

PLANET SCUBA PRESENTS:

THE SARDINE RUN

JUNE 21 ST-JUNE 29 TH 2019

The Sardine Run - a unique and unexplained phenomenon of millions of sardines traveling up the east coast of South Africa occurring from May to July, causing a frenzy of excitement amongst everyone and everything that comes into contact with them.

These small fish migrate from the colder waters of the Cape into the warm sub-tropical waters of the former Transkei (northern [Eastern Cape](#)) and [KwaZulu-Natal](#) in a northwards direction, coming close to shore in the South Coast area during autumn and winter, moving further offshore in the Durban area and finally, disappearing into the vast blue yonder.

Because of the cold currents along this stretch of coastline and their appetite for plankton, these fish converge close to the shoreline and to the surface, making ideal targets for hungry predators and perfect viewing for snorkelers and scuba divers.

A FEEDING FRENZY



The sardines shoal closely together minimizing their chances of being taken by predators. Picture tens of thousands of birds plunging from the sky, feeding on the fish, with larger game fish and numerous species of sharks all feasting on the wealth of food that is available. The numbers and variety of sharks is astounding: Bronze Whalers, Zambezies, Hammerheads, Coppers and Great Whites can be seen by the hundreds. Bottlenose and Common dolphins join in the excitement and employ a hunting strategy that works the shoals into what is referred to as a "baitball". By working together, like sheepdogs in a field of sheep, the dolphins herd the sardines into a tight ball and push them towards the surface. The dolphins then pounce on them, gorging themselves on the tiny fish.

AN UNEXPLAINED PHENOMENON

In South Africa, the main spawning grounds for these fish are off the Southern Cape coast, where the adults gather for a prolonged breeding season through the spring and early summer. Their eggs are simply released into the water, fertilized and left to drift off in the open ocean. The ocean currents carry most of the developing larvae westwards and northwards into the waters of the Atlantic Ocean along the West Coast. Therefore, the migration of large shoals of sardines into the waters of southern KwaZulu-Natal during the winter months, remains an unexplained phenomenon!

This is an event for everyone to enjoy - be it bird watchers, marine-life enthusiasts, amateur or highly experienced divers or snorkelers. Experience the **Sardine Run** beneath the waves or above. Either way it has been described as one of the greatest marine spectacles on earth.

Pricing and details on the flip side. Trip limited to 21 friends/divers- this is an ambitious exciting trip—we will try to follow the week in South Africa with a Botswana Safari and a 2nd week of diving in Mozambique.

SARDINE RUN ITINERARY

Day 1

On arrival at Durban International Airport, you will be greeted by a Seal Expeditions representative, who will brief you on what to expect from your trip. Transfer to the Mbotyi River Lodge by road, which is approximately a four-hour scenic drive from the airport. At check-in you will be given a brief orientation of the following days' events, and informed on other activities on offer in and around the area.

Overnight at Mbotyi River Lodge

Day 2 - 8

Enjoy an action-packed few days enjoying phenomenal marine-life and other activities in the area.

The boat launches from the beach between 06h30 to 07h30 depending on the sardine action, the daylight and your choice of an earlier breakfast at the lodge, or breakfast on board the boat.

A microlight is on hand to brief the boat of the happenings in the water within a 20 km radius of the shore. Once the boat has found the sardine action, (usually by the large flocks of sea birds or the schools of dolphins in the vicinity of the fish) you can choose to either witness the spectacle by snorkel or Scuba, or from the deck.

The choice is yours to enjoy a packed lunch on board the boat or return to the lodge in the early afternoon for a late lunch. Enjoy the remainder of the day at your leisure. Choose from the following activities on offer : a microlight flip, horse riding, walks or scenic drives.

A scrumptious dinner is enjoyed at the lodge each evening, followed by a relaxed discussion with your skipper and microlight pilot on the next day's arrangements.

Overnight at Mbotyi River Lodge

Day 9

Breakfast will be served at the lodge before check out and transfer to the airport for your departure flight.

\$4295.00 Cash or Check pricing (\$4425.00 credit card)

Our pricing includes 8 nights lodging, all meals, taxes, transfers. We will help with airfare by trying to arrange group pricing. A NON-REFUNDABLE deposit of \$860.00 per person is required to secure a reservation. (If you need to cancel we will assist you in reselling your space to other customers.)

References:

<http://www.sardinerun.com/default.asp>

<https://www.facebook.com/sealexpeditions/>

<http://mbotyi.co.za/>

https://www.tripadvisor.com/Hotel_Review-g1749719-d1749458-Reviews-Mbotyi_River_Lodge-Mbotyi_Eastern_Cape.html

Additional details on request!

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