

Interactions with cetaceans

2. Describe the types of interactions or activities that currently exist between people and cetaceans in the proposed WHS?

A:

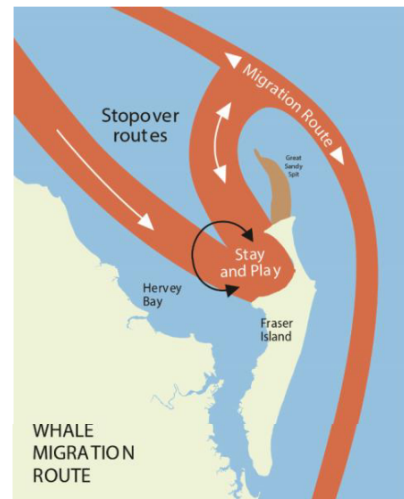
The primary interaction between people and cetaceans in the proposed site is through commercial tour operations and recreational boating. (Almost 60,000 people participated in commercial whale watching from Hervey Bay in 2018).

Increasing numbers of humpbacks (currently more than 8000) take the “stopover route” (*illustration right*) resting and socialising in the waters between Fraser Island and the mainland between July and November each year on their southern migration, back to the cooler waters of Antarctica.

Many research organisations and universities have studied whales in Hervey Bay since the 1980s, including The Oceania Project, Pacific Whale Foundation, University of Queensland, Sydney University, Southern Cross University and University of the Sunshine Coast. (See appendix 3)

Australia’s two most foremost humpback whale researchers, Drs Trish and Wally Franklin, have more than 20 years of study and research to back up their statements in relation to Hervey Bay’s significance as a “whale nursery”.

- **Dr Trish Franklin** states in 2012 that “... this research has shown that Hervey Bay is an important habitat for different maturational and reproductive classes of whales.” (The social and ecological significance of Hervey Bay Queensland for eastern Australian humpback whales, Southern Cross University, 2012)
- **Dr Wally Franklin** backs this up (2019) stating that the whales bring their young into the waters of Hervey Bay in order to teach the young certain skills to enable their survival and that part of this is how to safely interact with the humans on the water. In his opinion, without a doubt, whales know what to expect and enjoy the interactions almost as much as the humans. (*Sunday Age*, Melbourne January 2019; see Media and Publications folder in sharepoint).
- While he was alive, Pacific Whale Foundation's **Greg Kaufman** said Hervey Bay was the only area in the world where humpbacks consistently approached vessels. "The curious humpbacks of Hervey Bay provide some of the most unusual and prolonged encounters with humans," he said. (*The Daily Telegraph* 2012 – Queensland tourists 'mugged' by whales in Hervey Bay.
<http://www.dailytelegraph.com.au/news/national/queensland-tourists-mugged-by-whales-inhervey-bay/story-fndo2iwh-1226460233013>)



The Hervey Bay whale fleet prides itself on following strict regulations which creates this safe environment allowing positive engagement with whales.

In addition to research and whale watching tours, the proposed site also offers dolphin watching, diving, snorkelling and an immersive ‘swim with whale’ experience that recently completed its trial period after several years of negotiations and planning with stakeholders. Ongoing research is being conducted by Pacific Whale Foundation and Southern Cross University, to better understand the impact of the immersive program on the whale population.