

Summary of Procedures for Vessels Visiting Cenderawasih Bay National Park: How to View Whale Sharks and Dive Additional Sites

IMPORTANT: THE SITUATION IN CENDERAWASIH BAY IS IN CONSTANT FLUX. WHILE EVERY ATTEMPT HAS BEEN MADE TO KEEP THESE PROCEDURES UP TO DATE, PLEASE CHECK IN WITH PARK OFFICIALS TO DETERMINE THE MOST CURRENT PROCEDURES. RELY ON YOUR RANGER AND BE PATIENT WHEN ASKING PERMISSION TO DIVE NEAR VILLAGES

- 1) All ships/tourists entering Teluk Cendrawasih National Park must first obtain a SIMAKSI (Surat Izin Masuk Kawasan) from the BBTNTC park authority offices in either Manokwari or Nabire. You will be required to show various ship paperwork and passenger list and photocopies of passenger passport/visas (and visa entry stamps) and surat jalan kepolisian and pay a series of entry/activity fees as per the list in the "Tata Cara SIMAKSI" document. NOTE: to arrange the SIMAKSI, the point person at BBTNTC is Ibu Esie Mega (HP: 0813-241-33328; Ph: 0986-212303; Fax: 0986-214719; email: telukcenderawasih@gmail.com).
- 2) As part of the SIMAKSI process, you will also be assigned a park ranger that must accompany the vessel during your itinerary in the park. This ranger will take care of reporting to the various villages/police/koramil military installations. In some cases the ranger may ask for a small payment in the form of cash, cigarettes, etc. that will be made to the police and Koramil. You are responsible for providing accommodation and food for the ranger while on board, as well as a per diem to be agreed ahead of time. NOTE: it is possible to have ranger board/disembark your vessel in Sorong or Biak if you don't intend to do a Manokwari-Manokwari return trip. You will, of course, have to pay for their airfare between these ports and Manokwari.
- 3) Upon reaching Kwatisore Bay to view the whale sharks, liveboards should send a tender with the accompanying park ranger and a representative from the ship (could be captain, dive guide, or cruise director - but someone from the ship) in to Kwatisore village to report. The ranger will have with him the prepared paperwork to report to the koramil military installation and the local police resort. The village has now passed a village law that codifies the Rp 300,000 per person village whale shark fee. This is no longer a voluntary donation, but rather a fee for all tourists and foreign crew. For visiting foreign yachts, this fee must be paid not only for guests, but also for all foreign ship crew. (Please note this same rule applies in Raja Ampat to the entrance fee system as well - foreign yacht crew are considered visitors to the region and obligated to pay entrance fees.)

The ranger and ship rep should then carry on to the village chief's house, and at that time request the presence of a few "tokoh adat/tokoh gereja/tokoh perempuan/tokoh pemuda" or "kepala sekolah" to present the donation on behalf of the ship. Please note that it is VERY IMPORTANT that the donation be made in the presence of at least 3 representatives of the village, including the village chief.

Please do not simply hand an envelope to the village chief inside of his house. This is an excellent way to create conflict, as it sows deep seeds of suspicion on behalf of the other community members and is not fair to the village or the village chief. The donation needs to be done transparently and to a small gathering - noting that on behalf of the ship's (number of) guests, you are donating (so much Rp/person) at Rp 300,000 per person to the village's school fund. Note: a few key village elders you can involve in the donation process include (in addition to village chief and kepala sekolah/guru): Bpk Soleman Wopairi - ketua jemaat; Bpk. Julianus Refasi - Ketua kelompok pengawas TNTC Wilayah I, and Bpk Ferdinan Inggeruwi - tokoh adat.

PLEASE NOTE: this reporting and donating procedure should take no more than 30-45 minutes at most, and should not inconvenience the guests in any way. As of April, 2014 there is now a "village tourism bagan" that is anchored just off Kwatisore, which is run by the villagers. Liveboards are required to check with this bagan first to see if whale sharks are congregating here. If so, the villagers would like for visitors to snorkel there first. If there are no sharks at the village bagan or another group is there first, it is then permissible to look for whale sharks around other bagans. The village is trying to standardize prices and involve villagers in this tourism event, and they prefer that someone from village accompany you to other bagans and ensure the price is the standard.

If you follow this procedure, you are respecting the wishes of the traditional owners, while also ensuring that the community is actually deriving benefits from whale shark tourism and thereby providing a strong incentive to protect the whale sharks long into the future.

4) Regarding the bagans themselves, their cost has become quite inflated, upwards of Rp. 1-2 million. These fees cover revenue lost when the fishermen throw their catch to the whale sharks. After an agreement is set with a bagan, make sure to note that you do not want to see any fishing lines in the water during the interactions with guests and whale sharks, and that you do not want to see the bagan fishers standing on or otherwise touching the sharks. Of course, make sure all guests never touch the whale sharks.

5) WWF and the park have put together a brochure on the code of conduct for interacting with the whale sharks. This brochure is available for any boat that arranges a SIMAKSI when you arrange your SIMAKSI.