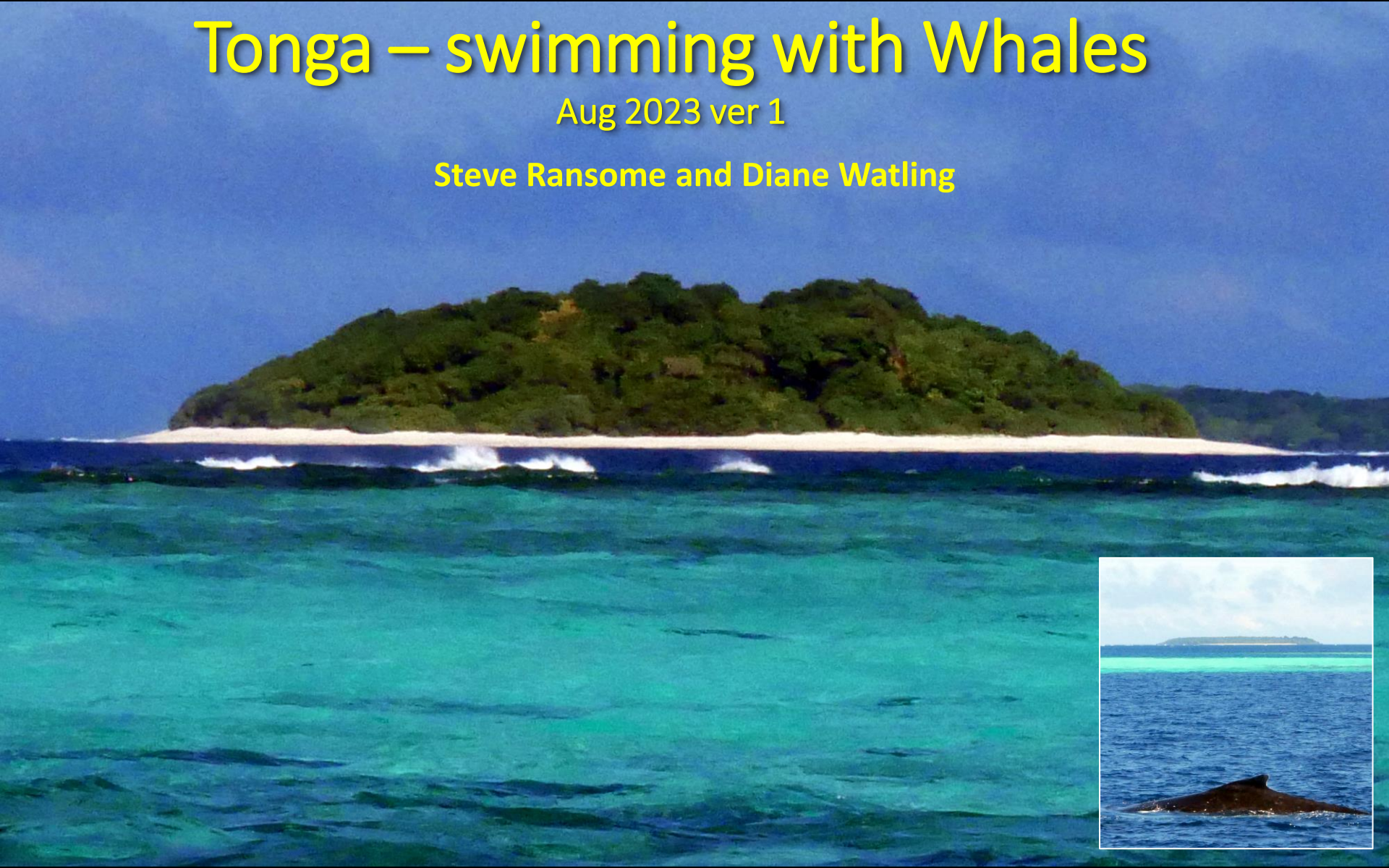


Tonga – swimming with Whales

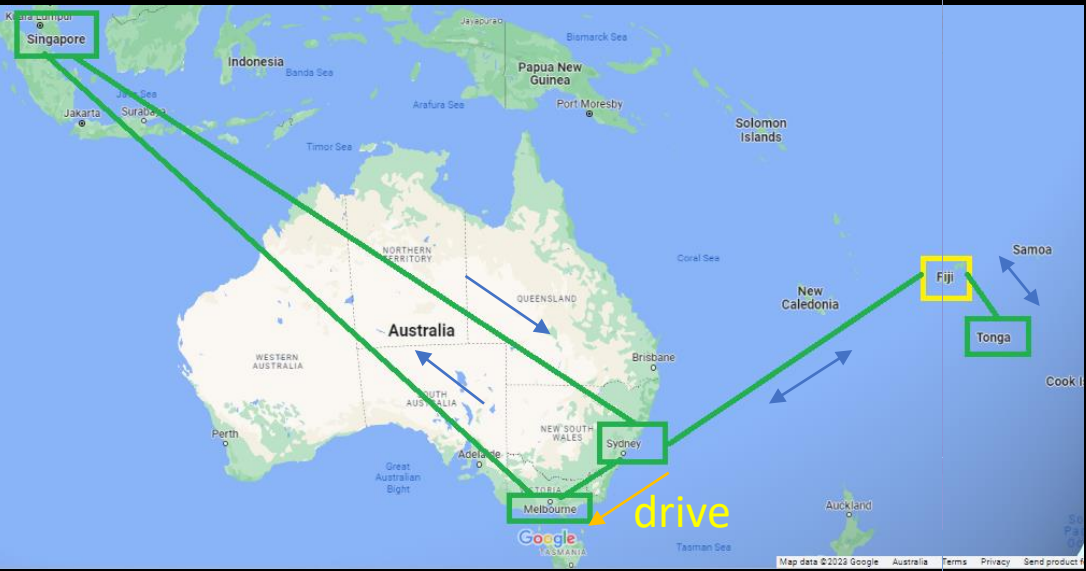
Aug 2023 ver 1

Steve Ransome and Diane Watling

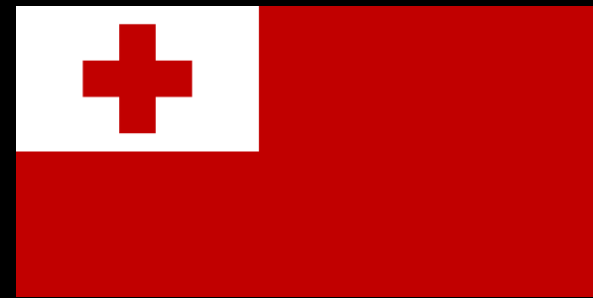


By plane from UK Singapore and Fiji airways via Singapore, Australia, Fiji to Vava'u, Tonga

- ✓ Humpback whales Mum and Calf in Southern Winter (August)
- ✗ Long air crossing four flights



Tonga



Capital	Nuku'alofa
and largest city	21°08'S 175°12'W
Official languages	Tongan English
Ethnic groups	97% Tongan
(2018[1])	0.7% Euronesians 2.3% others
Religion	96.9% Christianity
Demonym(s)	Tongan
Government	Unitary parliamentary semi-constitutional monarchy
• Monarch	Tupou VI
Independence	-
from the United Kingdom	-
• Independence declared	04-Jun-70
Area	-
• Total	748 km2 (289 sq mi) (175th)
Population	-
• 2021 census	100,209 ^[3] (199th)
Currency	Pa'anga (TOP)
Time zone	UTC+13
Driving side	left
Calling code	676

