

# Help Protect Our Wildlife:

## Safe Boating Practices

### 1 RESPECT

Do not closely approach, chase, encircle, leapfrog, or trap marine animals with watercraft or vessel.

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### 2 SLOW DOWN

When encountering marine animals in the water, slow down, operate at no-wake speed and engage in neutral when whales or other marine animals approach the watercraft or vessel.

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### 3 KEEP DISTANCE

Avoid approaching when calves are present, never put your watercraft or vessel between a mother and calf. If seals and turtles approach you, ignore them to encourage them to move on undisturbed.

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### 4 LIMIT TIME- 30 minutes or less

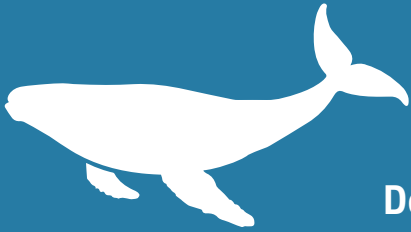
Limit time spent observing marine animals to 30 minutes or less.



# Help Protect Our Wildlife:

## Safe Boating Practices

### Humpback Whales



**Regulation 100 Yards**

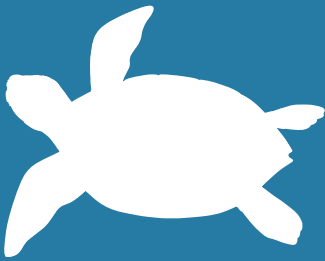


Do not leapfrog, limit time to 30 minutes or less.

Do not trap animal between water and shore.

Put in neutral if whales approach or pass.

### Sea Turtles



**Guideline 10 feet**



Post a look out.

Put engines in neutral if turtle is close or approaches the vessel.

### Dolphins



**Guideline 50 Yards**



Spinner dolphins **Regulation 50 Yards.**

Do not leapfrog, limit time to 30 minutes or less.

Do not trap animal between water and shore.

If dolphins approach continue normal navigation and do not engage or pursue.

### Seals



**Guideline 50 Feet**



**Mom and Pup 150 Feet**

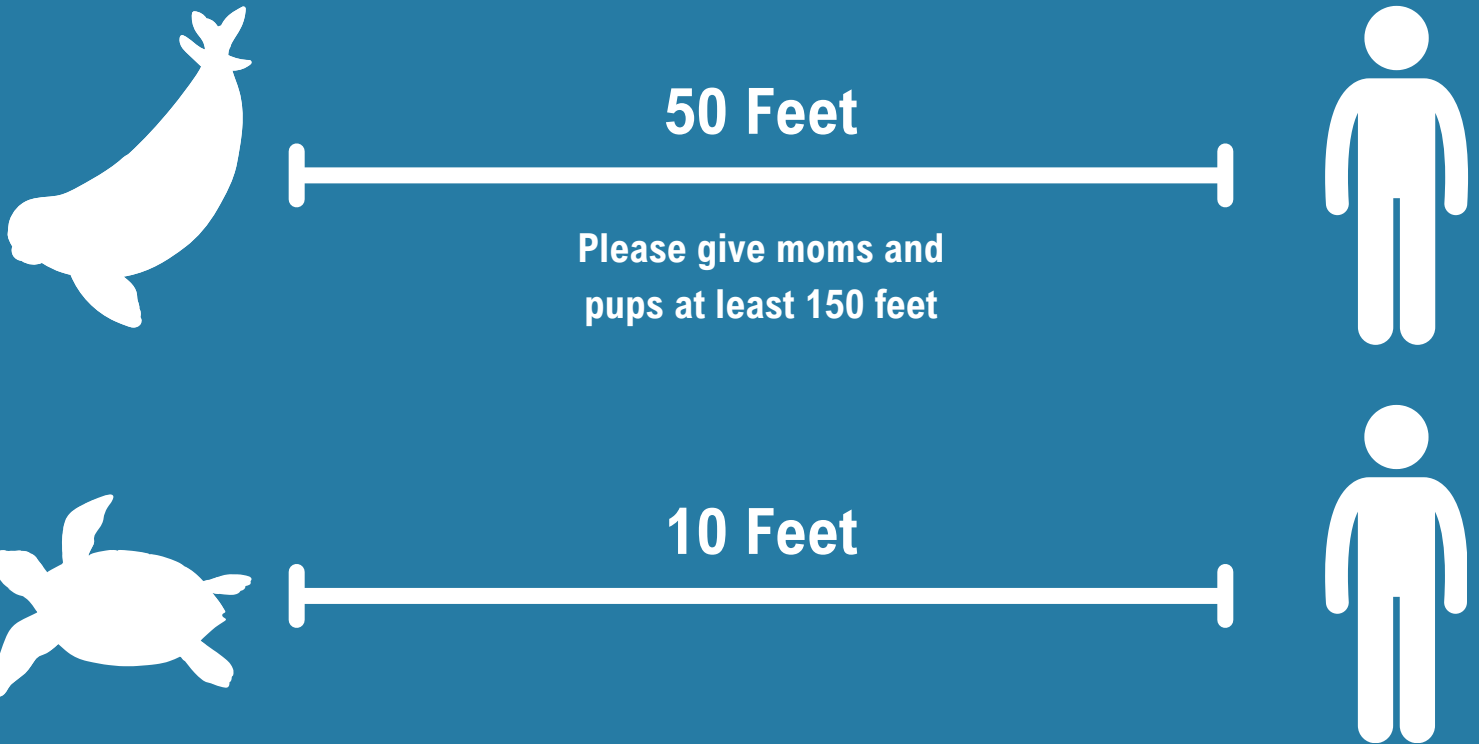
Give plenty of space do not approach.

