

## REGULATIONS ON MARINE ACTIVITIES IN THE SAGUENAY-ST. LAWRENCE MARINE PARK: IN BRIEF



Did you know?  
A quality whale watching activity begins with a respectful approach to the animals.

### Respecting the greatness of whales

The Regulations on Marine Activities aim to minimize the risk of disturbance. These regulations were developed in collaboration with the whale-watching industry, scientists and other representatives of the area. This way, we can **all have a chance to observe these animals go about their essential activities in peace.**

### Watch out, belugas!

The beluga population of the St. Lawrence is endangered and disturbance caused by human activities is one of the principal threats to its recovery. For this reason, belugas must be excluded from species targeted for whale watching activities.

Table 1

### General elements

- There are a limited number of permits delivered to whale-watching excursion companies. Permit holders are identifiable by the presence of a flag.
- It is forbidden to behave in a manner which is disturbing to a marine mammal.
- It is forbidden to navigate in the Marine Park at speeds in excess of 25 knots. However, reduced speeds must be respected in the presence of marine mammals. See Table 2.
- Any collision with a marine mammal must be reported to the Marine Park authorities.
- It is forbidden to fly over the Marine Park at an altitude of less than 2000 feet

Table 2

Behaviour to adopt<sup>1</sup> in the presence of marine mammals.  
At all times, operators must maintain control of their craft, keeping in mind wind conditions, waves and currents.

SPECIES	DISTANCE	BEHAVIOUR
Beluga and other endangered species <sup>2</sup> (Figure 1)	A minimum of 400 m	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Approaching the animal is forbidden.</li> <li>• In the event of an unexpected encounter, move away at the minimum speed required to manoeuvre and wait until you are at a distance of at least 400 m before resuming cruising speed.</li> </ul>
All species of whale other than the beluga (Figure 2)	At 1 nautical mile from any boat in observation (observation zone)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Reduce speed to 10 knots.</li> <li>• The time limit in an observation zone is 1 hour, with a 1 hour waiting period prior to re-entry.</li> </ul>
	From 400 m from an animal when you are the sole observation boat	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• An observation zone of 1 nautical mile is created around your boat.</li> <li>• The time limit in an observation zone is 1 hour, with a 1 hour waiting period prior to re-entry.</li> </ul>
	From 400 m to 200 m	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Reduce to minimum speed required to manoeuvre.</li> <li>• Repeated changes in speed and direction are prohibited.</li> <li>• It is forbidden to place your craft in the path of a whale with the intention of causing the animal to come closer than 200 m.</li> </ul>
	Less than 200 m	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• No approach permitted except for certified permit holders, who are allowed to approach whales at 100 m in certain cases.</li> </ul>
	If a whale comes closer than 200 m, or less than 100 m in the case of excursion permit holders	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Keep boat stationary until the animal is at least 200 m away (100 m for certified permit holders), or has dived <b>towards the bottom.</b></li> </ul>

