



take a dive on the wildside!

August 2006

UNDERSEA EXPLORER NEWSLETTER

Swimming with Minke Whales: The world's best wildlife experience!

This year in June and July we have had a fantastic seven weeks of Minke Whale Expeditions onboard Undersea Explorer.

There are plenty of wonderful stories to tell this year as we discover more and more about these beautiful inquisitive animals.

We encountered over 300 whales during the season, when normally we average 240.

We hope you will enjoy this special newsletter which focuses on our favourite little whales!

Dancing with "Pavlova"

A wonderful female whale - **Pavlova** was resighted this year, and again showed us amazing displays and unusual behaviour.

estimated just under 6m, and her "flirty" behaviour! This includes "motor boating" where she vertically moves with her head out of water, along the line interacting with the snorkelers!

Alastair recognised **Pavlova** by many unique aspects of her patterning. He believes she is an adolescent, due to her size,

We have named **Pavlova** for her fabulous pirouettes & dancing skills, and hopefully we will see her dance again next year.

"Kinky Minke" returns with calf!

We have had an encounter with **Kinky Minke** again this year who has been sighted seven times in previous years.

her gender, which in previous encounters we had not been able to establish.

We are excited that this year **Kinky Minke** was back with what is probably her first calf! This absolutely confirms

It is very difficult to establish gender of minke whales as we need to clearly see the whales belly. Our guests digital photos help greatly in this regard.

"I am convinced that dwarf minke provide among the best (if not **the** best) wildlife experiences on Earth!

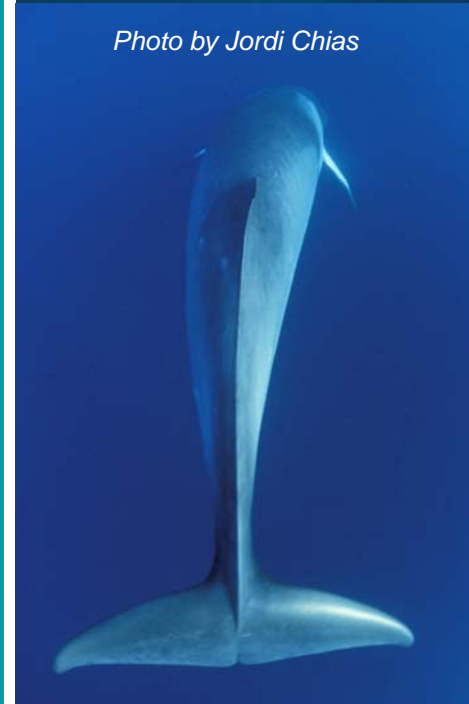
It's quite extraordinary to be motionless in the water, in her environment with a six metre long, five tonne young female who swims around you for hours on end, repeatedly stopping less than a metre away, standing vertically on her tail in the water, pirouetting in front of you for minutes at a time, blowing clouds of bubbles, often lifting her head out of the water and all the time she's looking directly at you - often with two eyes focused on you, allowing her binocular vision and hence immense precision in how close she decides to come! Amazing!

I feel incredibly privileged to be able to work with them!"
Dr Alastair Birtles, Project Leader and Senior Lecturer in Environmental Management, James Cook University.



"Pavlova" - by John Rumney

Photo by Jordi Chias



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Wedding bells!

Undersea Explorer owners Louise Bernstein and Grant Moulang were married on 29 July on a stunning beach with the reception held at Thala Beach Lodge, Port Douglas. Family and friends came from as far as the UK, and guests included the Undersea team, key researchers, reknowned photographers and a representative from Australian Geographic. It was a great party with guests dancing the night away!

Save the whales through research
 If you would like to donate funds to help research and conservation of Dwarf Minke Whales, please send your cheque made out to the **Minke Whale Project Fund, James Cook University**, and post to The Cashier, James Cook University Townsville Qld 4811

Little Wiggle's new sibling

In 2005 we were pleased to see an old cetacean friend - **Wiggly Nape Streak** - returning with a calf for the first time. We named her calf **Little Wiggle**.

This year we are excited to announce that **Wiggly Nape Streak** has returned with another calf! Aside from

the joy we have in seeing baby whales, this is quite a discovery for research. It indicates that the Dwarf Minke Whales can give birth in successive years, and supports the theory that these whales come to Tropical North Queensland waters to breed and care for their young, much like their cousins the Humpbacks.

A sad farewell to Peter Arnold

Many of you may have enjoyed a minke whale expedition with Undersea Explorer, and spent time with researcher Dr Peter Arnold. We are sad to advise that Peter passed away unexpectedly on 7 March this year in Townsville Hospital under observation for chest pains.

The funeral was attended by numerous world reknowned scientists,

friends and family. This quiet, modest gentleman will be greatly missed by all who knew him. Peter was the instigator of the Dwarf Minke Whale project, along with Alastair.

Peters ashes were scattered at Lighthouse Bommie by Alastair, his friend of 32 years, on 15 June on Undersea Explorer after a sunset minke encounter.

2006 Vessel Refurbishment:



With Undersea Explorer's new ownership this year, we have been busy making improvements to the vessel, in addition to revamping our collateral and brand.

Our vessel has been repainted throughout, and we have refurbished the top deck and interior areas. These photos show our new teal, navy blue and white colour scheme, and am sure you'll agree – she looks great! We now have Nitrox available for our divers and we offer the PADI Enriched Air Training Program.



Photos by Jurgen Freund



Lounge Room



Queen Cabin



Saloon