

OUR VIEW

Danish Shipping aims to bring awareness to the members on the increasing threat of whale strikes, detrimental to both the whale population, marine ecosystem, and vessel safety. Whale Protection is within the ambit of the UN Sustainable Development Goal (SDG 14) and in recent years the IMO, through its Marine Environment Protection Committee (MEPC), has strengthened efforts to address this issue.

Avoiding Whale Strikes

Whale strikes are a concern to the safety and well-being of marine mammal populations worldwide and are therefore addressed under the UN Sustainable Development Goal 14. Recognizing the urgency of this issue, the International Maritime Organization (IMO) has initiated efforts to address and mitigate the occurrence of whale strikes through guidelines and recommendations. It is thought that mortality due to ship strikes may make the difference between extinction and survival for this species, and a range of mitigation measures have thus been developed.



Whale Protection Areas have been designated in certain geographic locations considered as high risk and in particular seasons. Danish Shipping strongly supports Whale Protection and encourages members to review, disseminate, and incorporate the whale information relevant to their trading sea areas to ensure balance in commercial activities and protection of the vulnerable whale populations.

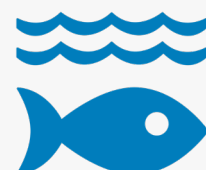
UN GOAL 14: CONSERVE AND SUSTAINABLY USE THE OCEANS AND SEAS

Goal 14 of the United Nations aims to conserve and sustainably use the oceans, seas, and marine resources, recognizing their crucial role in global ecosystems and human well-being. As a shipowner's association, we bear a natural responsibility to uphold this goal by actively seeking to prevent whale strikes and minimizing disturbances in their habitat. By implementing measures to avoid collisions and reducing underwater noise pollution, we contribute to the preservation of marine biodiversity and the delicate balance of ocean ecosystems.

HOW IS THE IMO DEALING WITH THE PROTECTION OF WHALES?

The IMO's commitment to whale protection is evident and an example of recent actions taken by the Marine Environment Protection Committee (MEPC) is that the MEPC has designated the North-Western Mediterranean region as a Particularly Sensitive Sea Area (PSSA). This proactive measure aims to mitigate ship collisions with large cetaceans such as fin whales, prevalent in this area of heavy maritime traffic. By recognizing and addressing the risks posed by shipping activities, the IMO demonstrates its dedication to safeguarding whale populations and promoting responsible maritime practices. This designation serves as a tangible example of the IMO's ongoing efforts to protect marine life and ensure sustainable ocean management.

14 LIFE
BELOW WATER



DANISH SHIPPING POLICY ON WHALE STRIKES

As a shipowner's association committed to environmental responsibility, it is our policy to support whale protection and promulgate awareness of the current guidelines and initiatives to enhance maritime safety while safeguarding the marine ecosystem. Members should note that certain regions, especially in North America, run both mandatory and voluntary programs, which are notified through national agencies and federations.

We emphasize the importance of equipping teams with information on sensitive whale areas, essential for establishing safe navigation. We encourage our members to utilize resources provided by the [World Shipping Council \(WSC\)](#), where valuable insights into whale habitats and migration patterns are available.

Further important links for reference:

- www.worldshipping.org/news/introducing-wsc-whale-chart
- <https://iwc.int/management-and-conservation/ship-strikes>
- <https://shipfed.ca/circular-letters/whales-mitigation-measures-2024-east-coast/>
- <https://content.govdelivery.com/accounts/USNOAAFISHERIES/bulletins/3927a45>

By accessing this information, our members can proactively navigate vessels while minimizing potential impacts on marine wildlife, aligning with our dedication to sustainable maritime practices.

FACTS

- **Whale strikes not only pose a significant threat to the diminishing whale population but to safety of vessels as well as strikes can cause serious vessel damage and threaten personnel safety, especially with smaller size crafts.**
 - **The risk is particularly heightened in certain areas and during specific seasons, due to which many regional voluntary and mandatory programs have become necessary as a precautionary measure.**
 - **Broader awareness on the issue and thorough evaluation of whale-related information for the trading sea areas, especially the identified high-risk areas, are essential in reducing whale strikes, protecting marine biodiversity and enhancing safety of navigation. Investigations have revealed that as many as up to 20,000 whales are killed annually in collisions with vessels, although the accuracy of this figure may be subject to scrutiny and further research.**
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