

SOP 2.03 – Marine Mammals

Section 2 – Powercraft Operations

Page 1 of 2

Effective Date – 1 September 2018

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Electronically Controlled Document

Purpose

To provide guidance on the regulations when operating Powercraft near marine mammals.

Scope

These regulations apply to all those members while operating Powercraft.

Procedures

Introduction

Laws are in place to ensure that whales, dolphins and seals are not disturbed by people in Powercraft. Powercraft should not approach closer than 200m to whales or 100m to dolphins. PWCs must not approach closer than 300m to either.

Requirements

When within 300m of whales, 150m of dolphins or 50m of seals you should:

- avoid sudden changes in direction;
- maintain a constant speed not exceeding 5 knots (8kph);
- leave the caution zone if a marine mammal shows any sign of distress;
- not approach whales, dolphins or seals from directly in front;
- not approach whales, dolphins or seals from directly behind the animal;
- not be in the known path of a whale, dolphin or seal;
- not form a barrier between a marine mammal and its group; and
- not come between a mother and her young.

Between 1 June and 31 October every year, vessels are prohibited from parts of Logan's Beach near Warrnambool, while Southern Right whales are in residence to rear their calves. There are protected seal colonies along the coastline where vessels are prohibited within 100m of a seal during breeding season (1 November to end February) and 50m of a seal outside of breeding season.

Please note: Some commercial operators hold permits to conduct tours that allow them within 100m of whales or 50m of dolphins.

Hoon laws may also apply for offences against marine animals.

To report a whale or dolphin entanglement or stranding contact the Whale and Dolphin Emergency Hotline on 1300 136 017.

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