

WHALE WATCHING IN

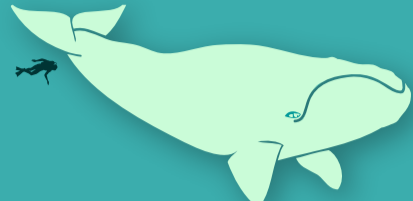
SOUTH AFRICA

-THE WHALES-



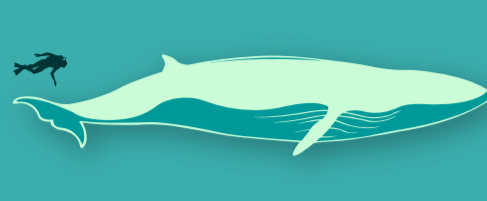
Humpback Whale
Megaptera novaeangliae

Stocky body with obvious hump
Very long pectoral fins
Mostly dark brown/black
White underbelly
Large throat grooves
Fluked tail with wavy edges
Length: 12–16m (39–52ft)
Weight: 25–30 tons
Highly vocal species
Highly acrobatic



Southern Right Whale
Eubalaena australis

Distinctive callosities on head
Lacks dorsal fin
Length: 13–16m (43–52ft)
Weight: 50–70 tons
Distinct v-shaped blow
Mostly black in colour
Slow swimmers (10kph max)
Highly acrobatic
Frequently breach, tail-slap & lobtail
Very common in Hermanus area



Bryde's Whale
Balaenoptera brydei

Pronounced "broo-duhz" whale
3 distinct notches on dorsal fin
Dark gray color
White underbelly
Length: 13–14m (43–48ft)
Weight: 12–25 tons
Broad, centrally notched tail-flukes never break the surface
Best seen from boats offshore



Killer (Orca) Whale
Orcinus orca

Regarded as apex predators
Member of oceanic dolphin family
Black back with white chest & sides
White patch above & behind eyes
Large dorsal fin up to 2m tall
Length: 6–8m (20 to 26ft)
Weight: 6 tons
Exceptionally sophisticated-echolocation abilities
Best seen in Algoa Bay area

WHEN TO VISIT?

Jan Feb Mar Apr May Jun Jul Aug Sep Oct Nov Dec



FALSE BAY and the Cape Peninsula

Boyes Drive
Fish Hoek
Coastal Road
Chapman's Peak
Baden Powell Drive
Clarence Drive

Whale watching boat tours operate from Simon's Town, Hout Bay & V&A Waterfront

WALKER BAY Heart of the Whale coast

Hermanus (Resident Whale Crier, Whale festival end September & Calf festival in August)
Gansbaai (also Great White Sharks)
Kleinbaai
Danger Point
De Kelders

Whale watching boat tours operate from Gansbaai & Kleinbaai

GARDEN ROUTE

Mossel Bay (boat trips to Seal Island)
Herolds Bay
Victoria Bay
Sedgefield (Gerike's Point & Swartvlei Beach)
Knysna Heads & Buffalo Bay
Plettenberg Bay (area between the Athene shipwreck and the Keurbooms River)
Robberg Peninsula (shore & cliff-based)

Whale watching boat tours operate from Mossel Bay, Knysna & Plettenberg Bay

WHERE TO VISIT?

TIPS FOR SPOTTING WHALES

Look for white patches out at sea – these are usually indicative of waves breaking over the bodies of whales
Sometimes rather than a white patch, you can sight a fin briefly as the whale rolls – this is a sure indicator of whale action
Any giant splash out of the corner of your eye could be whales breaching, continue to look in the same direction for a while
Check in with the whale crier in Hermanus, or the shark spotters on Boyes Drive for latest updates
Be aware that if you take a boat-based whale-watching trip it is highly likely that you will get seasick, so be prepared
When possible try calling the local tourism office before heading out to make sure whales are in the area

WHALE TERMINOLOGY & ANATOMY

Breaching – leaping or twirling whales, believed to be either communication, playfulness or to help with skin irritations
Lobtailing – tail vertically out of the water whilst the rest of the whale is submerged, followed by a resounding slap on the water's surface
Fluking – similar tail out of the water, but this time it is the start of a dive
Spyhopping – just as it sounds, the whale lifts its head out of the water, perhaps to look around
Blowing or spouting – the action of blowing water from their blowholes at the tops of their heads. Southern right whales have two blowholes
Logging – lying in the water with its head and back exposed, tail submerged

