

Whale SENSE Alaska Criteria Checklist



DEADLINES

- ___ APRIL 1ST: Submit online application
- ___ MAY 15TH: Each company must meet the following criteria:

IDENTIFY A STEWARDSHIP PROJECT

- ___ I have selected an ocean stewardship project that meets NOAA's Ocean Literacy Standards (https://oceanservice.noaa.gov/education/literacy/ocean_literacy.pdf)

ENSURE ADVERTISING FOLLOWS RESPONSIBLE VIEWING PRACTICES

- ___ I have checked that all brochures or online advertisements for whale watching does not depict illegal behavior & informs viewers of responsible viewing practices, and NOAA Fisheries Alaska Humpback Whale Approach Regulations, and whale watching guidelines

POST WHALE SENSE MATERIALS

- ___ Current year Whale SENSE Alaska placard or decal is displayed on-board all vessels
- ___ Current year Whale SENSE Alaska logo is posted to company websites and linked to Whale SENSE website
- ___ Whale SENSE Approach Guidelines and Creed are posted on-board each vessel

COMPLETE ANNUAL TRAINING

- ___ All incoming staff have completed Whale SENSE training within 2 weeks of starting work

ADHERE TO PROGRAM CRITERIA

- ___ A Whale SENSE briefing has been adopted at the beginning of each whale watching tour to educate passengers about whale protection laws and guidelines
- ___ I have ensured that all staff understand how to report sightings of entangled, ship struck, dead, or stranded marine mammals to the Alaska Marine Mammal Stranding & Disentanglement Hotline: 877-925-7773 and have agreed to stand-by entangled animals when possible
- ___ My company has committed to complying with Alaska Humpback Whale Approach Regulations and following additional whale watching guidelines to prevent harassment of marine mammals

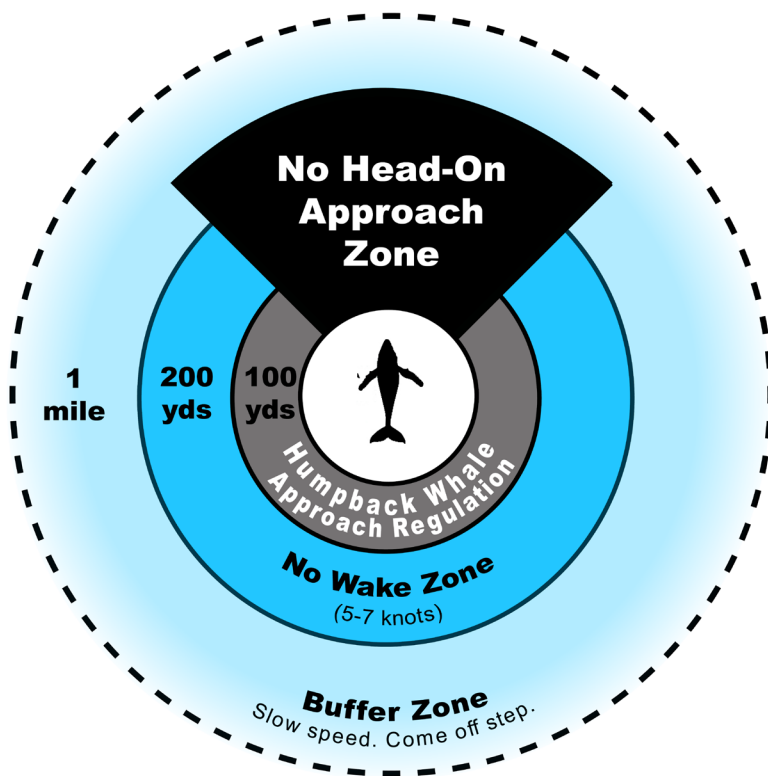
www.whalesense.org

Alaska Humpback Whale Viewing Guidelines

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
- Not disrupt the normal behavior or prior activity of a whale
- Operate your vessel at a slow, safe speed when near a humpback whale



VIEWING GUIDELINES

- Limit viewing time to 30 minutes around any individual or group.
- Reduced vessel speed as you approach and depart 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.
- Track parallel course of whale
- Do not separate whales within a group

BEST PRACTICES

Be extra vigilant around Mother-Calf Pairs & Bubble-net Feeding Groups!

- *Five and Drive* : Consider continuing to different individual or group of whales if 5 vessels are already present
- Minimize noise. Be aware of potential cumulative acoustic impacts to whales from engine noise
- 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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