

Land based whale watching

A boat trip on the open ocean is not for everyone and luckily there are plenty of places to see whales from land. Scan the waters when you are near the ocean and you are likely to be rewarded with a sighting.

It is not always the spout that signals a whale surfacing, as changing light and wind conditions can make it hard to see. Watch for an unusual splash, or a shiny reflection from a dorsal fin. A breaching whale will be obvious as it crashes back into the water, but a steadily cruising pod may be a little harder to initially locate.

Whale watchers often say that a change in the wind can turn previously quiet humpbacks into acrobatic athletes, so if the breeze increases or changes direction suddenly, be vigilant and you may see this come true.

Binoculars or a scope can make the experience more exciting.

Doubly rewarding

Later in the season female whales nursing their calves may be cruising just beyond the breakers, so close you can sometimes hear their breath as they exhale. The pair of them travelling all that distance – one a giant of around 15m and possibly over 50 years old and the other a tiny 4m and just a few weeks old - is a symbol of hope and reassurance for the future.

Giant acrobats of the sea

Riding south using the East Australian Current to conserve energy, the whales will travel over 5000 km to their summer feeding grounds at the edge of the Antarctic ice pack. In late winter the current flows towards the coast and the travelling pods are funnelled in close to Eurobodalla's shores to provide some of the best whale watching opportunities in the world.

Close encounters in Eurobodalla

An age-old journey

This migration has been going on for millennia with coastal Aboriginal people witnessing their passing and perhaps occasionally feasting on a beached whale. With colonisation came the whaling industry, ever more efficient, and by the 1960's operations along our east coast and in Antarctic waters decimated the whale population to the brink of extinction. Worldwide protection agreements in place for over 40 years have allowed humpback whales to make a slow but steady population recovery, now returning in noticeably increasing numbers every year.

Chasing islands that move - the largest living creatures in the world

Each year in late winter and spring, the waters off Eurobodalla's coastline become a busy thoroughfare for humpback whales heading south from their northern breeding grounds to enjoy a summer of intense feeding in the Antarctic Ocean.

Whales

Whale Watching Tours

There is nothing like being up close to the action aboard a professional whale watching boat or on an adventurous kayak tour.

Your experienced skipper or guide will usually know where to find a pod of whales, quite often only minutes from the port's entrance to the ocean. You could encounter acrobatic whales or perhaps a pod steadily steaming south or maybe there's a mother and calf to observe.

Whale watching regulations require boats to approach no closer than 100 m, but often curious whales swim right to the stationary vessel for a bit of "boat watching" or perhaps even "people watching" and you may be blessed with their spout and its unusual odour showering over you.

There is also the dramatic tension that develops when a whale dives. The minutes tick by and cameras are poised... eyes are scanning... suddenly there's a massive roar of air as it exhales just metres from the boat or it explodes into the air in a spectacular spiralling breach.

From the deck it is possible to notice the small things about these giant creatures – the bumps, marks and scars on their skin or the stare of their comparatively small eyes. Many of our Humpbacks have patches of white or light skin that glow luminously in the clear blue waters off our coast and you can peer down into the depths and see their outline swimming below.

From late winter through spring, daily whale watching boat or kayak tours can be booked at the Narooma and Batemans Bay Visitors Centres, phone freecall 1 800 802 528 or visit www.eurobodalla.com.au

Nelligen, South Durras, Batemans Bay, Mogo, Broulee, Moruya, Tuross Head, Bodalla, Narooma, Montague Island, Central Tilba and Tilba Tilba.

