



20 May 2020

Guy Barnett, Minister for Primary Industries and Water

Keep a safe distance as whales migrate

Migrating humpback and southern right whales have been reported off Tasmania's southeast coast in the past week and we are urging people to keep a safe distance for both their safety and that of the whales.

The whales migrate north through Tasmanian waters from May each year before returning to southern feeding grounds from mid-August to October, and several sightings have been reported on DPIPWE's whale hotline (0427 WHALES).

Whales are amazing creatures to watch, and we are incredibly lucky to be able to spot these animals all along the Tasmanian coastline, but it is important to keep an appropriate distance for everyone's safety.

This is even more important now as coronavirus movement restrictions ease and humans and animals begin sharing our natural spaces again.

Vessel operators should stay at least 100m from whales and swimmers and divers should not approach closer than 30m.

Whales are large so even small movements could cause injury if people are too close. If a whale approaches a vessel or swimmer, slow down gradually and move away.

It is also critical that people don't follow behind, wait in front, or try to touch or feed whales as this can disrupt their natural behaviours and migration.

Rules also apply to aircraft, including drones, and are outlined in the Australian National Guidelines.

Members of the public are encouraged to report whale sightings and injured or entangled marine mammals to the whale hotline (0427 WHALES).

The whale viewing guidelines are at www.dpipwe.tas.gov.au/WD-Viewing