## Observation Activities at Sea in the Marine Park

**REGULATIONS IN EFFECT**

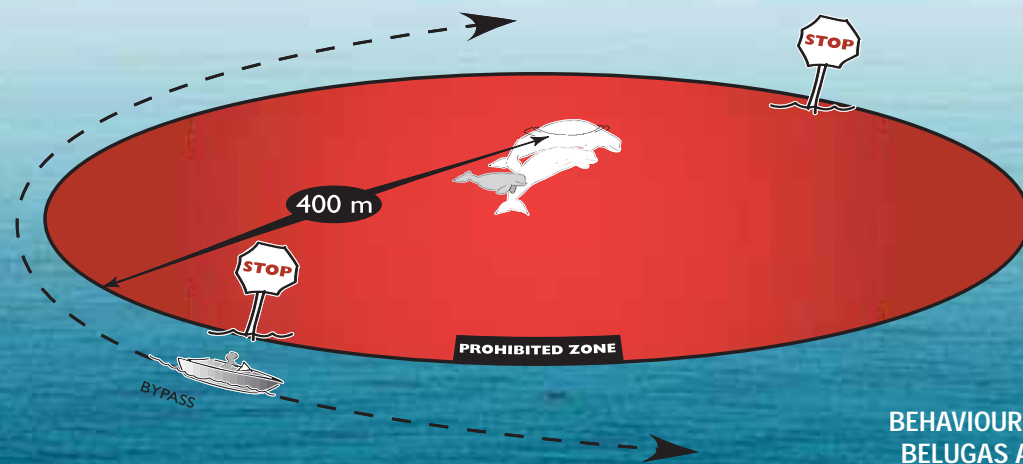


Figure 1  
BEHAVIOUR TO ADOPT:  
BELUGAS AND OTHER  
ENDANGERED SPECIES

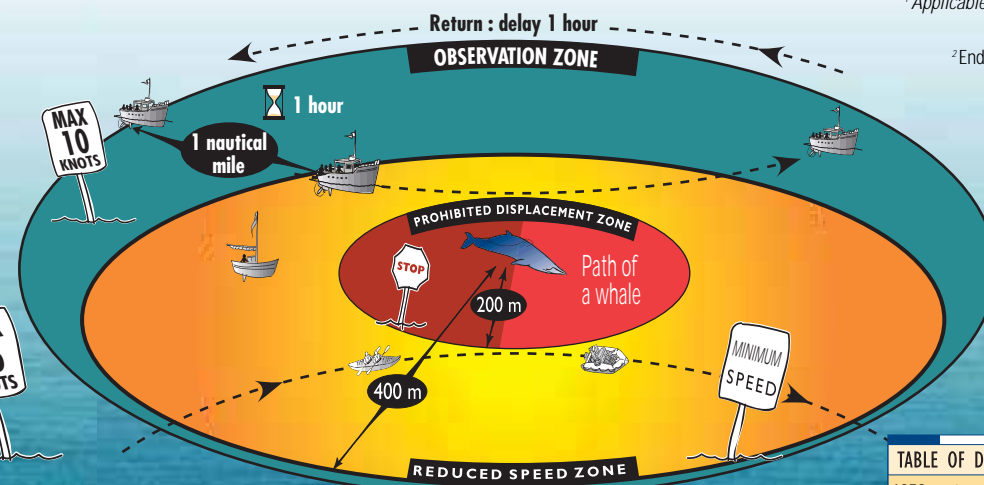


Figure 2  
BEHAVIOUR TO ADOPT: WHALES OTHER  
THAN ENDANGERED SPECIES

<sup>1</sup> Applicable to all motorized and non-motorized craft, and equally to swimmers and divers.

<sup>2</sup> Endangered species include all **endangered** or **threatened** species on the List of Canadian Species at Risk.

TABLE OF DISTANCE EQUIVALENCES	
1852 metres = 1 nautical mile = 6075 feet	
400 metres = 0.22 nautical mile = 1312 feet	
200 metres = 0.11 nautical mile = 656 feet	
100 metres = 0.05 nautical mile = 328 feet	





Cover: I. Wyndlow, Parc Canada/Jean Audet

## The Marine Park: let's protect this exceptional environment

The Saguenay–St. Lawrence Marine Park aims to increase the protection of marine ecosystems.

With the objective of protecting this fascinating yet fragile environment, **Regulations Respecting Marine Activities in the Saguenay–St. Lawrence Marine Park** are being applied by Parks Canada in 2002 (see overleaf for an overview).

### LEGEND:

-  The Saguenay–St. Lawrence Marine Park. The Regulations on Marine Activities apply to this entire protected area.
-  Saguenay Park
-  Zone outside of the Marine Park: the Fisheries and Oceans Canada Regulations Respecting the Protection of Marine Mammals apply.
-  Zones to Avoid: As a courtesy to land-based whale watchers, please remain at a distance of 1 nautical mile from the Cap-de-Bon-Désir and 400 meters from Pointe-Noire.



## Visiting the home of the whales... a unique privilege!

Feeding, resting and reproduction are the main activities of marine mammals in the area. The Marine Park is a major feeding ground for the St. Lawrence whales. Indeed, their major source of food, namely krill and capelin, is found in high concentrations here due to unique oceanographic conditions.



Feeding Minke whale  
Parks Canada/J. Audet

## An authentic nature experience!

Before going out to sea, have **realistic expectations**. Spectacular whale breaches are rather rare. Very often, they only show their backs. Keep in mind that it is an immense privilege to observe the behaviour of these wild animals in their natural environment. That way, you will appreciate your excursion regardless of their activities.



Group of fin whales  
Parks Canada/N. Lynas

## Much more than whales...

Breathtaking land and seascapes, water eddies of various shapes and colours, monumental lighthouses and a captivating history of human activity... An excursion in the Marine Park area will make you discover a wide range of fascinating natural and cultural attractions. In addition, a tour of the different interpretation centres and land-based observation sites is an excellent way to complement a sea excursion.



Prince Shoal Lighthouse  
Parks Canada/J. Audet

## Do boats disturb the whales?

Certain factors, such as a concentration of boats close to the animals, sudden approaches and abrupt changes of direction can disturb the whales. Among other effects, disturbance can result in a reduction in the duration of feeding dives.

**Complying with the Regulations on Marine Activities** (see overleaf for an overview) is a concrete way to help minimize disturbance.

Did you know?  
Thousands of excursions take place each year in the Marine Park: every move counts!

## How to reach us

If you would like to learn more about the Regulations, if you have witnessed events counter to the protection of the environment, or if you need to report a collision with a marine mammal, you can reach us at:

**Saguenay–St. Lawrence Marine Park  
Parks Canada**

182 De l'Église Street, P.O. Box 220  
Tadoussac (Quebec) G0T 2A0

Telephone: (418) 235-4703  
Evenings and weekends: 1 877 725-2340

## For more information

- ✓ [www.parcscanada.gc.ca/parks/quebec/saguenay\\_st-laurent](http://www.parcscanada.gc.ca/parks/quebec/saguenay_st-laurent)
- ✓ [www.whales-online.net](http://www.whales-online.net)
- ✓ contact members on board the excursion boats.

Did you know?  
There are a dozen species of marine mammals in the St Lawrence Estuary. However, half of these are on Canada's list of endangered species:  
[www.cosewic.gc.ca](http://www.cosewic.gc.ca)



Observation of fin whales  
Parks Canada/H. Michaud

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