Put in neutral if seals approach.

# Help Protect Our Wildlife:

## Shoreline viewing guidelines

Observing marine animals in their natural habitat is a remarkable experience. However, it is crucial to respect these animals and their environments to ensure their survival for future generations. Irresponsible human behavior can disturb wildlife, damage habitats, and even pose risks to both animals and people.



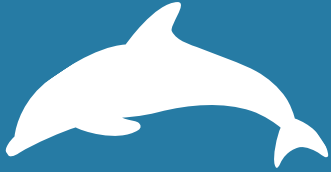
### How to respect resting Hawaiian Monk Seals & Sea Turtles:

- Observe from a distance – Use binoculars or a camera zoom instead of approaching.
- Let them rest – Do not disturb seals or turtles sleeping on the beach.
- No touching, chasing, or feeding – These are wild, protected animals and unpredictable in behavior.
- Keep your visit brief – Limit viewing time to minimize disturbance.

# Help Protect Our Wildlife:

## Safe snorkeling/ diving practices

### Spinner Dolphins

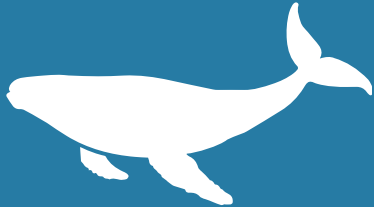


**Regulation** 50 Yards/ (150 feet)



It is illegal to swim with or approach spinner dolphins within 50 yards.  
Swimming with them can disrupt their rest periods which occur during the day.

### Humpback Whales



**Regulation** 100 Yards



It is illegal to swim with or approach humpback whales closer than 100 yards.  
This is a federal regulation to protect their behavior and migration patterns

### Seals



**Guideline** 50 Feet



Please ignore seals do not engage.

Seals can become nuisance animals if they become too comfortable around humans they can become protective or aggressive.

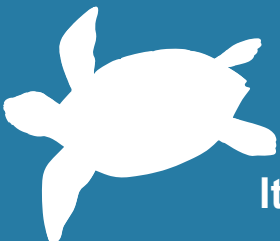
### Mom & Pup pair



**It is unsafe to swim near mom and pup.**  
Mother seals are protective and can bite  
Choose a different location.



### Turtles



**Guideline** 10 Feet



It is illegal and harmful to pursue or harass sea turtles.

# Help Protect Our Wildlife:

## Regulated and Recommended Viewing Distances

### 1 HUMPBACK WHALES



**Federal law prohibits** approaching within 100 yards of humpback whales. It is recommended to stay at least 400 yards a way at all times. If whales approach your vessel, engage in neutral or at no-wake speed.

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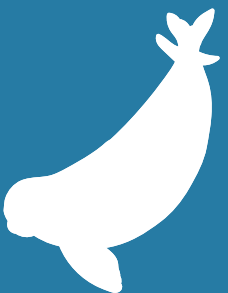
### 2 DOLPHINS



**Federal law prohibits** approaching within 50 yards of spinner dolphins and prohibits feeding them and swimming with or actively pursuing/chasing them with vessels or by snorkeling/swimming.

