

# Keeping marine mammals safe in the Adelaide Dolphin Sanctuary

The Adelaide Dolphin Sanctuary (ADS) is a popular place for recreational use and tourism activities involving interaction with marine mammals.

It also includes South Australia's largest commercial port and is surrounded by industry and residential properties. Recreational boating, fishing and many other water sports are also popular activities for community members. As such, compliance activities are important for the management of the ADS to safeguard the dolphin population. Rangers from the National Parks and Wildlife Service (NPWS) regularly patrol the 118km<sup>2</sup> of the ADS.

## How does the government ensure the safety of marine mammals in the ADS?

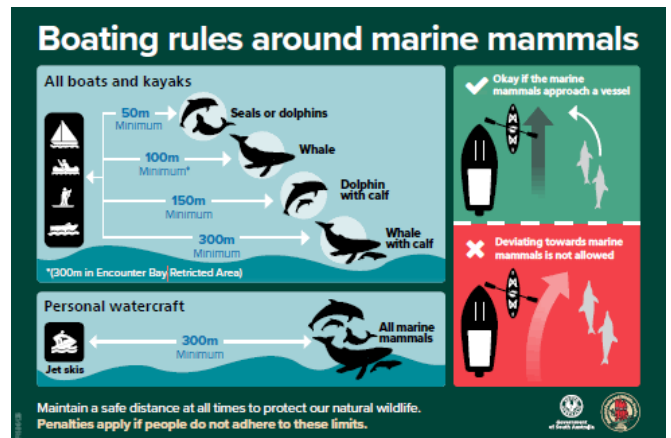
Visitor activities in the ADS are regulated under three main Acts:

- *National Parks and Wildlife (Protected Animals – Marine Mammals) Regulations 2010*
- *Adelaide Dolphin Sanctuary Act 2005*
- *Harbors and Navigation Act 1993*

Compliance patrols are conducted both on land and on water. Rangers also seek to educate park visitors and, where necessary, enforce the regulations.

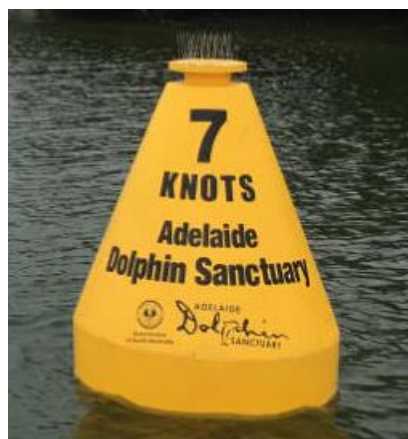
## Approaching Marine Mammals

Under the *National Parks and Wildlife (Marine Mammal) Regulations 2010*, the most serious offence is intentional harm to a marine mammal. Thankfully, there have been very few instances of this in recent years. The most common offence is approaching too closely. Swimmers and vessel operators, including kayakers and stand up paddle boarders (SUPs) must maintain a safe distance at all times. Approaching a dolphin too closely disturbs its natural behaviour and may interrupt feeding, socialising or sleeping, and this also increases its risk of injury. Dolphins are curious animals and sometimes they will approach you, this is their choice and is ok.



## Speeding

Large areas of the ADS have varying speed restrictions that are clearly sign posted. Local NPWS Rangers are authorised under the *Harbors and Navigation Act 1993* to assist Marine Safety Officers from the Department of Infrastructure and Transport (DIT) in detecting and enforcing speeding offences for the increased safety of the dolphins and other water users.



## **Feeding**

Many people think that by feeding the dolphins they are 'helping' the animal. Feeding wild dolphins actually does more harm than good, exposing them to illnesses and risks of luring them closer to boats and people fishing. They are intelligent animals, so it doesn't take them long to learn they can get an easy feed. However, it puts them at an increased risk of becoming entangled in fishing gear, taking baits from hooks, getting hit by a boat propeller, or becoming unintentionally harmed.

Dolphins are also a social species. They can quickly teach behaviours such as approaching boats and begging for food to other dolphins, which is exactly what we don't want to happen because it puts more animals at significant risk of illness and harm.



**Community members can report marine mammal incidents to a NPWS duty officer on 0427 556 676.**

**For more information visit**

**[www.parks.sa.gov.au/parks/adelaide-dolphin-sanctuary](http://www.parks.sa.gov.au/parks/adelaide-dolphin-sanctuary)**



**Government of  
South Australia**

