



Whale and seal watchers

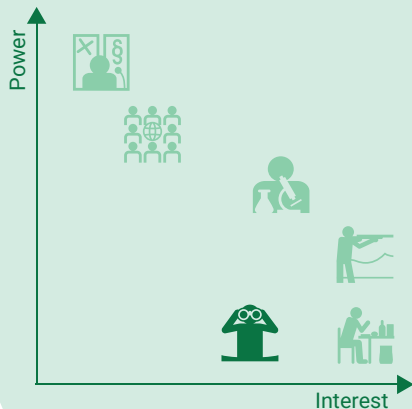


Whale watchers enjoying a pod of orcas © Ørjan Bertelsen

Whale and seal watching is a popular activity for tourists and local for [recreation](#), exploration, and [cultural](#) experiences. Some people go whale or seal watching because it is a popular activity at their destination, while others seek our specific destinations that are known for their whale and seal watching opportunities. For locals and tourists alike, it is becoming more and more important that the tours they go on are educative, [sustainable](#), and support [conservation](#).



Discuss: Does the matrix reflect each [stakeholder's](#) interest and influence in marine mammal [management](#) decisions?



Did you know that...

- Over 13 million people went whale watching for recreation in 2008 [1].
- Tourists contribute to the economy of coastal communities by supporting local businesses and tour operators [2].
- Wildlife watchers demand for close-up marine mammal encounters and photos may disturb these animals [3,4].



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Anyone can join their local beach clean up to prevent plastic from entering the ocean!
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Seeing marine mammals in the wild can make people care more about these animals and the marine [environment](#). This can lead to a change in lifestyle, making more [sustainable](#) choices, and speaking about [conservation](#). Whale and seal watchers can also serve as advocates for marine mammal [conservation](#) by spreading awareness, supporting [conservation](#) initiatives, and influencing public opinion and policy decisions in their home countries.

There is an increasing demand from tourists for [sustainable](#) and educational experiences [5]. This demand influences tour operators to adopt [eco-friendly](#) practices and can encourage [decision-makers](#) to implement [conservation](#) measures in marine mammal tourism [regulations](#). As a result, there is a growing emphasis on responsible tourism that benefits both marine mammals and the [environment](#) they depend on.



Whale watching tourists looking at a humpback whale © Ron Lach / Pexels.com



Discuss: How can we create opportunities for people to experience and connect with nature in a way that fosters a sense of care and responsibility for its [conservation](#) without causing harm to the [environment](#)?