

# DOLPHIN TRIP by Paul Hannan

My family have always been huge fans of New Zealand -my mum comes from the capital - so we saved up and went for a holiday there. We started with a week in the city she grew up in. After that, we toured around for a while before ending up by chance in Kaikoura, a small town on the coast. The first evening it seemed a rather dull place, but the next day I remembered what I'd read about it -- that it was often possible to see dolphins and whales there! I'll always think of Kaikoura as the place where I finally achieved my lifelong ambition - to swim with wild dolphins.

My family and I set off on a dolphin trip on a cold, grey day with a number of other people on a small boat. However, the sky soon turned blue, and we raced across the waves in the sunshine until we finally reached the place where we were supposed to go swimming. To my surprise, this was more than 40 km from land. I was quite cold by this time, and really starting to wonder why my family had made me come all the way out there, when suddenly someone shouted "Dolphins!"

All I could see were fins everywhere - there were more than a hundred dolphins, all swimming towards our boat! Many of them were jumping around in the water as if they were asking us to come and play. I put on my snorkel and jumped into the sea. Everywhere I looked, all I could see was dolphins, swimming under me and round me. Then I remembered the guide had told us to make sounds in the water to attract them. So I did and actually heard them making similar sounds, as if they were trying to answer me. I even made eye contact with one dolphin, and watched it carefully as I swam round in a circle. Amazingly, the dolphin almost followed me, but then changed its mind, although it kept eye contact with me all the time. It really made me realize how intelligent and beautiful these creatures are.

Then after an hour of swimming the guides called us to get back onto the boat. Although I had enjoyed myself, I was keen to leave the water by then as I was very cold. As I got dry I noticed that everyone on board was smiling and I realized what a very special moment we'd had.

I'll never forget that experience, and Kaikoura will always have a special place in my heart.

## TRUE OR FALSE?

|                                                                                      | TRUE | FALSE |
|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------|-------|
| 1. Paul has family connections with the place he first visited in New Zealand        | X    | X     |
| 2. Paul and his family chose to go to Kaikoura as part of their tour.                | X    | X     |
| 3. As soon as Paul arrived in Kaikoura he knew he might see some dolphins there.     | X    | X     |
| 4. The weather got worse during Paul's boat trip.                                    | X    | X     |
| 5. Paul had expected to go swimming closer to land.                                  | X    | X     |
| 6. Paul was beginning to feel unhappy about the trip until someone saw the dolphins. | X    | X     |
| 7. Paul believed the dolphins were inviting him to join them in the water.           | X    | X     |
| 8. Paul felt that he had failed to communicate with the dolphins.                    | X    | X     |
| 9. One dolphin copied exactly what Paul did in the water.                            | X    | X     |
| 10. Paul was pleased when the guides finally called them back onto the boat.         | X    | X     |

