



## **The Guide for Eco-Responsible Practices for Captains/Naturalists**

The Eco-Whale Alliance aims to ensure the responsible practice and sustainable development of whale watching activities in the Saguenay-St. Lawrence Marine Park. The existing marine protected area, the Marine Activities Regulations and a long tradition of collaboration amongst those involved in whale watching, science and conservation are all tremendous assets.

Recognizing that each marine tour must reflect the commitments of the Alliance, a guide for eco-responsible practices for captains/naturalists was created. It is complementary to existing laws and regulations and aims to promote the quality of marine observations and the protection of whales.

The Guide is the product of a collaborative effort of captains, naturalists, marine tour business owners, employees of Parks Canada and Parcs Québec and the Group for Research and Education on Marine Mammals (GREMM). The measures contained in the Guide are the result of a multidisciplinary work based on the practical experience of seafarers.

It includes two sections: the first addresses communication with the passengers and the latter, navigation.

A marine tour exposes the passengers to a generally unknown world. The captain-naturalist or naturalist accentuates the uniqueness of each tour. This is also a great opportunity to raise the passengers' awareness to the importance of protecting the marine environment. The first section of the Guide summarizes the measures taken from the moment of departure, through the duration of the excursion, to the end of the journey that allow passengers a privileged experience and convey a message of conservation.

Eco-responsible captains navigating a whale watching tour boat have many responsibilities including: safety, the boat, scheduling, passenger satisfaction as well as paying attention to the well-being of the marine mammals and of their environment. They are, in a way, the guardians of whales and their habitat. The second section of the Guide summarizes the practical measures that will help the captains to navigate in an eco-responsible manner while on a marine excursion.

The Guide is voluntary, but marine tour business owners member of the Alliance are committed to implement it through their personnel staff. It is an evolving tool, which will serve as an inspiration for other guides destined for users of the Marine Park.

Also available at [www.eco-baleine.ca](http://www.eco-baleine.ca)