The harbour in the Town and a beach resort



**Two hotels we stayed in and watching football in the pub.
England's matches were on after midnight!**



The house we stayed in with private jetty



Some lovely flowers including Calliandra Brevpipes? Hibiscus and national

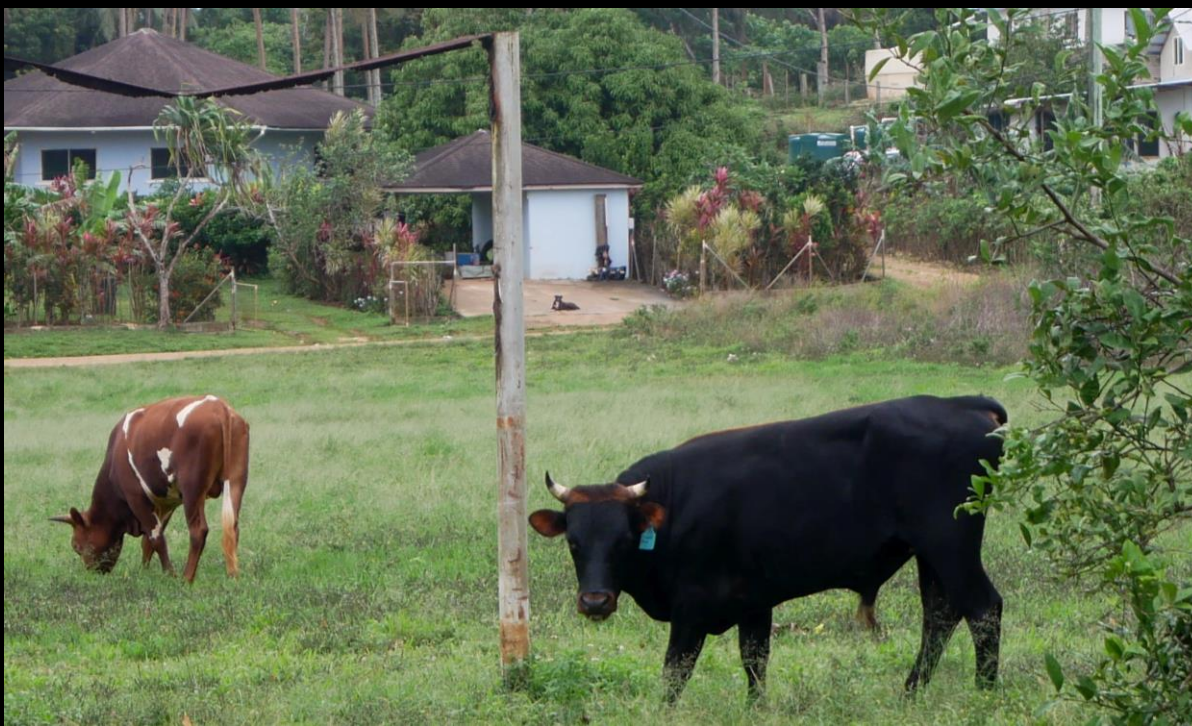
https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Calliandra_brevipes#/media/File:Calliandra_brevipes_01.JPG



