

# Be Whale Wise

## Marine Wildlife Guidelines for Boaters, Paddlers and Viewers *(Revised 2006)*



### Guidelines:

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. 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** whales from the front or from behind. Always approach and depart whales from the side, moving in a direction parallel to the direction of the whales.
5. **DO NOT APPROACH or position your vessel closer than 100 metres/yards to any whale.**
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.

### Bow and stern-riding porpoises and dolphins:

1. **DO NOT** drive through groups of porpoises or dolphins to encourage bow or stern-riding.
2. Should dolphins or porpoises choose to ride the bow wave of your vessel, avoid sudden course changes. Hold course and 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.

### Marine Protected Areas, Wildlife Refuges, Ecological Reserves and 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.

### 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

#### 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@orcانetwork.org](mailto:info@orcانetwork.org) or 1-866-ORCANET

#### Need more information?

#### CANADA:

Victoria and Southern Gulf Islands:  
Marine Mammal Monitoring Project (M3)  
[www.salishsea.ca](http://www.salishsea.ca) or 250-383-2086

Johnstone Strait and Northern Vancouver Island:  
Straitwatch  
[www.straitwatch.org](http://www.straitwatch.org) or 250-974-7064

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

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

#### US:

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

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

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

#### GREATER VICTORIA and WASHINGTON STATE:

Whale Watch Operators Association NW:  
[www.wwwalewatchers.org](http://www.wwwalewatchers.org)

