

Checklist for choosing a responsible whale watching adventure:

Selecting a whale-watching tour from the plethora of options you are likely to find online, or the brochures you find in your local hotel or tourist office, is not easy. Your final choice may be based mostly on proximity and convenience, but hopefully after visiting the IWC online Whale Watching Handbook, you will also want to ensure that you choose a responsible whale watching experience. Here is a quick checklist that you can use to help you identify a responsible whale watching tour operator, and a handy acronym (SCORE) that will help you to remember the key attributes of a good tour. Look for an operator that prioritises:

Safety: an operator should provide life jackets, conform with local permitting and licensing regulations, have good communications with shore, and conduct a safety briefing for passengers before departure.

Conservation: an operator should contribute to conservation of whales and dolphins in some demonstrable manner.

On-board Education: choose a tour that includes opportunities to learn about the whales or dolphins from a guide or interpreter.

Regulations: ensure that the operator follows regulations in place to protect the whales and dolphins.

Environment and Community: Choose an operator that demonstrates a commitment to the environment and the local community.

You can evaluate a tour operator's **SCORE** by asking questions when you visit their office or phone to book a tour. But you can also use the SCORE acronym to evaluate and compare the information that operators present on their websites if you are booking a tour online, and look for signs of their commitment to these principals.

For more information consult the IWC/CMS online whale watching handbook: <https://wwhandbook.iwc.int/en/>



INTERNATIONAL
WHALING COMMISSION



CMS

Photo courtesy of Fabian Ritter, MEER