Batemans Bay Visitor Centre

Princes Highway, Batemans Bay 2536
Phone: 02 4472 6900

Information Service at Moruya Library

Vulcan Street, Moruya 2537
Phone: 02 4474 1333

Narooma Visitor Centre

Princes Highway, Narooma
Phone: 02 4476 2881

For more ideas on holidaying in Eurobodalla or to book your accommodation and tours, talk to one of our travel consultants on 1800 802 528 (freecall) or visit

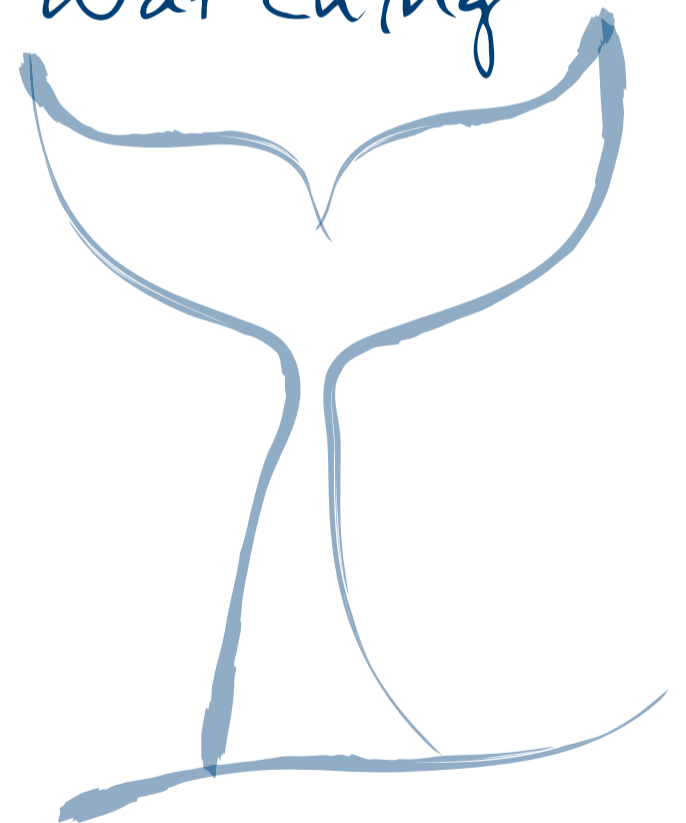
www.eurobodalla.com.au



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eurobodalla south coast nsw

Whale Watching



eurobodalla
Land of many waters

bring out your better nature

batemans bay | moruya
narooma | surrounding districts

Land based whale watching spots

Narooma Golf Club at Narooma

Excellent views from the clubs greens, windows, balcony and top end of the car park. The golf course is open to the public, though at your own risk. Walk around the course heading north towards the Coastal Patrol cottage, or south along the cliff top overlooking Narooma's main surf beach. The club is at the top of Bluewater Drive, turn left off the Princes Highway when travelling south through Narooma just after the Visitors Information Centre.

Bar Rock Road Lookout at Narooma

This is a great vantage point, two minutes from Narooma's Town Wharf, below the Coastal Patrol Station (old harbourmaster's residence) overlooking Narooma Bar and out towards Montague Island. Interpretive signs with cetacean identification (whales and dolphins) and timber stairs down to Australia Rock. Follow the Princes Highway south into Narooma, take first left turn after the Visitors Centre into Bluewater Drive and then left again into Bar Rock Road.

Headlands between Dalmeny and Kianga, Narooma

Dalmeny Drive hugs the coast from Dalmeny to North Narooma and the road runs adjacent to a cycleway. It is possible to drive or cycle along while following a pod of whales or a mother and calf. Several headlands offer excellent vantage points – Dalmeny, Duesburys, Kianga and Carters Headlands are all a short turn off the main road or cycleway. When travelling south, turn

left into Dalmeny about 5 km north of Narooma and follow this around to the beach. Some headlands have interpretive signs.

Toragy Point at Moruya Heads

This lookout offers whale watching views north along the coast, interpretive signage about whales and marine life courtesy of National Parks, limited parking, some seating and an historic graveyard. Turn left off the Princes Highway just south of Moruya, into South Head Road, drive toward the coast, and up around the headland (10 minutes drive from Moruya).

