

Hauraki Gulf Transit Protocol for Commercial Shipping

Reducing the risk of whale deaths

1. Plan to slow down

The best way to reduce the risk is to slow down and avoid areas with the most Bryde's whales. The risk to whales is substantially lower from ships travelling at 10 knots compared to 15 knots or more.

- ▶ Plan your voyage so that whenever possible you transit the Hauraki Gulf at 10 knots, when outside the Auckland Pilotage Area.
- ▶ Approach and depart Port of Auckland using the recommended route as outlined in the New Zealand Annual Notices to Mariners, Section 10: Shipping routes around the New Zealand coast.

Adherence to this route will narrow the area of the Hauraki Gulf transited by large vessels and help reduce the risk of collision with a whale.

2. Watch for Bryde's whales

If you see a whale, you can avoid it. Having a dedicated observer scanning ahead with binoculars will help to detect whales at greater distances.

When transiting through the Hauraki Gulf, vessels are required to post whale lookouts during daylight hours.

If a whale is sighted forward of the beam, slow down and/or change course to keep as far from the whales as possible. Whenever safe to do so, no vessel should pass closer than 1,000 metres from a whale.

The image on this document is provided to help crew identify Bryde's whales.

Recommended approach to Port of Auckland

From the north:

Enter Hauraki Gulf (Tikapa Moana) through Jellicoe Channel keeping at least 3 nautical miles off land, thence at least 3 nautical miles off Flat Rock, then pass through a point midway between Shearer Rock and The Noises (at least 3 miles off Shearer Rock) before proceeding westwards to intercept the sector light at St Leonards beach and thence to the Pilot Station.

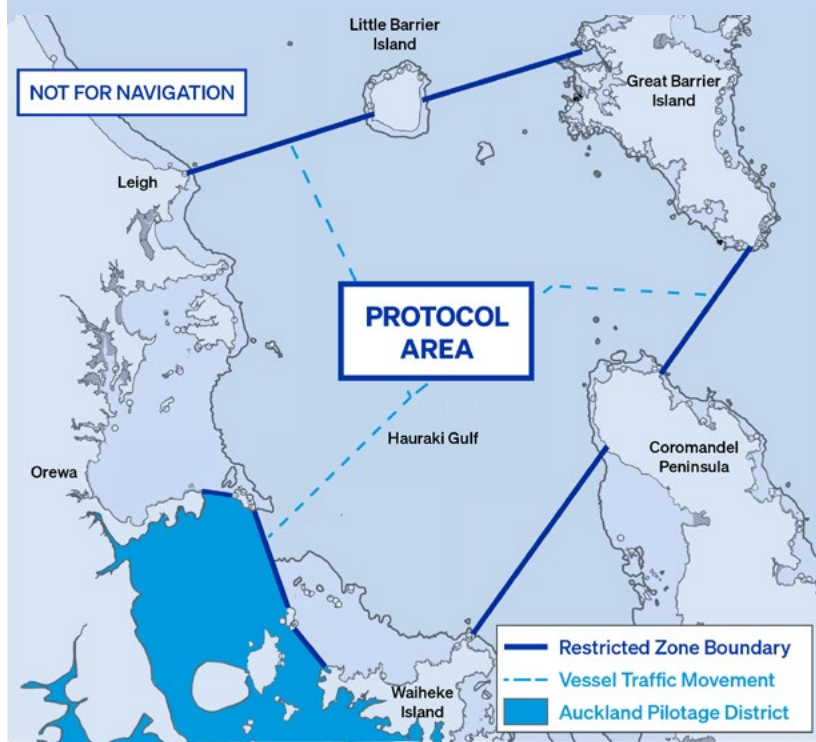
[Extract from Annual New Zealand Notice to Mariners, No. 10.](#)

From the east:

Enter Hauraki Gulf (Tikapa Moana) through Colville Channel keeping to the north of Channel Islands and thence to the Pilot Station.

The routes should be reversed for departing vessels.

Ships are to keep at least 5 nautical miles off the land, any charted danger, or any outlying islands, until reaching a position where alteration is required to make port.



3. Report on whale sightings

Port of Auckland's Harbour Control operate a whale reporting and warning system for vessels transiting the Hauraki Gulf. Whale sightings are relayed to all vessels in the Hauraki Gulf so that whales can be avoided.

All whale sightings should be immediately reported to Harbour Control as follows:

- "Auckland Harbour Control, Auckland Harbour Control, Auckland Harbour Control."
- "This is: [Vessel name, vessel name, vessel name]"
- "Whale sighting report."

On making contact, please provide the following information:

- ▶ Position of sighting, either latitude and longitude or bearing and distance from a known landmark.
- ▶ Number of whales sighted.
- ▶ Direction of movement in terms of three figure notation in degrees or as compass points.

Harbour Control will inform all other vessels in the Hauraki Gulf area of whale sightings, in the following format:

- "All stations, All Stations, All Stations"
- "This is Harbour Control, Port of Auckland."
"Sighting of [number] of large whale(s)."
- "At [location]"
- "Direction of whale travel is [.....]"
- "If possible, please avoid the vicinity, increase lookouts and reduce speed."
- "Out"

This protocol is a voluntary measure agreed between the Port of Auckland and the shipping industry. It contains reasonable, practical measures which should, if widely adopted, reduce the number of whale deaths caused by vessels.

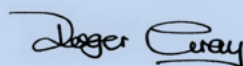
The protocol can only be effective if shipping lines and ship masters co-operate. By taking avoidance measures, planning ahead, and reducing speed whenever schedules permit, the industry will be able to address an issue of growing public concern.

Port of Auckland

Port of Auckland is located on the east coast of New Zealand's North Island, in the Hauraki Gulf (Tikapa Moana) Marine Park. While not endangered world-wide, the Hauraki Gulf is one of the few places in the world with a semi-resident population of Bryde's whales – a locally endangered species in New Zealand. Bryde's whales are vulnerable to ship strike which is a threat to the local population's long-term survival.

In September 2013, Port of Auckland, working with the shipping industry, New Zealand's Department of Conservation (DOC), Auckland University, iwi, and other key stakeholders, developed a voluntary protocol for large ships travelling through the Hauraki Gulf."

The protocol's main aim is to lower vessel speeds and reduce the risk of collisions between whales and ships. This protocol consists of four main elements which outlines the steps ship masters should take when planning their passage to and from Auckland, and what to do while transiting the Hauraki Gulf. Your commitment to helping protect the local Bryde's whale population is greatly appreciated.



Roger Gray
Chief Executive Officer,
Port of Auckland

