

# Nature tours stretch to luxurious lengths

**H**ARVEY Raven scratches his beard and looks contentedly out over Monkey Mia beach. "WA has it all," he says.

"But the people who appreciate this state the most are almost always from overseas."

Harvey has an Indiana Jones kind of ruggedness. With his deeply tanned skin, well-worn leather boots and a hearty laugh, you just know this man wouldn't be fazed by much that nature can dish up.

He also has what many would consider one of the best jobs in the world. Harvey owns and operates Monkey Mia Wildsights, a business offering cruises, outback tours and guided walks through some of the world's most pristine natural surroundings.

His luxurious catamaran, named Shotover, takes visitors on early morning and sunset cruises to see the dolphins, as well as dugongs, turtles, manta rays, flying fish, sea snakes and even whales in season.

Few people would know that Monkey Mia is home to one of the world's most significant tiger shark research programs.

"It's not called Shark Bay for nothing," laughs Harvey.

The biggest shark he's seen in the waters off Monkey Mia was 6m long.

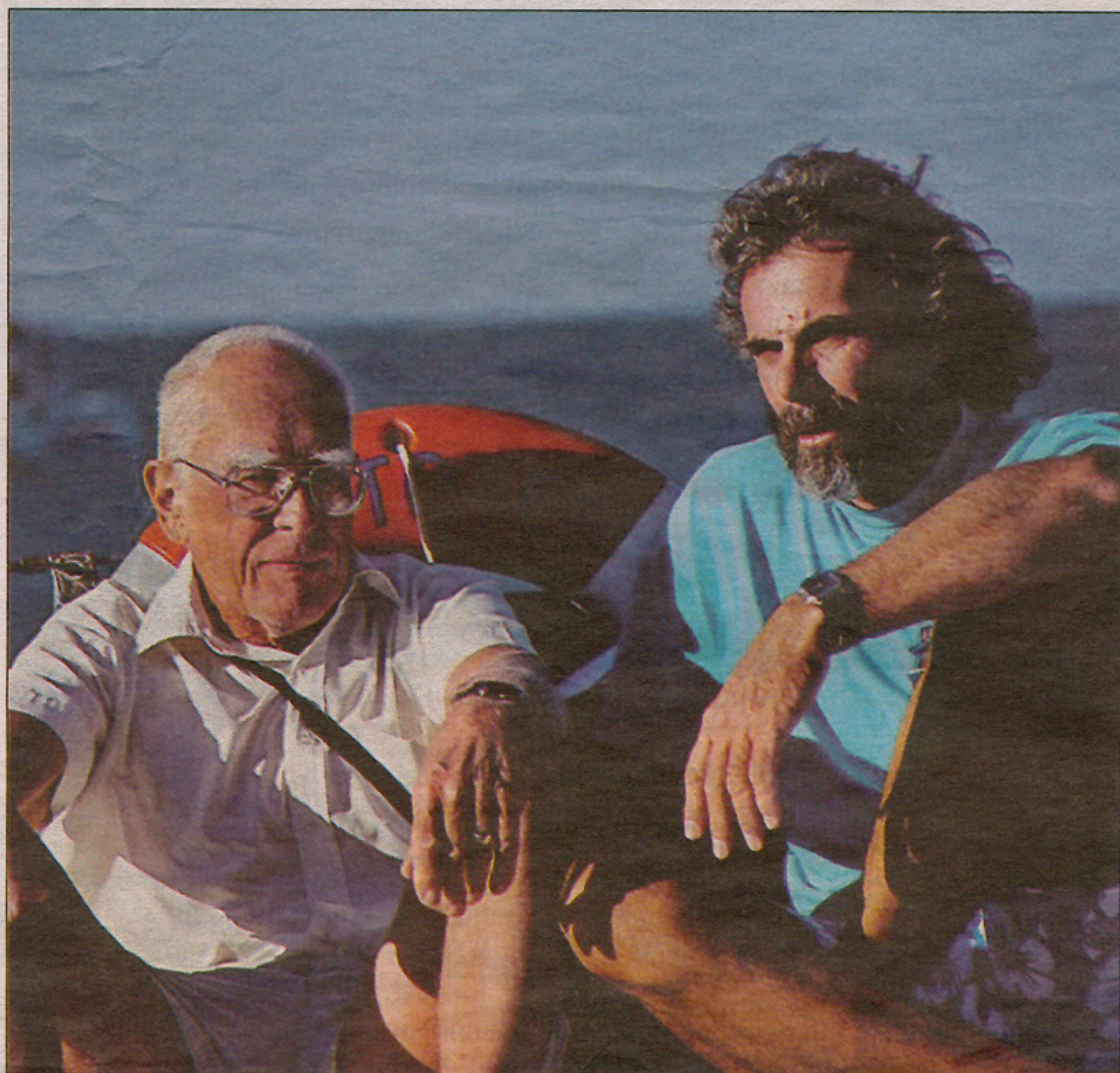
"I actually thought it was a whale shark at first," he says.

Harvey has plenty of tales to tell about his experiences with the marine life at Monkey Mia.

"We came across a shark trying to eat a turtle in the shallows so we drifted quite close. The shark ended up getting into water that was too shallow, turned around and collided with our hull.

"Lucky for the turtle, the shark spat it out. We mucked up nature a bit that day but the tourists on board couldn't believe what they'd seen."

Harvey is very much aware of the importance of the en-



**ON DECK:** Harvey Raven, right, and a guest on the deck of his luxurious catamaran.



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vironment. As the recipient of national and international environmental tourism awards, it is a responsibility he takes very seriously.

"We always put the interests of the environment ahead of our guests. There is a temptation to do something that no one is going to know about, but if we don't look after the animals they will leave."

As Harvey prepares to celebrate 10 years of business at

Monkey Mia, he has launched a new range of land-based tours, one of which is conducted in a stretch limousine.

"I've got four kids and we needed a bigger car," he says.

"Then I thought it would make a great vehicle for a tour — seeing the rugged outback from the comfort of a limo."

Harvey's eccentricity and willingness to give new things a try has served him well. In addition to the limousine

tours he is also offering night time astrological guided walks on the beach, which are proving popular.

But Harvey and wife Fran plan to leave the business in the capable hands of his staff next year to explore other parts of Australia.

"We don't know anywhere else in the world we'd like to live but it's always worth having a look to see what new adventure is out there," he says.

Information about Monkey Mia Wildsights at [www.monkeymiawildsights.com.au](http://www.monkeymiawildsights.com.au), call 1800 241 481 or email [bookings@monkeymiawildsights.com.au](mailto:bookings@monkeymiawildsights.com.au)