Some Tongan street scenes



Typical Tongan creatures



Typical Tongan creatures



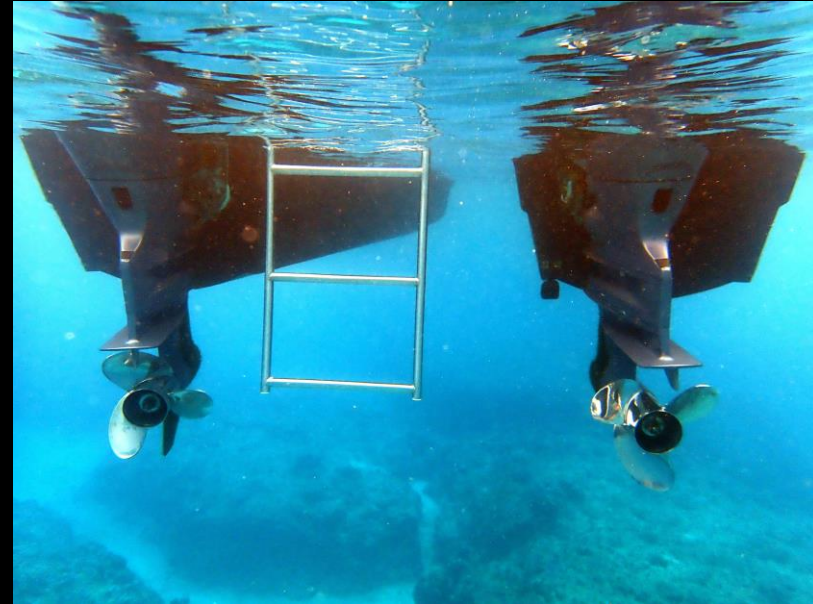
Tongan church



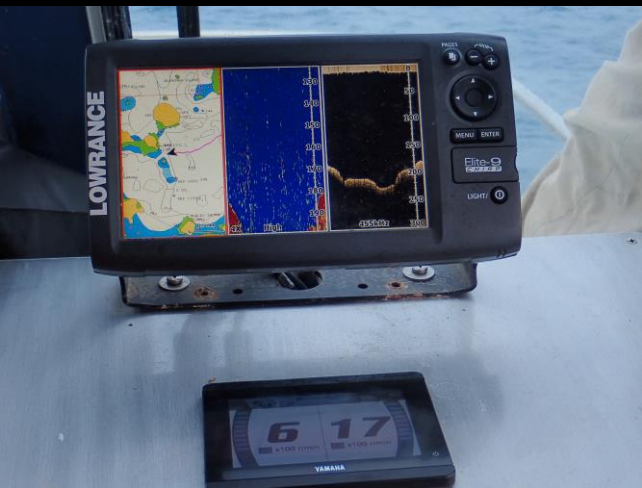
Going to see the whales from our house's private jetty



Our boat "No bananas"
- bananas are considered unlucky on a boat



Looking for whales with our Captain Billy and diver Lucky



Tongan island



Birds fishing



Going whale watching



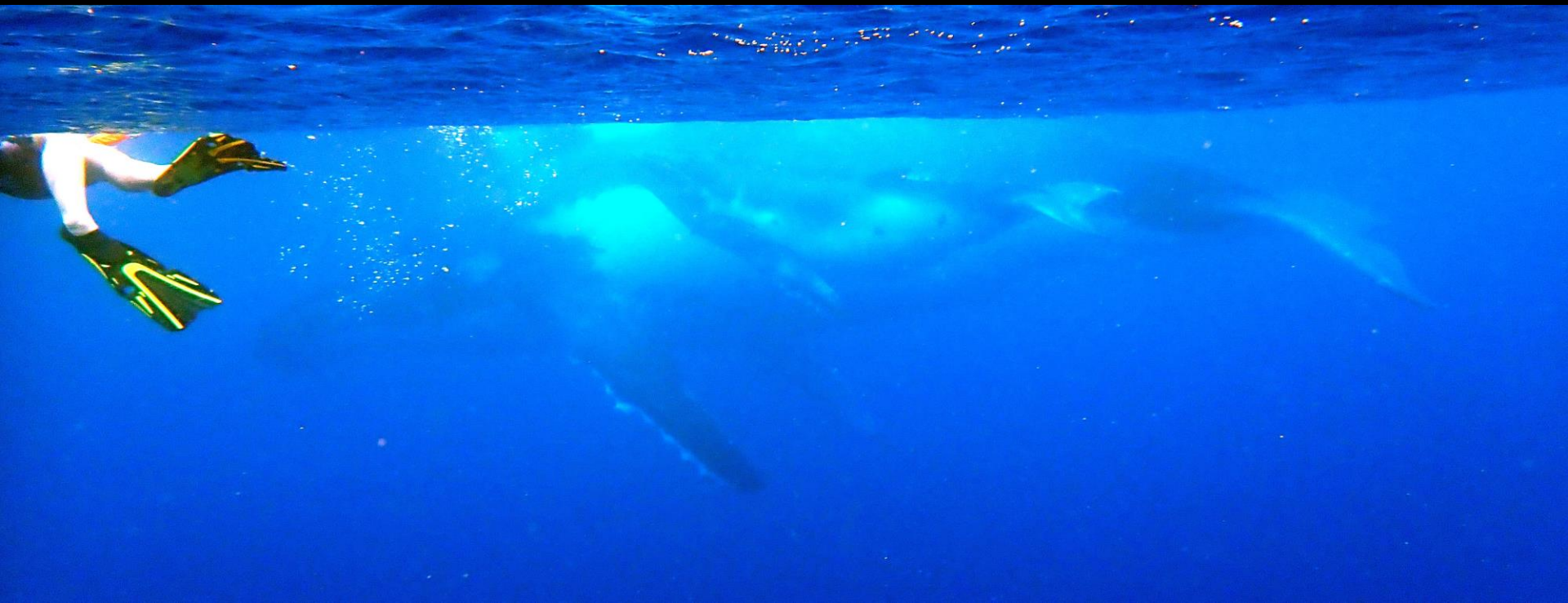
Me and Di



Someone jumps in from the boat to see if the whale is friendly (or not)



