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ABOUT RAGGY CHARTERS

As far as we are aware we are the oldest marine eco tour company combined with a conservation project in Africa – since 1992. We are owner run and managed and use the volunteer system to assist in our tours and projects. We specialise in taking tourists, photographers, corporate office party groups, TV crews and marine wildlife enthusiasts on ocean safaris to watch the whales, dolphins, penguins and other natural wonders of Algoa Bay.

Our wildlife and whale watching boat cruises possibly cover the longest distance of any ocean safari along the South African coast, lasting for 3-4 hours and covering 50km. This provides guests with a better chance of seeing the full array of marine wildlife Algoa Bay has to offer.

Port Elizabeth is a hidden gem in South Africa for whale watching, and other wildlife viewing. With seasonal visits from Southern right whales, humpback whales, and indo-pacific humpback dolphins. We have the largest breeding colony of African penguins in the world right on our doorstep. As well as our other resident species including bottlenose dolphins, common dolphins, bryde's whales, Cape gannets and more. All year round we at Raggy Charters can offer guests some great wildlife viewing experiences in our secret and undisturbed bay.

Raggy Charters was the only successful applicant for the Boat Based Dolphin & Whale Watching Permit for Algoa Bay, South Africa. There was only one permit issued. The permit was issued on the 20th June 2011 by the Department of Environmental Affairs, which allows us close encounters with whales and dolphins. This permit allows us to approach cetaceans up to 50 metres (no one else may approach closer than 300 metres) and if the cetaceans wish to move closer and are thus in control of the encounter we do not have to move away. Although there were many factors that counted towards the allocation of the permit, we believe that we were successful because of our commitment to marine conservation and education. Most of the funds generated by our tours go towards The Penguin Research Fund which is trying desperately to explain the dramatic decrease in the African Penguin population and rectify this situation. Raggy Charters also undertakes regular beach clean-ups in the Port Elizabeth area, and has started an initiative to offset our carbon footprint by planting one indigenous tree for every boat cruise we do.

Conservation

Funds generated from whale watching boat cruises, African penguin boat cruises and other marine eco-tours with Raggy Charters are used to fund the Baywatch Project and the Penguin Research Fund.

Raggy Charters undertakes regular beach clean-ups in the Port Elizabeth area and has started an initiative to offset our carbon footprint by planting one indigenous tree for every boat cruise we do.

THE RAGGY CHARTERS FLEET



Orca 2

Our 35-foot catamaran able to carry 20 passengers plus 2 crew. Built in 2002 to take guests in to the beautiful waters of Algoa Bay and show off both the St Croix Island and Bird Island groups, with the largest breeding colony of African penguins in the world and the largest gannetry on the planet. This vessel was designed to get guests up close and personal with these incredible animals! (our back up whale watching vessel).

Winkle

Our 28-foot catamaran able to carry 12 passengers plus 2 crew. Winkle was built in 2011 to help us with our vital penguin research we have been carrying out in Algoa Bay since 2008. Our research in to the decline of the african penguin has proven the cause to be overfishing of sardine and anchovie populations, which can be monitored with this research vessel. It is also our designated whale watching vesse, with which we can get 50 metres away from the ocean's giants! Both boats are SAMSA certified and were specifically designed with the Eastern Cape ocean conditions in mind, to make them as comfortable as possible for our guests!

OUR TOURS

We meet at the Algoa Bay Yacht Club in the Port Elizabeth Harbour at 8.15am for an 8.30am departure returning by 12.00pm (pre-booking required). Light refreshments and snacks are served during the cruises and there is the option of having lunch afterwards at the yacht club.

During the cruises guests also have the possibility of spotting bottlenose dolphins, common dolphins, humpback dolphins, bryde's whales, minke whales, Southern right whales, humpback whales, Cape fur seals, various species of sharks, Cape gannets and various species of pelagic birds including terns, petrels, skuas, shearwaters and albatrosses.

Both catamarans have a specially designed viewing platform which allows the guide to have the best possible view of the bay and thus chance to see any animals that may be present.



WHALE WATCHING BOAT CRUISE

We start off the tour with a harbour cruise and a full safety briefing, after which we exit port and head out into the bay.

