



RECOMMENDED ROUTING GUIDELINES FOR SÃO SEBASTIÃO, BRASIL

[WHALEGUARDIANS.ORG/MAPS](https://whaleguardians.org/maps)

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Introductory Note

In recent years, due to the gradual recovery of whale populations from the whaling era, a growing number of these animals have spotted near major ports or at approach routes. This has led to several incidents around the world, whereby whales, for yet unknown reasons, have difficulty detecting an approaching ship and collisions occur, generally resulting in the death of the whale and a multitude of unwanted consequences for the ship's owner and crew.



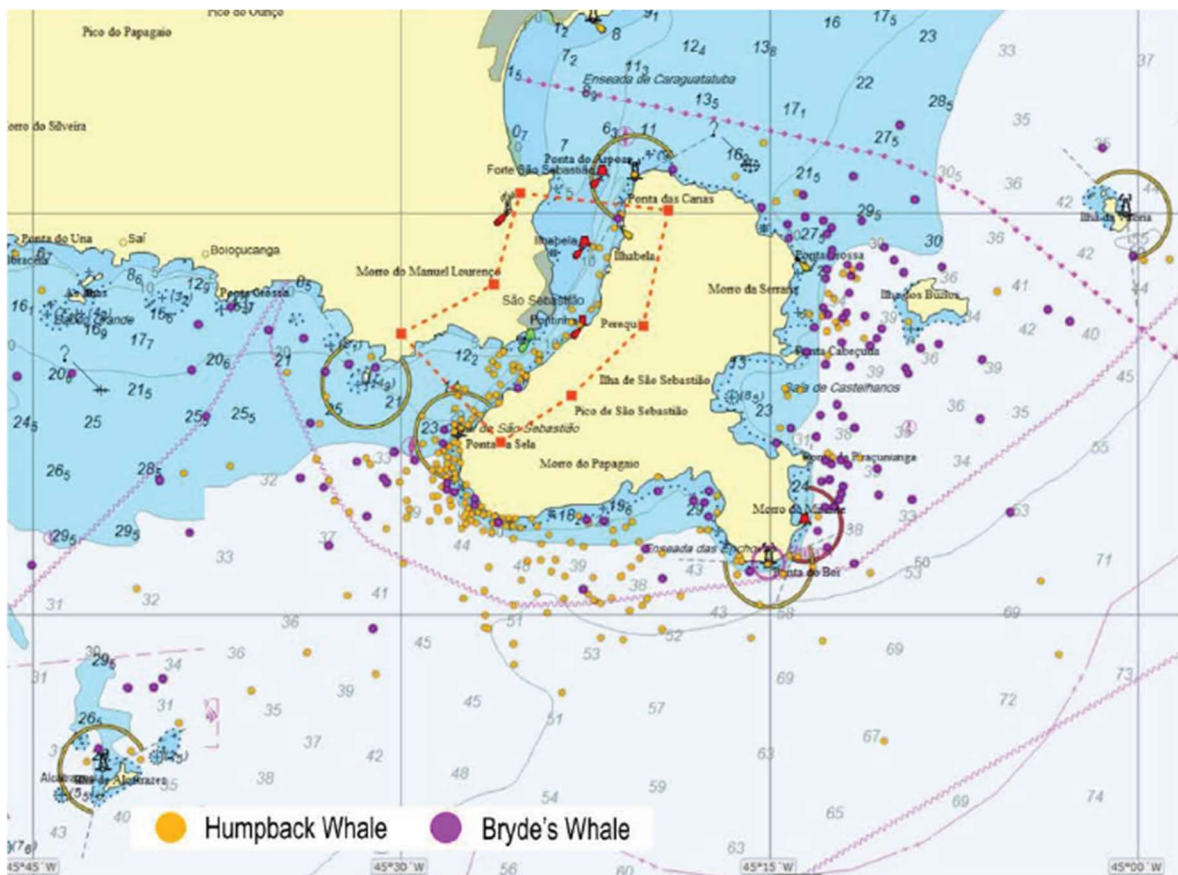
A humpback whale breaches near a tanker at the approach to São Sebastião, Brazil.

