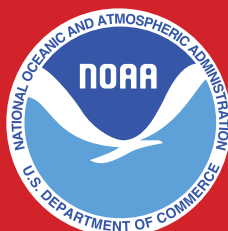


This is a violation
of the Marine Mammal Protection Act
Maximum Penalties:
\$20,000 and one year in jail



Photo: Provincetown Center for Coastal Studies

- ⚓ See a spout, watch out!
- ⚓ Do not troll around whales
- ⚓ Stay 500 yards away from right whales
-- it's the law
- ⚓ Report violations to:
NOAA Fisheries
Office of Law Enforcement
1-800-853-1964



NMFS Reminds Fishermen to Avoid Harassment and Possible Injury to Large Whales Commonly Seen by Vessels Engaged in Tuna Fishing

Recent evidence show that tuna fishing lines, trolled through areas where both tuna and whales are feeding, have hooked the wrong species. The strong lines and sharp hooks, necessary for catching large tuna, can dig into blubber of these unintended targets, possibly causing harm to the whale and is a violation of federal law.

All whales, dolphins and porpoises in the northeast region are federally protected by the Marine Mammal Protection Act (MMPA) and most large whales in the area are further protected under the Endangered Species Act (ESA). Under these Acts, it is illegal to "harass, hunt, capture or kill" any marine mammal. Prohibited conduct includes any "negligent or intentional act which results in the disturbing or molesting of marine mammals."

The following operational procedures, located in full at: http://www.nero.noaa.gov/prot_res/mmv/, are intended to avoid harassment and possible injury to large whales commonly seen by vessels engaged in tuna fishing. These guidelines can help protect both you and the whales and keep you from accidentally violating federal law. ALWAYS approach areas of surface fish activity cautiously - marine mammals might be present. NEVER cast your line or set your gear near marine mammals. An increasing number of large whales have been observed with recreational gear attached to them. Prevent this from happening and set and/or troll your gear elsewhere. If a marine mammal approaches your gear, remove it from the water.