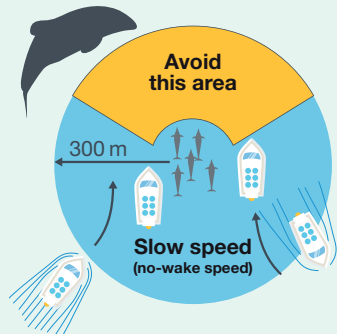
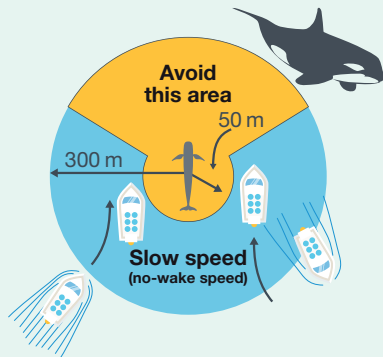


At sea

- ▶ Ensure that you travel no faster than idle or 'no wake' speed within 300 m of any marine mammal.
- ▶ Approach whales (which includes orca and pilot 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 m from whales (or 200 m 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 m to seals and sea lions hauled out on shore.
- ▶ Idle slowly away. Speed may be gradually increased to outdistance dolphins and should not exceed 10 kn within 300 m of any dolphin.



DOLPHINS



WHALES

Further information

For information on encounters with marine mammals:
www.doc.govt.nz/sharingcoasts

To apply for a commercial viewing or filming permit:
www.doc.govt.nz/permit-marine-mammal-interaction

For more information on drone use around marine mammals, contact your local DOC office or visit:

www.doc.govt.nz/drones-near-marine-mammals

www.doc.govt.nz

DOC HOTline
0800 362 468

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

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

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New Zealand Government

Sharing our coasts with marine mammals



Behaviour around marine mammals

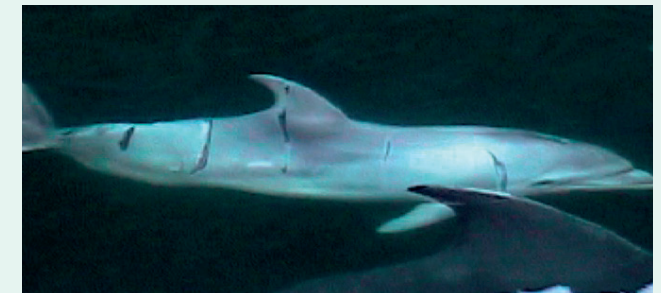
- ▶ Do not disturb, harass or make loud noises near marine mammals.
- ▶ Contact should be ceased if marine mammals show any signs of becoming disturbed or alarmed.
- ▶ Do not feed or throw any rubbish near marine mammals.
- ▶ Avoid sudden or repeated changes in speed or direction of any vessel or aircraft near a marine mammal.
- ▶ There should be no more than three vessels and/or aircraft within 300 m of any marine mammal; up to 6 kayaks rafted together counts as one vessel.

On shore

- ▶ Give seals and sea lions space. Where practicable, stay at least 20 m 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 m of a marine mammal.
- ▶ Never attempt to touch seals or sea lions – they can be aggressive and often carry diseases.

In the air

- ▶ Aircraft (including drones) must maintain a horizontal distance greater than 150 m when flying near any marine mammals.



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

Introduction

As an island nation, with most Kiwis living within an hour of the coast, many 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 backyard, the Hauraki Gulf. Seals laze on Wellington’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. Luckily, cameras have replaced harpoons and clubs, and some marine mammal populations are slowly recovering.

However, growing interest in marine mammals and the expansion in sea-based tourism bring a new suite of threats, including boat strike, noise pollution, harassment, displacement and separation of mothers and their young. The Marine Mammals Protection Regulations 1992, 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.



Fur seal.
Photo: Nathan Pettigrew

Above left to right: Orca with calf. Photo: Nathan Pettigrew
Southern right whale mother and calves. Photo: Mark Bauman
Leopard seal. Photo: DOC

All seals, sea lions, dolphins and whales are protected under the Marine Mammals Protection Act 1978. It is an offence to harass, disturb, injure or kill marine mammals.

Anyone charged with harassing, disturbing, injuring or killing a marine mammal faces a maximum penalty of 2 years imprisonment or a fine of up to \$250,000.

The Marine Mammals Protection Regulations 1992 list the conditions governing behaviour around marine mammals: www.legislation.govt.nz