



30 October 2018



## How to go whale watching - sustainably

From today, an online handbook will equip anyone who wants to go whale watching with places to go and questions to ask. A collaboration between the International Whaling Commission and the Convention on Migratory Species, the Whale Watching Handbook offers comprehensive, impartial and free advice to would-be whale watchers.

An estimated \$2.1Bn is spent by 13 million people who go whale watching each year. The new Handbook aims to support the industry and its regulators, as well as members of the public, to ensure long-term sustainability for both the whale populations and the communities whose prosperity has come to rely on their presence.

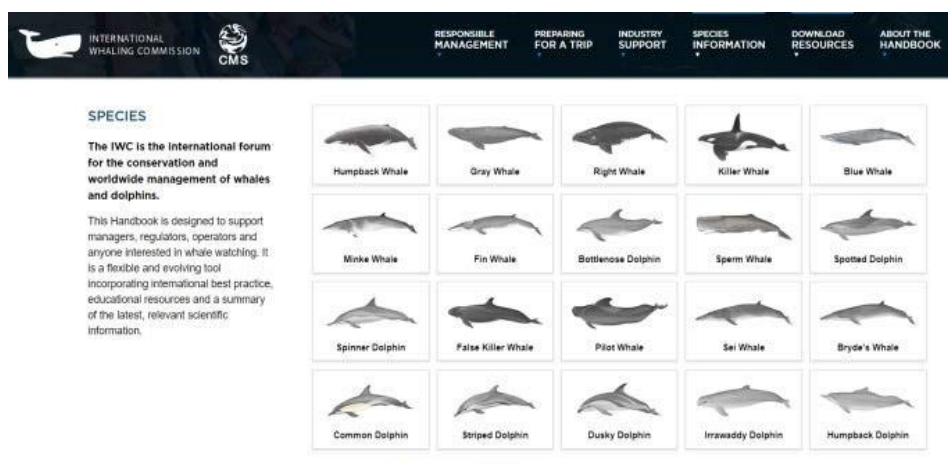
The starting point for the Handbook is the latest scientific understanding of potential whale watching impacts on individual whales - and on the long-term health of the populations being watched.

The result is a living and evolving global resource of on whale watching, including country and species information, case studies, and management advice, developed in consultation with governments, industry leaders and conservationists around the world.

Currently running to over 100 pages of searchable, cross-indexed online content, the Handbook is divided into easily navigable sections according to user-type.



Key features include an interactive world map that enables users to access information about whale watching in 25 featured countries, and a species section with annotated illustrations to help users learn more about particular species and identify them in the water.



Designed for use on mobile phones, tablets and desktop computers, the Handbook also includes a variety of material designed for download, including species factsheets and a database of over 300 peer-reviewed articles.

The Handbook initiative was led by the IWC Whale Watching Group, chaired by Ryan Wulff who thanked all those involved in the project:

“I think everyone who has contributed to the Handbook should feel very pleased with the end result. The IWC and CMS have combined their expertise and global reach to offer tangible support to those involved in the whale watching industry, whether as operators, regulators, or paying customers. This is a comprehensive resource and it’s an evolving one. I hope very much to see it grow and develop over the coming years.”

The Handbook was formally endorsed at the IWC biennial meeting in September 2018 and is available now at <https://wwhandbook.iwc.int>

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### **Notes to Editors:**

- 1) The term ‘whale watching’ is used to refer to boat, aircraft and sometimes also land-based observation of whales, dolphins and porpoises.
- 2) The annual whale watching spend and visitor numbers are taken from the 2009 [IFAW report](#). Predictions about the industry’s potential for expansion were made in a [2010 study](#) published in the Journal of Marine Policy.
- 3) The IWC’s wider programme of work on whale watching also includes a new and updated Strategic Plan, 2018-24 and research undertaken by its Scientific Committee. You can read more about it at <https://iwc.int/whalewatching>.
- 4) The Handbook was launched on 30 October 2018 and is supported by member governments of the International Whaling Commission and the Convention for

Migratory Species. The content is available in three languages, English, French and Spanish.

- 5) The Handbook was funded by generous voluntary contributions. Translation of the original English text into French and Spanish is kindly provided by the Convention for Migratory Species.
- 6) The Handbook website was designed by [Chameleon Studios](#), Cambridge UK.
- 7) For additional images, and information, please contact Kate Wilson at the International Whaling Commission [kate.wilson@iwc.int](mailto:kate.wilson@iwc.int) +44 1223 209 302.

### **About the International Whaling Commission (IWC)**

The IWC is the global forum for conservation of whales and management of whaling. Established by 15 nations in 1946, today's IWC has 89 member governments, and a work programme that ranges from bycatch, ocean noise and marine debris to indigenous whaling. [www.iwc.int](http://www.iwc.int)



### **About the Convention on Migratory Species (CMS)**

The Convention on the Conservation of Migratory Species of Wild Animals (also known as CMS or the "Bonn Convention") aims to conserve aquatic, terrestrial and avian migratory species throughout their range. Several instruments were established under CMS to conserve migratory whales. CMS is an intergovernmental treaty, concluded under the aegis of the United Nations Environment Programme, concerned with the conservation of wildlife and habitats on a global scale. Since the Convention's entry into force in 1979, its membership has grown to include 126 Parties from Africa, Central and South America, Asia, Europe and Oceania. [www.cms.int](http://www.cms.int)

