



Photo credit Chandra Salgado Kent

Mother-calf pairs can usually be seen close to shore. Often, they are seen resting just behind the wave breaks. While its exciting to see a whale close to shore, it is important to not disturb a resting whale and to obey all whale watching regulations.

When looking for SRWs, keep an eye out for a V shaped puff of air/water vapour. This is known as a blow and is a whale breathing. SRWs will have a distinct V shape whilst a humpback's blow will be more bushy and balloon shaped. Any splashing is also a good sign that there is a whale around!

Spotting a whale can sometimes be difficult. However, there are some handy tips and tricks that can help you!

WHERE TO LOOK FOR A SOUTHERN RIGHT WHALE

HOW CAN YOU SPOT SOUTHERN RIGHT WHALE?



Photo credit: Raelene Smith

SRWs can look similar to other species, but there are some key differences to keep an eye out for.

Key attributes of a SRW:

- No dorsal fin
- Short paddle-like pectoral fins
- White patches on their heads, known as callosities
- V shaped blow
- Can be up to 18m long
- Females are usually larger than males



Photo credit: Chandra Salgado Kent

SRWs are migratory mammals, meaning they travel large distances every year to their feeding grounds (Antarctica and it's surrounding islands) to feed on tiny creatures known as krill and copepods. They then make the long journey back to their breeding grounds. SRWs will return to the same feeding and breeding grounds, this is known as site fidelity!

WHERE DO OUR WHALES GO?



Thank you for all your support on the Right Whale Tracker Project! We couldn't do it without dedicated volunteers such as yourself.

If you would like to get involved in the project please contact laurab@southcoastnrm.com.au

If you would like to find out more information on southern right whales or read the original papers the information in this pamphlet is from, scan the QR code



or check out the South Coast NRM website southcoastnrm.com.au

This project is supported by funding from the Western Australian Government's State NRM Program.



Photo credit: Kirsty Alexander

SRWs aren't out of danger yet though! Despite their increase in population, SRWs are still listed as 'Endangered' under Australia's EPBC Act. They need your help!

Luckily, populations are now increasing, with an estimated ~3,400 individuals in the Australian population.

SRWs populations were severely reduced between 1790 - 1970 due to global commercial whaling. As many as 150,000 SRWs were estimated to have been killed. out of the water.

Southern right whales (SRWs) are a large baleen whale, meaning they don't have teeth. Instead they have bristle like structures which they use to filter their food

WHAT ARE SOUTHERN RIGHT WHALES?

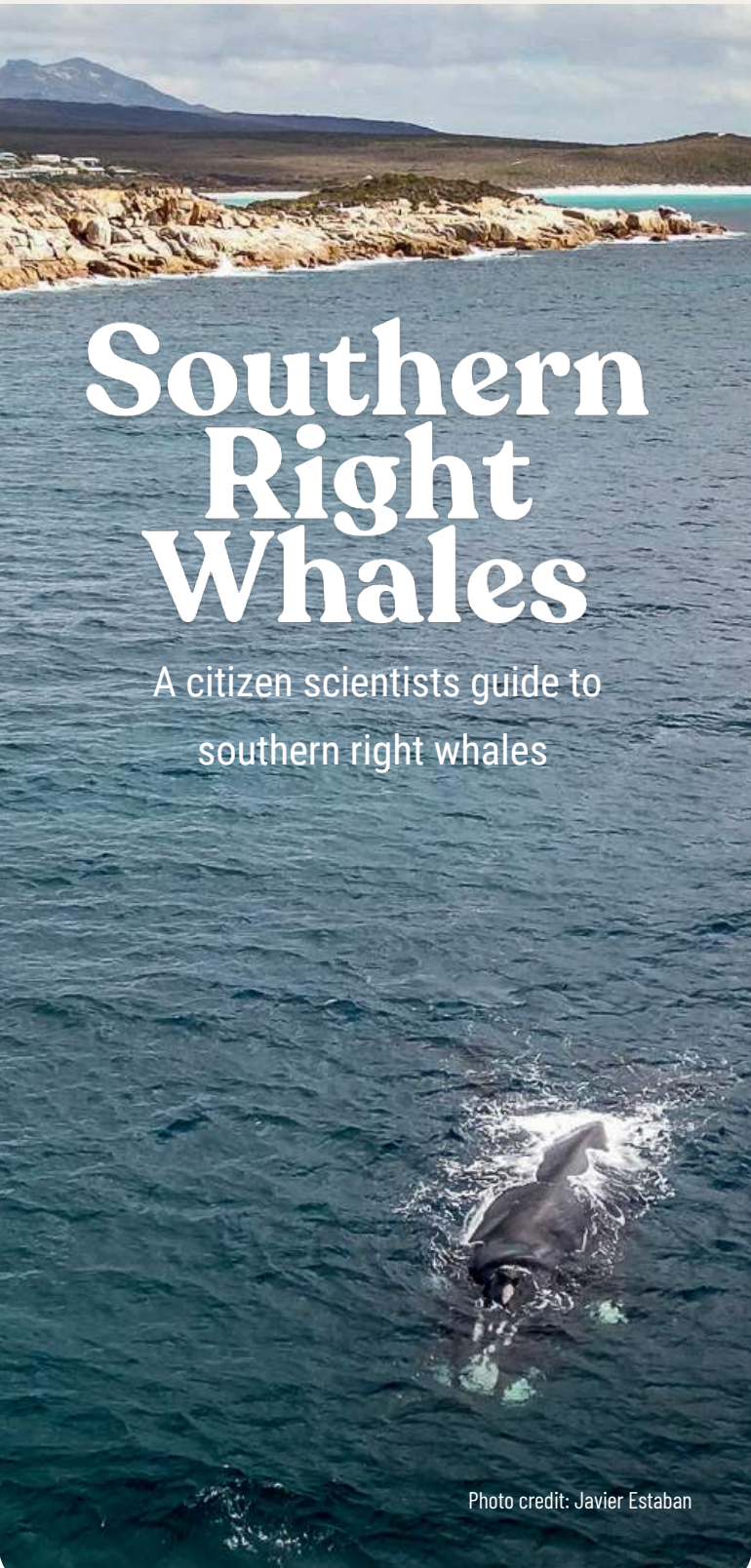


Photo credit: Javier Estaban

Southern Right Whales

A citizen scientists guide to southern right whales

THREATS TO WHALES

Unfortunately, there are many threats.

