









IAATO Cetacean Watching Guidelines

General code of conduct around marine mammals:

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|  | Stay with the animal up to a maximum time of one hour. If signs of disturbance or change in behaviour occur at any time during the stay with the animals, retreat slowly and quietly. |
|  | Never herd (surround), separate or scatter a group of marine mammals, particularly mothers and young. Where appropriate, stay where they can see you. Never chase animals. |
|  | When close to marine mammals keep voices low, don't whistle or shout. |
|  | Keep radio volume down. |
|  | Communicate with other boats to minimise disturbance to animals. |
|  | Avoid sudden movements that might startle the animal. |
|  | Never attempt to touch or feed animals. |
|  | Playback of underwater sound of any kind should not occur. If hydrophones are used from small boats to listen to the underwater sounds it is preferable to have the engines of the small boats shut down. |

General guidelines for viewing all marine mammals

- Marine mammals may approach vessels and if it wants to interact, it may stay with the vessel. This is when it is best for the vessel to drift passively, however, allowing a vessel to drift within acceptable distances to the animals could constitute an intentional approach.
- Do not chase or pursue animals.
- Animals may alter their behaviour if they are disturbed, when in doubt, err on the side of caution and give the animals time and space.
- Keep a watch for the following behaviour, which could indicate that the animal is agitated and no longer interested in staying near the vessel. Where this behaviour is noted, let the animal depart and when safe, move away slowly:
 - ▶ Changes in travelling directions
 - ▶ Regular changes in direction or speed
 - ▶ Moving away from the area
 - ▶ Apparent general agitation
 - ▶ Hasty dives
- Breaching, tail lobbing and flipper slapping may be an indication that the whales are socialising and may not be aware of boats. Keep your distance.
- If a cetacean approaches a vessel to bow-ride, maintain a relatively constant course and speed.



- Do not enter a group of dolphins to encourage them to bow-ride.
- If a cetacean surfaces in the vicinity of your vessel, take all necessary precautions to avoid collisions, while avoiding sudden changes in speed or direction. This may include, slowing down, slowly coming to a stop, and/or steering away from the animal.
- Be aware of other boats and obstacles, e.g. shorelines to ensure the animal is never boxed in. Ensure that travel and exit routes for the animal are clear and that a “Tunnel” of small boats does not form.
- When watching animals in the water, it is suggested that a maximum of two ships or 4 small craft are in zone 4 (200m) at any one time.
- Boats watching animals together should be next to each other to ensure the animals have a large open avenue to depart through.
- If Killer Whales approach Kayaks and begin spy hopping behaviour, ensure that safety small boats are close to the kayaks and consider transferring paddlers from kayaks to small boats.

Approaching whales in water

When approaching marine mammals in water

Zone 1 – 3000-1500m (2-1 mile) reduce speed to less than 10 knots and post a lookout for monitoring marine mammals.

Zone 2 – 1500-750m (1-1/2 mile) - reduce speed to 5 knots.

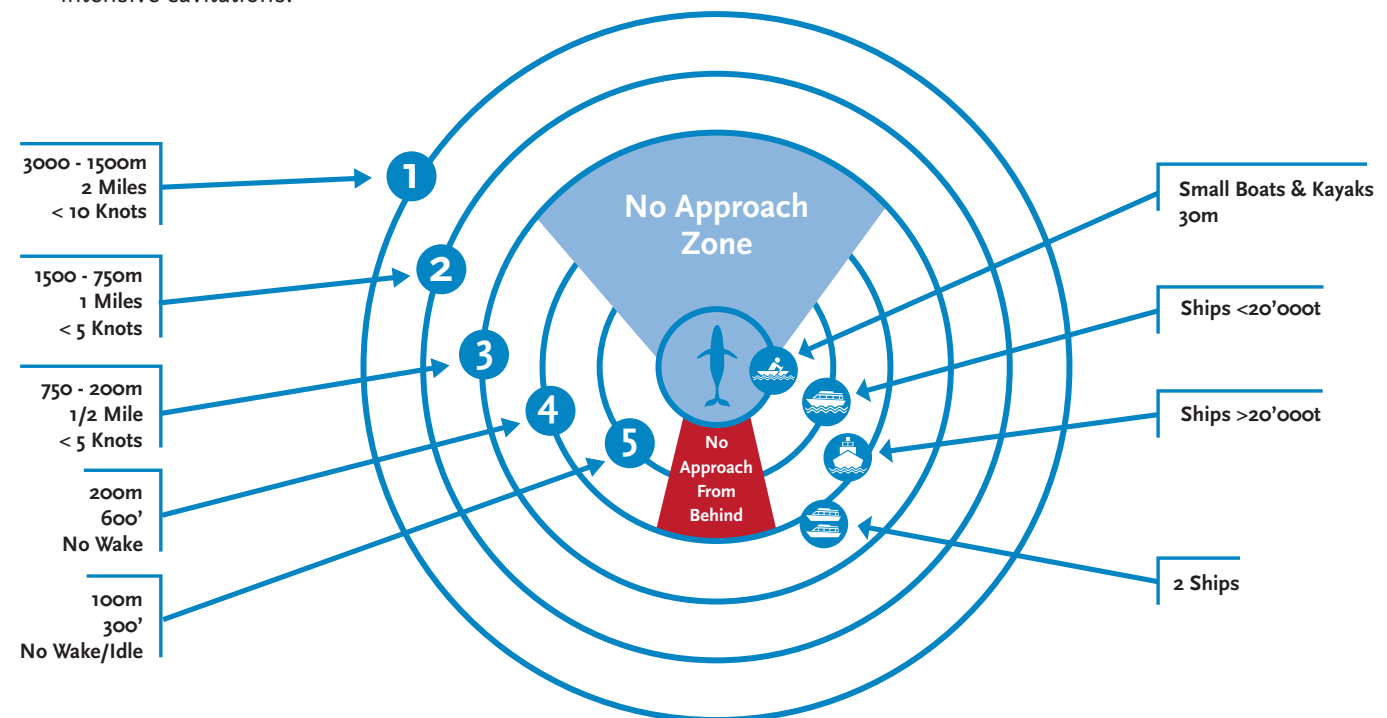
Zone 3 - 750m (1/2 mile) reduce speed to <5 knots, approach from sides.

Zone 4 – 200m (600 feet) go no faster than wake speed.

- ▶ Don't approach feeding baleen whales closer than 200m.
- ▶ Approach cetaceans from parallel to and slightly to the rear (4 or 8 o' clock position), not from the front or directly behind the animal.
- ▶ Attempt to stay downwind of animal.

Zone 5 – 30m (100feet) for small boats or 100m (300feet) for ships - Do not approach any closer.

- ▶ Put engines in neutral and allow engine to idle without turning off.
- ▶ If you want to turn the engine off, first idle for a few minutes before turning off.
- ▶ Try avoiding abrupt changes in noise that may startle or disturb the animal, including excessive engine use, gear changes, manoeuvring or backing up to the animal.
- ▶ Avoid the use of bow or stern lateral bow thrusters to maintain position as these can produce high pitched noise and intensive cavitations.



Departure from whale watching in water

- Move off at a slow no-wake speed to 100m, avoid engaging propellers within the minimum approach distance if possible
- When moving away, avoid moving in front of the animal, always move towards the rear
- Do not chase or pursue departing animals