



BE WHALE AWARE!

Marine mammals
of the Southern
California Bight . . .
and how to enjoy
them responsibly.



Ocean Conservation Society
was organized to conduct
scientific research & educational
projects leading to the protection
and conservation of our oceans.

www.oceanconservation.org

An exceptional diversity of whales, dolphins and more . . .

The Southern California Bight includes coastal Southern California, the Channel Islands and surrounding waters and is frequented by one of the largest populations of marine mammals in the world: up to 30 different species!



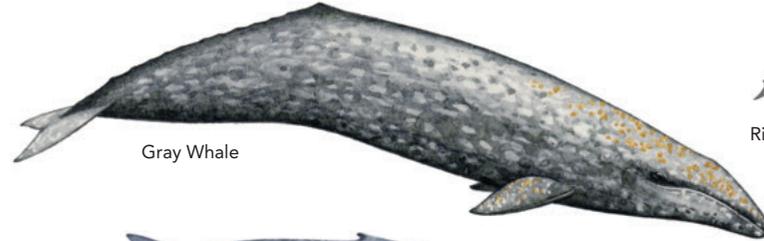
One can spot most baleen whales occurring in the Eastern North Pacific, over a dozen species of dolphins, various pinnipeds, even Sea Otters. Some marine mammals, like Bottlenose Dolphins, Short-beaked and Long-beaked Common Dolphins, Risso's Dolphins, Sea Lions and Harbor Seals are year-round inhabitants. Others like Killer Whales, Pacific White-sided Dolphins, Dall's Porpoises and Sperm Whales are occasional visitors, while Gray, Blue, Fin, Sei, Minke, and Humpback Whales pass through the Bight during yearly migrations. The Southern California coastal region also serves as a regular corridor for the inshore population of Bottlenose Dolphins that move along the California and Baja coast in search of prey. Because they live and hunt close to our shores, these dolphins are easily observed from land. Cetaceans spend all their time at sea but pinnipeds come ashore to mate, give birth, molt and rest. California Sea Lions can often be seen on buoys, docks and at their rookeries on the Channel Islands.



Short-beaked Common Dolphin



Minke Whale



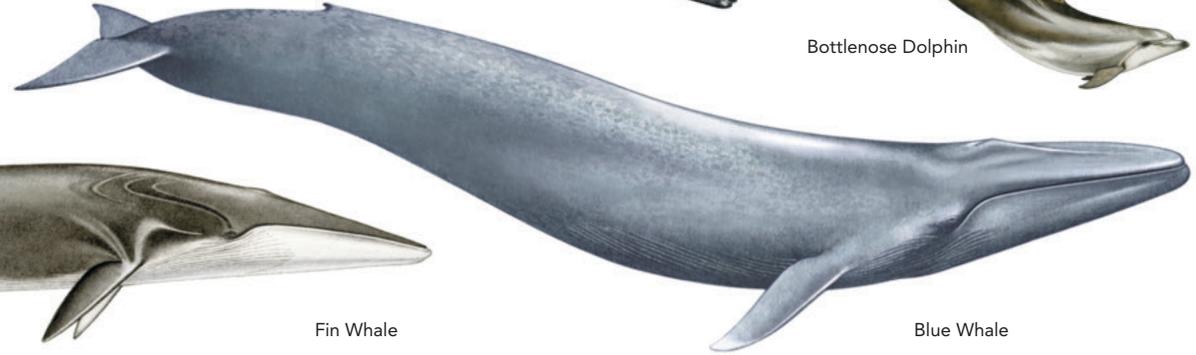
Gray Whale



Risso's Dolphin



Sperm Whale



Blue Whale



Killer Whale



Fin Whale



Bottlenose Dolphin

A few basic rules to follow and share with others:

Observing marine mammals in the wild while swimming, surfing, paddle boarding or kayaking can be a rewarding and educational experience, but we must respect them and their habitat. Whales, dolphins and pin-nipeds are protected under the Marine Mammal Protection Act of 1972. It's a violation of Federal law to harass or harm them and penalties can include up to 1 year imprisonment and fines of up to \$20,000. Harassment includes pursuit, torment or annoyance of a marine mammal or attempting to do so. For more info go to: www.nmfs.noaa.gov/pr/laws

Distance: You should attempt to remain at 100 yards (300 feet) from marine mammals while swimming, surfing, paddle boarding or kayaking.

• If you cannot avoid cetaceans by staying 100 yards away, do not chase them, move into their path or between them.

Observation: When observing marine mammals at sea, make sure your actions do not cause any change in their behavior. Disturbance is any interference with an animal's ability to hunt, feed, communicate, breed, socialize, rest, or care for its young.

• Upon sighting marine mammals stop at a safe distance and observe. NEVER follow behind, approach animals head-on, or try to encircle them.

• If you are swimming, surfing, in a kayak or on a paddleboard, avoid sudden changes in speed and direction. Dolphins and whales may surface unpredictably at any time or location.