Our first mother and calf



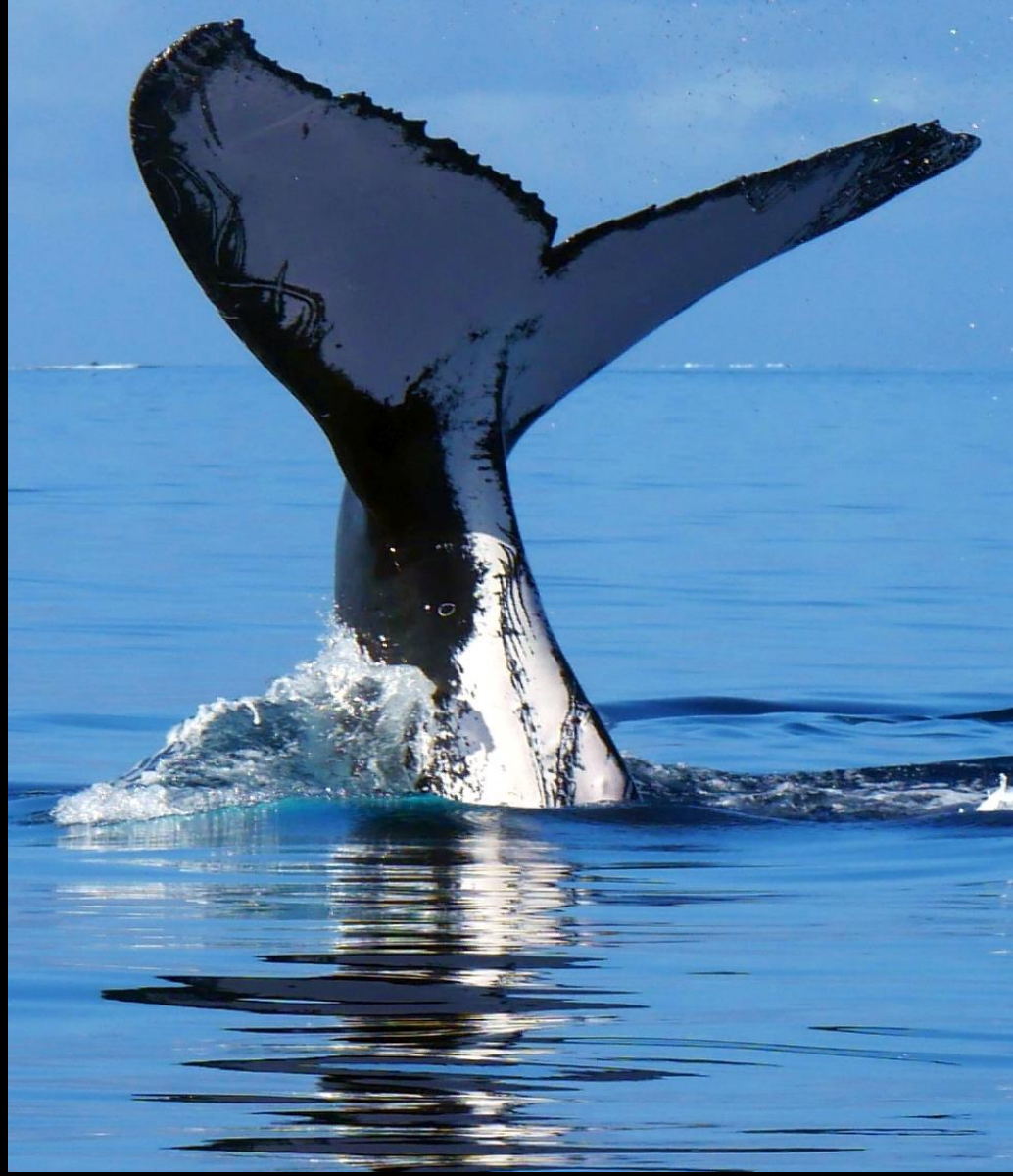
A whale passed right under the boat – reflection from light skin (see right)



Heat run



Tail fin vertical before deep dive
Water remains calm after dive



How close you can get!



