



FRIEND OF THE SEA

Sustainable Whale Watching Standard

Certification requirements for responsible whale and dolphin watching

This document shall be filled out by personnel of the certification body in charge of the audit. It shall be filled out in English, if spoken fluently. Additional photographic evidence and video footage are strongly appreciated.

Description of the Organisation to be audited

a) NAME AND COMMENCEMENT DATE OF THE APPLICANT ORGANISATION:
b) IS THE ORGANISATION IS PART OF A GROUP?:
c) ADDRESS OF THE APPLICANT ORGANISATION:



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d) NAME, ROLE AND CONTACT(s) OF THE REPRESENTATIVE(s) OF THE ORGANISATION ACCOMPANYING THE AUDITOR DURING THE INSPECTION:

e) WHALE WATCHING VESSEL(s) AND THEIR RESPECTIVE FLAG, REGISTRATION AND LICENCE NUMBERS:

f) VESSEL(s) OWNER(s):

g) HORSE POWER AND LENGTH OF THE VESSEL(s):

h) PEOPLE CAPACITY:

i) HARBOUR(S):



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j) WHALES and/or DOLPHIN SPECIES (COMMON AND SCIENTIFIC NAME) NORMALLY FOUND IN THE AREA WHERE WHALE WATCHING IS CARRIED OUT:

k) COORDINATES OF THE WHALE WATCHING TARGET AREA

l) BOAT(s) INSPECTED BY THE AUDITOR

m) NUMBER OF EMPLOYEES:



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n) CERTIFICATIONS AND AWARDS:

o) OTHER RELEVANT INFORMATION:



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- The Friend of the Sea project has been outlined to the organisation
(If not the auditor shall provide a short description to the organisation)
- The organisation was informed of the opportunity, in case of approval, of using the Friend of the Sea logo in association with its whale and dolphin watching activity (e.g. boats, marketing material, website)
- The duration of the audit has been agreed upon

CERTIFICATION BODY:	AUDIT TEAM:	AUDIT START AND END DATE:
SIGNATURE OF AUDITOR:	NAME OF THE RESPONSIBLE PERSON FROM THE ORGANISATION ACCOMPANYING THE AUDITOR DURING THE AUDIT:	AUDIT CODE:



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1 – Authorisations and permits

- a) Whale and dolphin watching operations are authorised by a permit granted by the responsible authority, for a given area.

- b) All vessels used in whale-watching operations are authorised under the national legislation

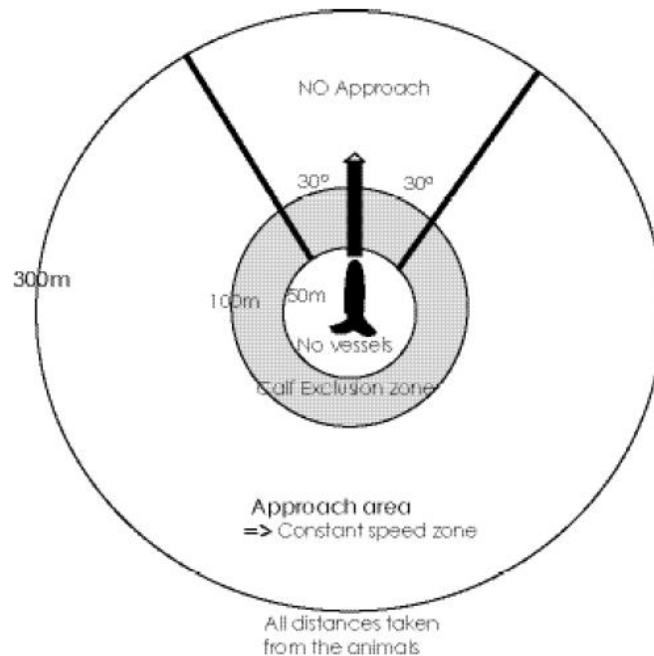
2 - Detection of whales and dolphins

- a) The vessels do not use active sonars, depth sounders, or systems emitting of sounds under the surface to attract or repel cetaceans.

3 – Whale-watching Operations



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- a) Except when whales and dolphins approach the boats, vessels shall always maintain themselves at a minimum distance from the animals (*i.e.* the 'Watching Zone'). The minimum distance is 100m from whales and 50m for dolphins.

- b) In the area between the watching zone and a distance of 300m from the animals (*i. e.* the 'Approach Zone'), vessels shall keep a slow and constant no-wake speed (<6 knots). *Chasing whales and dolphins is not permitted.*

- c) The vessel never approaches whales and dolphins from head on, but from the rear or the side;



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- d) Care shall be taken to make sure that no pod is dispersed and calves are not separated from their mothers.

- e) The vessels shall not approach isolated mother and calf pairs, isolated calves, and animals that appear to be resting or avoiding vessels.

- f) Only one vessel per time can be in the watch zone and no more than two in the approach zone.

- g) Time in the watching zone shall be limited to thirty minutes.

- h) Engines shall be placed in neutral when vessels are stopping in the watching zone.



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- i) The crew is aware of the position of the animals at any time, particularly when departing from watching cetaceans to avoid collisions or coming too close to the animals.

It might be necessary to wait for animals to return to the surface from a dive to be sure of their position.



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4 - Special Considerations for Sperm Whales

- a) When a sperm whale abruptly changes its orientation or starts to make short dives of about 1 to 5 minute durations without showing its tail flukes, the vessel shall leave the watching zone at a no wake speed until outside of the approach zone;

- b) The vessels do not stay in the vicinity of a sperm whale or pod of sperm whales for more than three of the whales' dive sequences.

5 - Swim-with

- a) The organisation does not provide or organise swim-with activities.

6 - Other

- a) No rubbish, black water or other polluting substances (including oil) or food are disposed at sea.

- b) Marine mammals are not subjected to whale watching activities by any vessel for more than two thirds of the daylight period.



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Recommendations

- a) An assessment of size, distribution and other characteristics of the target population/s shall be undertaken. *This can be done by a local authority or other recognised institutions.*

- b) Closed seasons and/or closed areas are set to provide additional protection.

- c) The effectiveness of management is monitored and improved based on updated information.

- d) Scientific research and population monitoring is an integral component of management.

- e) Training programs for operators and crew on the biology and behaviour of target species and on responsible whale watching operations are developed.

- f) Customers are given accurate information to educate them about rules and guidelines of behaviour in the presence of whales and dolphins.



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CONCLUSIONS

The auditor shall complete the following fields:

- The Organisation was found in COMPLIANCE with Friend of the Sea Sustainable Whale Watching Requirements.**
- The Organisation was NOT found in COMPLIANCE with Friend of the Sea Sustainable Whale Watching Requirements.**

The Auditor reports the following Non Conformities, identified by the related requirement Number:

- **NON CONFORMITIES (to be complied with within 3 months from audit date)**

- **RECOMMENDATIONS**