

WHALE & DOLPHIN WATCHING GUIDELINES

Extracted from the Marine Mammals Protection Regulations 1992 (pursuant to section 28 of the Marine Mammals Protection Act 1978).

When viewing whales and dolphins, please keep in mind the following: "Whale" means all species commonly known as whales and includes baleen, sperm, beaked, pilot and orca. "Dolphin" means all species commonly known as dolphins; and includes dusky, common, bottlenose, and Hector's dolphins, but does not include the species known as pilot whales or orca.

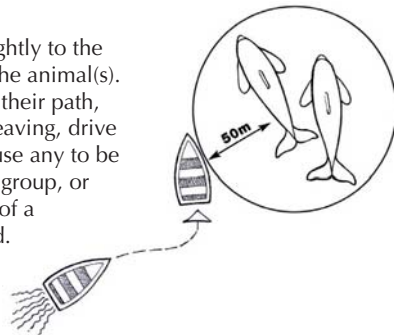
No person shall disturb or harass any whale or dolphin. You must abandon contact if they become (or shows signs of becoming) disturbed or alarmed.

DRIVING:

- Approach from slightly to the rear and parallel to the animal(s). You must not cut off their path, prevent them from leaving, drive through a group, cause any to be separated from their group, or cause any members of a group to be scattered.

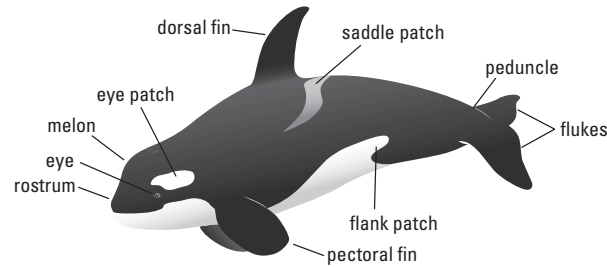
- Do not make sudden or repeated changes in speed or direction.

- At less than 300 m you should move the vessel at a constant, slow speed no faster than the slowest animal, or at idle or "no wake" speed.
- No vessel shall approach within 50 m of a whale or orca.
- There should not be more than three vessels around a whale or group of dolphins (if there are three vessels, you should not go closer than 300 m).



SWIMMING:

- You may not swim with whales (including orca).
- You may swim with dolphins but not with juvenile dolphins or a group that includes juvenile dolphins.
- No rubbish or food shall be thrown near or around, nor given to any whale or dolphin.



MALE & FEMALE ORCA Adult male orca 5–9 m (5,600–9,000 kg), dorsal fin can reach 2 m high. Adult female orca 4.6–8 m (3,800–8,000 kg), dorsal fin is often curved, like a dolphin's. Newborn 2–2.5 m (up to 180 kg, a yellow tinge to white areas if less than 6 months old). Immature males can look like adult females.

ORCA BEHAVIOUR New Zealand orca are unique. They specialise in hunting for rays and sharks, but also take dolphins and fish. They are often found in very shallow waters. Our orca are very curious about boats and will often approach you. Do not be alarmed. They do not mean to harm you, they are just inquisitive.

RAY HUNTING Nowhere else in the world do orca come in so close to the shore to hunt for rays. They are often seen in less than 1 m of water, inside surf zones, estuaries and harbours.

TAIL WAVE Tail raised into the air and waved around, as if swimming. Often seen in shallow water. Adult males have curled tips of flukes.

SHARK HUNTING NZ orca have been seen taking six species of shark.

TAIL LOB Tail raised into the air and slapped on the water surface. This can be to warn that your boat is too close.

PEC-WAVE & PEC SLAP Pectoral fin lifted into the air and waved, or slapped on the water surface.

BREACH Leaping into the air (may come only halfway out of water).

SPY HOP/FACE OUT Head out of the water (may rise as far as pectoral fins, but not common in New Zealand).

SURFING Surfing behind a boat or on natural wave.

PORPOISING Swimming fast and leaving the water like a porpoise.

