

The Growth and Socioeconomic Value of the Whale Watch Industry Worldwide

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IFAW

International Fund for Animal Welfare
protecting animals and their environments worldwide

It was many years before I realized why I never saw any whales in Tasmania.

Hunting had reduced their numbers so badly there weren't any around.

The Derwent River used to be full of whales.

Whaling records report – ‘that you could walk across the Derwent on the back of the Southern Right whales.’

Not any more...

Fortunately for the whales around Tasmania and the rest of the world there was a monumental shift in how whales were perceived.

This new perception or the Save the Whale Movement was started partly because people began to see the whales in their natural environment.


And once people saw whales for what they are giant majestic creatures
capable of gentle nurturing of their young –
- rather than a slab of blubber on a slipway

People were willing to fight for their rights to survive.



Whale Watching was born.

It has grown from humble beginnings in the 1950s to become an
almost universal human passion.

Whales are a valuable tourism resource....



The move followed a ban on local whaling, imposed by the King of Tonga in 1978 after whaling, had brought humpback whales to the brink of extinction.



**More than 9 million people
go whale watching each year
in 87 countries generating at least
\$1 billion USD per year**

We have always believed whales and dolphins
are worth a great deal more alive than dead.

Thanks to the extraordinary and tireless work
of author Erich Hoyt,
this new IFAW report proves it.

The Hoyt Report

Whale Watching 2001

Worldwide Tourism numbers
Expenditures, and Expanding Socioeconomic Benefits



World Whale Watch Visitor Expenditures:

| Year | Number of whale watchers | Direct expenditures USD | Total expenditures |
|------|--------------------------|-------------------------|--------------------|
|------|--------------------------|-------------------------|--------------------|

| | | | |
|------|-----------|--------------|---------------|
| 1991 | 4,046,957 | \$77,034,000 | \$317,854,000 |
|------|-----------|--------------|---------------|

| | | | |
|------|-----------|---------------|---------------|
| 1994 | 5,425,506 | \$122,445,000 | \$504,278,000 |
|------|-----------|---------------|---------------|


| | | | |
|-------------|------------------|----------------------|------------------------|
| <u>1998</u> | <u>9,020,196</u> | <u>\$299,509,000</u> | <u>\$1,049,057,000</u> |
|-------------|------------------|----------------------|------------------------|

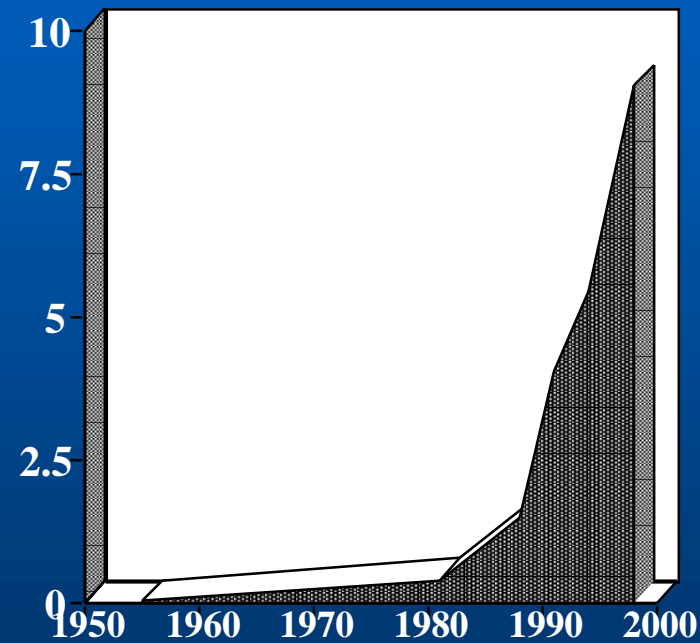
Average annual % increase 1991 - 94: 10.3%


Average annual % increase 1994 - 98: 13.6%

Average annual % increase 1991 - 98: 12.1%



The Growth of Whale Watch Industry Worldwide 1955 - 1998

 **Number of
Whale Watchers
Worldwide
(in Millions)**





The fastest growing whale watch country in the world
Between 1994 and 1998 is Taiwan, which went from
zero to about 30,000 whale watchers during the period.



The four next highest rates of increase between 1994 and 1998

are as follows:

average annual increase

| | |
|--------------|----------|
| Iceland | (250.9%) |
| Italy | (139.9%) |
| Spain | (123.6%) |
| South Africa | (112.5%) |

Australia Whale Watch Visitor Expenditures:

| Year | Number of whale watchers | Direct expenditures USD | Total expenditures |
|--------------------|-------------------------------------|------------------------------------|----------------------------|
| 1991 | 335,000 | \$3,056,000 | \$32,369,000 |
| 1994 | 446,000 | \$4,662,000 | \$45,000,000 |
| <u>1998</u> | <u>734,962</u> | <u>\$11,869,000</u> | <u>\$56,196,000</u> |

Kaikoura, a fishing town in NZ South Island was once a prospering area with profitable industries in both farming and fishing and railways.

Slowly, one by one these industries dropped away.

Farming profits dropped, fisheries collapsed, railways closed down,

Each time less people were employed. There were less opportunities for young people.

There was less hope.

There was less reason to stay and finally Kaikoura pretty much became a ghost town.

In 1987 in Kaikoura a young couple introduced

a risky opportunistic business using their fishing boat to offer

the few stopping tourists the chance to see whales that were starting

to be seen not far out on the Kaikoura coast.

