

# Be Whale Wise

## MARINE WILDLIFE GUIDELINES FOR BOATERS, PADDLERS AND VIEWERS (Revised 2011)



**ALERT:**  
Check out updated  
guidelines and new  
regulations!

### Guidelines for whales, porpoises and dolphins:

1. BE CAUTIOUS and COURTEOUS: approach areas of known or suspected marine wildlife activity with extreme caution. Look in all directions before planning your approach or departure.
2. SLOW DOWN: reduce speed to less than 7 knots when within 400 metres/yards of the nearest whale, porpoise or dolphin. Avoid abrupt course changes.
3. **KEEP CLEAR of the whales' path.** If whales are approaching you, cautiously move out of the way.
4. DO NOT APPROACH from the front or from behind. Always approach and depart from the side, moving in a direction parallel to the direction of the whales, porpoises or dolphins.
5. **DO NOT APPROACH or position your vessel closer than 100 metres/yards to any whale, porpoise or dolphin.\***
6. If your vessel is not in compliance with the 100 metres/yards approach guideline (#5), place engine in neutral and allow whales to pass.
7. STAY on the OFFSHORE side of the whales when they are traveling close to shore.
8. LIMIT your viewing time to a recommended maximum of 30 minutes. This will minimize the cumulative impact of many vessels and give consideration to other viewers.
9. DO NOT swim with, touch or feed marine wildlife.
10. DO NOT drive through groups of porpoises or dolphins to encourage bow or stern-riding.
11. Should dolphins or porpoises choose to ride the bow wave of your vessel, avoid sudden course changes. Hold course & speed or reduce speed gradually.

### Seals, sea lions and birds on land:

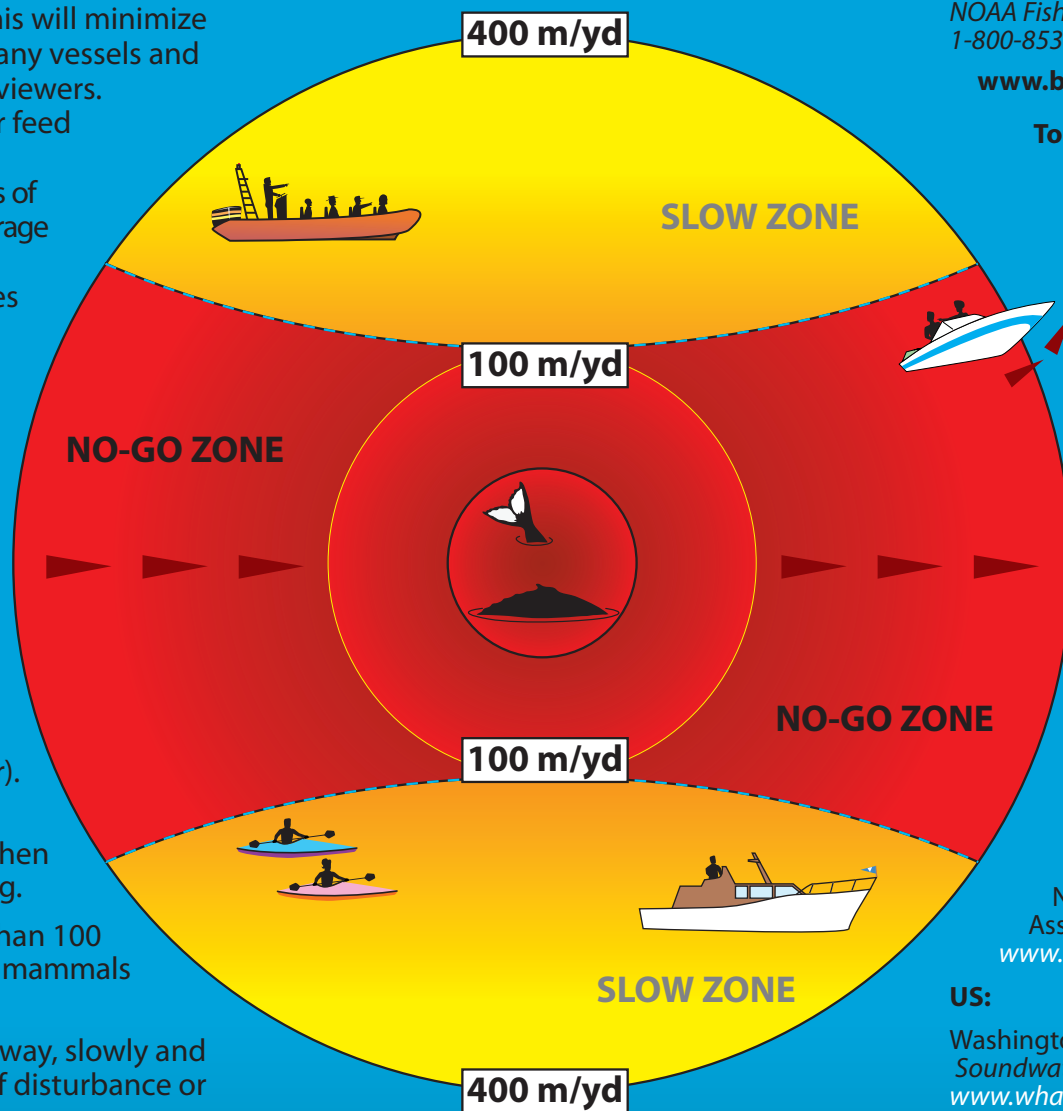
1. BE CAUTIOUS AND QUIET when around haul-outs and bird colonies, especially during breeding, nesting and pupping seasons (generally May to September).
2. REDUCE SPEED, minimize wake, wash and noise, and then slowly pass without stopping.
3. AVOID approaching closer than 100 metres/ yards to any marine mammals or birds.
4. PAY ATTENTION and move away, slowly and cautiously, at the first sign of disturbance or agitation.
5. DO NOT disturb, move, feed or touch any marine wildlife, including seal pups. If you are concerned about a potentially sick or stranded animal, contact your local stranding network where available.

