

# Whale SENSE Atlantic Participation Checklist



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

- \_\_\_ Conduct educational Whale SENSE Atlantic 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 Atlantic placard, logo, or decal onboard vessels, ticket booths, & websites.
- \_\_\_ Display NOAA Fisheries Greater Atlantic whale watching guidelines onboard vessel (may use poster, brochures, or placard).
- \_\_\_ Adhere to NOAA Fisheries Greater Atlantic whale watching guidelines to prevent harassment of marine mammals.
- \_\_\_ Report sightings of entangled, ship struck, dead, or stranded marine mammals to the NOAA Fisheries Greater Atlantic Marine Animal Reporting Hotline: 866-755-6622. Stand-by entangled animals when possible.
- \_\_\_ Keep Whale SENSE Atlantic Wheel House Important Contacts card in the wheel house at all times.
- \_\_\_ Create, implement an ocean stewardship project that can 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](http://oceanservice.noaa.gov/education/literacy/ocean_literacy.pdf))
- \_\_\_ All naturalists, educators, operators, & captains participate in & complete annual Whale SENSE Atlantic training.
- \_\_\_ Engage in responsible advertising that does not depict illegal behavior & informs viewers of responsible viewing practices, and NOAA Fisheries Greater Atlantic whale watching guidelines.

**[www.whalesense.org](http://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 VIEWING TIME IN THESE SITUATIONS\***

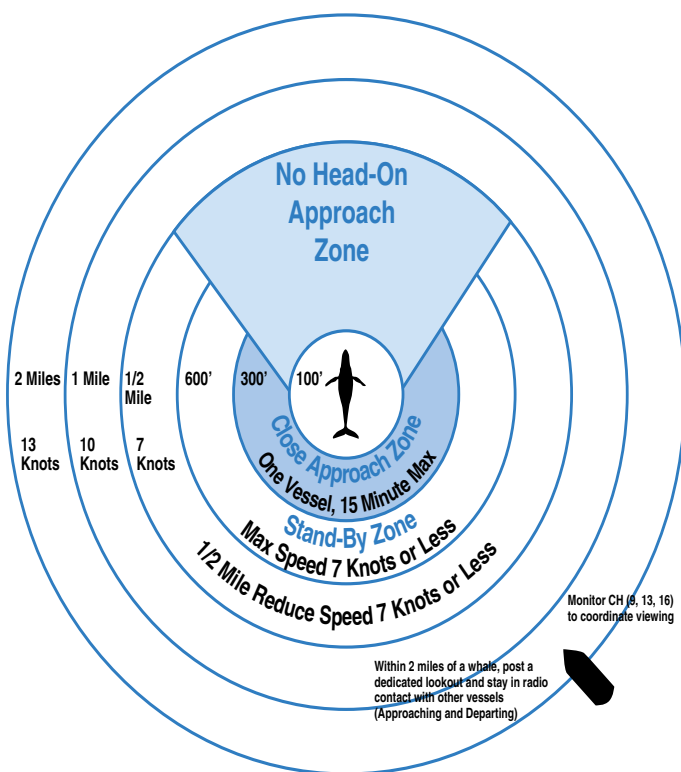
## North Atlantic Right Whale Regulations

*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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