



# **Whales in Paradise**

**An Exhibition of Humpback  
Whale Photography  
by  
Scott Portelli**

**Catalogue**



Over the last five years Scott Portelli has been taking underwater photos of Humpback Whales in the Islands of Vava'u, Tonga.

These are some of the same Humpback Whales that migrate up the coast of Australia and that the Japanese want to start killing.

Help them survive their gruelling fate through conservation and awareness and contribute to their survival by owning a glimpse into their domain. This is a unique opportunity to own a piece of Scott's incredible work while helping contribute to their preservation.

In response to Japan's decision to commence lethal 'scientific' whaling of Humpback Whales, all money raised during the exhibition will be donated to Greenpeace and The Humane Society International.



Beams of light pierce the surface from above through an opening in the cave. Swallows Cave in Vava'u, Tonga is one of the most spectacular natural formations around the Islands.

## N°1 Cave Dive

Signed Metallic Print

12 x 18 (30.48 x 45.72)

Unframed

16 x 24 (40.64 x 60.96cm)

Framed or unframed

20 x 30 (50.8 x 76.2cm)

Framed or unframed



These magnificent creatures are quite charismatic and are well known for their acrobatic behaviour. The sight of a 40 tonne Humpback Whale propelling itself from below the surface is unparalleled.

The sound on the water as the whale crashes back down can travel quite far, perhaps aiding communication across expanses of water.

## N°2 Breaching Grace

Signed Metallic Print

12 x 18 (30.48 x 45.72)

16 x 24 (40.64 x 60.96cm)

20 x 30 (50.8 x 76.2cm)

Unframed

Framed or unframed

Framed or unframed



A young calf can sometimes appear motionless as it ascends to the surface to take a breath of air. Curious yet cautious a baby will often venture closer for a better look.

Newborn calves are about 4.5 meters long, the size of a small car.

### N°3 Ascent

Signed Metallic Print

12 x 18 (30.48 x 45.72)

Unframed

16 x 24 (40.64 x 60.96cm)

Framed or unframed

20 x 30 (50.8 x 76.2cm)

Framed or unframed



A mother, calf and escort can often be seen swimming together, but on this occasion there was a bond between the three that was indicative of the physical contact they made as they glided effortlessly through the water.

Mothers can have more than one escort. These males can jostle violently with one another until one is victor, but no parental care or long-term bonds are established with calf or mother.

## N°4 Connection

Signed Metallic Print

12 x 18 (30.48 x 45.72)

Unframed

16 x 24 (40.64 x 60.96cm)

Framed or unframed

20 x 30 (50.8 x 76.2cm)

Framed or unframed



Sometimes something unexpectedly happens that makes you realise there is still so much more to learn about these gentle giants. This extremely curious calf made physical contact on numerous occasions. No words can describe the feeling.

Knobbly protuberances called tubercles dot the head and jaws of Humpback Whales. Each knob has a hair, which is thought to aid in sensory perception.

## N°5 Encounters

Signed Metallic Print

12 x 18 (30.48 x 45.72)

Unframed

16 x 24 (40.64 x 60.96cm)

Framed or unframed

20 x 30 (50.8 x 76.2cm)

Framed or unframed



Humpback whales often demonstrate some unique behaviour that often leaves us wondering why. Ever so delicately an adult humpback pieces the surface of the water to get a better view of its surroundings.

Spyhopping is a behaviour where whales pop their heads above the surface. This allows them to view the world of air instead of water, and see what human whale watchers are up to.

## N°6 Breaking the Surface

Signed Metallic Print

12 x 18 (30.48 x 45.72)

Unframed

16 x 24 (40.64 x 60.96cm)

Framed or unframed

20 x 30 (50.8 x 76.2cm)

Framed or unframed



A Humpback Whale can propel itself out of the water at surprising speeds, breaking the surface of the water with the grace and elegance of a bird in flight simply with a few beats of its giant tail flukes.

Breaching may serve as another way of viewing what is going on above the surface.

## N°7 A View From Above

Signed Metallic Print

12 x 18 (30.48 x 45.72)

Unframed

16 x 24 (40.64 x 60.96cm)

Framed or unframed

20 x 30 (50.8 x 76.2cm)

Framed or unframed



A curious calf can often draw attention to itself through playful behaviour but is always cautious to stay close to the mother initially. They quickly leave their apprehension behind as they feel less threatened.

