

Kia ora

WELCOME TO PIOPIOTAH
MILFORD SOUND, ONE
OF THE MOST BEAUTIFUL
AND ICONIC PLACES IN
AOTEAROA NEW ZEALAND

As Milford Sound’s original cruise company,
Southern Discoveries has been calling this place
home since it was first settled. We’re thrilled you’ve
chosen us to take you on this journey of a lifetime –
we can’t wait to share our local knowledge with you!

PIOPIOTAH: PLACE OF THE
SINGING THRUSH

According to Māori legend, it was the demi-god Tu-te-
raki-whānoa who created the fiords. With incantations
and his magic adze, Tu-te-raki-whānoa sculpted his
finest work: Piopiotahi – meaning ‘one single piopio’, in
reference to the native thrush-like bird (now extinct) said
to have flown here in mourning when Māui died in his
attempt to win immortality for mankind.



MILFORD HAVEN

Milford Sound was eventually discovered in 1823 by
Welsh sealer Captain John Grono after earlier European
explorers, including Captain James Cook, sailed passed
the narrow entrance. Grono originally named the fiord
Milford Haven after his birthplace in Wales, but in 1851
another Welshman, John Lort Stokes, anchored his ship in
the fiord and changed the name to Milford Sound.

SOUTHERN DISCOVERIES

Milford Sound’s first European settler, Donald Sutherland,
arrived in 1877, built a hut in Freshwater Basin and
called it home for the next 42 years. Sutherland and his
wife, Elizabeth Samuel, were responsible for creating
the ‘City of Milford’, which included three thatched huts
and an 18-room accommodation house; Milford’s first
hotel. In the 1890s, Sutherland began rowing people
across Milford Sound to the start of the Milford Track, an
enterprise that eventually became Southern Discoveries –
Milford Sound’s first cruise operator.



Milford Sound
CRUISE
HIGHLIGHTS

1 FRESHWATER BASIN

Your Southern Discoveries cruise
departs from the Milford Sound
Visitor Centre which is situated
in Freshwater Basin. This small
harbour contains more fresh
water than salt water so the
harbour was named accordingly.

2 DEEPWATER BASIN

The end of the world famous
Milford Track.

3 SINBAD GULLY

An excellent example of a
hanging valley, Sinbad Gully is
enclosed by the steep slopes of
Mt Phillips rising 1,445 metres
on its left, Mitre Peak on its right
and the Llawrenny Peaks in
behind. Sinbad Gully is home to
the Sinbad Sanctuary Project,
a movement sponsored by
Southern Discoveries to protect
some of New Zealand’s most
precious native species.

4 MITRE PEAK

At a height of 1,692 metres,
Mitre Peak is one of the highest
mountains in the world to rise
directly from the ocean floor. It
got its name because its shape
resembles that of a Bishop’s
mitre or headdress.

5 COPPER POINT

So named because of the very
high deposits of copper found
in the area. This is one of the
narrowest sections of the fiord
where wind gusts have been
recorded in excess of
140 kilometres per hour.

6 FAIRY FALLS

This is one of the prettiest
corners of Milford Sound and is
named after the rainbows in the
falls. Despite the large amount of
water that cascades from these
falls, they are only temporary
and will dry up after a few days
without rain.

7 ANITA BAY

Many years ago, local Māori
people frequently visited Anita
Bay for its tangiwai. Tangiwai,
more commonly known as
greenstone, is a precious
stone that was carved for both
weapons and ornamental wear.

8 ST ANNE’S POINT

This is where the automatic
lighthouse for Milford Sound
stands, 27 metres above sea
level. It is visible from out at sea
for 14 kilometres.

9 DALE POINT

Is the entrance to Milford Sound
from the Tasman Sea. It’s
approximately 548 metres wide
and up to 300 metres deep.

10 THE ELEPHANT

This mountain is in the shape of
an elephant’s head. The ‘trunk’,
forming part of the hanging
valley, runs up the ridge to a
summit of 1,507 metres and to
the top of the ‘elephant’s head’.

11 MOUNT PEMBROKE

Is one of the highest mountains
adjoining the fiord at 2,014
metres and is permanently
snow-capped. The glacier
on Mount Pembroke is the
remnant of the original glacier
that carved the fiord. Several
streams from the melting snow
run down the mountain forming
the Harrison River.

12 SEAL ROCK

Is one of the few areas in the
fiord where the Southern fur
seal is able to climb up out of the
water onto the rocks. These seals
inhabit the fiord all year round.

13 STIRLING FALLS

Dropping 155 metres, Stirling
Falls is one of two permanent
waterfalls in the fiord. They
were originally named after
Captain Stirling, one of the early
explorers in the area.

14 LION MOUNTAIN

Situated on the northern side of
the fiord rising to a height
of 1,301 metres. The mountain’s
correct name is Mt Kimberly, but
because its shape so strongly
resembles that of a crouching
lion, this more descriptive name
has been retained.