In South Africa whale season begins in June when we see humpback whales moving along the coast as they head up the East coast of Africa towards their breeding grounds. Humpback whales can be seen in Algoa Bay between June and early January, reaching peaks in July/August and again in November/December when they make their return journey, with calves in tow. Southern right whales can be seen from July to October as they enter the safety of the bay to give birth. Southern right whales are usually seen very close inshore and often nearby to the harbour. They are the most frequently observed whales along the South African coast.



PENGUIN ISLAND BOAT CRUISE - St. Croix Island

We meet at the Algoa Bay Yacht Club in the Port Elizabeth Harbour at 8.15am for an 8.30am departure returning by 12.00pm (Pre-booking required). Light refreshments and snacks are served during the cruise and there is the option of having lunch afterwards at the yacht club.

We start off the tour with a harbour cruise and full safety briefing, after which we exit port and set a course for the islands. St. Croix Island is home to 22,000 breeding pairs of African penguins, the largest breeding colony found in Africa (though we have lost 70% in 10 years). It is here where guests will get a close-up encounter with these comical birds. The African penguin's breeding season reaches its peak between March and May, when guests may be able to see the chicks from the boat. As well as African penguins, both St. Croix and Brenton Island (a smaller islet close by) are inhabited by the endangered African black oystercatcher, white-breasted cormorants and Cape cormorants. The St. Croix Island group, along with the Bird Island group, recently became part of the Addo Elephant National Park, allowing rangers to patrol the islands in aid of conservation efforts to protect the African penguin population. As they are Marine Protected Areas, please note that guests are not allowed to actually go on to the islands.

DOLPHIN WATCHING BOAT CRUISE

We start off the tour with a harbour cruise and full safety briefing, after which we exit port and head out into the bay. Indo-pacific bottlenose dolphins are the most frequently observed dolphins in the bay and can be spotted all year round, in groups from 10-400. These playful dolphins are mostly found in shallow waters either near the beaches or around St Croix Island, and tend to come right up to the boat and ride along in the bow waves. Common dolphins are also a spectacular sight as they are seen in groups of 1000-2000, swimming along at great speeds. These dolphins are often spotted from January to June as they follow large shoals of baitfish which move past the bay. We also get

humpback dolphins in Algoa Bay, which usually occur in much smaller groups, anywhere between 1 and 20, and are most commonly seen during the summer months.

BEACHFRONT BOAT CRUISE

We start off the tour with a harbour cruise and a full safety briefing, after which we exit port and set a course for the Cape Recife lighthouse. Our beachfront boat trips take guests on a leisurely cruise past the beautiful beaches of Humewood and Summerstrand. It gives guests a unique perspective of Port Elizabeth as we head along to the Cape Recife lighthouse and nature reserve. Our beachfront cruises are ideal for parties as we can offer private trips which can be personalised to suit your needs.

BIRD ISLAND BOAT CRUISE

We start off the tour with a harbour cruise and a full safety briefing, after which we exit port and head out into the bay. Bird Island is home to 250,000 Cape gannets, the largest breeding colony of these birds on the planet. The 19 hectare island is fairly flat which allows our guests close-up views of the Cape gannets and African penguins which nest on the island. The Bird Island group also consists of Stag Island, Seal Island, and Black Rocks. Black Rocks is home to 4,000 playful Cape fur seals and guests also have a good chance of seeing great white sharks as they feed in this area. These islands are nearly 60km away from Port Elizabeth, making it a half-day excursion, so it needs as early a departure as possible. The Bird Island group, along with the St Croix Island group, recently became part of the Addo Elephant National Park, allowing rangers to patrol the islands in aid of conservation efforts to protect the African penguin population. As they are Marine Protected Areas, please note that guests are not allowed to actually go on to the islands.

PELAGIC BIRDING BOAT CRUISE

We start off the tour with a harbour cruise and a full safety briefing, after which we exit port and head out into the bay. During the winter months (and ranging from April through to September) the South African coast is visited by a number of various pelagic bird species. We take our guests out on to the open ocean, heading for the continental shelf where we are soon joined by Indian yellow-nosed, black-browed, and shy albatrosses, sooty, cory's and great shearwaters, white-chinned, Northern giant and storm petrels, swift, roseate and antarctic terns, and the ever greedy sub-Antarctic skua. We have also encountered grey-headed and sooty albatrosses out to sea. Most of these birds often come up quite close to the boat, usually to see if we have any fish on-board. However, we will also head close to fishing boats as they might be getting all the attention of these beautiful birds. We usually like to do a half-day trip, trying to find our guests as many species as possible. And unfortunately, the rougher the sea the better chance we do have of spotting these animals.

