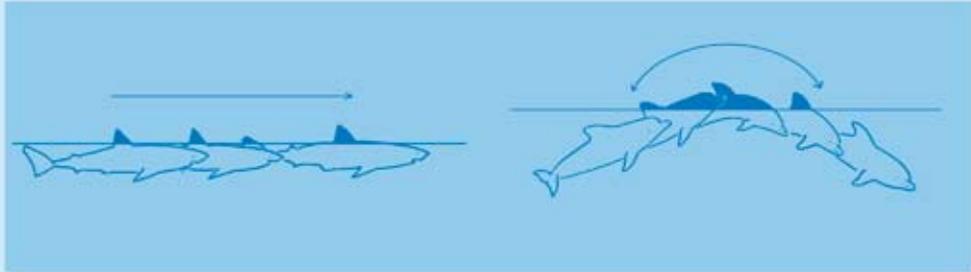


## IDENTIFYING MARINE MAMMALS

Marine mammals have adapted their behaviour through evolution to survive in the aquatic environment. They breathe with lungs and consequently rise to the surface to take in air through the blow hole at the top of their heads. This gives us the opportunity to observe and identify them.



discreet animal.



Leatherback turtle  
(*Dermochelys coriacea*) -  
Average length: 1.5 meters

This species is very rarely seen in Jersey waters. It is the biggest of the sea's turtles and feeds on jellyfish.

Copy and diagrams © GECC.



Grey seal  
(*Halichoerus grypus*) -  
Average length: 2 meters

Grey in colour, with a straight snout (as a horse's head) and parallel nostrils.



Not common in Jersey waters and are harmless. They swim at the surface (dorsal fin and tip of tail visible) with their mouths wide open to collect plankton.

## HOW YOU CAN HELP

Reporting your sightings of marine wildlife plays a valuable role in marine research. The information collected will contribute to Jersey's sightings database, increasing our knowledge and future protection of these species.

**Please inform us of your sightings, your report will be acknowledged and the Environment Department will issue an annual report summarising all of your sightings.**

Information needed to record species includes: Date, time, observation platform, distance from observation, latitude and longitude, species, numbers of animals, direction of travel and distinguishing features.

### The Wise Way to Watch Wildlife

When exploring the marine environment, it is advisable that you go with a locally accredited and experienced guide from a reputable company or organisation. This should increase the value of your experience and ensure that no offences are committed. The WiSe (wildlife safe) scheme offers nationally recognised training and accreditation to charter operators.

**A full list of Jersey accredited operators can be found at:**  
[www.eco-active.je](http://www.eco-active.je) and [www.wisescheme.org](http://www.wisescheme.org)



Front cover image of dolphin courtesy of Andrew Syvret, oyster catcher courtesy of Mick Dryden.

## JERSEY MARINE & COASTAL WILDLIFE WATCHING CODE



*Safe for Wildlife - Safe for You*



We share Jersey's marine and coastal waters with a large diversity of marine wildlife.

Species include bottlenose dolphins, grey seals, shag, brent geese, puffins and many more. All wild animals and their habitats are sensitive to disturbance and need to be treated with respect and understanding. A number of these animals are protected by law and it is an offence to intentionally kill or injure protected marine wildlife (unless you hold a permit).

This leaflet is a summary of the Marine and Coastal Wildlife Watching Code which applies to both commercial and recreational users. By acting sensitively and following the advice within this Code we can ensure that we enjoy our interactions with wildlife safely and that our impact is kept to a minimum. The full code can be found on [www.eco-active.je](http://www.eco-active.je)

## Knowledge

When venturing out into the marine environment ensure that you have researched the local area and the species that you may encounter. **Information about marine wildlife can be found at [www.eco-active.je](http://www.eco-active.je) and at Jersey's information centres.** Obtain a good understanding of how your actions will affect the marine environment and what the wildlife will perceive as threatening behaviour. In the presence of wildlife be alert, patient and observant to ensure that the wildlife's best interests come first.

## Responsibility

Be responsible for your actions when interacting with marine wildlife, ensure your actions do not interfere with or disturb the animals. For example, do not:

- Chase dolphins when in a boat.
- Try to get too close to seals resting on the seashore.
- Disturb areas where wildlife breed, nest, feed, roost and raft.
- Allow a dog to chase birds on the beach.

These disturbances may result in the demise of sensitive species, as often the places where these marine animals are found are those optimum for breeding, nesting and feeding.

## Respect

Ensure that you respect the marine environment, its inhabitants and other users. Abide by the local rules and regulations to ensure that your behaviour is appropriate. Keep a safe distance from wildlife, if in any doubt stay away from it. Always leave the marine environment as you found it.

## Safety

Safety of yourself and your companions is paramount. **All marine environments have the potential to be dangerous.** Jersey's can be particularly challenging due to the large 12 metre tidal range, fast currents and rocky coastline. Human safety must always take precedence when following the advice given within the Code, but it is equally important not to put yourself in danger in the first place.

## Acknowledgment

Take note of the warning signs that animals show when distressed and move away. Be sensitive to the amount of time you spend interacting with them. When photographing wildlife try to keep your distance by using a telephoto lens and avoid using flash photography.

