

Sea Lion Interaction During Moorings Operations

Number: 07 / 2025

Date Issued: 09th October 2025

Date of effect:	09 th Oct 2025
Details:	Sea Lion Interaction During Mooring Operations
Former Notice:	Nil
Distribution:	All Port Users
Attachments:	Nil

Sea lions are known to haul out on Berths around the Port of Geraldton. Sea lions are a protected species under State and Federal law and may become aggressive if disturbed or alarmed. All workers and contractors that enter the Port Secure Zone must have a valid Sea Lion Induction in Velpic.

Situations may arise where interaction with sea lions is required during mooring operations. The nature and extent of required sea lion interaction will be dictated by the risk posed by the mooring activity, the environmental conditions, and the fauna location and condition.

Shipping movements and all mooring operations (including running and releasing lines) are exempt from the requirements of the *Biodiversity Conservation Act 2016 (WA)*. Fines will not be issued for disturbance or harm to sea lions if all procedures are complied with; however, minimisation of potential harm to sea lions is still required.

A risk to human health & safety is always to be treated as the highest priority, with risks of harm to sea lions treated as a secondary priority.

SEA LIONS WITHIN A MOORING BLOCK COMPOUND

A sea lion accessing the main mooring block compound presents potentially serious risks to personnel and the animal. Every effort must be made to prevent sea lions from entering the mooring block area by:

- Keeping gates in the mooring area securely closed at all times, to prevent sea lion access.
- Regularly inspecting the condition and effectiveness of existing controls including gates, latches / locks, and barriers.
- Reporting all faulty or ineffective controls as soon as practicable to enable repair or replacement and prevent an incident.

If a sea lion is found inside the mooring block when access is required for a shipping movement, this must be:

- Reported to the MWPA Marine Team immediately.
- Reported as an environmental incident in your organisation's incident reporting tool.
- Actions to be taken will be on a case-by-case basis and will be discussed and agreed between MWPA and the relevant party(s) using a risk-based approach.

SEA LIONS NEAR MOORING BLOCK COMPOUNDS

It is a common occurrence that sea lions may be hauled out in front of, or adjacent to mooring blocks. This is not considered a reason to delay mooring operations unless a sea lion has become entangled in the line and there is a real and imminent risk of death to the sea lion. Based on the known history of Port mooring operations this is considered a very rare event, see '*If a Sea Lion Becomes Entangled in a Mooring Line*' below.

In the event that sea lions are observed near or in front of mooring blocks during mooring operations, the following steps must be taken:

- A risk assessment (i.e. take 5, or similar) must be completed prior to commencing the task, it must specifically address the presence of sea lion(s).
- The risk assessment must be reviewed if circumstances change (e.g. a sea lion approaches or crosses the mooring ropes).
- A 10m separation distance should be established between workers and the sea lion where practicable.
- Where necessary to continue the mooring operation, a worker may enter the 10m separation where safe to do so. e.g. where a physical barrier exists between the sea lion and the worker, such as the perimeter barrier of the mooring block.
- When running or releasing lines, every effort must be made to avoid and minimise contact with sea lions.
- Any observations of sick or injured sea lions should be reported to the MWPA Deputy Operations Supervisors as soon as practicable.
- Any minor (non-life threatening) injuries to sea lions as a result of mooring operations must be reported as an environmental incident in your organisation's incident reporting tool and must be reported to the MWPA Environment team immediately. Fines will not be issued.

IF A SEA LION BECOMES ENTANGLED IN A MOORING LINE

A sea lion becoming entangled in a mooring line is considered a very rare but serious event (since 2008 there have been zero recorded incidents of sea lion entanglement at the Port of Geraldton). However, given the proximity of these animals to mooring operations, a (very low) risk of entanglement remains. If a sea lion becomes entangled in a mooring line this must be:

- Reported to MWPA immediately. The MWPA Environment Team will contact the local DBCA office for further advice.
- Reported as an environmental incident in in your organisation's incident reporting tool.
- Actions to be taken will be on a case-by-case basis and will be discussed and agreed between MWPA, the relevant party(s) and DBCA using a risk-based approach.

Fines will not be issued by DBCA where it can be demonstrated that procedures were complied with.

Any questions or feedback regarding this Harbour Master Instruction should be addressed to the Harbour Master for further information / clarification.



Capt. Heathcliff Pimento
Harbour Master (Port of Geraldton)