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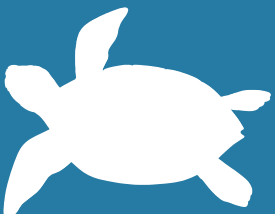
### 3 SEALS



It is recommended to stay at least 50 feet away from seals in water or on land. While seals are nursing pups, please stay at least 150 feet away from them. Engaging with seal pups could make the mom abandon her pup or moms could exhibit signs of protective behavior. It is common for seals to haul out and rest, please do not disturb and let them rest. Please keep all pets leashed while on the beach near seals.

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### 4 SEA TURTLES



It is recommended to stay at least 10 feet away, while in water and on land. Do not approach turtles while they are on shore for any reason - it is normal for turtles to “bask” (rest on land) for hours at a time. If a sea turtle is seen actively digging trying to lay a nest, please call the marine wildlife hotline: (888) 256-9840. Please keep all pets leashed while on the beach near sea turtles.

# Help Protect Our Wildlife:

## Safe Practices

### Boating Around Sea Turtles

#### 1 STAY ALERT

Always keep an eye out for sea turtles in the water, they often surface to breathe and can bask on the surface, making them highly vulnerable to boat strikes, which can cause fatal injuries. Please keep in mind sea turtles living near harbors and small boat ramps are most at risk for a boat strike.

#### 2 USE POLARIZED SUNGLASSES

These help you spot animals in the water more easily.

#### 3 KEEP YOUR DISTANCE

Give turtles plenty of space. Recommended viewing distance: 10 ft (3 meters away).

#### 4 GO INTO NEUTRAL

If you see a turtle in front of vessel, shift your engine into neutral to avoid any risk of injury.

#### 5 SLOW DOWN

Especially near harbors and shallow reef areas: Reduce your speed to 5-10 knots when going over shallow reefs, near harbors and boat launches.

#### 6 OBSERVE “NO WAKE” ZONES

Maintain “no wake” speeds within 200 feet of shore, as required by state regulations.

#### 7 DON'T FEED TURTLES

Feeding turtles can lead to dangerous behavior, as they may start associating boats with food.

#### 8 REPORT INJURIES

If you encounter an injured or deceased turtle, please report it immediately to the statewide Marine Wildlife Hotline: (888) 256-9840.

# Help Protect Our Wildlife:

## Safe Viewing Practices Around Monk Seals

### 1 DO NOT DISTURB

Never touch, pursue. Monk seals are wild, unpredictable, and protected under state and federal laws. It is illegal to feed anything to seals - including fish scraps.

### 2 KEEP YOUR DISTANCE

Recommended viewing distance: at least 50 ft (15 meters) away - on land and in water. View mother seals and their pups at least 150 ft (about 45 meters) away.

### 3 KEEP YOUR DISTANCE

Give seals plenty of space. If you are snorkeling/swimming and find that a seal will not leave you alone, ignore the seal and do not encourage the seal with engaging behavior.

### 4 LIMIT VIEWING

Limit viewing to a few minutes.

### 5 FOLLOW SIGNS

Stay behind any signs or barriers and keep dogs on a leash. Even well-trained dogs can be hard to control when they see a monk seal. There are documented attacks both ways — dogs have bitten seals and vice versa

### 6 USE THE "RULE OF THUMB"

To determine a safe distance (if no signs or barriers are present) on land:

1. Make a "thumbs up" gesture and extend your arm straight in front of you.
2. Turn your thumb parallel to the ground in your line of sight of the seal.
3. If your thumb covers the entire seal, you are likely far enough away (about 50 feet or 15 meters).