TOUR INCLUSIONS

Boat trip and light snacks on board

WHAT TO BRING

Sea sickness tablets are recommended if anyone is concerned, and dress warmly/with waterproof jacket.

PRICE PER PERSON, INCLUDING GST

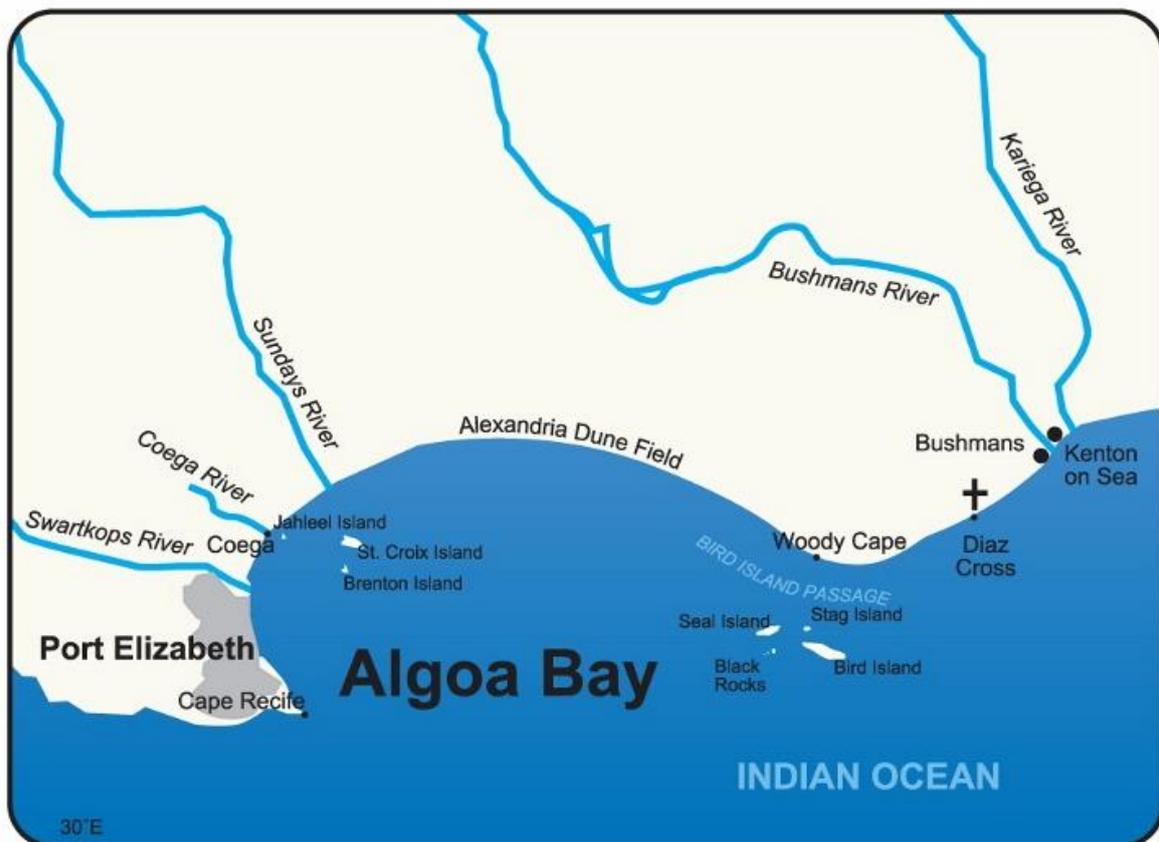
Cost varies per person and per tour type, There may be discounts for groups of 10+.

BOOKINGS

Bookings are essential. Meet at ABYC at 8:15am, board the boat at 8:30am and return to harbour by about 12pm (depending on sightings)

LOCATION

Algoa Bay, Port Elizabeth, South Africa



IMPORTANT NOTES, OBSERVATIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Raggy Charters cannot guarantee animal sightings on any cruise. Raggy Charters offers guests the opportunity to view wild animals which will move around at their own will and therefore we cannot be held responsible for the movements of these animals. Guests who are taken to St Croix are guaranteed to see African penguins, and therefore no refund will be given if other marine animals are not spotted. If absolutely no animals are sighted compensation, in the form of a free ticket for the next boat trip, may be given at the discretion of the skipper.

CONTACT

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