Broulee Island at Broulee

Broulee Island is joined to the mainland by a sandbar so is always accessible. Whales in season and dolphins all year round may be sighted from any side of the island which takes about an hour to walk around. Parking and toilets are at the Broulee Surf Club, South Broulee. The walk features a wonderful display of native plants and birdlife including the superb fairy wren and white bellied sea eagle.

Burrewarra Point Lookout at Guerilla Bay

This lighthouse lookout is a 15 to 20 minute easy walk from the beach car park at Guerilla Bay. Breathtaking views up and down the coast make the most of potential whale sightings. Drive 18 km south along the coast road from Batemans Bay to the turn off to Guerilla Bay. Turn left into Burri Point Road. The track to the lighthouse and look out is signposted.

South Head at Malua Bay

South Head is a secluded headland with two small clearings, one to the north and one to the south. Both can be accessed via a short walk along paths at the end of Tallawang Avenue, Malua Bay. From Batemans Bay drive south along George Bass Drive (the Coast Road) and turn left into Tallawang Avenue. Limited street parking. Whales can be sighted as close as 150 metres from the lookout.

To find out where to see whales now



Text:
follow whale_watch
to 0198 089 488.

Follow our whale watching blog
www.nswhales.com.au

Humpback whale facts – *Megaptera novaeangliae*

The East Coast Australia population:

1960's: after excessive hunting along their migration route for years - just 200-400 individuals.

2009 estimate: increase to over 10000 individuals, with an increase of 10-15% per year. Worldwide now over 50,000 individuals.

Humpback distinguishing features:

Dorsal fin two-thirds along their back. Unique tail flukes with scalloped edges.

Unique pectoral (front) flippers up to 6m long, also with bumpy scalloped edges.

Wide blow up to 4m high when exhaling from their twin blowholes.

Southern Hemisphere Humpback whales may have a lot of grey or white on their bodies. "Migaloo" is a famous albino humpback you may be very lucky to see.

Humpback visible body parts:

Rostrum: Flat area above the mouth, extends back to blowholes. Has bumps (tubercles) on the top.

Pectoral Fins: forward fins, in proportion to a third of the length of the whale's body.

Dorsal fin: A relatively small fin right on the back about two-thirds along the body. Many different sizes and shapes.

Caudal Peduncle: Sometimes called the tailstock. This is the immensely strong rear section of the body between the dorsal fin and the tail flukes.

Tail Flukes: The two sides of the tail are called flukes. Quite often they carry scars and have bits missing from attacks when the whale was young. Distinctive and used by scientists to identify individual whales.

What about the hump? They actually don't have one. They get their name from the arch of their tailstock as they sound – the only whales to have such a pronounced u-bend.

Humpback behaviours:

Cruising: 2-5 breaths at the surface then dive for up to 10-15 mins but usually less.

Sounding: The whale arches the tailstock into a u-bend as they dive. The distinctive humpback tail flukes are often held high for a moment. Usually indicates a deeper dive.

Lunging: Front of head (rostrum) comes out of water and dives back under. Sometimes whole head may appear.

Peduncle Slap: Tail is raised and chopped back into the water with a sideways motion using the flexible Peduncle which is the strong muscular area just before the flukes.

Tail Slapping: Whale is upside down under water. Can smack the whole tail repeatedly on the water in either direction.

Tail Swish or Roll: A flicking movement where the tail is slammed sideways and down as the whale submerges.

Flipper Flapping or Pectoral Slapping: One or both pectoral fins are repeatedly raised and then flopped loudly back onto the surface. Sometimes extended above water for several minutes. Sometimes appears to be backstroking.

Spy-hopping: The whale hangs vertically sculling in the water and the nose and head may rise upwards, sometimes as far as the eye.

Feeding: You may see one half of a tail fluke and sometimes the belly scything through the water, with rapid changes of direction, followed by a period underwater then a repeat of the process.