Appendix Ten – Marine Mammal Competency Training Module

Marine Mammal Competency Training Module

Marine mammal Protection Regulations

All Heritage Expeditions staff will carry out their duties in a manner that ensures compliance with the Marine Mammals Protection Regulations 1992 at all times. These regulations are designed to minimise the effects of human activity on marine mammals. It is also the responsibility of the staff to ensure that all passengers comply.

https://www.doc.govt.nz/documents/conservation/native-animals/marine-mammals/marine-mammal-regulations-summary.pdf

General behaviour around marine mammals

- do not disturb, harass or make loud noises near marine mammals
- interaction should be ceased if marine mammals show any signs of becoming disturbed or alarmed
- do not touch marine mammals
- do not feed or throw rubbish near marine mammals
- marine mammals are not to be separated from a group, or caused to scatter

Approach protocols and vessel handling near marine mammals

HERITAGE EXPEDITIONS

Simple rules for boaties when interacting with whales and dolphins

Don't travel faster than idle or 'no wake' speed within 300 metres



No more than 3 vessels within 300 metres



Do not obstruct their path. Approach from a parallel/ slightly rear direction



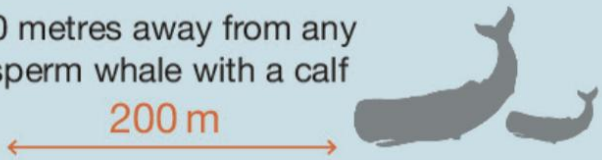
Do not swim with dolphin pods containing juveniles



Stay 50 metres away from any whale or orca



Stay 200 metres away from any baleen/sperm whale with a calf

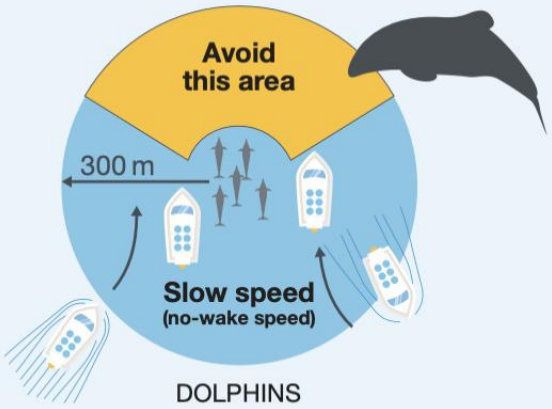


Do not swim with whales or orca

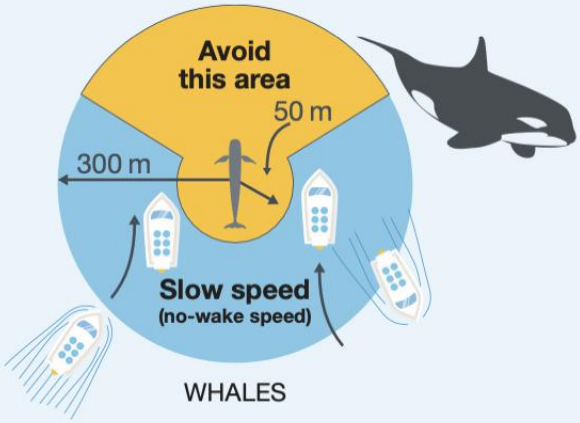


HERITAGE EXPEDITIONS

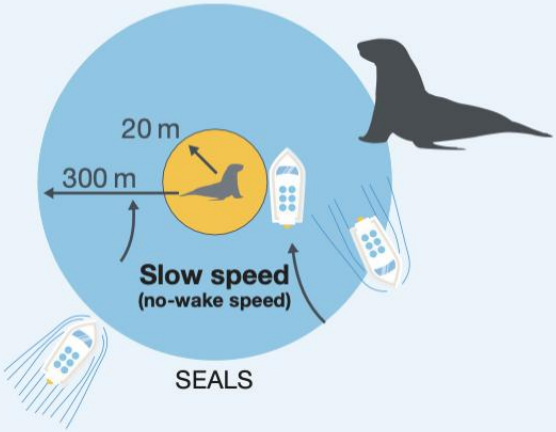
Ngā tamariki a Tinirau
Simple rules for interacting with MARINE MAMMALS



