

# ABERDEEN HARBOUR DOLPHIN CODE

Aberdeen Harbour is a feeding ground for bottlenose dolphins. These animals are protected by national and international legislation and disturbing them is a criminal offence.

There is a great deal of local interest in the dolphins and their welfare, with many people watching the animals from Torry Point Battery. It is therefore likely that any suspected acts of disturbance will be noted and reported to the police and/or the press.

The simplest way to reduce the risk of inadvertently breaking the law is by keeping watch for the animals and following this advice, which has been approved by Aberdeen Harbour Board, Scottish Natural Heritage, Police Scotland and the East Grampian Coastal Partnership.

1. Never approach dolphins.
2. Never allow anyone to swim with, touch or feed dolphins.
3. Maintain a constant course and the slowest safe speed you can, given the conditions, in the harbour mouth and whenever dolphins are nearby.
4. When entering or leaving the harbour, if it is safe to do so, stay well away from the breakwaters to avoid startling animals by making them feel boxed in.
5. Avoid turning engines on and off if dolphins are present.

Small boat users will need to take particular care, especially if they are operating in groups, in order to avoid inadvertently herding the animals. A single file formation may be the safest formation to adopt, subject to safe vessel handling.

## What to do if dolphins come towards your vessel.

From time to time, dolphins may choose to come in to close quarters with your vessel. If you are lucky enough for this to happen, maintain a steady course and slow speed until the animals move away. If you wish to 'lose' the animals, it is best to slowly come to standstill with your engine idling and wait for them to lose interest. Never chase animals that are moving away from you.

## What to do if you see a whale.

Please apply the same code of conduct when encountering a whale as you would a dolphin. Should you see a whale then please record the position and report the details to the Seawatch Foundation ([sightings@seawatchfoundation.org.uk](mailto:sightings@seawatchfoundation.org.uk)).

