

Be Whale Wise!

Cetaceans live in a fragile world. Pollution, climate change, and other threats are taking their toll on all levels of the coastal food web. Many species of marine mammal, such as the endangered southern resident killer whale, are showing signs of vulnerability. Meanwhile, vessel traffic in our waters is steadily increasing, placing added pressures on marine animals and their habitats. When we get too close, we interfere with an animals' ability to hunt, feed, communicate, socialize, rest, breed, and care for its young. These are critical life processes that are necessary for healthy marine wildlife populations. For more information on the effects of vessel traffic on whales, see our threats section.



See Something? Say Something!

You can help cetaceans in B.C. by reporting harassment and violations. Call the Fisheries and Oceans Canada Incident Reporting Hotline at **1-800-465-4336** or click on the button below to report a violation on the Be Whale Wise website.

[Report Violations Here!](#)


Be Whale Wise is a partnership of governmental agencies, non-profits and other stakeholders in the Salish Sea to research, implement and educate best vessel practices to protect the unique and fragile marine resources found in the area. The Be Whale Wise team helps create consistent messaging and education to local boaters and those visiting the area. Be Whale Wise partners accomplish this goal by educating boaters on shore, then reinforcing the message on-the-water around whales.


Be Whale Wise is managed by the core partners: National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, Department of Fisheries and Oceans Canada, Washington Department of Fish & Wildlife, San Juan County Marine Resources Committee, and The Whale Museum/Soundwatch. Other partners that assist in the development and distribution of the program include: the United States Coast Guard, Pacific


Whale Watch Association, CETUS, Straitwatch, Ocean Wise Conservation Association, Seattle Aquarium, Georgia Strait Alliance, BC Parks, Killer Whale Tales, and Orca Network.


New Regulations (2019)


Check out some additional resources:


 Oceans Protection Plan
<http://www.canada.ca/protecting-our-coasts>


 Protecting Canada's Endangered Whales
<https://www.tc.gc.ca/en/campaigns/working-together/protecting-endangered-whales.html>


 Transport Canada's Interim Order (detailed information)
<http://www.tc.gc.ca/eng/mediaroom/interim-order-protection-killer-whales-waters-southern-british-columbia.html>


 Transport Canada's Interim Order (Questions and Answers, and maps)
<https://www.tc.gc.ca/eng/mediaroom/frequently-asked-questions-io-protection-killer-whales-waters-southern-british-columbia.html>


 Vancouver Fraser Port Authority's ECHO Program
<http://www.portvancouver.com/echo>

 Fisheries and Oceans Canada
<http://dfo-mpo.gc.ca/campaign-campagne/protecting-whales-protgerbaleines/index-eng.html>

 Be Whale Wise
www.be-whale-wise.org

 Report violators to Fisheries and Oceans Canada:
1-800-465-4336

 If you have any questions about the Interim Order, please contact Transport Canada at:
TC.SRKW-ERS.TC@tc.gc.ca

 If you have any questions about fishery closures or boating around whales, please contact Fisheries and Oceans Canada at:
DFO.SRKW-ERS.MPO@dfo-mpo.gc.ca

KEEP 400 METRES AWAY

When you see any killer whales. It's the law!
(around 4 football fields)

AVOID WHALE SANCTUARY

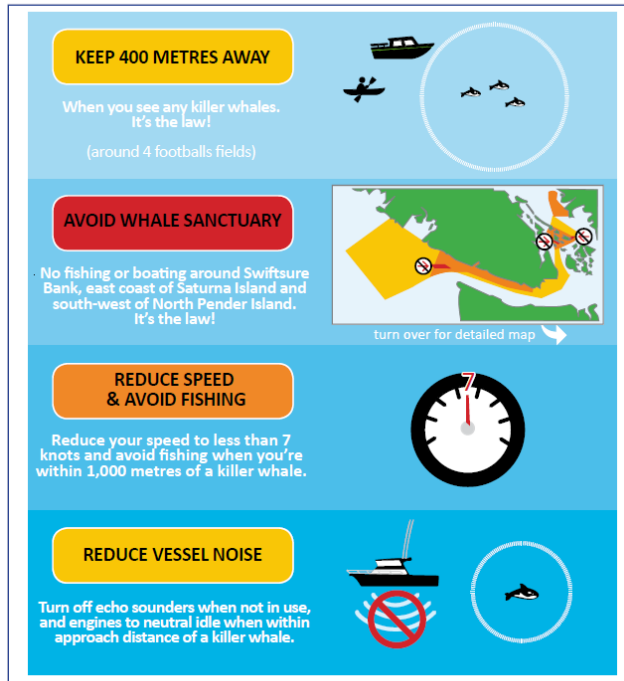
No fishing or boating around Swiftsure Bank, east coast of Saturna Island and south-west of North Pender Island. It's the law!

REDUCE SPEED & AVOID FISHING

Reduce your speed to less than 7 knots and avoid fishing when you're within 1,000 metres of a killer whale.

REDUCE VESSEL NOISE

Turn off echo sounders when not in use, and engines to neutral idle when within approach distance of a killer whale.



