

MINKE WHALE PROJECT

WHALE SIGHTING SHEET 2025



Australian Government
Great Barrier Reef
Marine Park Authority



30
CELEBRATING
THIRTY FIELD SEASONS
1996 - 2025

We are interested in all of your whale sightings, but are particularly keen on hearing about minkes (dwarf minke whale pictured above left).
Please fill out this sheet as best you can to help our sightings records.

Part A: Fill in immediately when whales are seen:

1. **Time** of initial sighting:..... 2. **Date:** _____ / _____ / 2025
3. **Location:** Coordinates at start: **Lat:**.....(S) **Long:**.....(E)
4. Approx. **distance from vessel** when first sighted: 5. Time of first approach (to within 30m)

Part B: Fill in immediately after end of encounter:

6. **Time** of last sighting:..... 7. **Vessel:**..... 8. Your name:
9. Coordinates at end (if drifting/steaming): **Lat:**..... (S) **Long:**.....(E)
10. How did the encounter end? (please tick one) ☐ Whale(s) left the boat ☐ Boat left the whale(s)

Part C. Fill in at end of encounter:

11. Type of whale: (please circle one) Minke / Humpback / Other:
12. **Number of whales:** Certain / Approx. If approximate, please provide a range, with a **minimum estimate** (the most whales seen at one time) and a **maximum estimate** (number of different whales you think may have been present throughout the encounter).
13. Estimated size(s): (No. of whales): more than 6m: # _____; 4m-6m: # _____; less than 4m: # _____
14. Any calves? (Calf will be < 1/2 size of mother, usually in close proximity to her & usually breathing more often): # _____
• If a cow & calf were seen; how long did they stay in the area? (give times) **From:** _____ **To:** _____
15. Vessel status when whale(s) first sighted: (please circle one) Anchored / Moored / Steaming / Drifting
16. Did the vessel status change during the encounter? (Please explain and give times; e.g. "dropped mooring to drift at 15:35")
.....
17. Distance drifted during encounter: naut. miles 18. Average wind speed: knots
19. Average wave height: metres 20. Underwater visibility: metres
21. Name of nearest reef or dive site:..... 22. Distance to that reef/site:
23. Closest approach distance by whale(s) (metres from boat): 24. Rope used?: Y / N (please circle one)
25. Maximum number of divers in at one time: Using snorkel: Using SCUBA:
26. Brief description of encounter (e.g. movement of whales, swimmers, etc; use back of page if necessary):
.....
.....
27. Were any of the following behaviours observed? (Tick where appropriate and **write number of times observed**)
(For descriptions of behaviours see the CRC Reef brochure, www.minkewhaleproject.org or the Minke Whale Project Interpretive DVD 2007)
☐ Breaching? # times: _____ ☐ Headrise/Spyhop? # _____ ☐ Bubble blast? # _____ ☐ Gulping? # _____
☐ Sudden speed up? # _____ ☐ Sharp veer away? # _____ ☐ Sudden deep dive? # _____
☐ Jaw clap? # _____ ☐ Belly presentation? # _____ ☐ Close approach (<3m)? # _____
☐ Motorboating? # _____ ☐ Pirouetting? # _____ ☐ Very close approach (<1m)? # _____
☐ Vocalisation(s)? (please describe):
☐ Physical contact? (eg. with rope/buoy/boat/person - please describe):
☐ Other (please specify):
28. Description of any significant markings/scars on the whales (use back of page if necessary):
.....
29. Photos and/or video available : Y / N 30. Name of photo/videographer :
31. **Your contact details / vessel stamp:**
Address & Telephone:.....
Email:.....

Please return completed forms and copies of any photos/video to the Minke Whale Project:

c/- Dr Alastair Birtles, College of Science and Engineering, James Cook University, Townsville QLD 4811.

Ph: (07) 4781 4736

Email: Alastair.Birtles@jcu.edu.au

Web: www.minkewhaleproject.org

The Minke Whale Project will forward copies of all completed Whale Sighting Sheets to the Great Barrier Reef Marine Park Authority. *Thank you for your help with this research.*