South Africa - Whale Watching - 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

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

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 predator

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

TIPS FOR SPOTTING WHALES

Look for white patches out at sea - there are several indications of action below or on the backs of whales. Sometimes rather than a white patch, you can sight a /f_in brie/f_ly 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

Spyhopping - just as it sounds, the whole whale lifts head out of the water, perhaps to look around

Blowing or spouting - the act of blowing water from their blowholes at the tops of their heads. Southern right whales have two blowholes

Logging - lying in the water with their head and back exposed, tail submerged

Dorsal Fin

Tails/Flukes

Eye

Blow Holes

Tubercules/Callosities

Baleen

Ventral Grooves

Manufacturers

Southern Right Whale

Bryde's Whale

Killer (Orca) Whale

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EASTERN CAPE

WESTERN CAPE

NORTHERN CAPE

GARDEN ROUTE

Cape Town

Plettenberg Bay

Knysna

Gansbaai

Kleinbaai

De Kelders

Walker Bay

Hermanus

Kleinmond

Gansbaai

Kleinbaai

L'Agulhas

De Hoop Nature Reserve

Mossel Bay

Herolds Bay

Victoria Bay

Sedgefield

Knysna Heads & Buffalo Bay

Plettenberg Bay

Robberg Peninsula

Garden Route

Port Elizabeth

Central Coast

East London

East Cape

West Coast

False Bay

Gansbaai

Kleinbaai

Kleinmond

Gansbaai

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