15 HARRISON COVE

The only natural anchorage in
the fiord used during the early
1800s by whalers and sealers.
The Milford Sound Underwater
Observatory and Southern
Discoveries kayaking trips are
located here.

16 BOWEN FALLS

The higher of the two permanent
waterfalls in Milford Sound,
Bowen Falls drops 161 metres
from a hanging valley in the
Darren Mountain Range.



MILFORD SOUND
Pocket Guide to

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HELPING TO PROTECT MILFORD SOUND'S NATIVE SPECIES

Southern Discoveries is passionate about preserving Milford Sound's beauty for future generations. We're proud to partner with the Fiordland Conservation Trust and Department of Conservation on the Sinbad Sanctuary Project. It's a pest control programme that helps threatened native species in Sinbad Gully increase in number, with the long term aim of reintroducing species that are no longer present.

Native birds currently found in Sinbad Gully include tokoeka/kiwi, whio/blue duck, weka, kākā, kea and rock wren, as well as three species of threatened lizard: the Sinbad skink, Cascade gecko and cryptic skink. This is thought to be one of the largest alpine lizard communities in the world. Sinbad Gully is also one of the last places where kākāpō were found in their natural habitat, making this owl parrot an obvious candidate for translocation when the area is pest free.



Most famous peak
MITRE PEAK
— 1,692M —

LENGTH
16KM

Widest
POINT
3KM



Annual rainfall
OVER 600CM

AVERAGE
DEPTH
330M

SPOT THE SKINK

KIDS – CAN YOU FIND ALL 8 HIDDEN SKINKS?



Milford Sound is the wettest inhabited place in New Zealand and one of the wettest places on earth with an average 182 rainy days per year.



To refer to Milford Sound as a sound is actually incorrect as it's a fiord. Sounds are valleys created by rivers. Fiords are valleys created by glaciers.

THERE'S EVEN MORE TO SEE UNDER THE SURFACE!

Discover a whole new world of local marine creatures through the large windows of the Milford Sound Underwater Observatory, suspended 10 metres below the surface of the Piopiotahi Marine Reserve.

The top few metres of Milford Sound is made up of fresh water from the mountain run-off and rivers, and the layer below is salt water from the sea. The top layer, stained dark by the tannins from the surrounding forest, decreases the amount of light that penetrates the water below. This is what is known as deep water emergence.

An amazing example of deep water emergence is black coral, which is a living colony of tiny, white anemone-like animals covering a tough black skeleton. It usually only occurs at depths of 50 metres and beyond, so it's rare to see at just 10 metres deep.



ASK ONE OF OUR BOAT HOSTS ABOUT ADDING THE UNDERWATER OBSERVATORY TO YOUR CRUISE



Say hello to
The NEW ZEALAND FUR SEAL

I live in Milford Sound all year round. You'll find me relaxing on seal rock during the day after a busy night hunting for squid and fish. I can dive up to 380 metres deep and can spend up to 15 minutes underwater.



Kia ora from
The BOTTLENOSED DOLPHIN

I'm one of the largest dolphins in New Zealand and can grow up to 3.8 metres in length. I love riding the bow wave of boats and our friends the Dusky dolphins sometimes join us.



Introducing
The FIORDLAND CRESTED PENGUIN

I'm also known as a Tawaki, which is my Māori name. I'm quite rare and special so it's always exciting to see me. I breed annually and return to the same nest site and mate from year to year. My breeding season is August–November.

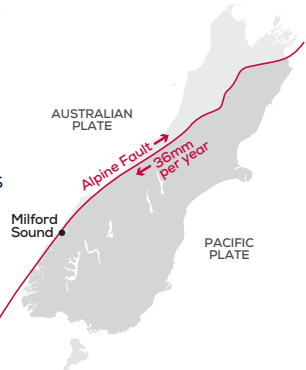


Meet
The KEA

I'm friendly, mischevious, smart and inquisitive. You'll sometimes find me chewing on your car along the road to Milford Sound. Even though I might seem hungry, please don't feed me because it's not good for me!

GEOLOGICAL ACTIVITY

One of the world's major plate boundary faults – the Alpine Fault – crosses the mouth of Milford Sound. The Australian plate slides sideways and is pushed beneath Fiordland at 36 millimetres per year, forcing plate rocks upwards to form the mountains.



Milford Sound has two permanent waterfalls, Stirling Falls and Bowen Falls, and hundreds of temporary falls. Bowen Falls provides hydro-electric power and water supply for all of Milford Sound.

GLACIATION

Milford Sound was carved out of the rocks by glaciers. During the most recent glaciation period, which peaked around 20,000 years ago, glaciers extended offshore beyond the fiords and only small portions of the mountains were exposed above the ice.

Global warming caused the glaciers to retreat and the sea level to rise, filling Milford Sound with water long before the first humans arrived in New Zealand.