Two adolescent whales (rear)
chasing baby and mum (front)



Mother, Calf and “escort”



Calf and Mum



Baby whale breaching



Whales breaching



Di near mother and calf (Grant's photo)



Me photographing whales (Grant's photo)



A small island near Vava'u where we stopped for lunch



Undercut cliffs on the islands from the south pacific tides

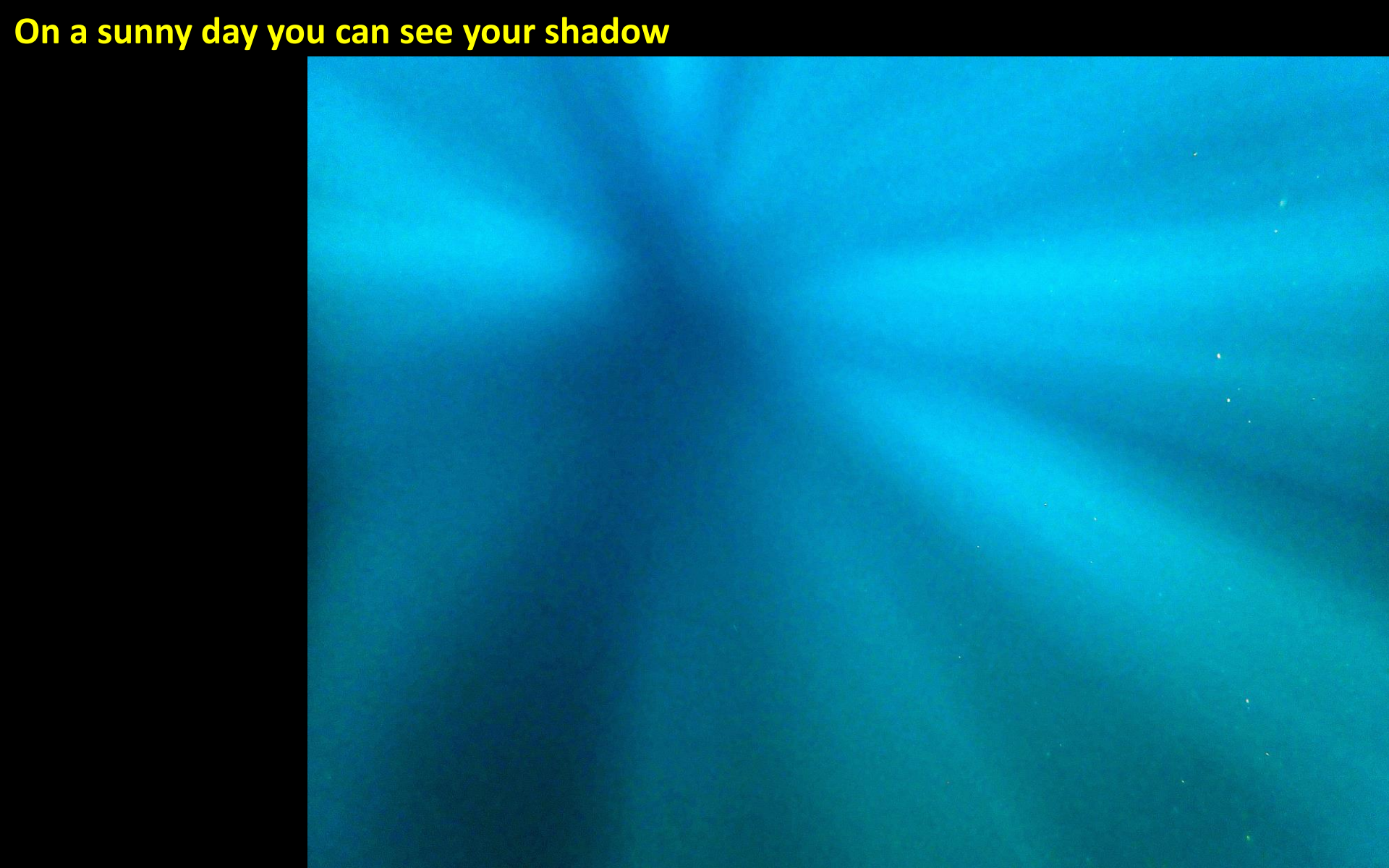


Mollyday 95 – as it was my Mother Molly's 95th birthday



Mollyday 95 – as it was my Mother Molly's 95th birthday





On a sunny day you can see your shadow

The sister boat to “no bananas” with 3 Americans and a Czech lady



Weird distortion of me from an underwater fish-eye lens



Calf and Mum