Duration: Limit your viewing time to 30 min. to avoid creating unnecessary stress for the animals. They need our help to survive and flourish.

Cetaceans are friendly animals and might approach you while you are at sea. They are, however, wild animals and should be always treated with respect. Our interactions with cetaceans can change their behavior for the worse. Feeding wild dolphins and whales and swimming with them can disrupt their natural activities and threaten their ability to survive in the ocean. Cetaceans can also harm people if harassed or annoyed. You may risk injury by getting too close to these creatures!

STAY AWARE! Help us create better ocean stewardship. Learn more about the **BE WHALE AWARE CAMPAIGN** and how you can help: www.oceanconservation.org

Ocean Friends in Peril

The ocean is a remarkable ecosystem, full of life and resources, but it's also a fragile world. Pollution, climate change and overfishing are only a few of the problems affecting our waters, but the real issue is the cumulative human impact on our oceans. Today, numerous species of marine mammals are threatened, endangered or critically endangered and a few have already disappeared within the past several decades. Another significant threat to whales is vessel strikes. In recent years, endangered Blue Whales - reaching up to 90 feet in length - have become regular visitors to the Southern California Bight using this area as foraging grounds. These whales, unfortunately, tend to move along the same routes used by ships in the commercial shipping lanes. Fatal ship strikes are a recurrent problem. Harassment by humans, even when intentions are good, can also adversely affect the normal behavior of whales, dolphins and other marine mammals during feeding, mating and other activities. Let's be careful to minimize our impact and respect marine mammals while enjoying their presence and learning from them.

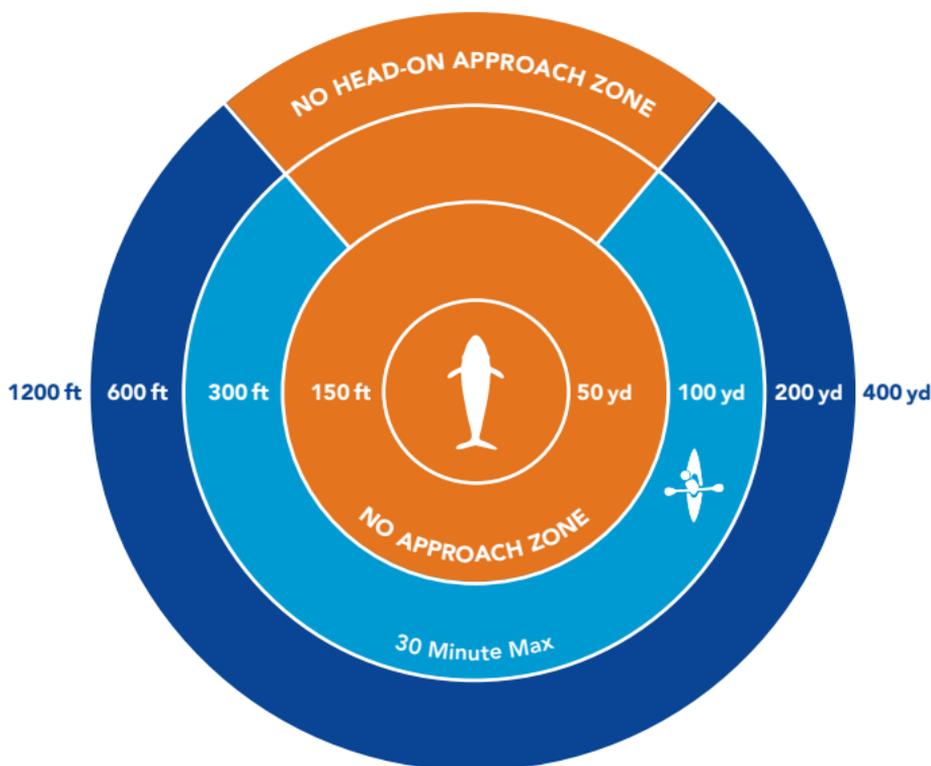


Pacific Harbor Seal



California Sea Lion

Marine Mammal Viewing Guidelines



REPORT INCIDENTS OF HARASSMENT OF MARINE MAMMALS TO:
National Marine Fisheries Service 24hr hotline 800.853.1964
Boaters can use VHF channel 16 to contact local authorities.

YOU CAN HELP MARINE MAMMALS IN DISTRESS:
If you see a stranded animal, keep your distance and call NMFS
California Stranding Coordinator 562.980.3230 • Please report injured,
entangled, or ship-struck whales to the 24/7 WET hotline
877.SOS.WHALE (877.767.9425)



OCS has been doing marine mammal research and conservation, along with educational outreach, in Southern California since 1998. Please visit oceanconservation.org to learn how you can help or get involved, or email us at info@oceanconservation.org

Brochure funded by: Lush Fresh Handmade Cosmetics. Thanks to NMFS.

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