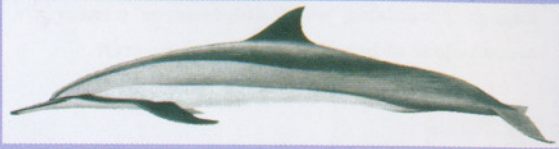


SOME COMMON SPECIES AROUND MAURITIUS



Spinner Dolphin - *Stenella longirostris*
Adult: 2.3m long, 78Kg. Life span: 20-25 yrs. Lives in pods of 25 to hundreds of individuals; has teeth & eats small fishes and squid; can leap out of the water & make several spectacular spins in the air.



Bottlenose Dolphin - *Tursiops truncatus*
Adult: 3.5m long, 500 Kg. Life span: 40-45 yrs. Pods of <20 individuals live near shore & pods of several hundreds are found offshore. Has teeth & eats fishes, squids & crustacean.



Sperm Whale - *Physeter macrocephalus*
Adult: 18m, 57 000Kg. Life span: 60-70 yrs. Females lives in pods of 10-20 ind. with their young. Males join these pods for breeding only. Has teeth & eats squids and big fishes. Dives up to 2000m & can stay under water >1hr.

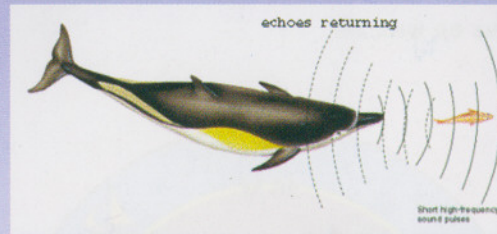


Humpback Whale - *Megaptera novaeangliae*
Adult: 15m, 40 000Kg. Life span: at least 50 yrs. Pods of 2-3 ind. No teeth but baleen plates, a sieve like structure that filters sea water & traps krill, plankton & various small fishes. Has ventral pleats on belly to allow distention of throat during feeding.

Diagrams from FAO website & not to scale

How do dolphins & Whales communicate?

Whales and dolphins communicate primarily by sound, which travels 5 times faster in water than in air. Some of them use "echolocation" - they emit clicking sounds that bounce off objects in order to locate and identify these objects e.g. friends, prey, predators & other obstacles. Some great whales sing long complex songs, so loud that they can sometimes be heard above water.



Reproduction

Dolphins have a gestation period of 11-12 months. The calf is delivered normally tail first and the newborn is capable of swimming & breathing within the first minutes. The calf will follow its mother closely and nursing will continue for 12-18 months after birth.

Whales have a gestation period which varies between 12-16 months. Each female bears one calf every 2 to 3 years. Nursing time varies a lot between 7-12 months to 2yrs.

Underwater Noise Pollution Harms Marine Mammals!

There is growing evidence that human-caused noise in the oceans i.e. military sonar & commercial activities, ships, motor boats and water skis are disrupting and/or killing marine mammals. Therefore, care should be taken to minimize noise pollution when viewing whales and dolphins.

Courtesy of Reef Conservation Mauritius

Guidelines on Dolphin and Whale Watching

Tourism Authority



« To regulate the tourism industry with a view to promoting its sustainable development »

GUIDELINES: DOLPHIN AND WHALE WATCHING

“HAVE A GOOD LOOK BUT KEEP YOUR DISTANCE”

INTRODUCTION

Dolphin and whale watching is a major tourist attraction worldwide. In Mauritius such attraction helps to diversify our tourist product and create business opportunities for the local community. However, it has been noted that the activities are carried out in an unsustainable manner thus tainting the image of our destination as a caring one.

Present practice of dolphin and whale watching cannot be continued. With a view to protecting the mammals, these guidelines should be strictly adhered to. Any harassment of the dolphins and breach of these guidelines will entail the suspension, revocation or cancellation of the skipper or pleasure craft licence by the Tourism Authority.

When in sight of dolphins and whales

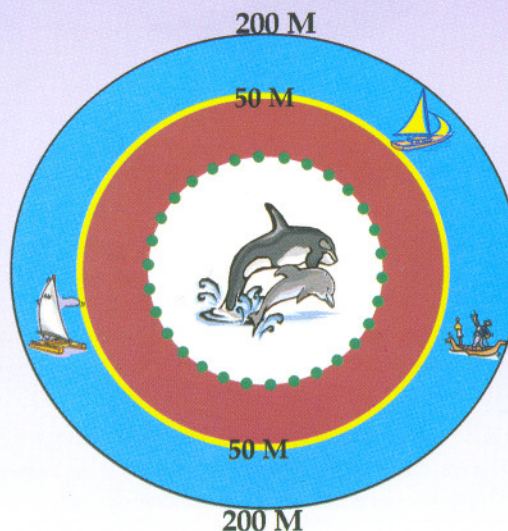
The following operational procedures are intended to avoid harassment and possible injury to mammals commonly seen by crafts engaged in Dolphin and whale watching. The following guidelines can help protect you and the dolphins you wish to watch:

How to approach

- a) Approach zone within a range of 50 mts to 200 mts of the mammals
 - (i) Moving craft is to be kept at no wake speed.
 - (ii) Avoid sudden changes in speed and direction.

- (iii) Craft shall stay on the side of the dolphins or the whales and follow a parallel course.
- (iv) Intentional noise to attract the mammals is prohibited.
- (v) Never cross in front of the mammals or drive into or over a pod.
- (vi) The engine or any other propeller device is to be kept in neutral gear during the viewing period.

- (b) **No Approach Zone: 50 mts from the mammals**
 - **DO NOT APPROACH WITHIN 50 METRES OF DOLPHINS OR WHALES**



- (c) **Departure Procedure**
 - All crafts shall leave the mammals following the same speed and distance procedures described above.
 - In order for vessels to be clear of mammals before dark, crafts shall cease dolphin and whale watching an hour before sunset.

Dolphins or whales within 50 metres of the craft

In case a mammal approaches within 50 metres of

your craft, put engines in neutral and do not re-engage propulsion until dolphins or whales are observed clear of harm's way from your craft.

Bow-Riding

Any action to solicit or encourage dolphins or whales to bow-ride is prohibited.

In case dolphins or whales choose to bow ride, crafts shall maintain their course or speed.

Feeding

Never feed marine mammals

Littering

Do not dispose any rubbish, litter or contaminants at sea.

Information/Awareness

Operators shall inform their clients about the habitat and behaviours of dolphins and whales and the content of these guidelines.

Skipper

No skipper shall operate a pleasure craft for dolphin or whale watching activity unless he has been certified to do so.

Pleasure Craft

No pleasure craft shall be engaged in the dolphin or whale watching activity without the prior written authorization of the Tourism Authority.

Reporting

Any reports of and activity that appears to be an intentional or negligent action leading to collision and harassment incident shall be reported to the Tourism Authority on phone number 213 1740 or National Coast Guard Posts.