Photo: Heitor Rodrigues, July 2021

Brazil has a consolidated national policy for whale conservation and its jurisdictional waters have been decreed as a Whale and Dolphin Sanctuary, leading to great public interest on the matter. And in the country, the Ilhabela/São Sebastião region is quickly becoming a major hotspot for whale sightings, mostly for humpback whales (*Megaptera novaeangliae*), but also with regular sightings of tropical whales (*Balaenoptera edeni*) and several other cetacean species. Given the importance of port-related activities there, these guidelines were developed jointly by Great Whale Conservancy, the Brazilian Humpback Whale Institute/Instituto Baleia Jubarte and Projeto Baleia à Vista, with support from the local Port

Authority and agents, to help Masters consider collision prevention measures while in route to/from the port of São Sebastião and the TEBAR terminal.

The below illustration shows the sightings of the different whale types within the Ilhabela Island area. (Data since 2016).



In that regard, whales very often show propeller impact scars. In order to protect these animals from ship strikes, the below routing guidelines for the approach of the port have been prepared.

Before executing the maneuvers proposed in these guidelines, Masters should consider all navigational and technical circumstances, as well as the ship's particulars and specific hazards, and the legal obligations of the charter party.

**GENERAL GUIDELINES FOR THE PORT OF SÃO SEBASTIÃO – INCLUDING
TEBAR TERMINAL – DURING WHALES SEASON (MAY TO NOVEMBER):**

- **Consider reducing the ship's speed to 10 knots once 20NM from São Sebastião Island, especially during nighttime.** Whales are generally feeding along the surface of the water during nighttime. During the daytime, whales feed in deeper waters and thus the risk of ship strikes on these animals is reduced. Try to plan your arrival or departure accordingly. All navigational and technical circumstances as well as the legal obligations of your charter party should be considered before reducing ship's speed.
- **Consider putting a lookout on the bow** during hours of daylight to report whale sightings to the bridge by radio.
- If the vessel is fitted with a CCTV on the bow, this equipment can be used instead of lookout.
- **Ensure maximum maneuverability of the vessel** (steering gear and main engine on standby) to allow evasive maneuvering in case of sightings within close proximity of the vessel.
- **Consider stop the propeller from turning, as an ultimate protection measure if whales are sighted very close to the vessel and it's not possible to change course to avoid collision.** When the ship is clear from the whales, the propeller can be switched on again in order to maintain the speed as necessary.
- **Prioritize the North Bar pilot station as a port entry if the draft of the ship allows**, taking into account all navigational parameters. The majority of the sightings of cetaceans are concentrated near the South Bar pilot station. The below

passage plan guidelines are written for the ships that are using the South Bar pilot station.

- **Contribute, whenever possible, to the voluntary observation system and lookout to identify the presence of whales inside the channel and anchorage area.** A significant number of whales have been spotted inside the channel route and an alarm system (based on land and sea observations) is already in place and includes the cooperation of harbor pilots and ship's masters, as well as the Port Authority. We invite all ships to voluntary report whale observations via e-mail (projeto baleiaavista@gmail.com).
- The maximum speed within the channel, as determined by the Maritime Authority, is 9 knots. Given the limited speed of the ships (approaching their berths), whale strikes so far have not occurred within the channel.
- **Avoid the area around the Southwestern shore of São Sebastião Island (off Ponta da Sela).** This will exclude the area with the highest whale records around the island. Coordinates of the area to be avoided:
 - a. 23°53.2'S – 045°27.7'W (Ponta da Sela)
 - b. 23°56.0'S – 045°30.5'W
 - c. 24°03.6'S – 045°30.5'W
 - d. 24°03.6'S – 045°15.1'W
 - e. 23°58.0'S – 045°15.1'W (Ponta do Boi)

The below ENC printscreen shows the Area to be Avoided (red line). Always consider all navigational hazards specific to your vessel for your final passage plan.



- **Departure via South Bar pilot station.** Once the pilot has disembarked, follow the same guidelines as for the approach of the port. Consider maintain a maximum speed of 10 kts until 20 NM away from São Sebastião Island and increase to your maximum speed once you reach 20 NM clear of the island.

Ship collisions are one of the leading causes of whale deaths around the world, and especially given the size of modern tankers and container ships, watchkeeping officers are often completely unaware when a collision occurs. As modern ships continue to increase in size, this problem will only increase in severity, unless steps are taken to try to counter it.

By adopting the proposed guidelines in the preparation of your passage plan, you will be playing an important role in improving the ability of these great denizens of the sea to coexist safely with modern shipping.

The Great Whale Conservancy, the Brazilian Humpback Whale Institute and the Projeto Baleia à Vista Thank You for your efforts in complying with these guidelines.