

SPECIES MANAGEMENT PROFILE

Balaenoptera physalus Fin Whale

Group: Chordata (vertebrates), Mammalia (mammals), Cetacea (Whales and Dolphins), Balaenopteridae (rorquals)

Status: *Threatened Species Protection Act 1995*: vulnerable
Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999: Vulnerable

Endemic: Migratory

Status:



Fin whales have a world-wide distribution though they tend to be less common in tropical waters. In the southern hemisphere, fin whales migrate from summering grounds in the Antarctic past New Zealand and Australia to overwinter in the southwest Pacific Ocean.

Fin whales are the second largest whale species and can grow up to 26 m in length. The head is narrow and 'V' shaped with a prominent median ridge. The back is distinctly ridged from the dorsal fin to the flukes, prompting the common name 'razor back'. There are 50 to 100 slim ventral grooves extending to the navel. Body colour is dark grey to brownish black but with white underneath and behind the head (chevron), flukes and flippers and along the midline of the back. Fin whales have a world-wide distribution though they tend to be less common in tropical waters. In the southern hemisphere, fin whales migrate from summering grounds in the Antarctic past New Zealand and Australia to overwinter in the southwest Pacific Ocean. Threats include direct killing (illegal in Australian waters), entanglement in nets or other water debris, collision with oceanic vessels. marine pollution leading to disease or strandings, e.g. oil spills. competition and depletion of food stocks by fisheries, especially unsustainable harvest of krill, disturbance and harassment.

Source; Bryant, S. L. and Jackson, J. (1999). *Tasmania's Threatened Fauna Handbook*. Threatened Species Unit, Parks and Wildlife Service, Hobart.

A complete species management profile is not currently available for this species. Check for further information on this page and any relevant Activity Advice.

Key Points

- **Important:** Is this species in your area? Do you need a permit? Ensure you've covered all the issues by checking the Planning Ahead page.
- **Important:** Different threatened species may have different requirements. For any activity you are considering, read the Activity Advice pages for background information and important advice about managing around the needs of multiple threatened species.

Further information

Check also for listing statement or notesheet pdf above (below the species image).

NRE Whale and Dolphin Viewing Guidelines

Australian National Guidelines for Whale and Dolphin Watching

Industry Guidelines on the Interaction between Offshore Seismic Exploration and Whales

Cite as: Threatened Species Section (2024). *Fin Whale (Balaenoptera physalus): Species Management Profile for Tasmania's Threatened Species Link*. <https://www.threatenedspecieslink.tas.gov.au/Pages/Fin-Whale.aspx> Department of Natural Resources and Environment Tasmania. Accessed on 17/4/2024.

Contact details: Threatened Species Section, Department of Natural Resources and Environment Tasmania, GPO Box 44, Hobart, Tasmania, Australia, 7001. Phone (1300 368 550).

Permit: A permit is required under the Tasmanian *Threatened Species Protection Act 1995* to 'take' (which includes kill, injure, catch, damage, destroy and collect), keep, trade in or process any specimen or products of a listed species. Additional permits may also be required under other Acts or regulations to take, disturb or interfere with any form of wildlife or its products, (e.g. dens, nests, bones). This may also depend on the tenure of the land and other agreements relating to its management.