

## WHALE & DOLPHIN CODE OF CONDUCT

Vessels of all kinds can pose a real threat to dolphins either by direct injury when animals are accidentally rammed or cut by the boat's propeller, or by interference or stress caused from the noise made by the vessel's motor or from its propeller when at speed. However, there is no reason why boats and cetaceans should not be able to co-exist if care is taken to observe the following rules:

IF YOU SIGHT DOLPHINS AT A DISTANCE, MAKE FORWARD PROGRESS GENTLY SLOWING DOWN SO YOU DO NOT EXCEED 10 KNOTS WHEN WITHIN A KILOMETRE OF THEM

DO NOT RESPOND TO THEM BY CHANGING COURSE OR SPEED IN A SUDDEN OR ERRATIC MANNER; SLOWING DOWN OR STOPPING SUDDENLY CAN CONFUSE AND ALARM ANIMALS AS MUCH AS SUDDEN ACCELERATION

DO NOT CHASE DOLPHINS, DRIVE A VESSEL DIRECTLY TOWARDS THEM, OR ENCIRCLE THEM; WHEREVER POSSIBLE, LET THEM APPROACH YOU. IF THEY CHOOSE TO BOW-RIDE, MAINTAIN A STEADY SPEED AND COURSE

ALLOW GROUPS TO REMAIN TOGETHER. AVOID DELIBERATELY DRIVING THROUGH, OR BETWEEN, GROUPS OF ANIMALS

AVOID CLOSE APPROACH TO INDIVIDUALS WITH YOUNG. YOU RISK BREAKING UP MOTHER-CALF BONDS AND EXPOSING INEXPERIENCED YOUNG TO STRESS AND POSSIBLE BOAT STRIKES

DO NOT THROW RUBBISH OR FOOD NEAR OR AROUND CETACEANS

ALWAYS ALLOW DOLPHINS AN ESCAPE ROUTE. AVOID BOXING THEM IN BETWEEN VESSELS

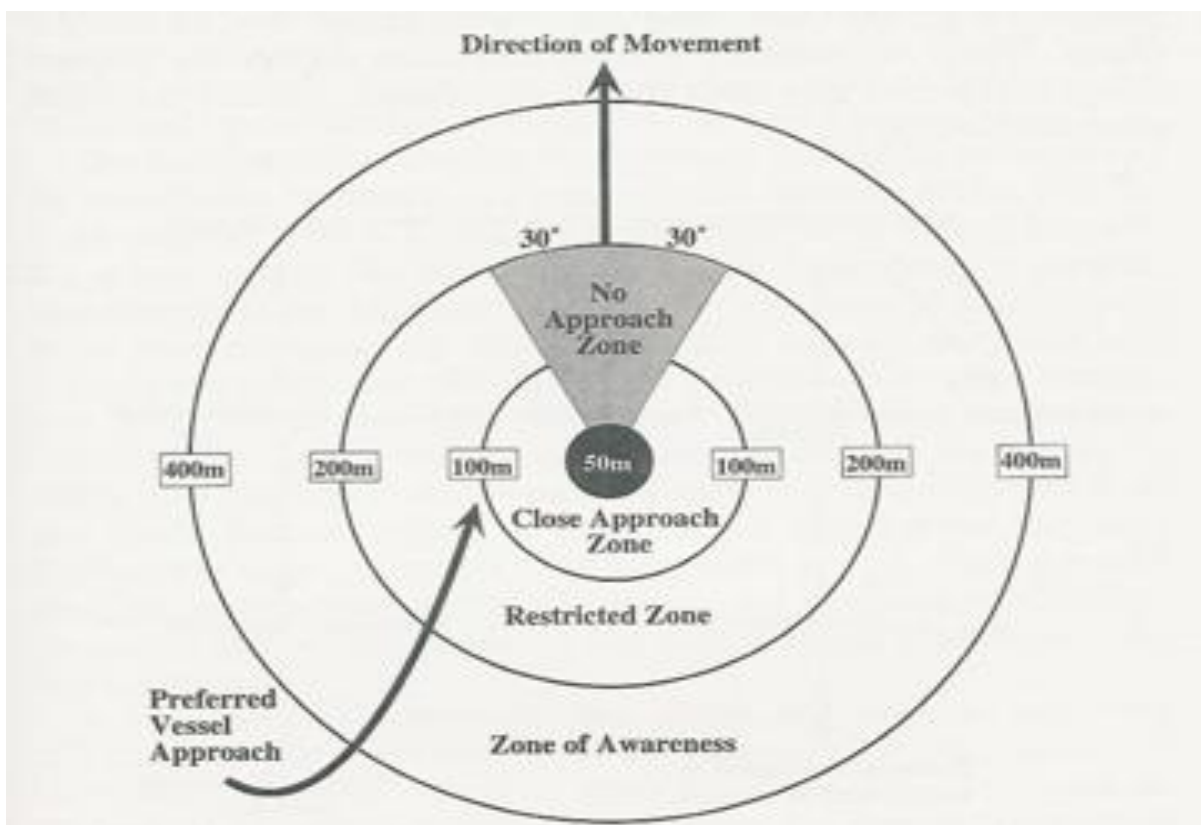
ENSURE THAT NO MORE THAN TWO VESSELS ARE WITHIN A KILOMETRE OF DOLPHINS AT ANY ONE TIME AND NO MORE THAN ONE BOAT WITHIN CLOSE PROXIMITY (I.E. RADIUS OF 100 METRES). REFRAIN FROM CALLING OTHER VESSELS TO JOIN YOU

