

GUIDELINES FOR VIEWING MARINE MAMMALS FOR PRIVATE BOATERS



You can make a difference when viewing marine mammals in the wild. By being aware of the steps for responsible marine mammal viewing, you can help reduce the potential to inadvertently harm marine mammals or violate Federal law.

- Remain at least 100 yards away from whales, dolphins, porpoises, and from seals and sea lions that are on land, rocks or ice.
- While viewing marine mammals, you should ensure that your actions do not cause a change in their behavior. Never attempt to herd, chase, or separate groups of marine mammals or mothers from their young.
- Do not encircle or trap whales or other marine mammals between your boat and shore, or another boat and your boat. Always leave them an escape route.
- If approached closely by marine mammals while motoring, reduce speed and shift to neutral. Do not reengage props until the animals are observed at the surface, clear of the vessel.
- Do not crowd other whale-watching vessels. When encountering other whale watchers, wait your turn from a distance, then approach cautiously after they have left the area. Limit your viewing time with any individual or group of marine mammals to ½ hour.
- Avoid following behind or approaching directly in front of whales or other marine mammals. Vessels should attempt to parallel the whale's course.
- Avoid excessive speed or sudden changes in speed or direction near whales and marine mammals.
- Whales and marine mammals may surface in unpredictable locations. Emitting periodic noise may help whales know your location and avoid whale and boat collisions. For example, if your engine is not running, occasionally tap the side of your boat with a hard object.
- Report incidents of harassment of marine mammals to the National Marine Fisheries Service 24-hour HOTLINE 1-800-8.53-1964, state or local enforcement agency, harbor patrol, or your local Coast Guard office.



For more information regarding the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) and National Marine Fisheries Service, contact the NOAA Office of Public & Constituent Affairs on the Internet at - <http://www.publicaffairs.noaa.gov>