### Killer Whales:

\* Killer whales have special protection in Canadian and U.S. waters. Be sure to educate yourself about new protections, including regulations with specific distances and recommendations for viewing killer whales.

### Marine Protected Areas, Wildlife Refuges, Ecological Reserves & Parks:

1. CHECK your nautical charts for the location of various protected areas.
2. ABIDE by posted restrictions or contact a local authority for further information.



### The Laws:

Regulations in Canada and the U.S. prohibit the harassment and disturbance of marine mammals. Many species are threatened or endangered and subject to additional protections under the Endangered Species Act (U.S.) and the Species at Risk Act (Canada).

### Learn about and follow all local laws.

### What is a disturbance?

Disturbance is when we interfere with an animal's ability to hunt, feed, communicate, socialize, rest, breed, or care for its young.

These are critical life processes, necessary for healthy marine wildlife populations.

### To report a marine mammal disturbance or harassment:

#### CANADA:

Fisheries and Oceans Canada:  
1-800-465-4336

#### US:

NOAA Fisheries, Office for Law Enforcement:  
1-800-853-1964

[www.bewhalewise.org](http://www.bewhalewise.org)

### To report marine mammal sightings:

BC Cetacean Sightings Network (BC)  
[www.wildwhales.org](http://www.wildwhales.org) or 1-866-1SAW ONE

The Whale Museum Hotline (WA state):  
[hotline@whalemuseum.org](mailto:hotline@whalemuseum.org)  
or 1-800-562-8832

Orca Network (WA state)  
[info@orcaneetwork.org](mailto:info@orcaneetwork.org)  
or 1-866-ORCANET

### Need more information?

#### CANADA:

Victoria and Southern Gulf Islands, Johnstone Strait and Northern Vancouver Island, West Coast Vancouver Island:  
Straitwatch  
[www.straitwatch.org](http://www.straitwatch.org) or 250-590-7723

Robson Bight (Michael Bigg) Ecological Reserve:  
[www.env.gov.bc.ca/bcparks/eco\\_reserve/robsonb\\_er.html](http://www.env.gov.bc.ca/bcparks/eco_reserve/robsonb_er.html)

Fisheries and Oceans Canada:  
[www.dfo-mpo.gc.ca](http://www.dfo-mpo.gc.ca)

North Island Marine Mammal Stewardship Association:  
[www.nimmsa.org](http://www.nimmsa.org)

#### US:

Washington State, Haro Strait Region:  
Soundwatch Boater Education Program  
[www.whalemuseum.org](http://www.whalemuseum.org) or 360-378-4710

Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife:  
[www.wdfw.wa.gov/conservation/orca/](http://www.wdfw.wa.gov/conservation/orca/)

NOAA Fisheries, Northwest Region:  
[www.nwr.noaa.gov](http://www.nwr.noaa.gov)

NOAA Fisheries, Office of Protected Resources:  
[www.nmfs.noaa.gov/pr/education/viewing.htm](http://www.nmfs.noaa.gov/pr/education/viewing.htm)

Pacific Whale Watch Association:  
[www.pacificwhalewatch.org](http://www.pacificwhalewatch.org)

