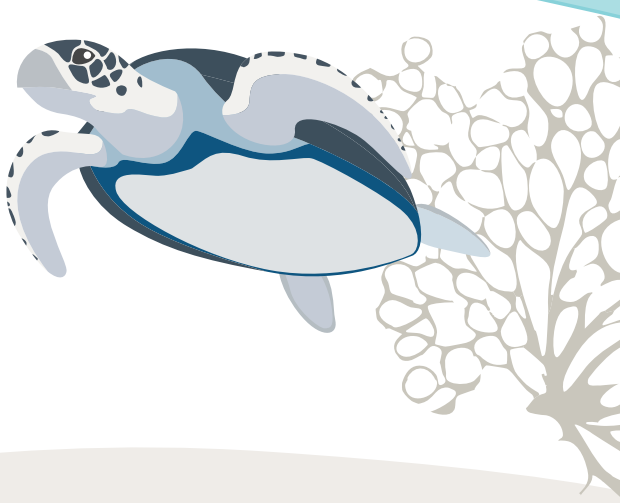
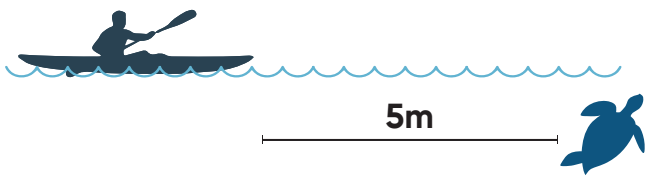
What to do if you see turtles when paddling, surfing or sailing



These guidelines are for when turtles are sighted from non-motorised vessels (boats, kayaks, canoes, sailing dingeys, stand-up paddleboards, surf boards etc)

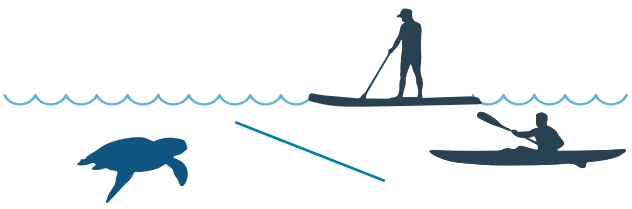
1 Keep your vessel at least 5 metres away from a turtle

If a turtle approaches your vessel, stop and wait until the turtle has passed.



2 Approach from the side

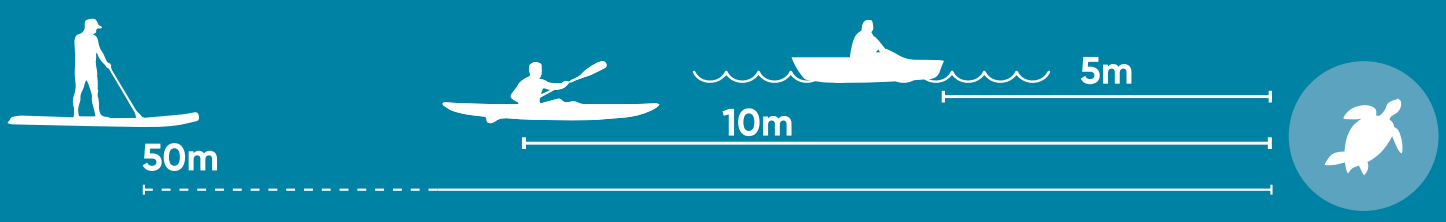
If there is more than one vessel, stay on the same side of the turtle.



3 Keep the encounter to 30 minutes or less

4 There should never be more than 2 non-motorised vessels within 10m of a turtle

If you come across a turtle and there are already 2 boats within 10 metres, stay back, at least 50 metres away.



5 Do not prod, poke or hit a turtle with any watercraft, paddle or floatation device

6 Never drive or paddle over the top of a turtle even if you think it is deep under the water

7 If the turtle shows any signs of avoidance, move slowly away from the turtle. Signs of disturbance include:

8 Do not chase or harass turtles

9 Do not feed turtles or throw objects in the water that may be confused as food

10 Do not disturb normal behaviours, including foraging

Stay away from nesting beaches at night during nesting season (October to March)

11 Keep noise and splashing to a minimum to avoid disturbing the turtles

12 Take care in mating areas not to disturb turtles

13 Be extra careful when paddling or riding over seagrass and corals reefs and when anchoring or pulling your vessel on shore

These habitats are critical for sea turtles and can be damaged by vessels

14 Minimise lights after dark during the breeding season

(October to March)

Respect local restrictions

The full guidelines can be found via this QR code.

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