

# humpback whale tonga



august 18 - 31, 2011

rare free-diving clinic and photography coaching

## location details

The Kingdom of Tonga, an archipelago in the South Pacific Ocean, comprises 169 islands, 36 of which are inhabited, and stretches over a distance of 500 miles in a north-south line.

## world's leading free-diving instructors

For the first time, this year, I have created a joint project with Kirk and Mandy Rae — who were featured in the movie *The Cove* and are the world's leading free-diving instructors. In addition to my photography coaching, they are teaching a free-diving clinic to improve efficiency and develop better breathing — enabling all of us to have more intimate views of these gentle giants. All guests will have an opportunity to work with each instructor — two boats with six people per boat. This soft adventure is limited to twelve guests in order to create an up-close and personal experience for every participating diver.

Taking our cues from the great cetaceans themselves and from my accumulated knowledge of humpback whale behavior, three guests at a time will slip quietly into the water to dive and photograph the whales.

This expedition will give us a rare, intimate look at the tender moments of nursing mothers and their calves. Having arrived from antarctica, they give birth among the warm-water and protected reefs. It is a privilege to share their space and to photograph these giant gentle creatures.



Magnificent breach from the humpback

## humpback behavior

The sometimes-violent competing behavior of the mature humpback bulls is witnessed, along with breaching and tail slapping. It is impressive to see the juvenile whales practice breaching as they learn from the adult bulls. The adult bull, usually about forty feet long and forty tons, throws itself almost completely out of the water only to crash back down in a spectacular display of foam and spume to impress its female or scare away its competitors.

At such moments, when time seems to stand still and the modern world is very far away indeed, even the most experienced photographer can forget to point and shoot.

## rustic blue lagoon

We are staying on a far-removed island within the atoll of Vava'u, on the edge of a beautiful blue lagoon. Cozy in rustic over-the-water cabins built from driftwood and woven mats, we are hosted by an extraordinary character and colorful storyteller, Feletti, and his wife Mahata. This 'Robinson Crusoe' adventure is an unforgettable big animal encounter in a natural setting with all the 'civilized' amenities — hot water, towels, healthy hearty meals — and brilliant stars lighting up the night.

In addition, there is ample snorkeling, kayaking, and exploration around adjacent islands.

## the vessels

There are two modern vessels, each 24-feet long, to accommodate the two separate diving teams. The vessels have easy, safe access to the water to make your entry as quiet as possible — with little disturbance to the environment of the whales.

Big Animals Expeditions' intention is always to honor the animals and their need to live their lives with minimal interference.



## amos nachoum

Professional photography will be done with Amos Nachoum, who was the BBC **wildlife photographer of the year** in 2007 and 2008.

He will be coaching individuals on wide-angle and ambient-light photography of big animals.

Amos has **twenty years experience** diving with humpback whales in Tonga.

Amos's explorations have been featured on National Geo, BBC and the **Discovery Channel**.

**Big Animals Expeditions** re-creates the same adventures and photo opportunities for you.



Worldwide Humpback Whale  
Experience  
21 years

Where  
Kingdom of Tonga

**SPECIAL TRIP IN 2010**

Dates Aug 18 - 31, 2011

Duration 13 Days

Cost \$8,000 per person

Max No. of Guests 12 guests

Availability Open

Registration

Deposit of \$2,700

Registration form

Facilities

Accommodation at blue lagoon

Diving Services

Two 22' modern whale-watching vessels

Activities

Snorkeling / Kayaking / Beachcombing

Temperature

In Water: 72-76°F

Air

72-80° F Windy at times!

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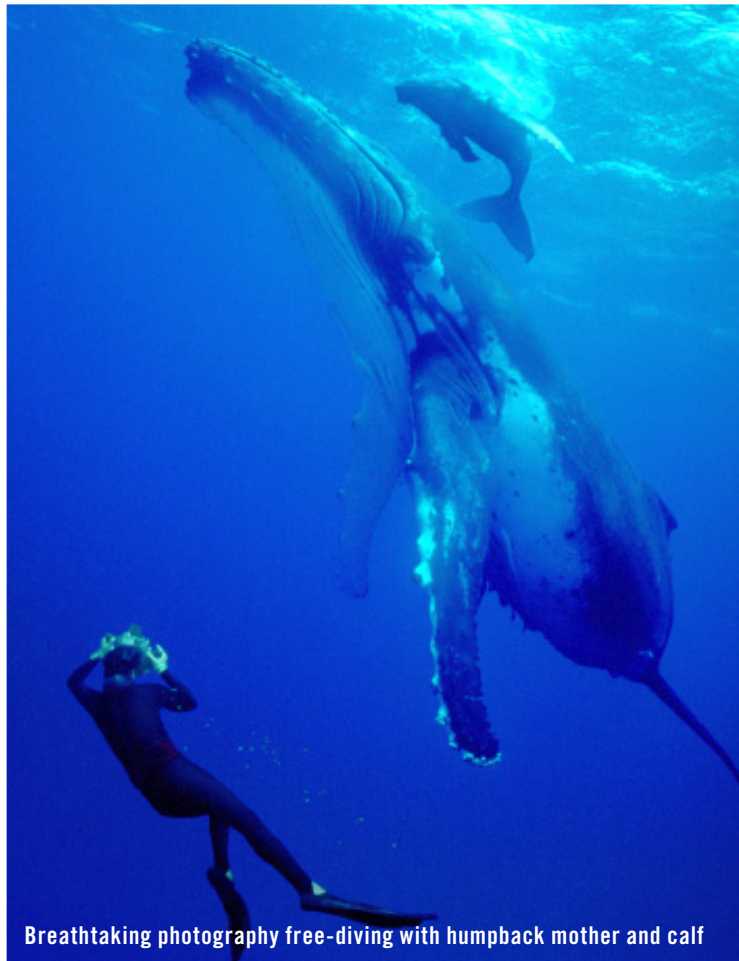
[biganimals.com](http://biganimals.com)

all photos amos nachoum

dates and prices subject to change and are current as of dec 2009



Kirk and Mandy Rae



Breathtaking photography free-diving with humpback mother and calf



Enjoying clear waters and pristine beaches