The Latin name for the Humpback Whale is *Megaptera novaeangliae*, meaning 'big-winged New Englander'. The long flippers provide lift, stability and a way of touching your neighbour.

## N°8 Curiosity

Signed Metallic Print

12 x 18 (30.48 x 45.72)

Unframed

16 x 24 (40.64 x 60.96cm)

Framed or unframed

20 x 30 (50.8 x 76.2cm)

Framed or unframed



Despite their enormity humpback whales are quite agile. A playful calf will spend a lot of time near the surface then descend to a patient mother hovering below.

Mating has never been observed, and no photos exist of a Humpback Whale birth.

## N°9 The Descent

Signed Metallic Print

12 x 18 (30.48 x 45.72)

Unframed

16 x 24 (40.64 x 60.96cm)

Framed or unframed

20 x 30 (50.8 x 76.2cm)

Framed or unframed



Up close and personal encounters are rare in most wild environments, but the curiosity of humpback whales often parallels our own inquisitive behaviour as mammals.

Recent research has shown a Humpback Whale's brain is highly developed, allowing complex learning, communication and social interactions.

## N°10 Mammals

Signed Metallic Print

12 x 18 (30.48 x 45.72)

16 x 24 (40.64 x 60.96cm)

20 x 30 (50.8 x 76.2cm)

Unframed

Framed or unframed

Framed or unframed



The calf is never too far behind its mother and when it is time to go a powerful stroke of the tail creates momentum as they become a distant outline in the deep blue.

Young calves may utilise their mother's slip stream, created as she moves forwards through the water.

## N°11 Footprint

Signed Metallic Print

12 x 18 (30.48 x 45.72)

Unframed

16 x 24 (40.64 x 60.96cm)

Framed or unframed

20 x 30 (50.8 x 76.2cm)

Framed or unframed



For a calf there is always time for play. Young Humpback Whales will display breaching behaviour as part of the learning process, often imitating the mother or simply having a good time.

Although no definitive explanation exists for breaching, it probably serves a variety of functions, including expressing exuberance.

## N°12 Imitation

Signed Metallic Print

12 x 18 (30.48 x 45.72)

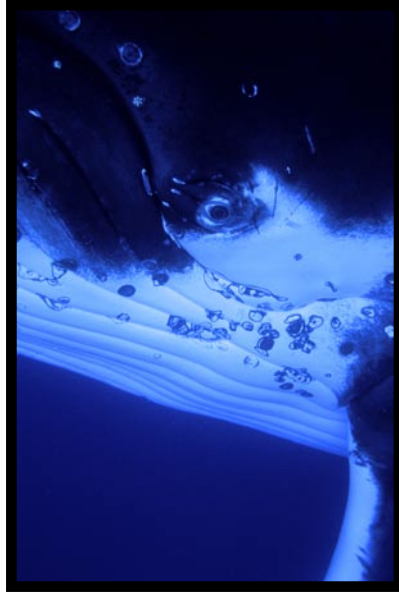
Unframed

16 x 24 (40.64 x 60.96cm)

Framed or unframed

20 x 30 (50.8 x 76.2cm)

Framed or unframed



When you look into the eye of a whale and you sense that they are looking at you with as much bewilderment. The connection is on a level that only few people have experienced.

The whale's world is an acoustic one, as sound can travel vast distances and in dark water, but there is no doubt vision too is an important way of gathering information.

## N°13 Looking into our Souls

Signed Metallic Print

12 x 18 (30.48 x 45.72)

Unframed

16 x 24 (40.64 x 60.96cm)

Framed or unframed

20 x 30 (50.8 x 76.2cm)

Framed or unframed



The power of these mammals is demonstrated by the sheer size of the splash they produce when displaying surface behaviour. Tail slapping is commonly seen with humpbacks and can be seen from great distances.

The underside of each Humpback Whale's tail fluke has an individually distinctive pattern of black and white. Researchers can photograph these and use them like a fingerprint to track the movements of whales and establish databases of life-histories.

## N°14 Tail Slap

Signed Metallic Print

12 x 18 (30.48 x 45.72)

Unframed

16 x 24 (40.64 x 60.96cm)

Framed or unframed

20 x 30 (50.8 x 76.2cm)

Framed or unframed



South Pacific Humpbacks often have a greater proportion of white on their underside and along their sides. From above the waves a whale gliding close to the surface appears as aqua apparition slipping through a sapphire ocean.

