

OUTLINE FOR ANNUAL RECREATIONAL BOATER SEMINAR

Responsible Whale Watching Guidelines

If a cetacean approaches closer than 100 yards to a boat, engines should be put in neutral. The boat should remain in neutral and not leave the sighting area before clearly seeing the cetacean on the surface at a minimum distance of 25 yards from the boat. The exception to this is if dolphins approach to bow ride.

No more than three boats should be between 100 yards and the minimum approach distance of a cetacean at any one time.

If a fourth boat arrives, this boat should first attempt to locate another individual or group of cetaceans to view. If this is not possible, the fourth boat must wait at least 100 yards from the closest cetacean and all boats should reduce their viewing time to 10 minutes to reduce cumulative pressure on the animals. If the first three boats have been there for 10 minutes or more when the fourth boat arrives they must halt their activity immediately, move away and allow the fourth boat to move into position.

If the number of boats within 300 yards of a cetacean remains three or less, viewing time should be kept to a maximum of 30 minutes per boat.

When more than one boat is within 300 yards of a cetacean, all boats must stay on the same side of the cetacean so that movement is less restricted. Special care must be taken to ensure that cetaceans are not trapped between boats and other physical barriers such as islands.

Whale Safe Guidelines:

National Marine Fisheries, a division of NOAA (National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration) developed these.

- See a blow - Go slow
- Slow down and approach at the same speed as the whale

- Carefully approach from the right or left flank, do not pull in front or behind of the whale.
- Always attempt to stay 100 yards away from a whale
- If a situation arises when you cannot avoid a whale, assume no-wake speed and put vessel into neutral.

Do NOT:

- Move into the path of a whale
- Move faster than a whale
- Change speed or directional changes
- Get between two whales
- Chase any whales
- Feed or touch any whales
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Cetaceans should not be approached within 300 yards if resting or nursing behavior is evident.

Extra caution needs to be taken by the operator when calves are present. These are especially vulnerable and sensitive individuals and should therefore be approached with increased care and sensitivity

If dolphins or porpoises bow-ride alongside the boat, the boat should remain at a constant speed with no sudden changes in direction.

The operator should not return to the same cetaceans during the same trip to sea.

Open discussion

Questions and answer segment with Captains and boaters