

Whale Watching Guideline Ogasawara (Bonin) Islands, Tokyo

Legislative status: Voluntary rule of the Ogasawara Whale Watching Association (Ogasawara Whale Watching Association, enforcement on January 14, 1997)

Target species: Baleen whales and sperm whales

Approaching methods:

1. Slow down when 300 meters from a whale (the slow down area).
2. Do not approach from the targeted whale's direction.
3. Do not maneuver the vessel in ways, which may disturb current whale's behavior.

Minimum approaching distance:

1. Do not approach within 100 meters from baleen whales and 50 meters from sperm whales (the exclusive area).
2. If a whale approaches a vessel, leave with slow speed or stop until it out of the area.

Number of boats and watching time: No restriction

Others:

1. The rule applies in the waters within 20 miles of the coast of Ogasawara Islands.
2. Do not playback cetacean sounds or similar sounds into the sea. Do not make sounds, which might confuse the behavior of whales. However normal sounds from vessels are excluded.
3. In order to approach whales for research or filming purpose without adhering to above rules, one must submit a research plan or filming plan and receive permission from the Association. Boat with special permission will hoist a designated flag.
4. Above rules apply to small boats (less than 20 tons, include non-motor vessel such as yacht, canoe etc.). Large vessels (more than 20 tons) slow down within 1000 meters and don't approach within 300 meters from a whale.