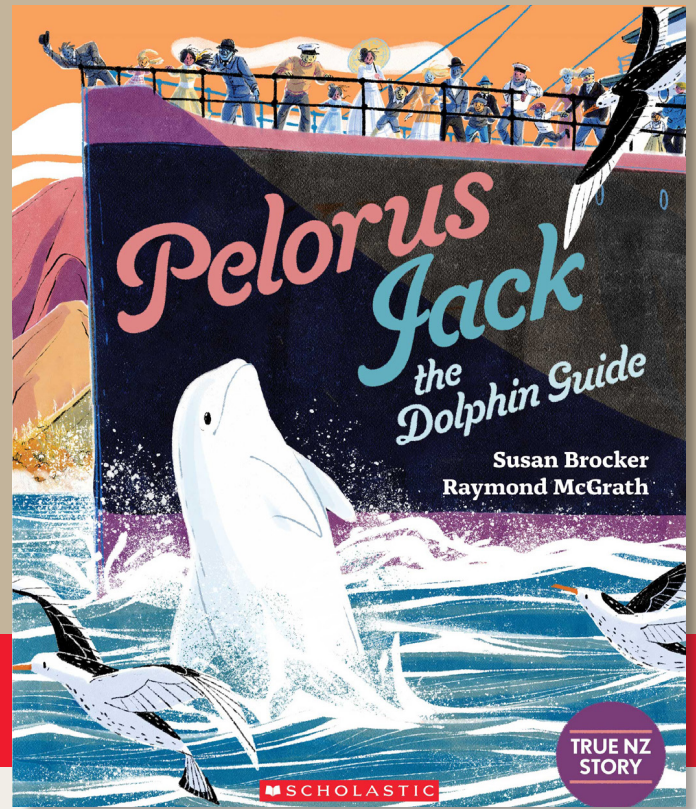


Pelorus Jack the Dolphin Guide

By Susan Brocker

Illustrated by Raymond McGrath

- Reading • Writing • Thinking Skills •
- Social Studies • Science



Synopsis

A true New Zealand story of a dolphin that captured the hearts of passengers in the 1880s.

This is the heart-warming tale of Pelorus Jack, a rare white Risso's dolphin who delighted passengers over 100 years ago as he guided steamships through the rough waters of French Pass into the calm waters of the Marlborough Sounds. Passengers from around the world, even royalty, came to see him and it is believed he became the first sea creature to be protected by law in any country.

A life-size bronze statue of Pelorus Jack stands at Collinet Point, overlooking French Pass.

About the Author

Susan Brocker has written over 50 fiction and non-fiction books for older children and teens, which have been published worldwide. She has a history degree and a love of social history that is reflected in her books. Susan also has a close affinity with animals and lives with her husband and many pets in a lovely old villa on a small farm near Tauranga. *Pelorus Jack the Dolphin Guide* is the latest in a picture book series based on true NZ animal tales which include *Bess the Brave War Horse*; *Friday the Rebel Dog* and *Mrs Chippy the Cat*. Other titles with Scholastic are the middle grade fiction stories *Kiwis at War: 1914 Riding into War* and *ICE*.

About the Illustrator

Raymond McGrath is an award-winning animation director, illustrator, designer and writer who has been working in children's television and advertising for around 20 years. As well as illustrating books for other authors, such as the award-winning *The Little Ghost Who Lost Her Boo!* and Susan Brocker's true-life animal stories, he has written and illustrated several books himself, including *That's What Dragons Do!* Raymond lives in rural Auckland with his wife and four children, some cats and a Schnauzer.

Writing and Illustration Style

Pelorus Jack the Dolphin Guide is a creative non-fiction picture book, telling the story of the playful antics of an unusual Risso's dolphin that guided ships through the challenging waters of Marlborough Sounds, becoming a cultural icon in Aotearoa New Zealand at the turn of the twentieth century.

Told in the third person, the writing is descriptive and well-crafted, rich with figurative language and interesting vocabulary. Famous characters are woven into the narrative, including English writer Rudyard Kipling and legendary Polynesian explorer Kupe. This beautifully written true New Zealand story connects the reader to moments in the nation's history, such as the passing of the first law in any country to protect an individual sea creature, driven by the love of the nation for Pelorus Jack. In the back of the book, there is background information on Pelorus Jack and the overwhelmingly positive public response to him.

Stylised watercolour illustrations in a controlled, subdued palette add greatly to the book's appeal and help create a sense of time and place. The artwork is evocative of the New Zealand landscape, from playful, bubbly underwater scenes to mist-covered meetings of mountains and ocean, complete with whirling seabirds. Pacific iconography is used to reinforce the concept of legendary taniwha as protectors and guides.

Shared Learning and Discussion Points

Look at the front cover and ask the students:

- What do you think this book is going to be about?
- What is a guide?
- Where and when do you think this story is set?

Read the blurb and ask:

- Can you think of any other animal guides?
- Why would an animal help humans in this way?

Before reading, identify Cook Strait on a map of Aotearoa New Zealand. Explain that people used to travel across Cook Strait via a ferry that travelled from Wellington to Nelson. Point out Wellington, Nelson, the Marlborough Sounds, Pelorus Sound and French Pass and explain that Pelorus Jack got his name because he guided ships between Pelorus Sound and French Pass.