There was suddenly work for the locals.

Kids got their qualifications and came back to town.

Roads were rebuilt. The building industry resurfaced.

Libraries became once again part of the town structure.

There is pride in the community.

The very core of the community grows stronger and today over 300,000 people visit Kaikoura annually and through whale watching alone \$5 million comes into the local community.

The most common focal species for whale watching industries are humpback whales, gray whales, northern and southern right whales, blue whales, minke whales, sperm whales, short-finned pilot whales, orcas, and bottlenose dolphins.

Two of these (blue and northern right whales) are classified as endangered species, while two others (humpback and southern right whales) are considered vulnerable (IUCN Red Data Book).

There is no doubt that all four species would be watched more if they could be reliably found in more locations; wherever they are found, they are very popular.

This new industry has begun to make a dramatic difference in coastal communities worldwide.

New Zealand Whale Watch Visitor Expenditures:

| Year | Number of whale watchers | Direct expenditures USD | Total expenditures USD |
|--------------------|-------------------------------------|------------------------------------|-----------------------------------|
| 1991 | 40,000 | \$1,095,000 | \$8,400,000 |
| 1994 | 90,000 | \$3,900,000 | \$12,500,000 |
| <u>1998</u> | <u>230,000</u> | <u>\$7,503,000</u> | <u>\$48,736,000</u> |

Whale Watch Kaikoura is owned by the traditional owners of New Zealand's south island the Maori tribe Ngai Tahu.

An extended family business that are now the biggest employer in the town. This has not only been a financial success for the Ngai Tahu but has created an opportunity for the Maori to stand tall in the community.

Their interest in their business is to protect the whales.

Their intent is that whale watching supports their family for generations to come.

This is only possible with the health and well being of the whales.

Whale Watch Kaikoura work alongside New Zealand Government to create legislation for the industry to protect the whales.

This legislation effects all whale/ dolphin watching across New Zealand and has changed the attitudes of tourists and locals alike who now see the whales as precious jewels that must be protected.

Another success story with whale watching has been in the northern Tongan islands of Vava'u.

Pacific Island people's culture and lifestyle has always been intimately linked with the marine environment and it's resources, on which, they still heavily depend for food and income. Increasingly, Pacific Island countries are looking at new, more sustainable ways to generate a livelihood from their natural resources, including a strong focus in all twenty two countries and territories on the development of nature tourism.

In all Pacific Island states marine-based tourism is seen as a natural area to develop, and in at least eight states this has included, in recent years, developing whale watching tourism.

As a poor third world economy there is very little employment in Tonga.

Very little opportunity. Tonga's economy is relatively small and to a large extent is dependent on foreign aid.

Tourism

is, however, an important component of the local economy.

Humpback whales migrate to Tonga from the Southern Ocean each year,

to breed and mate, and Vava'u in Tonga began capitalising on this migration in the early 1990s, developing a now-thriving whale-watching industry.

From there whale watching caught the imagination of the tourists and the image of the sperm whales giant flukes became the life blood of their town.

Businesses grew up around this industry.

Of course tourist needs were met with all types of accommodation, food outlets, transport, then came seal watching, helicopter flights, canoeing etc.

But not only did whale watching effect this aspect of the growing town.

Tonga Whale Watch Visitor Expenditures:

| Year | Number of whale watchers | Direct expenditures USD | Total expenditures USD |
|--------------------|-------------------------------------|------------------------------------|-----------------------------------|
| 1991 | None | None | None |
| 1994 | 200 | \$10,000 | \$35,000 |
| <u>1998</u> | <u>2,334</u> | <u>\$55,000</u> | <u>\$422,000</u> |

Each Humpback whale in Tonga's waters brings in T\$30,000 (USD \$18,744) in Whale-watching earnings each year, or T\$1.6 million (US\$999,692) during its 50-year lifetime.

Dr Mark Orams



IEFAW

INTERNATIONAL FUND
FOR ANIMAL WELFARE



Images of whale watch workshops in Tonga



IFAW is working in Partnership with
The South Pacific Regional Environment Programme or
SPREP to support the sustainable development of whale watching
in the Kingdom of Tonga.

This work has included: Training of whale watch operators and guides,
facilitation of guidelines for whale watching operations,
policy and technical advice on whale watching and whaling issues,
research, public education and associated media coverage.

To date, the cost of this work has been largely funded by SPREP
with additional resources secured from New Zealand, Australia
and the GEF supported South Pacific Biodiversity Conservation Programme (SPBCP).

United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP)

The IFAW / SPREP / WHALES ALIVE

project is being documented as a
case study in nature tourism at the
invitation of the

United Nations Environment Programme

In the last 10 years as whale numbers begin to increase a small whale watch industry.

Whale watching has started to attract visitors from across the world, who like bird watchers are traveling to see their favorite wild life in new and exotic places.

The clear blue Tongan waters offers the chance to catch a rare glimpse of the southern humpbacks.

A survey, carried out by Dr Mark Orams from the Centre for Tourism Studies at Massey University in New Zealand, estimates that each humpback whale in Tonga's waters brings in T\$30,000 (US\$18,744) in whale-watching earnings each year, or T\$1.6 million (US\$999,692) during its 50-year lifetime.

Whale Watch workshop publications

1. **Scientific Aspects of Whale Watching**
2. **Educational Values of Whale Watching**
3. **Socio Economic Values of Whale Watching**
4. **Legal Aspects of Whale Watching**
5. **Special Aspects of Watching Sperm Whales**



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