

WHALE WATCHING FACT SHEET

Ocean Odyssey, Close encounter whale watching tours and Eco Marine tours, is passionate about showcasing Knysna’s natural assets. This breath-taking Garden Route setting provides us with the ideal platform from which to introduce visitors to our rich aquatic heritage; an iconic estuary and adjacent coastline and the complex web of life that is found here. We are the proud holder of a prestigious Blue Flag status, an international award given to beaches, marinas and nature-based boat excursions that meet a standard of excellence in the following categories. Environmental Education, Environmental Management, Safety and security, and water quality.

Where we are: Conveniently located on the popular Thesen Island within walking distance from the Knysna Quays and the centre of Knysna town. Our vessels are accessible by walk-on jetties on Thesen Harbour town which is a Blue Flag Marina.

CLOSE ENCOUNTER WHALE WATCHING



Let’s get up close and personal with these majestic giants that inhabit our vast and pristine Indian ocean. These migratory mammals, Southern Right and Humpback whales, grace us with their presence from June to November annually showing off their acrobatic skills while nurturing their young.

Approaching a whale requires incredible skill and understanding of the behaviour of these gentle giants. Our skippers are well aware of the strict guidelines set in place by the permit and respect that they are in the whale’s domain.

Whale season is from 1 June to 30 November, and the close encounter trips depart three times daily. Out of whale season, we offer Marine Eco-Tours.

Ocean Odyssey is the only close encounter whale watching permit holder for the greater Knysna area, which extends from the Western Side of the Robberg Peninsula, to Gericke’s Point in Sedgefield. The Permit, which is issued by the Department of Environmental Affairs, allows us to approach marine mammals to within 50m, and if whales approach us, we are permitted to stay and observe. Our **25-seater**, 9m Butt Cat departs from Thesen Harbour Town. From Thesen Island we cruise across the sweeping Knysna estuary and out to sea through the Iconic Knysna Heads in search of marine life.

Vessel:	Odysseus
Pax:	25 pax in comfortable cinema-style seating
Duration:	1.5 – 2 hours
Departure:	09h30, 12h00 & 15h00 (or as scheduled with us directly)
What you may see:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Humpback, Southern Right or Bryde’s whales Common, Bottlenose & Humpback dolphins Cape Fur seals, penguins & Pelagic birds



WHAT TO BRING

Camera or Camcorder

Make sure your batteries are fully charged or you have a spare set to ensure you don't miss the "money shot". And don't forget your memory card.

Binoculars

Usually the whales are close enough to see better without binoculars. They may, however, be useful for spotting some beautiful pelagic bird species.

Rubber-soled shoes

A moving vessel is not usually the best place for high heels. Sneakers/takkies have much better traction as sometimes the decks get wet and slippery even though we have non-slip rubberising on our vessels.

Warm clothes

Ideally you should wear a nice warm jacket or hoodie as it can get really chilly out on the ocean. We will supply you with a blanket if the day is colder than normal.

Sunscreen and Sunglasses

On sunny days you can get quite a sunburn and sunglasses will help protect your eyes from glare off the water as you scan the horizon looking for whales and dolphins.

SAFETY

The safety of our guests and crew are our number one priority and each tour commences with a safety briefing prior to departure. Each guest is supplied with the latest approved commercial PFD/Life jackets (automatic inflatable and super comfortable) and a bottle of water.

IMPORTANT INFORMATION

Most of our trips are ocean going trips and are weather and sea conditions permitting. Only the skipper of the vessel can make a judgment call on these conditions, which are determined on the day of the trip. Conditions are influenced by tide,



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