



NOAA FISHERIES Protected Resources

Stranding Network Contact Information

Pacific Islands

- Sea Turtle Hotline: 808-725-5730
- Marine Mammal Hotline: 888-256-9840

Alaska

- Marine Mammal Hotline:
877-9-AKR-PRD (1-877-925-7773)

West Coast

- Sea Turtle and Marine Mammal Hotline
1-866-767-6114

Northeast

- Sea Turtle and Marine Mammal Hotline
1-866-755-NOAA (1-866-755-6622)

Southeast

- Sea Turtle and Marine Mammal Hotline
1-877-WHALE HELP (1-877-942-5343)

Download **Dolphin & Whale 911**, a free smartphone app to report stranded marine mammals in the Southeast, from the **Google Play** or **Apple iTunes** Stores

Fishing Tips to Protect Sea Turtles and Marine Mammals



We need your help

The unintentional capture or injury of sea turtles and marine mammals during fishing is a significant threat to their health and recovery.

If you catch a sea turtle or marine mammal, call your local stranding response network immediately or contact the U.S. Coast Guard on VHF Channel 16.

Here's some other guidance to reduce accidental captures and harm to animals. Remember, safety first, use your judgment, and don't put yourself in danger!

Marine Mammal and Sea Turtle Friendly Fishing Tips

- Never abandon fishing gear. Hooks, lines, or nets left in the water can entangle and kill sea turtles and marine mammals.
- Use barbless circle hooks and knot-free buoy lines to reduce injuries.
- Inspect gear often to avoid unwanted line breaks.
- Recycle fishing line and stash your trash.
- Change fishing location if sea turtles or marine mammals show interest in your bait or catch.
- Don't cast your line if a sea turtle or marine mammal is in the area.
- Don't discard bait or cleaned fish remains into the water, as sea turtles and marine mammals may associate the area with food.
- Never feed or attempt to feed sea turtles or marine mammals – it's harmful and illegal!
- Release catch quietly away from marine mammals and according to state and federal fishing regulations.





If you catch a sawfish, a sturgeon, or another endangered fish, follow these tips:

- Do not remove the fish from the water.
- Cut the line as close to the hook as possible.
- Release the fish as fast as possible to reduce stress on the animal.
- Sawfish Hotline: 941-255-7403
- Sturgeon Info (NE): 978-281-9328



Tips for viewing wildlife responsibly

www.nmfs.noaa.gov/pr/education/viewing.htm

Recommendations to reduce injuries if you hook or entangle a sea turtle:

- Call your local stranding network immediately.
- Keep hands away from the turtle's mouth and flippers.
- Use a net or lift by the shell to bring the turtle on the pier or land. **Do NOT** lift by the hook or pulling on the line. If the turtle is too large to net or lift, try to walk it to the beach.
- When you have control of the sea turtle, use blunt scissors or knife to cut the line. Leave at least 2 ft. of line to allow for dehooking by trained responders.
- Leave the hook in place as removing it could cause more harm.
- Keep the turtle out of direct sunlight, and cover the shell with a damp towel.
- If you **cannot** reach the response team and are **unable** to bring the turtle to shore, cut the line as short as possible before releasing the turtle.

Recommendations for fishing vessel operation:

Vessel strikes can cause injuries to marine mammals and sea turtles. Injuries may be caused by propellers and blunt force trauma from the vessel's hull. To avoid injury:

- Watch for sea turtles and marine mammals in the water. Give them **at least 50yds** of space, **100yds or more for whales**. Use our viewing tips for proper distances, if you see them closer put your engine in neutral to avoid injury.
- Do not cross ahead of, or through, a group of marine mammals. Slow down and cross behind them.
- Watch for schools of small fish or jellyfish, sea turtles and marine mammals could be nearby.
- Wear polarized sunglasses to help you better see animals in the water.
- Retrieve your mooring system (anchor and ball) before returning to port.

Share the Shore:

Seals and sea lions use shoreline habitat every day to rest and regulate their body temperature. When you are shore fishing, please share the shore and try not to disturb seals and sea lions when they are on land by following these guidelines:

Do

- Give seals and sea lions space. Avoid approaching closer than 100 yards/meters.
- Keep dogs away at all times. Marine mammals carry diseases that can be transmitted to you and your pet.

Don't

- Disturb, move, feed or touch any marine mammal, including harbor seal pups. All marine mammals are protected under the Marine Mammal Protection Act, and it is illegal for unauthorized persons to harass, handle, or feed them.

For more information:

Visit our Recreational Fishing Website and look for "Responsible Practices"
http://www.fisheries.noaa.gov/sfa/management/recreational/resources_for_fishermen.html