

Whale SENSE Atlantic Pre-Season Checklist



Prior to Whale SENSE program enrollment or renewal, each company should:

POINT OF CONTACT

Determine person who will act as the company's Whale SENSE Atlantic Point of Contact and Alternate Point of Contact.

STEWARDSHIP PROJECT

Design your company's Whale SENSE Stewardship Project and identify:

- Which of NOAA's Ocean Literacy Principles apply to your project (http://oceanservice.noaa.gov/education/literacy/ocean_literacy.pdf)
- The project's objectives/goals, how the project will be implemented & monitored.
- How the project will be shared with passengers (i.e. a display, leaflet, added to tour narration, etc).
- What the take home message for passengers will be and how you know if your message is being heard.

STAFF LIST

Compose a list of operators and naturalists that you expect to employ during the whale watching season. Lists can be updated during the season as new employees are hired. This list will help you keep track of staff that have received training.

ADVERTISING

Engage in responsible advertising that does not depict illegal or irresponsible behavior & informs viewers of responsible viewing practices, and NOAA Fisheries Greater Atlantic whale watching guidelines.

POST NOAA FISHERIES GREATER ATLANTIC WHALE WATCHING GUIDELINES

Display NOAA Fisheries Greater Atlantic whale watching guidelines onboard vessel (may use poster, brochures, or placard).

After company is enrolled in the Whale SENSE Atlantic Program:

Post Whale SENSE Atlantic placards on each vessel and in each ticket booth.

Post Whale SENSE Atlantic logo to company websites.

Link company website to Whale SENSE Atlantic website.

Make sure all incoming staff receive Whale SENSE Atlantic training & complete training evaluation.

When the whale watching season begins, make sure all staff adhere to the program criteria outlined in the Whale SENSE Atlantic Participation Checklist.

www.whalesense.org

Greater Atlantic Whale Viewing Guidelines

Special Considerations for Mother Calf Pairs & Feeding Whales

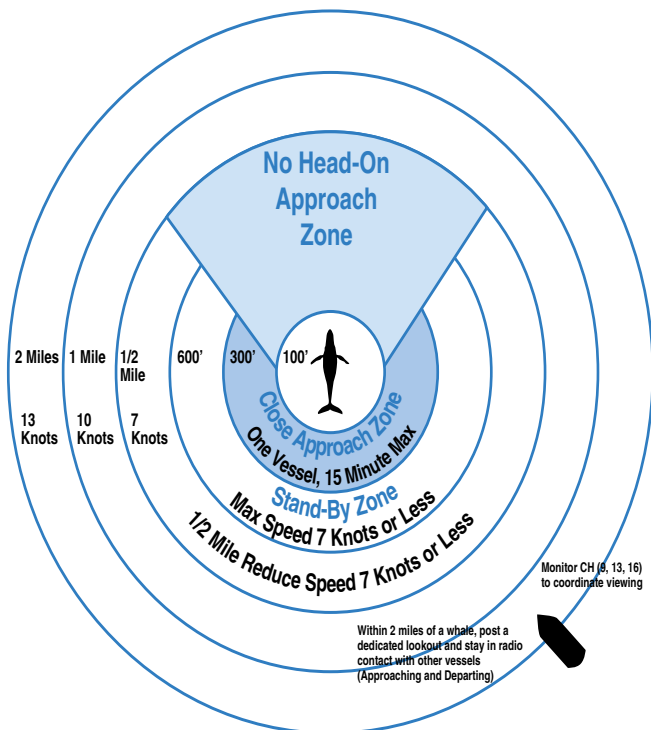
- Be extra vigilant
- Do not traverse bubble clouds
- Strive to communicate intentions with many vessels in a concentrated area
- Pay attention to whales' direction of movement
- Be especially sensitive to limiting time spent with mom-calf pairs

DO YOUR BEST TO LIMIT TIME SPENT WITH ANIMALS IN THESE SITUATIONS*

North Atlantic Right Whale Regulations

Federal regulations require that you:

- Not approach within 500 yards of a right whale (3 football field lengths).
- If right whale approaches within 500 yards, vessel should depart the area.
- If you suspect a right whale is entangled, call 866-755-6622 or the US Coast Guard to request permission to investigate (you must obtain a permit number before approaching within 500 yards).
- Vessels 65 feet and greater in length must adhere to seasonal management areas requiring travel speeds be limited to 10 knots or less.



Additional Viewing Guidelines

- Post a look out at the first whale sighting.
- Avoid sudden changes in speed & direction.
- Do not approach whales within 100 feet.
- If whale approaches vessel within 100 feet, put engines in neutral & do not re-engage propulsion until whales are observed clear of harm's way from your vessel.
- Do not attempt head-on approaches.
- Parallel course of whale.
- Reduce vessel speed as you approach whales.
- Do not separate whales within a group
- Move away if whale shows sign of disturbance.
- Coordinate viewing time with other vessels.
- Depart animals at slow safe speeds, only when whales are known to be out of harm's way.
- Limit viewing of animals within close approach zone to 15 minutes.*
- Use of drones and underwater cameras should be limited and not approach whales within 100 feet.

Whale SENSE Contacts

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