Government of Canada / Gouvernement du Canada

Boating Around Killer Whales
South Coast of BC • 2019

Boaters need to be aware when boating around killer whales. Always slow down when killer whales are near, if safe to do so.

Rules that apply year-round:

- Keep 200 metres away from all killer whale populations in B.C. and the Pacific Ocean.


Rules from June 1 until October 31 in critical habitat:

- Keep 400 metres away when you see any killer whales.
- No fishing or boating around certain sections of Swiftsure Bank, off the east coast of Saturna Island and south-west of North Pender Island.

Additional ways you can help:

- Go Slow! Reduce your speed to less than 7 knots and avoid fishing when you're within 1,000 metres of a killer whale. Areas to be aware of include Gulf Islands, the Strait of Juan de Fuca and the Mouth of the Fraser River.
- Reduce noise from boats by turning off your echo sounders when not in use, and engines to neutral idle when within 400 metres of a killer whale.

Please help protect Southern Resident Killer Whales! They live in the southern coast of British Columbia and are endangered.



Canada

Interim Sanctuary Zones and Critical Habitat

Marine Wildlife Laws and Guidelines for Boaters, Paddlers, and Viewers (2019)

1. Keep a minimum of 100m away from most whales, dolphins, and porpoises, and keep a minimum of 200m away if they are in resting position or with a calf. Do not approach killer whales (all populations) in southern resident killer whale critical habitat within 400m from June 1st-October 31st. Elsewhere, it is illegal to approach killer whales (all populations) within 200 metres.
2. BE CAUTIOUS, CURTEOUS, and QUIET when around areas of known or suspected marine wildlife activity, in the water or at haul-outs and bird colonies on land; especially from May to September during breeding, nesting, and seal pupping seasons.
3. LOOK in all directions before planning your approach or departure from viewing wildlife.
4. SLOW DOWN: reduce speed to less than 7 knots when within 400 metres/yards of the nearest marine mammal to reduce your engine's noise and wake.

5. ALWAYS approach and depart from the side, moving parallel to the animal's direction of travel. If the animal(s) are approaching you, cautiously move out of the way and avoid abrupt course changes. DO NOT approach from the front or from behind.
6. PLACE ENGINE IN NEUTRAL and allow animals to pass if your vessel is not in compliance with the approach regulation (1)
7. PAY ATTENTION and move away, slowly and cautiously, at the first sign of disturbance or agitation.
8. STAY on the OFFSHORE side of whales when they are travelling close to shore.
9. ALWAYS avoid going through groups of porpoises or dolphins and hold course and reduce speed gradually to discourage bow or stern-riding.
10. LIMIT your viewing time to 30 minutes or less. This will reduce the cumulative impact of all vessels and give consideration to other viewers.
11. DO NOT disturb, swim with, move, feed, or touch any marine wildlife. If you are concerned about a potentially sick, stranded, or entangled animal, contact your local stranding network at 1.800.465.4336 or on VHF Channel 16.

Drones/Unmanned Aircraft Vehicle or System (UAV/UAS) Guidance

It is illegal to harm or disturb wildlife. To prevent disturbance from an unmanned aerial vehicle (UAV/drone) operators must use extreme caution. UAV/drones may interfere with an animal's ability to hunt, feed, communicate, socialize, rest, breed, or care for its young. Fly during daylight hours, keep your drone in sight and limit your viewing time to reduce the cumulative impact.

Marine Protected Areas, Wildlife Refuges, Ecological Reserves and Parks

1. CHECK your nautical charts for the location of various protected areas.
2. ABIDE by posted restrictions or contact local authority for further information.

Anyone in contravention of these Regulations can now be charged with an offense under the Fisheries Act.



[Watch our Be Whale Wise Video!](#)



The vessel in the above photo is in violation of the Be Whale Wise Guidelines. Not giving whales enough space can disrupt important foraging and socialization behaviours that are critical to their survival.



If cetaceans approach your vessel to bowride, hold course and reduce speed gradually. If your vessel is not in compliance with approach regulations, place engine in neutral and allow animals to pass.

Commercial Mariners

When safety considerations allow, mariners can reduce their chance of striking or disturbing whales in the following ways:

1. **Keep your distance.** Stay at least 400m away from killer whales (all populations) in southern resident killer whale critical habitat and 200 metres away from all other cetaceans; greater distances are more beneficial.
2. **Reduce your speed.** Slowing below your vessel's cavitation inception reduces underwater noise that may affect whale foraging and communication. The chance of a ship striking and killing or seriously injuring a whale is greatly reduced when a ship travels at 10 knots or less.
3. **Avoid rapid acceleration.** Limit changes in RPM while transiting past whales.
4. **Reroute.** Consider the whale's direction of travel and avoid entering their path.

5. **Use the WhaleReport Alert System (WRAS).** The WRAS is alert system that broadcasts pertinent details of whale presence to large commercial vessels. Information on whale presence is obtained from real-time observations reported to the B.C. Cetacean Sightings Network via the WhaleReport app. These alerts inform shipmasters and pilots of cetacean occurrence in their vicinity. This awareness will better enable vessels to undertake adaptive mitigation measures, such as slowing down or altering course in the presence of cetaceans, to reduce the risk of collision and disturbance. [Learn more!](#)