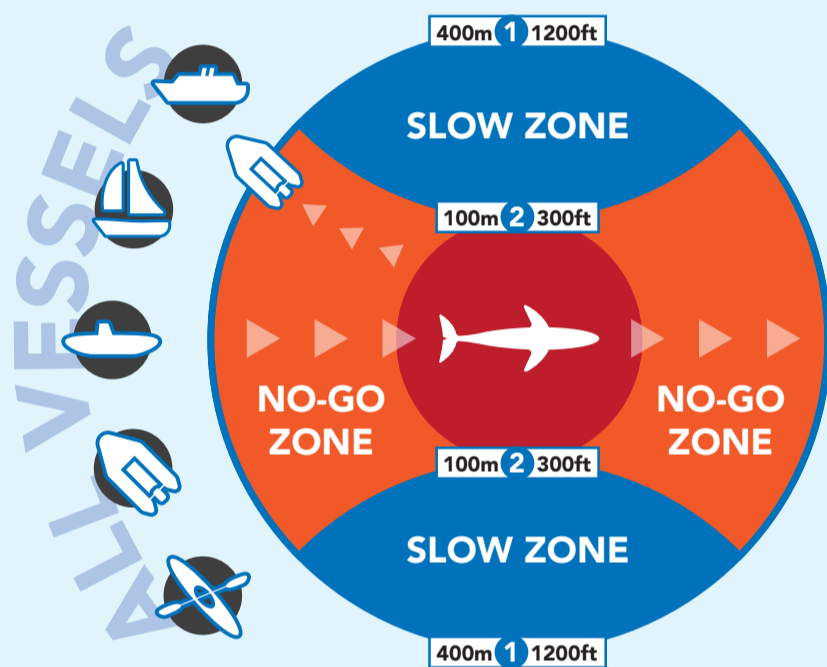


# IAATO Cetacean Watching Guidelines



## Approaching Whales in Water



### See a Blow? GO SLOW!

#### Zone 1: 400m/1200ft

- <5 knots AND go no faster than wake speed
- Don't approach <200m feeding whales
- Approach animals parallel or slightly to the rear
- Stay downwind

#### Zone 2: 100m/300ft for all vessels

- Do not approach any closer
- Idle engine, in neutral
- If turning engine off, first idle engine for 5 mins
- Avoid abrupt changes in engine noise that may startle animal
- Avoid using lateral thrusters for holding position as they produce intensive cavitation

## General Guidelines for Viewing All Marine Mammals

- Animals may approach and stay with your vessel. If so, drift vessel passively, however drifting closer than acceptable distance to the animal is considered an intentional approach
- Do not chase or pursue animals
- Animals may alter their behaviour if they are disturbed, when in doubt, give the animals time and space
- Be vigilant for agitated behaviour and, if observed, let the animal depart and move away slowly:
  - Regular changes in direction or speed, moving away from encounter
  - Apparent general agitation
  - Hasty dives
- Breaching, tail lobbing and flipper slapping indicate socialising and animals may not be aware of boats. **Keep your distance**
- If an animal approaches a vessel to bow-ride, maintain a constant course and speed. **Do not** enter a group of dolphins to encourage them to bow-ride
- If an animal surfaces near your vessel, take all precautions to prevent collisions, while avoiding sudden changes in vessel speed or direction
- Be aware of other vessels and obstacles such as shorelines to ensure the animal is never trapped and an exit route is clear
- When watching animals in the water, a maximum of two ships or four small craft are recommended to approach
- Boats watching animals together should be next to each other, to ensure the animals have a clear route to exit
- If Orcas approach kayaks and exhibit 'spy-hopping', ensure that a safety boat is close to kayaks and consider transferring paddlers from kayaks to safety boat

Cetaceans are often very inquisitive and may approach close to vessels or watercraft. It is important that the animal is in control at all times

## General Code of Conduct Around Marine Mammals:

	Stay with the animal up to a maximum time of 30 minutes. If signs of disturbance or change in behaviour occur at any time during the stay with the animals, retreat slowly and quietly.		Communicate with other boats to minimise disturbance to animals.
	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.		Avoid sudden movements that might startle the animal.
	When close to marine mammals keep voices low, don't whistle or shout.		Never attempt to touch or feed animals.
	Keep radio volume down.		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.

## Departure from Whale Watching in Water

- Move off at a slow no-wake speed to 400m (1200ft), 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