

Whale SENSE Alaska Participation Checklist



In order to be an active participant in the Whale SENSE Alaska program, your company must meet the following criteria:

- ___ Conduct educational Whale SENSE Alaska briefing at beginning of each whale watch tour.
- ___ Educate passengers about whale protection laws, guidelines, ecology, threats, & conservation. Make sure staff are accessible for passengers to ask questions during whale watch tour.
- ___ Display current year Whale SENSE Alaska placard, logo, or decal onboard vessels, ticket booths, & websites.
- ___ Display NOAA Fisheries Alaska Humpback Whale Approach Regulations and Whale Watching Guidelines onboard vessel (may use poster, brochures, or placard).
- ___ Adhere to Alaska Humpback Whale Approach Regulations and follow additional whale watching guidelines to prevent harassment of marine mammals.
- ___ Report sightings of entangled, ship struck, dead, or stranded marine mammals to the Alaska Marine Mammal Stranding & Disentanglement Hotline: 877-925-7773. Stand-by entangled animals when possible.
- ___ Keep Whale SENSE Alaska Wheel House Important Contacts card in the wheel house at all times.
- ___ Create and implement an ocean stewardship project that may be communicated to passengers with a take home message that meets NOAA's Ocean Literacy Standards (http://oceanservice.noaa.gov/education/literacy/ocean_literacy.pdf)
- ___ All naturalists, educators, operators, & captains participate in & complete annual Whale SENSE Alaska training.
- ___ Engage in responsible advertising that does not depict illegal behavior & informs viewers of responsible viewing practices, and NOAA Fisheries Alaska Humpback Whale Approach Regulations, and whale watching guidelines.

www.whalesense.org

Alaska Humpback Whale Viewing Guidelines

Special Considerations for Mother Calf Pairs & Bubble-netters

- Be extra vigilant
- Strive to communicate intentions with many vessels in a concentrated area
- Pay attention to whales' direction of movement
- No head-on approach or positioning in path of whales
- Be especially sensitive to limiting time spent with mom-calf pairs

DO YOUR BEST TO FOLLOW THE 30 MIN. VIEWING LIMIT IN THESE SITUATIONS

When in transit, stay as far as practicable from whales.
When viewing whales, start slowing speed at 1 mile.

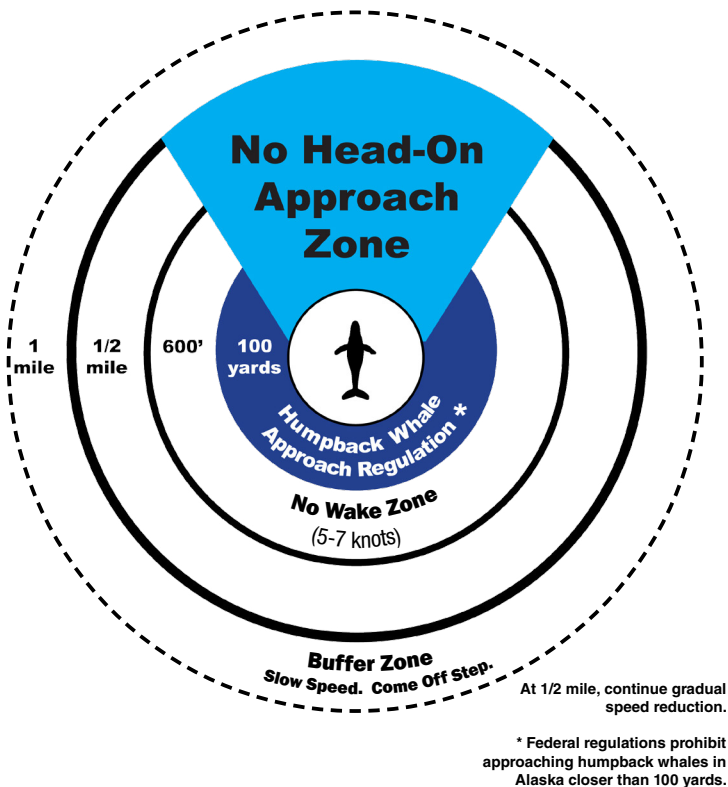
Alaska Humpback Whale Approach Regulations

Federal regulations require that you:

- Not approach within 100 yards of a humpback whale.
- Not place your vessel in the path of oncoming humpback whales causing them to surface within 100 yards of your vessel
- Operate your vessel at a slow, safe speed when near a humpback whale.

Additional Viewing Guidelines

- Use reduced vessel speed as you approach and depart whales.
- Limit viewing time around any individual or group to 30 minutes. Be aware of the amount of vessel pressure on the animals.
- Minimize noise. Be aware of potential cumulative acoustic impacts to whales from engine noise all season long.
- Minimize use of reverse. Use of propellers in reverse creates a different level and type of noise which is more disruptive to whales.
- Avoid sudden changes in speed & direction.
- If whale approaches vessel within 100 yards, put engines in neutral & do not re-engage propulsion until whales are observed clear of harm's way from your vessel.
- Disperse vessel presence among groups of whales.
- Do not attempt head-on approaches.
- Parallel course of whale.
- Do not separate whales within a group.
- Communicate locations and coordinate viewing time with other vessels.
- Consider installing AIS or other tracking system for operator coordination to disperse vessels among limited whales.



Whale SENSE Alaska Coordinator

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