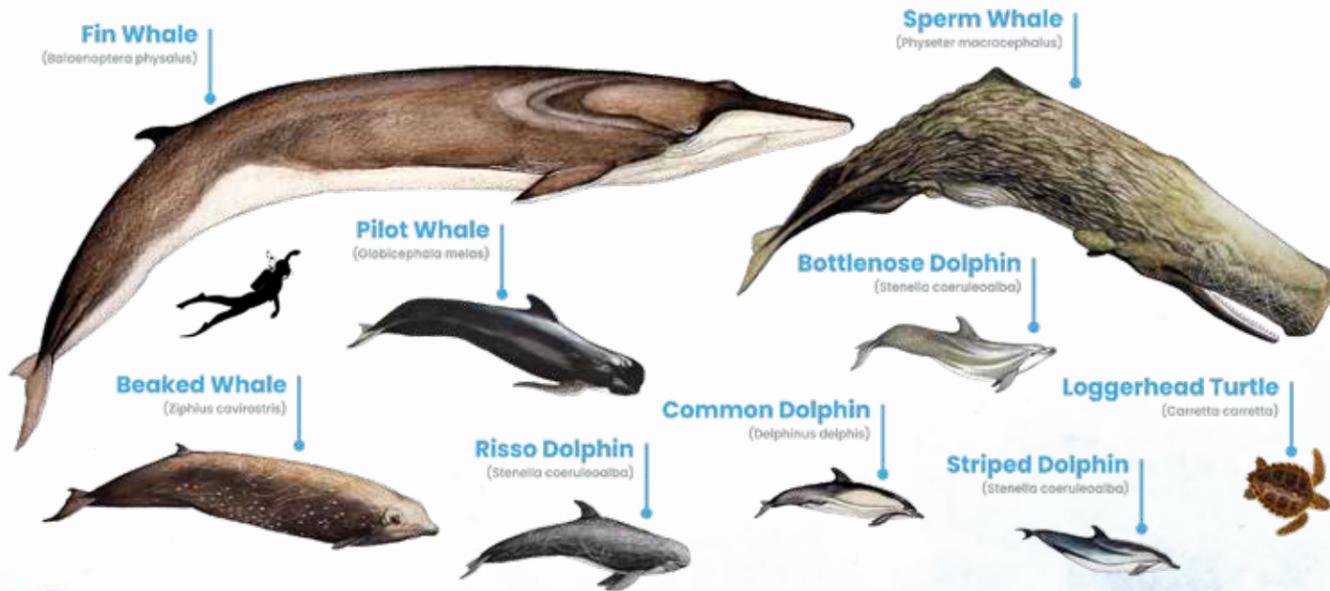




## Cetaceans in Malta

**Did you know** that the **waters around Malta** are home to **different species of cetaceans and sea turtles?**



The **loggerhead turtle** can be frequently found in Maltese waters that serve as a migratory corridor and foraging site.

These species are under various threats, such as marine traffic, pollution, noise, plastic, entanglement, prey depletion and habitat degradation.

**Physical boat presence alone is enough to cause stress and short-term disruption of their behaviour.**



This precious environment represents a **critical habitat** for marine wildlife and **in particular for the bottlenose dolphin, the short-beaked common dolphin and the striped dolphin.** However, all the eight resident Mediterranean species of cetaceans have been spotted around the archipelago.

## The code of conduct: how to approach cetaceans and turtles?

When you spot whales, dolphins or turtles, there are **few simple rules** you can follow to **enjoy the sighting without disturbing** them. It is recommended to:

### Speed to keep

- **Reduce the speed** to match the speed of the slowest animal and **never exceed 5 knots**
- Stay **parallel** to the **animals' direction**

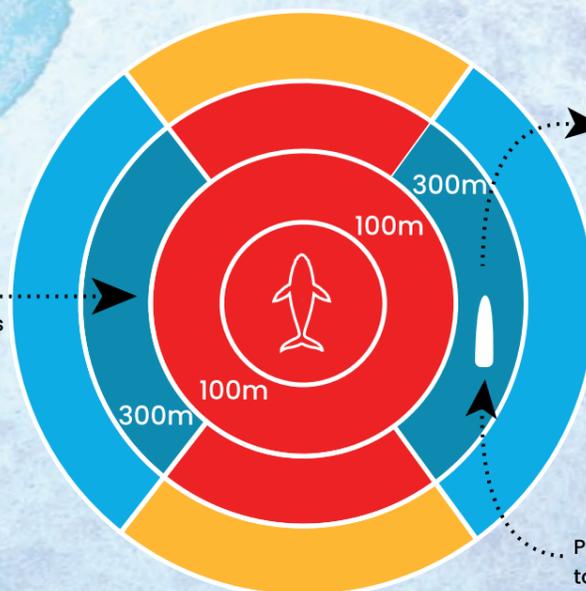
### How to approach

- Keep a recommended distance of at least **100m**
- **Turn off the fishfinder**
- **Only one boat** at a time can be within a 300m area

### If they spontaneously get close to your boat

- **Never try to touch them**
- **Never throw food or rubbish** to the animals
- **Never swim** with them

### DO NOT APPROACH FROM THE FRONT



### How long

- The observation is limited to **30 minutes** in case of **cetaceans** and **10 minutes** in case of **turtles**
- Observation time is anyway limited to **15 minutes** if **other boats are waiting**

### What to do

- **Never approach** them either **from the front or from the back**
- **Never follow** or try to chase them
- **Never make quick changes** in your navigation
- **Never separate the animals** from their group

### DO NOT APPROACH FROM BEHIND

Cetaceans and turtles are **protected under European regulations**, harassment is therefore punishable by law.

Become a citizen scientist and play a crucial part in the safeguarding of marine wildlife while navigating.

## How? Report your sighting.

**Respect ALWAYS the code of conduct** in order not to cause disturbance to the animals. **Report your sighting** of cetaceans and turtles on [www.sightme.org](http://www.sightme.org). **Upload pictures and short videos** in the dedicated section, include the information on the species, date, time, location and number of individuals.

**Your help** as citizen scientist **is fundamental** and can contribute to the data collection aimed at the conservation of threatened species, such as the short-beaked common dolphin, listed as endangered under the IUCN Red List.

