

**BEST MANAGEMENT PRACTICES (BMPs) FOR BOAT OPERATIONS
AND DIVING ACTIVITIES**

*National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS)
Pacific Islands Regional Office (PIRO), Protected Resources Division (PRD)*

NMFS recommends the following BMPs be followed to reduce or eliminate adverse effects on protected marine species through potential interactions with in-water activities such as boat operations or diving. They are primarily aimed at small-scale projects such as research dives, marine debris removal, or small buoy placement or repair projects conducted by resource agencies or contracted personnel. These BMPs are not necessarily comprehensive for major construction activities:

1. Constant vigilance shall be kept for the presence of Federally-listed marine species;
2. When piloting vessels, vessel operators shall alter course to remain at least 100 yards from humpback whales, and at least 50 yards from other marine mammals and sea turtles;
3. Reduce vessel speed to 10 knots or less when piloting vessels in the proximity of marine mammals;
4. Reduce vessel speed to 5 knots or less when piloting vessels in areas of known or suspected turtle activity;
5. Marine mammals and sea turtles should not be encircled or trapped between multiple vessels or between vessels and the shore;
6. If approached by a marine mammal or turtle, put the engine in neutral and allow the animal to pass;
7. Unless specifically covered under a separate permit that allows activity in proximity to marine protected species, all in-water work will be postponed when whales are within 100 yards, or other protected species are within 50 yards. Activity will commence only after the animal(s) depart the area;
8. Should marine protected species enter the area while in-water work is already in progress, the activity may continue only when that activity has no reasonable expectation to adversely affect the animal(s); and
9. Do not attempt to feed, touch, ride, or otherwise intentionally interact with any marine protected species.

*Last updated February 2009
Adopted by Papahānaumokuākea Marine National Monument*

