do need to know is kiwi don't like too much light, luckily finding red cellophane to cover your torch or phone light (kiwi can't see red light) is pretty easy to find, a trip to the DOC center or 4 Square will have you set and ready to go. Local knowledge is the best when trying to track down Kiwi, so a chat with a few people round town is the last thing you'll need in preparation for a night of Kiwi hunting! It is worthy to note that the Rakiura Tokoeka are the only diurnal (venture out day and night) species of kiwi, so it is possible to spot them during the day as well, often being seen in daylight hours on Ulva Island and the Rakiura track.

Free

This is just a shot list of the many activities there are to do on this amazing little island, for more information you can visit www.stewartisland.co.nz