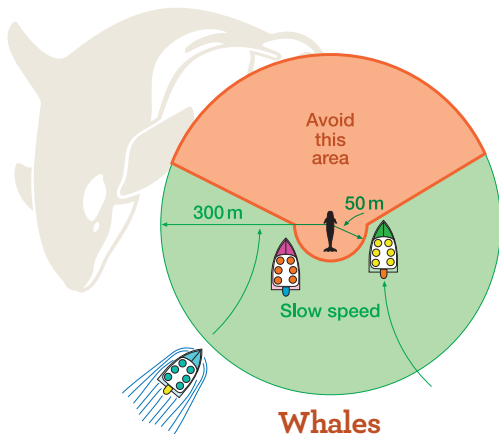
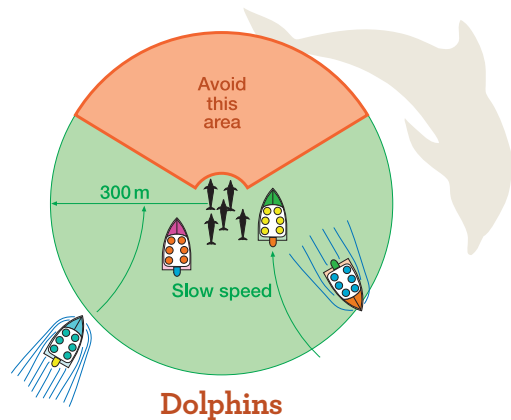


At sea

- Ensure that you travel no faster than idle or 'no wake' speed within 300 metres of any marine mammal.
- Approach whales and dolphins from behind and to the side.
- Do not circle them, obstruct their path or cut through any group.
- Keep at least 50 metres from whales (or 200 metres from any large whale mother and calf or calves).
- Swimming with whales is not permitted.
- You may swim with seals and dolphins but not with dolphin pods with very young calves.
- Avoid approaching closer than 20 metres to seals and sea lions hauled out on shore.
- Idle slowly away. Speed may be gradually increased to out-distance dolphins and should not exceed 10 knots within 300 metres of any dolphin.



Bottlenose dolphin showing severe propeller marks. Photo: C. D. Rundgren

All seals, dolphins, whales and porpoises are fully protected under the Marine Mammals Protection Act 1978; it is an offence, amongst other things, to harass or disturb marine mammals. Offences carry penalties of up to six months imprisonment or fines up to \$250,000 and further fines of up to \$10,000 for every marine mammal in respect of which the offence is committed.

Refer to the Marine Mammals Protection Regulations 1992 for a complete list of conditions prescribing behaviour around marine mammals: www.legislation.govt.nz



Appropriate boating behaviour can minimise risk to marine mammals. Photo: Kim Westerskov

DOC HOTline

If you notice a marine mammal being harassed, severely injured or entangled, please contact the Department of Conservation HOTline immediately.

For more information: www.doc.govt.nz

DOC HOTline
0800 362 468

Report any safety hazards
or conservation emergencies
For Fire and Search and Rescue Call 111

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New Zealand Government

Sharing our coasts with marine mammals



Department of
Conservation
Te Papa Atawhai



Photo: Shaun Templeton, Elm Wildlife Tours

Introduction

As an island nation, with most Kiwis living within an hour of the coast, most of us will be fortunate enough at some stage to encounter marine mammals—whether seals or sea lions hauled out on shore, or dolphins and whales at sea.

From the tip of the north to the deep south, New Zealand is a hotspot for marine mammals. Dolphins mingle with the boaties in Auckland's back yard, the Hauraki Gulf. Seals laze on the capital city's southern coast, and even whales can be seen resting between dives above the Kaikoura canyon, the South Island's marine mammal Mecca.

Hunting in the past reduced many marine mammal populations to a fraction of their former size. Nowadays,



Photo: Dennis Buurman Photography

cameras have replaced harpoons and clubs, and some marine mammal populations have been slowly recovering.

However, with growing public interest in marine mammals and the expansion in sea-based tourism come a new suite of threats, including boat strike, noise pollution, harassment, displacement and separation of mothers and their young. The Marine Mammal Protection Regulations 1992, as summarised here, aim to minimise these threats by prescribing appropriate behaviour around marine mammals. Commercial tourist operators require permits and are subject to further rules.

If you see whales, dolphins or seals while boating or visiting the coast, a few simple rules will ensure an enjoyable encounter for you and for them.

Behaviour around marine mammals

- Do not disturb, harass or make loud noises near marine mammals.
- Contact should be ceased if marine mammals show any signs of becoming disturbed or alarmed.
- Do not feed or throw any rubbish near marine mammals.
- Avoid sudden or repeated changes in speed or direction of any vessel or aircraft near a marine mammal.
- There should be no more than three vessels and/or aircraft within 300 metres of any marine mammal.

On shore

- Give seals and sea lions space. Where practicable, stay at least 20 metres away.
- Avoid coming between fur seals and the sea.
- Keep dogs on a leash and well away.
- Where practicable, do not drive vehicles within 50 metres of a marine mammal.
- Never attempt to touch seals or sea lions—they can be aggressive and often carry diseases.

In the air

- Aircraft should maintain a horizontal distance of greater than 150 metres when flying near any marine mammal.
- Avoid flying or imposing a shadow directly over a marine mammal either at sea or on shore.

continued overleaf ►



New Zealand sea lions.
Photo: Barry Harcourt



Southern right whale mother and calves.
Photo: Dennis Buurman Photography



Dusky dolphins.
Photo: Kim Westerskov