The grooves under the jaw of the whale are throat pleats. These expand when the whales take in mouthfuls of food and water.

## N°15 White on Blue

Signed Metallic Print

12 x 18 (30.48 x 45.72)

Unframed

16 x 24 (40.64 x 60.96cm)

Framed or unframed

20 x 30 (50.8 x 76.2cm)

Framed or unframed



A young curious calf will exhibit many types of behaviour including rolling around and presenting its underside. Every movement is like a dance as one motion gracefully flows into the next.

The gender of a whale can be determined when they roll and present their bellies, making underwater observations an ideal way of studying these aquatic mammals.

## N°16 Playground

Signed Metallic Print

12 x 18 (30.48 x 45.72)

16 x 24 (40.64 x 60.96cm)

20 x 30 (50.8 x 76.2cm)

Unframed

Framed or unframed

Framed or unframed



Humpback whales appear each year between August and October in various numbers to mate and give birth in the calm sheltered waters of the islands of Vava'u. Often a mother with a new born calf maybe seen with an escort.

The warm waters allow the calves to quickly put on weight with their mother's rich milk, before leaving for the summer in the cold Antarctic waters.

## N°17 Glide

Signed Metallic Print

12 x 18 (30.48 x 45.72)

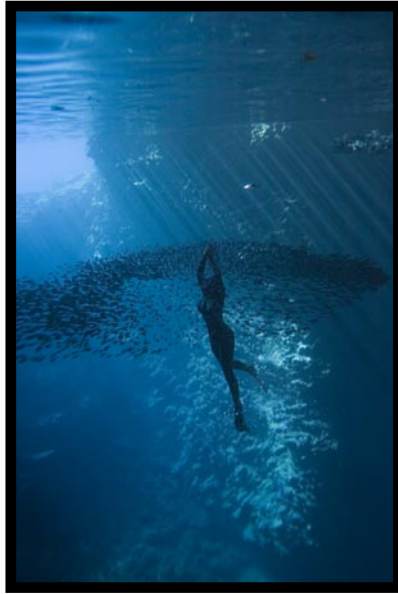
Unframed

16 x 24 (40.64 x 60.96cm)

Framed or unframed

20 x 30 (50.8 x 76.2cm)

Framed or unframed



Swallows cave, with its ornate entrance, provides a playground for freedivers to explore a limestone cathedral. Stunning beams of sunlight pierce the surface of the tranquil crystal clear water.

## N°18 Cave Siren

Signed Metallic Print

12 x 18 (30.48 x 45.72)

Unframed

16 x 24 (40.64 x 60.96cm)

Framed or unframed

20 x 30 (50.8 x 76.2cm)

Framed or unframed



Some animals have a symbiotic relationship with other creatures. Remora fish are regular hitchhikers with Humpback Whales. This mother and calf descend to the depths with their entourage in close proximity.

When the whales reach cooler waters they become encrusted with barnacles on their tails, flippers and heads.

## N°19 Hitching

Signed Metallic Print

12 x 18 (30.48 x 45.72)

Unframed

16 x 24 (40.64 x 60.96cm)

Framed or unframed

20 x 30 (50.8 x 76.2cm)

Framed or unframed



Their aerodynamic design whales sometimes appear motionless as they glide effortlessly on the currents allowing them to relax and minimise the energy that they exert from travelling great distances.

With their hydrodynamic design, whales sometimes appear motionless as they glide effortlessly on the currents allowing them to relax and minimise the energy that they exert from travelling great distances. Whilst in Tonga, the adult whales don't feed, so nursing mothers must conserve as much energy as possible.

## N°20 Resting

Signed Metallic Print

12 x 18 (30.48 x 45.72)

16 x 24 (40.64 x 60.96cm)

20 x 30 (50.8 x 76.2cm)

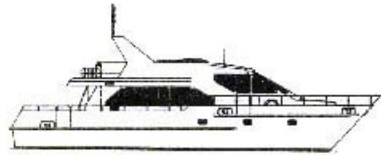
Unframed

Framed or unframed

Framed or unframed

# Sponsors and Supporters

Thank you to all the sponsors and contributors, without your support this exhibition and campaign would not be possible. By building awareness and raising the necessary funding we are able to make a difference to the survival of the magnificent species that is the Humpback whale.



Halicat Tours



WhaleSwim  
ADVENTURES



[www.whalesinparadise.net](http://www.whalesinparadise.net)