



# Unusually Early Visits From Humpback Whales Excites Victorian Researchers

*Victoria has recently recorded the first humpback whale sighting of the 2017 season and it's an early one! Says Dolphin Research Institute.*

MELBOURNE, VICTORIA , AUSTRALIA , May 31, 2017 /EINPresswire.com/ -- Victoria has recently recorded the first humpback whale sighting of the 2017 season and it's an early one! On May 15, two unidentified large whales were sighted off Mount Eliza in Port Phillip. "This sighting is amongst the earliest of confirmed sightings on record for our region and we are very excited about what this could mean for the season ahead" said David Donnelly, Research Officer with the [Dolphin Research Institute](#). "As winter approaches, we expect to see an increase in sightings of humpback whales within Port Phillip and Western Port. While traditionally, the Queen's birthday weekend has marked the 'start' of the whale season in Victoria, it may be possible to spot whales any time from now until early September," said Donnelly.

This year, it is expected that up to 26,000 humpback whales will make the northerly migration along Australia's east coast...a far cry from the post whaling population estimate of around 200.

Killer whales have also been seen off Port Phillip and Western Port.

In past years, the arrival of whales in our waters has generated a great deal of interest with bay users, unfortunately some boat operators have ended up dangerously close to whales.

This was best represented when a pod of 5 competing humpback whales were engaged by a number of small recreational craft off the coast of Dromana in 2011. In this example, the whales were behaving very aggressively toward each other and a number of small craft were caught in the mix. It was only by sheer luck that no vessels were damaged and no injuries occurred to humans. This is a timely reminder of why Victoria has whale watching regulations that both ensure the safety of vessel operators and the welfare of the whales.

Boats are required to not approach whales closer than 200 metres with a 300-metre exclusion zone for PWCs (jetskis). Aircraft (including drones) must not fly below 500 metres over a whale or dolphin. Keen whale watchers who wish to catch a glimpse of these ocean giants are advised to take a pair of binoculars and seek high ground along the coast.

Best places to see whales in the Two Bays region are: Barwon Bluff, Port Phillip Heads, Cape Schanck, The Nobbies, Pyramid Rock and Cape Woolamai on Phillip Island and the Bass Coast.

Report sightings to the Two Bays Whale Project at [www.dolphinresearch.org.au](http://www.dolphinresearch.org.au)

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IMAGERY: Images and vision can be provided on request.

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The Dolphin Research Institute is a not for profit organisation, established in 1991.

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