## GENERAL CODE OF CONDUCT

*for ALL users of the marine environment*

- **Never attempt to swim with, touch or feed the animals.** This is for your safety and the health of marine wildlife.
- **Avoid overcrowding** – a maximum of three vessels should observe marine wildlife at any one time.
- **Limit observation time** – when in the presence of marine mammals, observe them for a maximum of **15 minutes**.
- **Leave marine mammals an escape route** – be aware of your surroundings and your position in relationship to the wildlife.
- **If you approach marine wildlife, follow these guidelines:**
  - approach slowly and cautiously;
  - make sure that your movements are steady and predictable;
  - let animals decide how close they want to be;
  - if you see signs of disturbance, stop and gently move away.



- **Avoid conflict** with other marine and coastal users by adhering to the relevant laws, regulations and codes. Please report reckless disturbance or harassment of wildlife (see Contacts list).
- **Do not attempt to rescue wildlife** that appears abandoned or injured – see Contacts list.
- **It is an offence to spill fuel, oil and other hazardous substances** at sea. It is against the Water Pollution (Jersey) Law, 2000 to permit or carry out such an action. (see *Contacts list for Pollution Hotline*).
- **It is an offence to dump any waste** – liquid or solid into the sea. All waste should be retained and disposed of in the appropriate facilities onshore.



Photo courtesy of Pe

## CODE OF CONDUCT

*for sea birds*

- **When observing wild birds ensure that you do not alter their natural behaviour. This can be achieved by:**
  - keeping noise to a minimum;
  - avoid approaching bird colonies, roosts, rafts, nest and feeding sites closer than 100 meters;
  - observing the birds using binoculars.
- The following behaviours indicate preparedness to fly:
  - Head craning, head turning.
  - Head bobbing.
  - Wing flapping in situ.
- **If you observe any of the above move away and allow the birds to settle.**
- Other signs of disturbance include:
  - Swooping and dive bombing observers.
  - Making loud calling noises.
  - Appear aggressive and agitated.
- **Be aware that birds may feel threatened by human presence**, this may cause them to display behaviour resulting in personal injury.
- **Avoid disturbing the birds** by only using recognised landing areas.

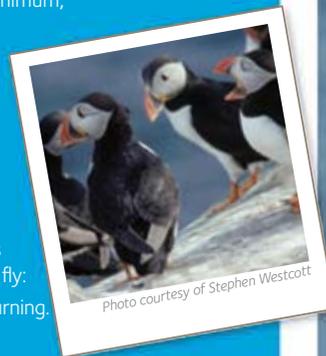


Photo courtesy of Stephen Westcott

- When in a vessel under motor, **be sensitive to wind direction** and engine fumes choking nesting birds.
- **Never walk through a nesting site or feeding flocks**, this may have a devastating effect on the birds and may cause irreversible damage to nests or nesting birds.
- Areas where birds breed, nest and feed include isolated **shingle banks, enclosed bays, gullies and cliffs**, it is recommended that people are sensitive to birds in these areas from 1st December to the 31st July.

## CODE OF CONDUCT

*for seals*

- Seals should be approached slowly and from a sideways angle to reduce stress.
- **If a seal shows signs of distress immediately move away slowly, the first signs are called the 'tripwire moment', which include:**
  - Head erect and whiskers bristling.
  - Nervous movement.
  - Shuffling or milling if on rock/beach.
- **Signs of major disturbance include:**
  - Rapid swimming to and fro.
  - Sudden panic diving.
  - Stampede into the sea or, if already in sea, crash diving.
- Observe seals from a distance of **100 meters using binoculars**. Avoid staring or pointing at seals, they will find this behaviour intimidating.
- **Care should be taken when using non-motorised vessels.** Vessels with low or no engine noise are less likely to be heard, which may result in seals being startled or even collision.
- When in shallow waters **be aware of submerged seals and never creep up on seals.**
- **Never place yourself between a mother and pup**, particularly young pups left on beaches. Adult females generally rest underwater 10-30 meters from the shore.
- **Hauling out or mooring** close to young animals may distress nearby parent animals and prevent them feeding or approaching their young.



Photo courtesy of David Yettram

Main photo courtesy of Stephen Westcott

## CODE OF CONDUCT

*for cetaceans (dolphins and porpoises)*

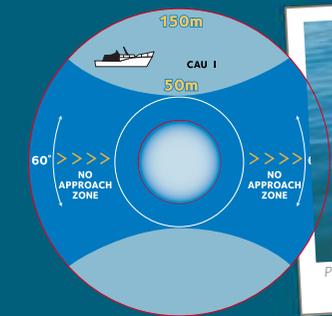


Photo courtesy of Trevor Copp

- On sighting cetaceans, vessels should **gradually slow down** to a speed no greater than **5 knots** (or no wake speed) and keep a distance of **100 meters** from the cetaceans.
- When encountering cetaceans whilst moving or if they choose to bow-ride, **continue on your intended course**, avoiding any unpredictable or erratic movements.
- **Move away slowly if you notice signs of disturbance, such as:**
  - Hasty dives.
  - Changes in breathing patterns.
  - Attempts to leave the area or move away from the vessel.
  - Erratic changes in speed and direction.
  - Lengthy periods underwater.
  - Aggressive behaviours, such as tail slaps and trumpet blows.
- Avoid groups of cetaceans with young and **never come between a mother and her calf.**
- **Never drive deliberately between groups of cetaceans**, allow them to remain together.
- **If safe, switch off all sonar equipment** when near cetaceans as this can affect their communication and navigation.
- **If you discover a solitary dolphin, try to avoid interacting** with the animal by maintaining a steady speed in the direction intended. If you are followed into a harbour or marina by a dolphin contact the Harbour authorities (see Contacts list).