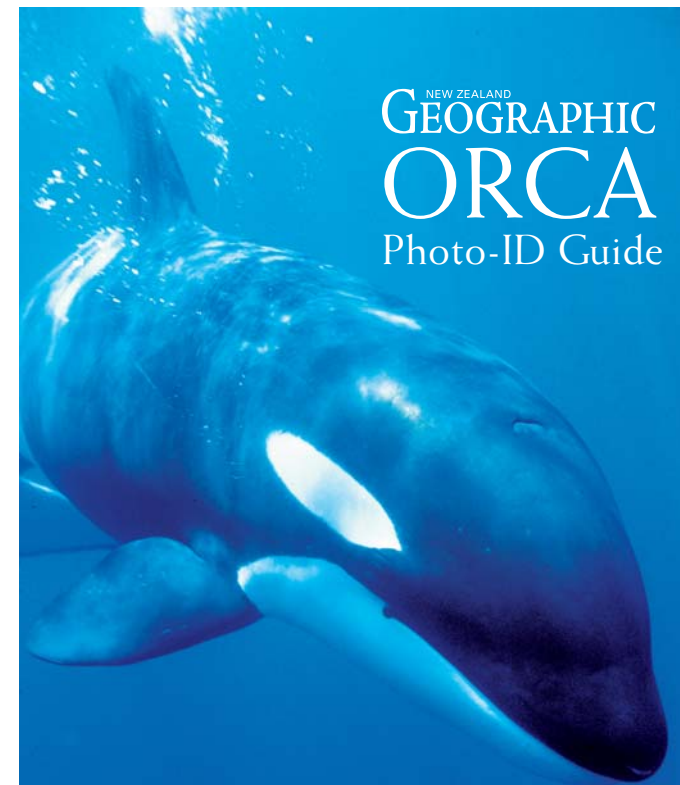
BLOW As an orca exhales, its warm breath creates a mist. This is more obvious on calm cold days.

TRAVEL TIGHT Two or more orca travelling close together—often within touching distance of each other. Often observed when orca are sleeping.

APPROACH If an orca approaches your boat. Do not be alarmed. Follow Watching Guidelines.



NEW ZEALAND GEOGRAPHIC ORCA Photo-ID Guide



Orca (also known as killer whales) can be found around all coasts of New Zealand, including estuaries and harbours. Each orca has distinctive marks which make it identifiable. Orca are long-lived (up to 80 years) and during their lives they gain new marks and distinguishing features. This is a guide to some of the more easily recognisable orca in New Zealand waters.

If you see orca please call 0800 SEE ORCA (0800 733 6722) urgently, to enable orca researchers to find them.

Orca do strand but they can be successfully rescued if help is called. If you find a marine mammal in stress (e.g. stranded or entangled) please call the DOC Hotline (0800 362 4685) or the Project Jonah Whale Rescue Hotline (0800 494 253). For sighting data sheets and more information, go to: www.orcaresearch.org

ID CATALOGUE

These 17 orca are often seen and easy to identify. However there are approximately 200 orca living around New Zealand, some of which are not as well marked as these.



A1 (NZ1)
Top of dorsal fin missing from fishing line, cut at an angle. A1 was the first orca catalogued in New Zealand.



RAGGED TOP (NZ44)
Top of dorsal fin bitten off, presumably by a shark or orca. Usually seen with Prop.



STEALTH (NZ39)
Long notch near tip of rounded fin. Hunts for dolphins. Has only been photographed off the South Island.



PROP (NZ25)
Three cuts in back—one through the saddle patch—from boat propeller. Prop has a very small dorsal fin.



BEN (NZ101)
Stranded and rescued in June 1997. Dorsal fin sliced when run over by a boat in 1998. Now half of the fin folds permanently over his left side.



YIN (NZ27)
Multiple notches in trailing edge of dorsal fin. A grandmother, with two large adult sons.



NOBBY (NZ19)
Ridge at front base of dorsal fin, from entanglement with a line. Has a sliver off the trailing edge of his fin tip.



NICKY (NZ16)
Large V-shape nick in fin. Travels all around New Zealand.



ANZAC (NZ125)
Run over by a boat and found on ANZAC day. Missing end of right tail fluke and chunk from tail stock.



KORU (NZ123)
Tip of dorsal fin damaged and progressively collapsing, currently curled over like a fern frond.



CORKSCREW (NZ15)
Photographed from behind the dorsal fin resembles a corkscrew. There is also a large notch halfway up at the front of the fin.



OLAV (NZ3)
Older male (at least 40 years). Top of dorsal fin missing—presumed bitten off by another orca—and a notch near the base of the fin.



RUDIE (NZ25)
Pointed tip of dorsal fin and a square notch. Whilst hunting for rays in 2004, Rudie got stranded but was rescued.



JIGSAW (NZ34)
Tip of fin has a knob like a piece of a jigsaw. Jigsaw has only been photographed off the South Island.



ASTRID (NZ32)
Multiple notches on dorsal fin. Often travels a distance from others in the group.



MOBY (NZ118)
Long shallow notch on the dorsal fin with a small 'finger' sticking out from bottom of notch.



PORKY (NZ60)
Very wide based fin with multiple notches.

Identification tips:

The dorsal fin is the feature most commonly used for photo-identification and is somewhat like a fingerprint, in that each is different. Look for the overall size and shape (e.g. rounded tip, wide base) and then distinguishing features such as notches. All orca have a grey area behind the dorsal fin, called the saddle patch, and a white patch on the side.

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