IF OTHER VESSELS IN THE VICINITY ARE INTERESTED IN WATCHING THE ANIMALS, LIMIT YOUR PRESENCE TO 20 MINUTES

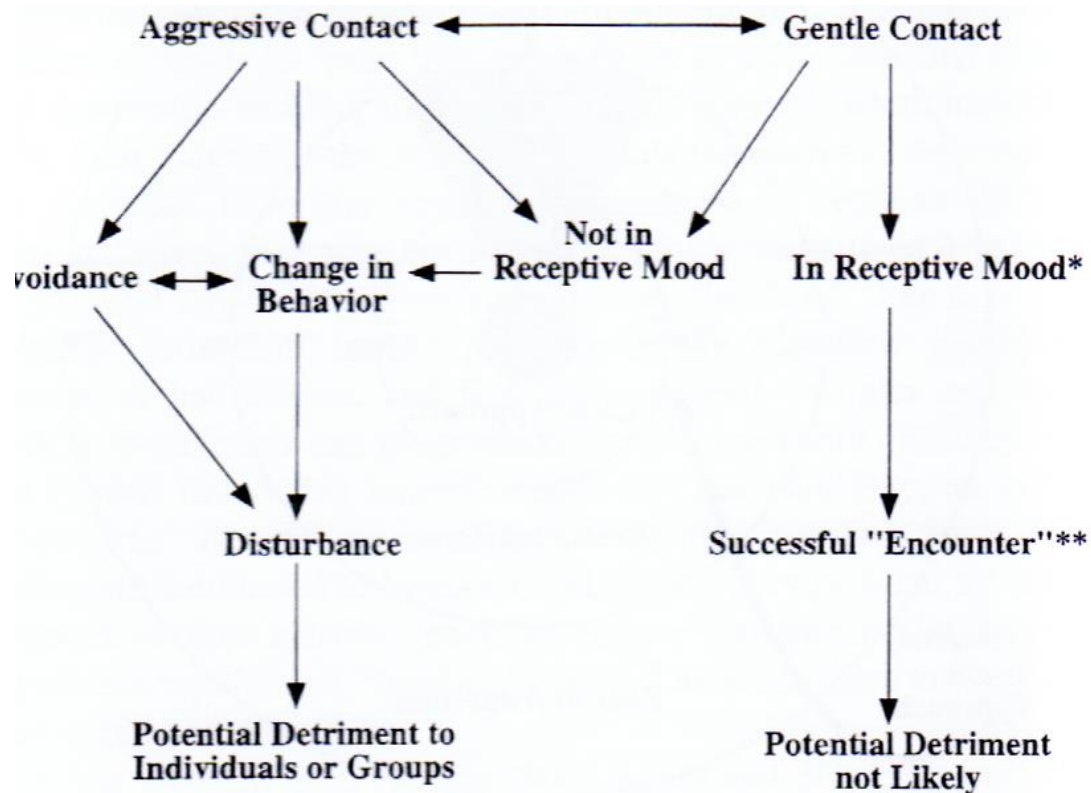
MOVE AWAY SLOWLY IF YOU NOTICE SIGNS OF DISTURBANCE, SUCH AS REPEATED AVOIDANCE BEHAVIOUR, ERRATIC CHANGES IN SPEED AND DIRECTION OF TRAVEL, OR LENGTHY PERIODS UNDERWATER

PLEASE NOTE THAT UNDER UK LAW, IT IS AN OFFENCE TO INTENTIONALLY KILL OR INJURE DOLPHINS. IT IS ALSO AN OFFENCE TO DISTURB DOLPHINS. TO DO SO INTENTIONALLY OR RECKLESSLY MAY RESULT IN A PRISON SENTENCE.

To guide people on how best to approach a whale, dolphin or porpoise (or group of them), and then once they have done that, how to assess their reaction at the time to the vessel's approach, the following two diagrams have been prepared:



**Fig. 1.** Vessel Approach diagram



**Fig. 2.** How to ensure a successful interaction without causing disturbance

(\*Receptive means that the animals are in a behavioural state (e.g. socialising, but not trying to feed) to likely cause least disturbance. \*\*Successful Encounter refers to both the animals not being disturbed, and the humans being happy with the situation.)

Aggressive contact is a rapid approach by the vessel, or rapid changes in speed and direction. Gentle contact means careful appraisal of the animals, their behavioural state, and how best to approach them, usually slowly and not head-on. Note that even gentle contact can result in unacceptable potential detriment if the animals are not in a receptive mood.

Disturbance can be assessed by observing how animals respond to your vessel: If they repeatedly move away from you, changing their course in response to changes in the course of the vessel, they you are probably disturbing them. Similarly, if they dive on your approach and then re-surface further away, you probably have disturbed them.