INTRODUCING

Whale Heritage Sites
What is a Whale Heritage Site?

Whale Heritage Site is a global accreditation that formally recognises destinations around the world that support and demonstrate the importance of cetaceans and their habitats, through culture, education, research and conservation. These sites empower and defend the right of local communities to care for and protect whales, dolphins, and porpoises through a collaborative management partnership.

They provide the travel industry with a clear marker to help identify and support sustainable practices, and create a platform for communities to promote and engage with their whale related culture, heritage and biodiversity. Whale Heritage Sites also give tourists a transparent and easy way to select responsible whale and dolphin watching holiday destinations, and encourage them to experience these incredible animals in their natural habitat, in a sustainable and responsible way.

Whale Heritage Site status is granted to those places around the world where:

- People are able to work collaboratively within their communities to make and enforce decisions that will benefit cetaceans and their habitats in the long term.
- Respectful coexistence with cetaceans is supported through law, policy and cooperation.
- Whales and dolphins are celebrated by engaging communities and tourists through art, music, education, research and cultural events.
- Sustainable practices and livelihoods are continually improved to ensure the health of cetacean habitats and the long-term economic benefit to human communities.
Why are Whale Heritage Sites so important?

The Whale Heritage Site certification is a replicable solution demonstrating that with a local focus underpinned by global cooperation, we can promote awareness, affect hearts and minds, and impact real change for cetaceans through education, sustainability, and conservation. Whale Heritage Sites deliver long-term protection for cetaceans and marine habitats, allowing people to witness these beautiful mammals for thousands more years into the future. They also ensure sustainable development for the coastal communities that depend on the sea, inspiring local people to value their whale and dolphin related heritage.

Accredited WHS have seen sustainable practices and livelihoods continually improve with increased investment in eco-tourism that can transform these sites into a place where whales thrive and the local community benefits.
Benefits of Whale Heritage Sites

Whale Heritage Sites, designated against well-developed and robust criteria, will play an important role in distinguishing areas where cetaceans and people exist in harmony. These sites will be confined to those places where human relationships with cetaceans are positive and not exploitative. Whale Heritage Sites act as beacons of hope in a world where whales, dolphins and porpoises are increasingly at risk from human impacts; places where innovation and celebration lead to ideas that can be replicated to protect cetaceans across the world.

**ECONOMIC**
- Capacity expansion.
- Supporting local initiatives.
- Increased funding and investment.
- Creation of partnerships.
- Improved livelihoods.
- Increased visitors.

**ENVIRONMENTAL**
- Further scientific knowledge.
- Improves animal welfare.
- Cetacean and ocean protection and conservation.
- Greater environmental awareness.
- Encourage responsible tourism.

**SOCIAL**
- Environmental education and culture enhancement.
- Improves collaboration and community cohesion.
- Alternative livelihoods.
- Climate change adaptation.
- Global knowing sharing.

“This can be a strategic job creator and investment opportunity in our city and community. Given the difficult economic climate and high unemployment rate such an opportunity should be widely embraced. This is also a chance for us to keep building towards our vision of making the Bluff a Green Community.”

JP Prinsloo, Ward Councillor for The Bluff Area
Becoming a Whale Heritage Site – The Process

There is a five-tiered process: an initial online application, a candidacy review, an optional technical advice, a final application and then, if successful, Whale Heritage Site (WHS) designation.

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<tr>
<td><strong>Online initial application</strong></td>
<td><strong>Candidate review</strong></td>
<td><strong>Optional technical advice</strong></td>
<td><strong>Final application</strong></td>
<td><strong>Site designation</strong></td>
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<td>A site representative submits an initial application.</td>
<td>Application is reviewed by WCA representatives. If accepted as Candidate site, the site forms an official steering committee and receive a license to use the logo. Candidate status will last for a maximum of three years.</td>
<td>WCA offers support and opportunities to gain advice to assist with the final application. General advice and specialist advice from our technical team of experts.</td>
<td>Site submits a final application which is assessed by the WHS independent review panel against the WHS criteria. Fees will be applied to sites once they become fully certified WHS.</td>
<td>If full WHS status is designated, the site must prepare and submit an annual review each year explaining how the criteria have been met. Designated sites will also receive an on-site audit once every three years.</td>
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Fees and Support

Whale Heritage Site applicants pay a one-off fee to receive certification, WHS logos, advice and support:

- **USD $ 750** – Developing and transitioning countries.
- **USD $ 3,000** – Developed countries.

Once certified, the Whale Heritage Site pays the fee annually.

* Annual membership fees paid by WCA Responsible Whale Watching certified business or WCA partners operating within the Whale Heritage Site count towards the certification fee.
Applications are encouraged from communities and organisations that advocate a real connection between cetaceans and both tourists and locals alike, whilst actively promoting the preservation of cetacean habitats for the benefit of present and future generations.

For more information, fees, and to apply, visit http://whaleheritagesites.org/