



Participation Checklist

The following checklist is to assist Dolphin SMART participants in meeting the criteria required for participation and recognition. Your business must meet these criteria before you request an initial evaluation from the Dolphin SMART Coordinator.

- 1. Conduct Educational Briefing Onboard Vessel**

Prior to viewing wild dolphins, conduct an educational onboard briefing about the Dolphin SMART program. The briefing should include what the program is, why it is important, and the criteria participants agree to follow, as well as where additional educational information can be obtained. Participants are provided with a “script” to guide the introduction to the program, but participants are responsible for providing in-depth explanations regarding the program.
- 2. Provide Outreach Materials**

Provide customers with outreach materials that promote the program objectives. Participants are supplied with outreach materials at no charge, as they are developed.

 - a. Provide handout at the end of the tour with pertinent program information and “script” from educational briefing.
 - b. Disseminate additional outreach materials upon request for clients following the tour (i.e. brochures, viewing guidelines, fact sheets, etc).
- 3. Comply with Applicable Laws and Report Marine Mammal Strandings, Injuries, Entanglements, and Potential Violations**
 - a. Comply with all applicable resource protection regulations (e.g. Florida Keys National Marine Sanctuary, US Fish and Wildlife Service, Marine Mammal Protection Act, Endangered Species Act).
 - b. Agree to report violations of the Marine Mammal Protection Act to the NOAA Office of Law Enforcement’s hotline (1-800-853-1964).
 - c. Report any marine mammal strandings to the local stranding hotline at 1-888-404-3922 or the NMFS stranding hotline at 305-862-2852.
- 4. Follow Established Policies, Guidelines, and Recommendations to Prevent Harassment**
 - a. Follow NMFS policy statement on harassment activities:

“Interacting with wild marine mammals should not be attempted, and viewing marine mammals must be conducted in a manner that does not harass the animals. NMFS cannot support, condone, approve or authorize activities that involve closely approaching, interacting or attempting to interact with whales, dolphins, porpoises, seals or sea lions in the wild. This includes attempting to swim with, pet, touch, or elicit a reaction from the animals.”
 - b. Follow NMFS Southeast Regional Office’s Marine Mammal Viewing Guidelines listed below:
 - ◆ Remain a respectful distance from marine mammals and sea turtles. The minimum recommended distances are:
 - i. dolphins, porpoises, seals = 50 yds
 - ii. whales = 100 yds
 - ◆ Limit time spent observing marine mammals to 30 minutes per group of dolphins.
 - ◆ Marine mammals should not be encircled or trapped between watercraft, or watercraft and shore.
 - ◆ If approached by a marine mammal, put the watercraft’s engine in neutral and allow the animal to pass. Any vessel movement should be from the rear of the animal.
 - ◆ Never feed or attempt to feed marine mammals.

- c. Avoid engaging in viewing activities or associated activities that have the potential to cause disturbance of wild dolphins, such as attempting to swim with wild dolphins.
- d. Avoid vessel operations that separate mothers and calves.
- e. Slowly depart area if wild dolphin(s) display signs of disturbance, such as forcibly exhaling, tail-slapping, repeated avoidance behavior, erratic changes in speed or direction, or lengthy periods underwater.

5. *Voluntarily Exceed Standards Specified by Law, Policies, and Guidelines to Prevent Harassment and Promote Stewardship*

- a. Avoid making loud or sudden noises near dolphins.
- b. Approach and depart within 50 yards at a slow “no wake” speed.
- c. Limit the number of vessels around each group of dolphins to one, with a second vessel waiting in the distance until the first departs. The maximum number of vessels per group of dolphins at any time should be two. This maximum should be invoked only when vessels are unable to locate o t h e r groups of dolphins.
- d. Participate in marine debris and beach clean-ups, recycling, and vessel wastewater pump-out.

6. *Participate in Training*

- a. Participate in training provided by the program partners to a minimum knowledge standard on dolphin viewing etiquette, behavior, research, and natural history.
- b. Ensure all employees are trained according to program standards. Dolphin SMART will provide participants with necessary materials to ensure that employee are trained according to the program standards.

7. *Engage in Responsible Advertising*

(Note: Advertising includes direct or indirect print advertisements that mention the business’s name or those linked to the business, search engine listings, and any posted photos. These also include, but are not limited to, pitch sheets, print, web, visual, and radio.)

- a. Engage in responsible advertising that promotes responsible wildlife viewing.
- b. Follow NMFS’ “Recommendations for Marine Mammal Watching Advertisements” (contained in participant’s handbook):
 - ◆ Do not depict people feeding or attempting to feed wild marine mammals, which includes people reaching out to dolphins. Advertisements should avoid suggesting that these activities will/can occur.
 - ◆ Do not depict people touching, pursuing, chasing, attempting to swim with, or closely interacting with wild marine mammals.
 - ◆ Do not depict people in close proximity to wild marine mammals.
 - ◆ Do not depict begging dolphins in advertisements that promote viewing wild dolphins. Typical dolphin begging behavior generally entails an animal that approaches people in a begging pose, with its head fully out of the water.
 - ◆ Do not depict dolphins photographed or videoed under the water or otherwise imply photographer was in the water.
 - ◆ Do not use wording that conveys physical or intentional contact with a wild dolphin while viewing, such as, but not limited to, “interaction,” “swim-with,” or “snorkel-with.” Additionally, avoid using other words or phrases that may raise the public’s expectation to closely interact with dolphins in wild. Some examples of words that may suggest close interactions include but are not limited to, “encounter” and “communicate.” Ambiguous words and phrases used in advertisements will be reviewed and evaluated in the context of the entire advertisement. They will be considered appropriate if they do not suggest or promote direct, proximate, and intentional inappropriate human interactions with wild dolphins while viewing.
- c. Promote the Dolphin SMART program by including the Dolphin SMART logo and prepared statement about responsible wild dolphin viewing on all business promotions and advertisements, where feasible. At a minimum, participants should include a link on their business web site to the Dolphin SMART program web site, as well as the Dolphin SMART logo and prepared statement.

8. *Display current year Dolphin SMART flag and decal on vessel at all times.*