

These rules and guidelines have been issued by:

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WATCH & SWIM GUIDELINES: BOATS

- Drive the boat slowly with a steady speed. Avoid sudden changes of speed or direction. Avoid reverse or going in and out of gear.
- Approach the dolphin group from the rear or the side. Never head on.
- Do not chase the dolphins, let them come to the boat instead.
- Do not encircle or intersect the dolphins.
- Always make sure the dolphins have an escape route when there are more than two boats.
- Never approach a mother and calf.
- Dolphins slapping their tails at the surface, making coughing sounds, leaping or turning away from the boat, indicate that they are disturbed. Leave them alone and look for other animals instead.



Tourist boat in Menai Bay

WATCH & SWIM GUIDELINES: SWIMMERS

- Enter the water as quietly as possible. Do not jump or dive in.
- Stay close to the boat and hold on to the boat or lines along the side of the boat.
- Do not swim after or chase the dolphins, let them come to you.

Guidelines for dolphin tourism in Zanzibar

Leaflet aimed for tourists and boat operators in Zanzibar

DOLPHIN WATCHING

Watching dolphins in their natural habitats can be exciting and educational. However, care must be taken to avoid disturbing the animals, as this could interfere with their normal behaviours.

These guidelines have been produced for the management of the dolphin tourism to ensure that no harm or unnecessary stress is caused and to ensure that the dolphins remain in the area. Carefully managed, dolphin tourism has the potential to provide a regular and sustainable income to local communities while helping to protect dolphins and to support education and conservation.



1. Bottlenose dolphins (*Tursiops aduncus*)

WHAT ARE DOLPHINS?

Dolphins are marine mammals that spend their entire lives in the water. Like other mammals, they are warm blooded and give birth to a single calf every 3-4 years which they nurse with milk for 2-3 years. They have lungs and breathe air through their blowhole on the top of their head which means that they must come to the surface for air every few minutes.

The most commonly seen dolphins around Zanzibar are bottlenose and humpback dolphins (see picture 1 & 2) although spinner dolphins are also common north of Unguja.

Dolphins are highly social animals that spend their time in groups varying from two to several hundred, depending on species.

Dolphins eat various fish and squid and use sound (echolocation clicks) to find their prey. They also communicate using whistles and each individual bottlenose dolphin even has its own signature.



2. Humpback dolphin (*Sousa chinensis*)

DOLPHIN BEHAVIOUR

Dolphins are often engaged in **social behaviours**. They like to touch each other with their pectoral fins and sexual behaviours are also very common.

When dolphins are **feeding** they often spend short time at the surface. When diving, they usually display their tail flukes which indicate that they will make a deep dive.

Travelling behaviour is displayed when dolphins swim at a constant speed in the same general direction from one area to another without evidence of feeding or social activities.

Dolphins that remain in one area without evidence of feeding or directional movement are usually **resting**. They move slowly in a compact group, rising slowly to breathe while staying in the same general area.

BEHAVIOURS INDICATING DISTURBANCE

Females with young and dolphins engaged in feeding may be particularly sensitive to disturbance from boats and swimmers.

The following behaviours are indicators of disturbances:

- Slapping their tails at the surface
- Making coughing sounds
- Leaping or turning away from boats
- Sudden fluke-up of the whole group
- Startle reaction e.g. sudden acceleration

A dolphin's daily routine may be disturbed by engine noise or erratic movements by boats and swimmers. This may interfere and reduce time for nursing, feeding, prey detection, acoustic communication and orientation. This could also force the animals to move to less favourable areas. These disturbances will have a negative effect on the daily life of the dolphins and possibly adverse long-term effects for the survival of the animals around Zanzibar.

SAFETY FIRST

There are also safety issues for tourists visiting dolphins that must be taken into account. Operators must ensure that their vessel is seaworthy and has adequate safety equipment on board including back-up motor facilities.

Dolphins are wild animals and are capable of inflicting injury on humans if provoked. Tourists should respect this and always let the animals come to them.