# Help Protect Our Wildlife:

## Safe Boating Practices With Whales

### Recommendations:

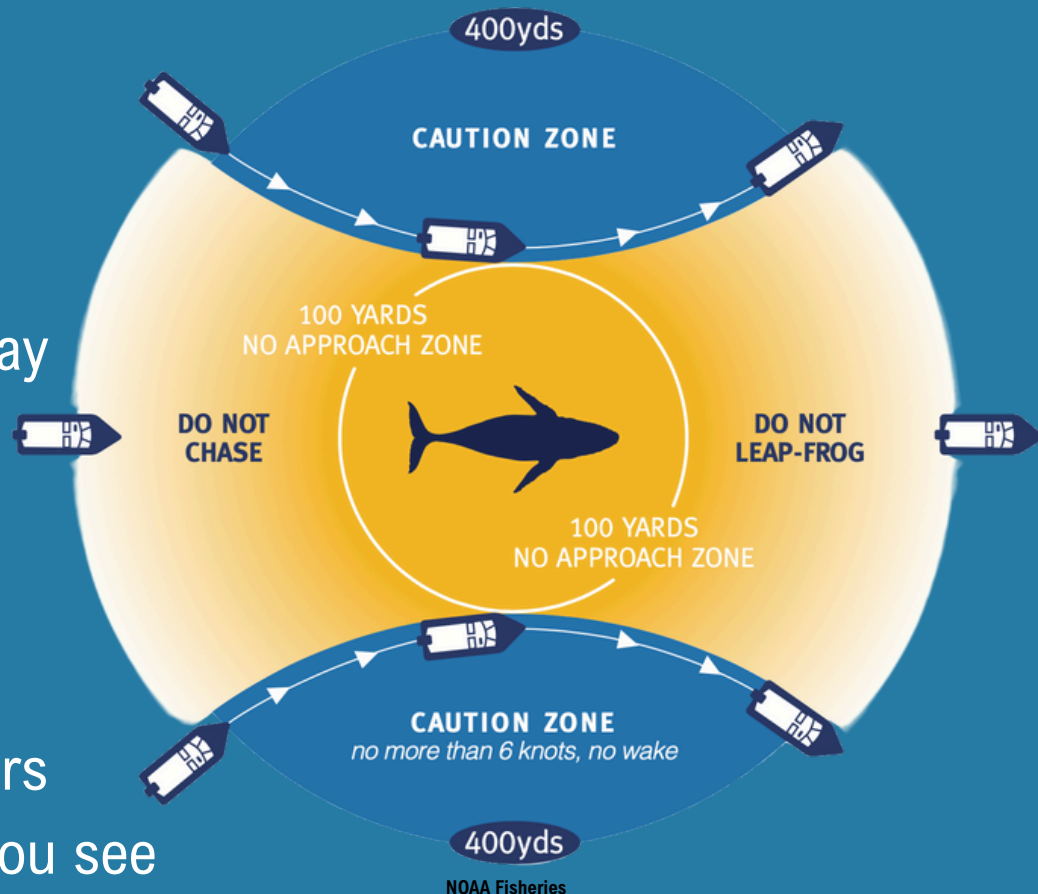
- In transit:
  - 15 knots or minimal planing speed
  - Post a lookout
  - Go into neutral if a whale approaches
- Tour operators:
  - Go 6 knots when approaching and departing pods or whales.

### It's The Law:

- Stay 100 yards away
- No leapfrogging

### Please Kōkua:

- Warn other mariners
- Call the hotline if you see a collision or an entangled whale  
888-256-9840.





If you see someone closely interacting with marine wildlife, such as touching, chasing, or disturbing them, whether in person or on social media, you may be witnessing a violation of federal or state law. The best way to help is to **report the incident immediately** and submit photos or videos of potentially illegal encounters.



## SUBMIT A REPORT:

Call:

NOAA Marine Wildlife Hotline:

(888) 256-9840

(best number for all protected marine wildlife emergencies)



NOAA Office of Law Enforcement:

(800) 853-1964

DLNR DOCARE:

(808) 643-DLNR (3567)



Submit online:

Send videos, photos, and social media links to [respectwildlife@noaa.gov](mailto:respectwildlife@noaa.gov)

Download and submit a report through the DLNRTip app.

# PROTECTED SPECIES OF HAWAI'I



At the federal level, all marine mammals, including Hawaiian monk seals, dolphins, and whales, are protected by the **Marine Mammal Protection Act (MMPA)**. Additionally, the **Endangered Species Act (ESA)** protects all sea turtle species and other marine species, such as Hawaiian monk seals, insular false killer whales, and sperm whales.

Both of these acts prohibit the “**take**” of any of the species they protect. “Take” under the ESA is defined as “**to harass, harm, pursue, hunt, shoot, wound, kill, trap, capture, collect, or attempt to engage in any such conduct**”.

In Hawai'i, **Hawai'i Revised Statute (HRS) Chapter 195D** and **Hawai'i Administrative Rule (HAR) 13-124** further protect these species and in some cases, impose additional penalties for “take.”

