

Be Whale Wise

Marine Wildlife Laws & Guidelines for Boaters, Paddlers and Viewers

(Revised 2016)

www.bewhalewise.org

Seeing killer whales and other marine wildlife in their natural environment can be a thrilling experience.

In our excitement, we sometimes forget that our presence has an effect on wildlife and their habitat. Just like us, marine mammals need space to find food, choose mates, raise young, socialize and rest.

When we get too close, approach too fast, or make too much noise, we may be disrupting these activities and causing the animals unnecessary stress. In some cases, we may be threatening their lives. Set an example for others, and help protect our spectacular marine resources.

Be Whale Wise – Follow these guidelines and local laws in the presence of marine wildlife.

Why do we need guidelines?

The diversity and complexity of marine life in the inland and coastal waters of British Columbia and Washington is truly extraordinary.

It is a fragile world. Pollution, global climate change and other impacts are taking their toll at all levels of the coastal food web. Many species of marine wildlife, such as the endangered Southern Resident killer whales, are showing signs of vulnerability.

Meanwhile, vessel traffic in our waters is steadily increasing, placing added pressures on marine animals and their habitats.

We need to minimize our impact.

These guidelines are designed to help you enjoy your wildlife encounter, and reduce the risk of disturbing marine wildlife.

BE WHALE WISE!

DO YOUR PART TO PROTECT MARINE WILDLIFE FROM HARASSMENT AND DISTURBANCE.

FOLLOW THESE GUIDELINES AND ALL LOCAL LAWS.

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.), the Species at Risk Act (Canada) and RCW 77.15.740 in Washington State.

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.

CANADA/B.C. GULF ISLANDS: To report injured, distressed, dead, stranded or entangled marine mammals or sea turtles:

Fisheries & Oceans Canada/B.C. Marine Mammal Incident Reporting 24/7 Hotline: 1-800-465-4336

REPORT MARINE MAMMAL & SEA TURTLE SIGHTINGS:

B.C. Cetacean Sightings Network
1-866-472-9663 or sightings@vanaqua.org/www.wildwhales.org. WhaleReport app available on iTunes and Google Play

NEED MORE INFORMATION?

Fisheries & Oceans Canada: www.canada.ca/en/fisheries-oceans.html

Robson Bight (Michael Bigg) Ecological Reserve: www.env.gov.bc.ca/bcparks/eco_reserve/robsonb_er.html

Straitwatch: www.straitwatch.org or 1-250-590-7723

North Island Marine Mammal Stewardship Association
www.nimmsa.org

US/INLAND WA WATERS: To report a marine mammal harassment, entanglement or stranding:

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

Entanglements: 1-877-707-9425

Strandings: 1-866-767-6114

Download the dolphin and whale 911 app

TO REPORT MARINE MAMMAL SIGHTINGS:

The Whale Museum Hotline (WA State):
hotline@whalemuseum.org or 1-800-562-8832

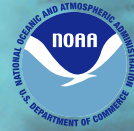
Orca Network (WA State):
info@orcانetwork.org or 1-866-672-2638

NEED MORE INFORMATION?

Soundwatch Boater Education Program
www.whalemuseum.org or 1-360-378-4710 ext. 33

NOAA Fisheries, West Coast Region:
<http://www.westcoast.fisheries.noaa.gov>

NOAA Fisheries, Office of Protected Resources:
www.nmfs.noaa.gov/pr/



Fisheries and Oceans Canada

Pêches et Océans Canada



BC Parks



U.S. STRANDING NETWORK
1-866-767-6114

U.S. ENTANGLEMENT NETWORK
1-877-767-9425

**CANADIAN MARINE MAMMAL
Reporting Hotline**
1-800-465-4336



REGULATIONS FOR KILLER WHALES IN U.S. WATERS

WHERE do federal regulations to protect killer whales apply? In inland waters of Washington State, east of the entrance to the Strait of Juan de Fuca and south of the U.S./Canada boundary.

WHAT do the regulations require? Except for specific exemptions, it is unlawful for any person to:

- Cause a vessel to approach, in any manner, within 200 yards (182.9 metres) of any killer whale.
- Position a vessel to be in the path of any killer whale at any point located within 400 yards (365.8 metres) of the whale.

WHO do the regulations apply to? All motorized and non-motorized vessels (including kayaks and paddleboards), with exceptions to maintain safe navigation and for certain types of vessels - government vessels in the course of official duties, ships in the shipping lanes, research vessels under permit, and vessels lawfully engaged in commercial or treaty Indian fishing that are actively setting, retrieving, or closely tending fishing gear.

WHY did NOAA adopt regulations? Southern Resident killer whales were listed as endangered in 2005. Vessel impacts were identified as one of the threats. These regulations implement an action in the recovery plan and are designed to protect **all killer whales** by reducing impacts from vessels. Southern Residents are also listed as endangered under the Species at Risk Act in Canada.

TRANS-BOUNDARY GUIDELINES FOR THE UNITED STATES AND CANADA APPLY TO ALL MARINE MAMMALS AND BIRDS

1. DO NOT APPROACH or position your vessel closer than 200 metres/yards to any killer whale in the U.S. DO NOT APPROACH or get closer than 100 metres/yards to any other marine mammals or birds, whether on the water or on land.

2. BE CAUTIOUS, COURTEOUS and QUIET when around areas of known or suspected marine wildlife activity, in the water or at haul-outs and bird colonies on land; especially from May to September during breeding, nesting and seal pupping seasons.

3. LOOK in all directions before planning your approach or departure from viewing wildlife.

4. SLOW DOWN: reduce speed to less than 7 knots when within 400 metres/yards of the nearest marine mammal to reduce your engine's noise and vessel's wake.

5. ALWAYS approach and depart from the side, moving parallel to the animal's direction of travel. If the animal(s) are approaching you, cautiously move out of the way and avoid abrupt course changes. DO NOT approach from the front or from behind.

6. PLACE ENGINE IN NEUTRAL and allow animals to pass if your vessel is not in compliance with the approach regulation or guideline (#1).

7. PAY ATTENTION and move away, slowly and cautiously, at the first sign of disturbance or agitation.

8. STAY on the **OFFSHORE** side of whales when they are traveling close to shore.

9. ALWAYS avoid going through groups of porpoises or dolphins and hold course and reduce speed gradually to discourage bow or stern-riding.

10. LIMIT your viewing time to 30 minutes or less. This will reduce the cumulative impact of all vessels and give consideration to other viewers.

11. DO NOT disturb, swim with, move, feed or touch any marine wildlife. If you are concerned about a potentially sick, stranded or entangled animal, contact your local stranding network.

Drones/Unmanned Aircraft Vehicle or System (UAV/ UAS) Guidance

It is illegal to harm or disturb wildlife. To prevent disturbance from an unmanned aerial vehicle (UAV/ drone) operators must use extreme caution. UAV/ drones may interfere with an animal's ability to hunt, feed, communicate, socialize, rest, breed, or care for its young. Fly during daylight hours, keep your drone in sight and limit your viewing time to reduce the cumulative impact. This is rapidly evolving technology... Know and follow all local regulations.

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.

