

Report Violations and Incidents

In the U.S.

- **WDFW Enforcement:**
1-877-933-9847

In Both

- **Coast Guard:**
Coast Guard VHF Channel 16

In Canada

- **Fisheries and Oceans Canada:**
DFO.ORR-ONS.MPO@dfo-mpo.gc.ca
1-800-465-4336

Report Marine Mammal Sightings

- **The Whale Museum:**
hotline@whalemuseum.org
1-800-562-8832
- **Ocean Wise Sightings Network:**
sightings@ocean.org
1-866-472-9663
WhaleReport App
- **Orca Network:**
sightings@orcانetwork.org
1-866-ORCANET



Boaters can also report violations at
bewhalewise.org/report-violators



Trans-Boundary Marine Wildlife Guidelines

- **KNOW BEFORE YOU GO.** Educate yourself on local marine life and regulations before getting underway.
- **BE ALERT and CAUTIOUS** on the water. Have your family and friends help to scan for nearby marine life, especially in areas with known or suspected marine wildlife activity, or in narrow or tight areas of navigation.
- **LOOK IN ALL DIRECTIONS** and **ALWAYS GO SLOW** (<7 knots) when in the vicinity of any marine wildlife. If you suspect but aren't certain marine wildlife are near, slow to a stop and assess the situation.
- **PLACE ENGINE** into neutral and allow all animals space to pass if they approach your vessel or surface within the allowable distance.
- **BE PREPARED** to move away or shut down if nearby animals change speed and/or direction.
- **DO NOT** position your vessel in front of or behind wildlife.
- **STAY** on the **OFFSHORE** side of all wildlife to lessen disturbance along the shoreline. *
- **AVOID** moving through and disturbing groups of any marine animal. **DISCOURAGE** bow or stern riding by holding course and gradually reducing speed.
- **LIMIT** any wildlife viewing time to 30 minutes or less to lessen cumulative impact of vessels on wildlife.
- **NEVER** approach an animal in distress. Contact your local marine mammal response network to report a sick, stranded, entangled, or dead marine animal.
- **DID YOU SEE A WHALE?** Help fellow boaters Be Whale Wise by flying your Whale Warning Flag and reporting your sighting to your local sightings network.

* Kayakers and paddlers should follow Kayak Education Leadership Program (K.E.L.P.) guidelines to stay **INSHORE** of wildlife, raft up, secure themselves, and stop paddling until whales have passed beyond regulation distance. Never paddle towards whales.

Visit the K.E.L.P. section on the Be Whale Wise website:
bewhalewise.org/kelp/ for more information.

Be Whale Wise

Marine Wildlife Laws and Guidelines

BeWhaleWise.org
Revised 2025



Washington
Department of
**FISH &
WILDLIFE**



Canada

Know before you go

- ▶ Learn about the different types of marine mammals, how to identify orcas, and how to estimate distance on the water.
- ▶ **Know the local laws**, speed limits and slow zones by checking the Be Whale Wise website.
- ▶ Learn about the whale warning flag and how to recognize and use it on the water.



The whale warning flag lets you know that whales are in the area. It is a reminder to slow down and be prepared to adjust course.

bewhalewise.org/get-a-whale-warning-flag

While you're out boating

Keep an eye out for signs that whales may be nearby:

- ▶ Boats flying the Whale Warning Flag
- ▶ Whale watching tour boats
- ▶ A line of boats traveling slowly together
- ▶ A government enforcement vessel
- ▶ The obvious signs:



tail



fin



blow

STAY > 1000 YARDS AWAY
FROM SOUTHERN RESIDENT KILLER WHALES
WASHINGTON STATE LAW

STAY > 400 METRES AWAY
FROM ALL KILLER WHALES*
CANADIAN LAW

STOP

ENGINES, SAILS, PADDLING
WITHIN 400 YARDS**

400
Yard|Metres

1000
Yard|Metres

SLOW DOWN | MOVE AWAY
< 7 KNOTS WITHIN 1000 YARDS**



*In BC Waters between Campbell River and Ucluelet

**Law in Washington State, Guideline in Canada

REGULATIONS CHANGE

Stay up to date by visiting BeWhaleWise.org



Rules and Regulations
[bewhalewise.org/
regulations-guidelines/](http://bewhalewise.org/regulations-guidelines/)



Request this information in an alternative format or language at [wdfw.wa.gov/accessibility/
requests-accommodation](http://wdfw.wa.gov/accessibility/requests-accommodation), 833-885-1012, TTY (711), or CivilRightsTeam@dfw.wa.gov.