DOLPHINS



WHALES



SEALS



Te whānau puha, ngā aihe me ngā kekeno – e mātaki ai i tai
Whales, dolphins and seals – sea-based viewing

- Ensure you travel no faster than idle or 'no wake' speed within 300 m
- Make sure there are no more than three vessels within 300 m
- Approach from a direction that is parallel and slightly to the rear. Do not circle the marine mammals, obstruct their path or cut through any groups
- Idle slowly away

Ngā aihe
Dolphins

- Gradually increase speed to outdistance dolphins; do not exceed 10 kn until more than 300 m away
- Do not swim with dolphin pods containing juveniles

Te whānau puha
Whales (including orca and pilot whales)

- Stay at least 50 m away from any whale
- Stay at least 200 m away from any baleen or sperm whale mother and calf
- Do not swim with whales

Ngā kekeno
Seals

- Vessels – stay at least 20 m away from the water's edge where seals may be present
- Swimmers – stay at least 5 m away from the water's edge

Ngā kekeno – e mātaki ai i uta
Seals – shore-based viewing

- Stay at least 20 m away
- Do not get between a seal and its escape route to the sea
- Do not handle seals
- Keep dogs away

Department of Conservation
Te Papa Atawhai

SMART
Sustainable Marine Mammal Actions in Recreation & Tourism

New Zealand Government

General Approach behaviour

From water

- best endeavours will be used to operate the vessel in a way that the normal movement or behaviour of any marine mammal is not disrupted
- avoid sudden or repeated changes in speed or direction of any vessel near marine mammals
- when stopped to enable passengers to watch a marine mammal, the master should place the engines in neutral (preferred) or be switched off within a minute of the vessel stopping
- when two or more vessels approach a marine mammal, the masters shall co-ordinate their approach to minimise disturbance
- where practicable, a support boat should be between any manually propelled craft (kayaks) and any marine mammals

From land

- give seals and sea lions plenty of space
- do not get between a seal/sea lion and its escape route to the sea

Species behaviour knowledge

New Zealand has a rich and diverse fauna of marine mammals. Almost half the world's cetaceans (whales, porpoises and dolphins) have been reported in NZ waters.

For example, endemic Hector's dolphins (found nowhere else), rare beaked whales, New Zealand sea lions (found only in our southern waters), and the widely distributed New Zealand fur seals/kekeno.

Other seals that visit our shores occasionally, such as the southern elephant seal/ihupuku and the leopard seal, are found in larger numbers in Antarctic and sub-Antarctic waters.

The populations of many species of large whales, (such as southern right whales and humpback whales) and both our indigenous seals were reduced to near extinction by commercial whalers and sealers of the past two centuries. Some are still threatened or endangered, and now face additional threats from habitat degradation, global climate change, by-catch in fishing operations, entanglement and accumulation of pollutants in the oceans.

NZ Marine Mammals
https://www.doc.govt.nz/globalassets/documents/conservation/marine-and-coastal/marine-conservation-services/resources/doc-csp-fishers-guide-to-marine-mammals.pdf

NZ Fur seals
https://www.doc.govt.nz/globalassets/documents/conservation/native-animals/marine-mammals/seal-deal.pdf

Incident response procedures

If a marine mammal is accidentally harmed or killed as a result of an interaction then it must be reported as soon as possible to the Department of Conservation (0800 362 468) or Ministry for Primary Industries (0800 008 333).

If a phone call is not possible at the time (due to remoteness), record the following details and supply them to DOC at the earliest possible opportunity:

- animal species
- date and time of incident
- exact location (lat and long)
- description of event and extent of injuries/cause of death
- photos of the animal and general surroundings (if possible)
- actions taken to assist animal

If the animal is alive, it should be released back into the water as quickly and gently as possible, provided it is safe to do so. If it is dead, release the carcass at sea or if possible bring it to shore for DOC staff to recover.