

## Media Release

Friday 30 September 2016  
*embargo until 12pm 30/9/16*

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### East Coast Whale Trail opened in Break O'Day

Whales and visitors to the East Coast will get closer together with a series of new whale viewing sites created between Irapuna/Bay of Fires and the Tasman Peninsula.

Six new 'East Coast Whale Trail' sites in the Break O'Day municipality were opened by Break O'Day Council and the Parks and Wildlife Service on Friday.

Mayor Mick Tucker said six new signs with information about whales are located at The Gardens, Binalong Bay, St Helens and Shelly points and Four Mile Creek.

"People often see whales along the East Coast during their annual migrations and these new information sites will help residents, visitors and tourists and the boating community from Irapuna/Bay of Fires to the Tasman Peninsula, get to know whales as they pass by," Mick said.

The different East Coast Whale Trail sites in the Break O'Day provide information and stories about the whales commonly sighted along the coast, including the humpback and southern right whales and orcas, whaling history, migration and how to view whales safely on the water.

To help people scan the Tasman Sea for whales the East Coast Whale Trail includes outdoor binoculars installed at Shelly Point north of Scamander and at Cape Tourville east of Coles Bay in the Freycinet National Park.

Natural Resource Management Facilitator with Break O'Day Council and NRM North, Polly Buchhorn, says the string of whale viewing sites with information signs aims to raise awareness of whale conservation and get people whale watching.

"It will help people learn about these majestic animals and watch whales safely, bringing whales and people closer together in terms of care and respect, so management and protection of these incredible and significant marine mammal species will continue to improve," he said.

"It is important when viewing whales on the water to not get too close and harm them or put yourself at risk. All the sites on the Trail provide information on safe whale viewing guidelines," Polly said.

Dr Kris Carlyon of the Department of Primary Industries, Parks, Water and Environment's Marine Conservation Program says the East Coast Whale Trail will help people appreciate the whales and dolphins along our Tasman Sea coastline.

“About 40 whale and dolphin species have been recorded in the waters around Tasmania, however some of the larger species are still recovering from past exploitation and face emerging threats from things like pollution, changing climate and shipping strikes,” Dr Carlyon said.

“Their numbers are slowly recovering following protection and the implementation of management strategies, which is helped by people learning about and appreciating these amazing marine mammals,” he said.

The East Coast Whale Trail sites are at coastal locations where whales are sometimes seen and popular with local residents, Tasmanian visitors and tourists travelling the *Great Eastern Drive* on the East Coast.

The East Coast Whale Trail has been funded by the National Landcare Programme of the Australian Government through its Whale Trail Programme. The Break O'Day, Glamorgan Spring Bay, Sorell and Tasman councils collaborated together and worked closely with support from the Parks and Wildlife Service and Marine Conservation Program of DPIPWE. The East Coast Whale Trail is also part of the *Great Eastern Drive*, a regional tourism initiative on the East Coast.

If people see whales, or find stranded or injured animals, they can be reported to the Tasmanian Whale Hotline: 0427 WHALES (0427 942 537).

The East Coast Whale Trail sites in Break O'Day municipality each have a different whale story. They can be found at The Gardens (end of the road), Binalong Bay (viewing platform), Burns Bay boat ramp and Beer Barrel Beach at the end of St Helens Point, at Shelly Point (binoculars) and at the northern scenic lookout at Four Mile Creek.

More information is available at the East Coast Whale Trail sites or get the Break O'Day Trail brochure from council's website or St Helens Visitor Information Centre. For information on 'Whales and Dolphins in Tasmania' look them up online at [www.dpipwe.tas.gov.au](http://www.dpipwe.tas.gov.au).

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**For more information contact:** John Brown, General Manager

**Photo:**

Shelly Point whale viewing lookout near Scamander, one of the sites on the new East Coast Whale Trail opened on Friday in Break O'Day by Deputy Mayor John McGiveron.



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