

The New Zealand Catalina Preservation Society Incorporated has operated the PBY-5A Catalina ZK-PBY for over a quarter of a century, more than a third of the aircraft's existence. As custodians of New Zealand's iconic WWII flying boat, the group have supported community events across the country, educating the public in the role the aircraft and crew played whilst also allowing people to experience the spectacle of New Zealand's largest flying Warbird. The society have also raised funds and awareness of the charity it supports The Child Cancer Foundation and in doing so have enabled families with children, undergoing cancer treatment, to experience the pleasure of a flight in the Catalina and bring joy to them during tough times. The sponsored Cancer kids flights have been a highlight for both the society and families coming to enjoy a once in a lifetime exciting adventure.

Recent world events have challenged the ability to generate funds supporting the objectives of the society with the cancellation of several significant community events over the last 28 months. The society, a non profit organisation run by volunteers, recognises the increased challenges community event organisers face to sponsor the aircraft to attend regional events

Meanwhile the aircraft has been maintained in an airworthy condition and has been regularly serviced with continued volunteer and financial support from the membership. The aircraft has been subject to continued engineering improvements during the inactive period. It is envisaged the Catalina is able to fly for many more years to come.

The society has the long term welfare of the aircraft as its prime objective and has elected to sell the aircraft whilst remaining in good airworthy condition, being one of only a handful of active PBY-5A Catalinas in the world. It is unique amongst the active Catalinas, having a full passenger configured interior which is a significant feature.

The aircraft will shortly be advertised for sale on the international market.

It is hoped the aircraft can be retained in New Zealand and continue to remain active. To that end there has been an initiative to form a syndicate to purchase the aircraft and potentially house it in the Waikato.

The Catalina Group is no longer scheduling any further activities for the aircraft.

The New Zealand Catalina built by Canadian Vickers in Cartierville near Montreal, Canada for the Royal Canadian Airforce as a Canso A. It came on strength with the RCAF in March 1944 and served until 1947. It was converted to a civilian Catalina in the mid 1950's and flew with several Canadian operators serving remote communities as a passenger, freighter and supply aircraft.

It became famous as the "Last African Flying Boat" in the feature BBC documentary capturing the antics and challenges of operating a vintage aircraft during route proving flights before starting tourist safaris on expeditions along the River Nile. It was purchased by the New Zealand Catalina Group in 1994 and in October of that year travelled its last epic journey flying from Zimbabwe to New Zealand in 14 days. Despite only being registered in three countries this Catalina has travelled to 40 countries in most continents and is possibly the world's most famous travelled Catalina.