

It's all about transparency

Glass Bottom Boat owner, Scott Pennington, has worked hard to make this year easier and safer for visitors to the Goat Island marine reserve. 'The boat is no longer going right around the island in order to create a safe zone next to Goat island and through the channel.

Together with the other operators, we've created a management plan for the reserve to give everyone the most enjoyable and safest outcome.'

Glass Bottom Boat Tours is not just about the boat either. A visit to their website shows you can hire snorkelling gear and kayaks, and they also organise group tours and team building days. 'We've also gone paperless at the beach,' Scott tells me. 'It's all done on tablets now so you can talk to any of our crew and they can multi-book on the spot for any of our activities.'

For the peak summer months, however, booking ahead through the website is the best way to ensure a great day at the reserve, and pre-booking and multi-bookings attract good discounts.

An important aspect of Scott's operation this summer is the arrival of new team members who he is nurturing into long-term roles with the company. 'I've loved working with my daughter in this amazing environment so it's great to have a father and son joining us, and sisters from Germany. We're very family oriented and we love hosting families.'

A trip on the Glass Bottom Boat will take you via the kelp, kina, eagle rays and big snapper, to North Reef and the caves at the back of Goat Island, before returning via any other highlights that can change daily. Scott encourages guests to take the time to do all the activities available during their visit – book the boat, kayak and snorkelling – and all you need to do is bring your lunch.

'People want to go back in time when they visit Goat Island,' says Scott. 'They want to see things the way they used to be. So it's not about building it out and commercialising it, it's about sustainability and preserving that experience of seeing a pristine environment. Our buzz is seeing people come out of the water with a grin from ear to ear.'

Glass Bottom Boat Tours will be running seven days a week from 15 December through until the end of February, and they run 6-9 trips per day depending on weather and tide.

glassbottomboat.co.nz