Entanglements in fishing gear

Entanglements occur when whales swim through ropes, fishing lines, nets and other marine debris. These objects become entangled on the whales body. This can result in deep cuts, or in serious cases can prevent the whale from surfacing to breathe, resulting in the whale drowning.

Ship/vessel strikes

SRWs are the second most common species involved in vessel strikes in Australia. Vessel strikes can leave deep lacerations, increasing the risk of infection. Serious collisions can kill even fully grown whales.

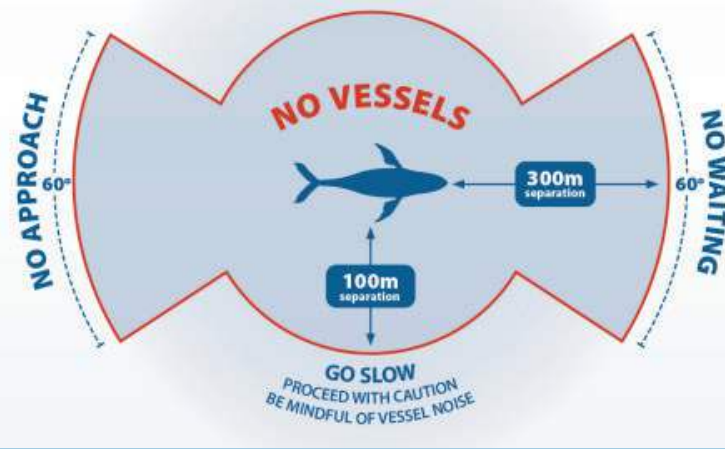
Climate Change

Ocean warming from climate change is altering species distributions and abundances. SRW prey (such as krill and copepods) are projected to decrease in coming years. Less prey will mean there will be more competition for food, not only in SRWs but also between other species which rely on krill.

WHALE WATCHING REGULATIONS

The Western Australian Government has strict whale watching regulations. This is both for your safety and for the safety of the whale.

It is important to not be within 100m of the whale when approaching from the side. If approaching a whale head on or from behind, you must remain at least 300m away. If a whale is approaching your vessel, simply place it in neutral or slowly distance yourself.



Never try to touch or swim with a whale (swimming is allowed in some areas of Australia on licensed tours). Breaking whale watching legislation can result in fines up to \$500,000.

RECOMMENDED WHALE WATCHING SPOTS

Whales can be seen all along the coast of Western Australia throughout May-October. However, here are some great places where you may get lucky and see some whales!

Cheynes Beach

Many southern right whales like to rest at Cheynes beach, and the humpbacks are always putting on a show in the bay! Grab a cuppa, bring your binoculars and camera and sit tight on Tourist Rocks which is a great vantage point to see lots of marine life! If you are lucky you may even see a blue whale!

Marine Drive Lookout

Marine drive lookout point is another great place to see whales in King George Sound. As it is high above the water you will have a good field of view to spot both humpbacks and SRWs.

Albany wind farm lookout

The Albany windfarm boardwalk is another great place to look for whales as it is so high above the water. Bring a jacket though as it gets windy!

WHAT ARE THE ECOLOGICAL ROLES OF WHALES?

Did you know that whale poo acts as a fertilizer and keeps deep sea environments healthy? Whale excrement (poo) is full of nutrients which phytoplankton use to grow!

Whale fall is a phenomenon where when a whale dies it sinks to the ocean floor, which provides food for deep water species. Often these deep water areas are very nutrient poor, so whale fall keeps lots of different species fed!

Although mighty and massive, whales can still be preyed on by other animals! Orca (Killer Whales) are known to hunt other whales. They have even been known to hunt blue whales which are the largest animals on earth!



Photo credit: Laura Bird

HOW CAN YOU HELP PROTECT WHALES

There are a number of ways that you can help protect whales and other marine life

One of the most direct and impactful ways you can help is to drive vessels (boats, jet skis etc) slowly during whale season, especially when you are close to shore. Remember this is where southern right whale mothers and calves like to sleep!



Photo credit: Albany Ocean Adventures

You can report any injured or stranded animals to the Wildcare Helpline on (08) 9474 9055.

Participate in citizen science! It is through trained volunteers and citizen scientists that a lot of this awesome research can be done. It is with the help of the community that projects such as the Right Whale Tracker Project are so successful!

WHALEY COOL FACTS

Fact 1

Did you know that SRW mothers and calves will ‘whisper’ to each other when on the breeding grounds? They do this to avoid being detected by predators such as Orcas (Killer whales)!

Fact 2

Did you know that most baleen whales are capital breeders? This means that they feed for roughly half the year and then fast the rest of the year! That means when you see a baleen whale (i.e. southern right whale, humpback whale or a blue whale) in Australia, it is possible that that whale hasn’t eaten for months!

Fact 3

Have you ever seen a white southern right whale calf? This is a genetic trait called grey morphism (they are not albino!) and they will eventually darken as they get older. Roughly 5% of southern right whales are born white!

