



(Sir Peter Blake Trust, n.d.[c])

As at date of publication  
Archive



**Sir Peter Blake**

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**Sir Peter Blake and the Environment**

Peter's sailing life started in Bayswater in Auckland, New Zealand, in the 1950s where his backyard was the harbour filled with mangroves, bird and fish life. His childhood holidays were spent aboard a boat, camping and exploring and he developed a love, a sense of awe and appreciation for the natural world as he grew up.

Sailing holidays are about the journey more than the destination and Peter's parents encouraged him to appreciate the environment through bird and fish identification activities. He kept this love of the creatures of the sea throughout his life. No matter what was happening on the boat or how tired he might have been he always took time to watch the albatrosses and whales he encountered while sailing around the world.



[More about this image](#)

As a sailor you have to have a real feel for the elements - the wind, waves and tides - and Peter had a unique connection with them, understanding that the power of nature was awesome and with due respect, could be harnessed. Peter was a natural when it came to reading the weather and loved all the old traditions.

*Earth is a water planet on which the quality of water defines the quality of life. Good water, good life. Poor Water, poor life. No water, no life."*

— Sir Peter Blake

His environmental focus crystallised around his observations of albatrosses. When he began doing round the world races they were plentiful and over the years he observed their numbers diminish significantly. He connected this with the deterioration of our oceans and became determined to do something about it.

Having achieved all his major sailing goals, and because he felt he had gained so much from his career at sea, he wanted to give something back. He didn't want to see the albatross disappear from our skies altogether and he was determined to pour his energies into building public awareness of the threats facing the environment, particularly water.

After considering a role with the Cousteau Society he struck out to create his own organisation - Blakexpeditions. He planned a five year series of visits to key waterways of the world to draw attention to their plight and raise awareness regarding their importance to our lives.

Sir Peter was made a United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) Special Envoy in July 2001 and while visiting the Antarctic he commented in a speech to the UN:

*"Earth is a water planet on which the quality of water defines the quality of life," Sir Peter explained. "Good water, good life. Poor water, poor life. No water, no life."*

### Sir Peter Blake

"Having vision is not enough. Change comes through realising the vision and turning it into a reality. It is easy to espouse worthy goals, values and policies; the hard part is implementation."

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## Get Involved



The [Sir Peter Blake Trust \(/the-trust/\)](#) identifies and celebrates the next generation of New Zealand leaders, adventurers and environmental stewards.

Sir Peter Blake was an inspiring and visionary kiwi leader. The Trust keeps Sir Peter's leadership legacy alive by recognising and celebrating leaders across all fields and pursuits through the [Sir Peter Blake Leadership Awards \(/get-involved/sir-peter-blake-leadership-awards/\)](#) These Blake Leaders, awarded at the beginning of Leadership Week, join a growing group of individuals who follow in the footsteps of Sir Peter and possess many of the characteristics admired in him.

During [Leadership Week \(/get-involved/2013-leadership-week/\)](#), people of all ages from businesses, schools and organisations around New Zealand, take part in events which celebrate and develop leadership capability and motivate future leaders. Leadership Week culminates in [Red Socks Day \(/get-involved/red-socks-day/\)](#), when New Zealanders are encouraged to celebrate the memory of a great Kiwi leader by wearing a pair of Sir Peter's lucky red socks.

A life spent on the world's oceans instilled in Sir Peter Blake the certainty that action is needed to preserve and protect this precious resource. Today, the Trust seeks to carry on his work through the [Care for Our Coast \(/get-involved/care-for-our-coast/\)](#) programme, which involves thousands of school children developing awareness and cleaning up the marine environment. The annual [Sir Peter Blake Youth EnviroLeaders' Forum \(/get-involved/sir-peter-blake-youth-enviroleaders-forum/\)](#) empowers 50 young kiwis with knowledge and confidence to take action on topical environmental issues. Every year the Trust sends one young kiwi ambassador to [Antarctica \(/get-involved/antarctic-youth-ambassador/\)](#), a place Sir Peter found awe-inspiring, and in 2012 30 young New Zealanders journeyed to the Kermadec Islands as members of the inaugural [Young Blake Expedition](#).

### 2013 Programme Overview

[2013 Overview of Programmes \(pdf, 11.76MB\)](#)  
[\(/media/219695/the\\_sir\\_peter\\_blake\\_trust\\_2013\\_prospectus.pdf\)](#)

### News & Events



