

Aquarium: Keep a Certain Distance from Whales in Long Island Sound

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You may have heard that a humpback whale was seen off of Westport on Friday. This is the third consecutive year that a humpback (or humpbacks) have been seen in the Sound, after NOT being here for ... well, a century?

— *an announcement from the Maritime Aquarium*

The Maritime Aquarium at Norwalk wishes to stress this:

Whales fall under the Marine Mammal Protection Act. There are federal restrictions on how closely you are allowed to approach them. **See the attached.**

Early Friday afternoon, Westport police posted the video, above, on Facebook, with this statement:

After receiving calls of a whale near Cockenoe Island this morning, our Marine Unit responded and confirmed a large Humpback whale was visiting Westport. Officers made sure the whale was not in distress and kept a safe perimeter around him until he swam into the deeper waters of Long Island Sound.

We do not want everyone in Fairfield and New Haven counties with a boat to go chasing after this animal.

Humpback whales are *very large* animals — bigger than most people's boats. We do not want boaters hurt and we do not want this whale to be hurt.

One of the three humpbacks that turned up in the Sound two years ago was killed "by blunt force trauma," probably in a collision with a sailboat.

Past articles on Humpbacks in Long Island Sound

- [Humpback Whales are in Long Island Sound](#) (Jan. 14)
- [Whales Have Returned to Western Long Island Sound: What to Do If You See One](#) (July 28, 2016)

If someone on the Sound sees a whale, we strongly urge them to cut their engines or drop their sails, and just watch. And take pictures and video. And report the sighting to John Lenzycki and Dave Hudson here at the Maritime Aquarium: jlenzycki@maritimeaquarium.org and dhudson@maritimeaquarium.org.

Photo or video of the underside of the whale's tail would be especially helpful. The pattern on the underside of every humpback's tail is unique, and seeing it may help to identify the whale.

Federal Guidelines for Watching Whales

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(The Maritime Aquarium passed along this graphic illustration)

At the bottom of the document (not shown here), the NOAA asks: "Please report right whale sightings or sightings of marine mammals in distress to 866-755-6622."