Comprehension questions

- What does the illustration on the endpapers (first and last double-page spread) represent?
- Why has the author described the dolphin as 'moon-white' and the water as 'emerald-green'? What kind of words are these? How has the author used alliteration in the first two sentences? How does the text and illustration set the scene? (pp.2-3)
- How has the author used verbs (action/doing words) to tell the reader that the dolphin is adventurous and playful? What is the dolphin looking to find? How do the illustrations convey that the dolphin is young, friendly and playful? (pp.4-5)
- What is the 'huge creature'? What does the word 'bow' mean in this context? Which sentence is a simile? Which piece of text tells the reader that the dolphin is young and lonely? (pp.6-7)
- Why is Pelorus Jack described as a 'ghostly dolphin'? Why did the crew member want to shoot it? How do you think the people on board the ship felt when they saw the dolphin? (pp.8-9)
- What kind of words are 'joyfully' and 'playfully' (adverbs)? What purpose do they serve? What does the word 'snubbed' mean? Why did the dolphin prefer steel-hulled steamer ships? (pp.10-11)
- Which sentence uses two examples of alliteration? What clue in the illustration tells you that the ship is from Aotearoa New Zealand? How has the illustrator shown which two people are talking? What does 'bespectacled' mean? What does 'ancestral' mean? (pp.12-13)
- Who was Rudyard Kipling? What is a 'navigator'? What is a 'taniwha'? Who are Hana's 'people'? Why has the illustrator used a different style in the picture of Kupe and the taniwha? (pp.14-15)
- What is a 'fishy tale'? Why are dolphins mammals and not fish? (pp.16-17)
- What 'crossing' is Hana making? What does 'tīpuna' mean? What is a 'sea shanty'? Which two examples of figurative language has the author used in the last sentence? What is meant by 'phosphorescent light'? Have you ever seen phosphorescence in the water? (pp.18-19)



teacher toolkit

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- Why did people come from ‘all over the world’ to see Pelorus Jack? What does the word ‘frolic’ mean? What kind of word is it? What is a ‘VIP’? (pp.20–21)
- Using the illustration as a guide, how did the crew feel about the ‘gunman’ trying to shoot Pelorus Jack? Why did passengers cheer ‘when Pelorus Jack leapt from the waves to do a back-flip’? (pp.22–23)
- Based on the information in the text on p.24, what adjective best describes Pelorus Jack? What is meant by a ‘sticky (or salty) end’? (pp.24–25)
- Why did people want Pelorus Jack to be protected by law? What effect would this have? (pp.26–27)
- How was Pelorus Jack good for tourism? Which popular tourist activity in Aotearoa New Zealand today could be said to have developed out of people’s relationship with Pelorus Jack? (pp.28–29)
- Do you think Hana is a real character or a fictional character? What makes you think that?
- People loved Pelorus Jack. Some people, such as Hana, saw him as a guardian, appearing in times of need. Others saw him as a delightful, friendly sea creature in need of protection, a tourist attraction, or as an important symbol of Aotearoa New Zealand. How do you think of Pelorus Jack?

Activities

ACTIVITY 1: BECOME A MARINE MAMMAL PROTECTOR

It is believed that Pelorus Jack was the first individual animal protected by law in the world. Today all dolphins, whales, seals and sea lions are protected in Aotearoa New Zealand. This means that it is an offence to harass, disturb, injure or kill them.

Design a poster encouraging marine mammal protection. Include a title, a main image and some of the following information.

There are many ways people can protect marine mammals, including:

- Not making loud noises around them
- Not feeding them or throwing any rubbish nearby

On Land

- Staying at least 20 metres away from seals and sea lions
- Keeping dogs on a leash and well away from seals and sea lions

At Sea

- Not circling marine mammals or moving through groups
- Travelling at a very low speed in boats when around marine mammals
- Not swimming with whales and staying away from dolphin pods containing juveniles

ACTIVITY 2: TALES OF TANIWHA

Some people believe that Pelorus Jack was the taniwha Tuhirangi, in the form of a dolphin. Research to learn more about Tuhirangi and other taniwha, such as Takauere, Karutahi, Kaiwhare, Ureia, Āraiteuru, Hotu-puku, Ngārara Huarau, Haumapuhia, Ngake and Whātaimai. Is there a taniwha associated with your area? Write the tale of your chosen taniwha.

ACTIVITY 3: WRITE A POSTCARD

Pelorus Jack was a tourist symbol, even appearing on postcards. Design your own Pelorus Jack postcard and write a message on the other side, pretending that you have seen Aotearoa New Zealand’s most famous marine mammal. Who will you send your postcard to? Don’t forget to include the recipient’s address, and design a stamp for the top-right corner.

ACTIVITY 4: BE A DOLPHIN DETECTIVE

Research the nine different dolphin species found in the waters around Aotearoa New Zealand. Present your findings on a chart or as Google Slides.

ACTIVITY 5: FROM BOOK TO BOOK

In *Pelorus Jack the Dolphin Guide*, Hana has a conversation with a man named Rudyard Kipling. This gentleman was a famous writer. You can read about some of Kipling’s ‘bears, tigers, elephants and wolves’ in his children’s books *Just So Stories* and *The Jungle Book*. You might find these books in your school library.

Written by Frances McBeath



teacher toolkit

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