



DOLPHIN FRIENDLY FISHING TIPS

Help Protect Wild Dolphins While Fishing

Serious and even fatal dolphin injuries from interactions with recreational fishing gear and boats are on the rise. You can help prevent these injuries, and potential damage to your gear, by following these tips designed to protect marine mammals.

1) Never Feed Wild Dolphins – It’s Harmful And Illegal

- Feeding is illegal under the federal Marine Mammal Protection Act.
- Feeding teaches dolphins to beg for food and draws them dangerously close to fishing gear and boat propellers.

2) Reuse Or Share Leftover Bait

- Freeze leftover bait for later or give it to your fishing neighbor.
- Dumping leftover bait may attract dolphins to fishing areas to beg or steal bait and catch.

3) Reel In Your Line If Dolphins Are Near

- Reel in and wait for dolphins to pass to avoid losing your bait or catch and prevent potential harm to dolphins.
- Never cast towards dolphins.

4) Change Locations If Dolphins Show Interest In Bait Or Catch

- Move away from dolphins to avoid unintentionally hooking one and prevent damage to gear or catch.

5) Release Catch Quietly Away From Dolphins When And Where It Is Possible To Do So Without Violating Any State Or Federal Fishing Laws Or Regulations.

- Feeding or attempting to feed a marine mammal in the wild is prohibited.

6) Check Gear And Terminal Tackle

- Inspect your gear often to avoid unwanted line breaks – even small amounts of gear in the water can be harmful to wildlife if entangled or ingested.

7) Use Circle And Corrodible Hooks

- Circle hooks may reduce injuries to fish, dolphins, and sea turtles.
- Corrodible hooks (any hook other than stainless steel) eventually dissolve.

8) Stay At Least 50 Yards Away

- Stay a safe distance from wild dolphins to avoid causing potential harm.

- Maintaining a safe distance helps keep dolphins wild.

9) Recycle Fishing Line

- Place all broken or used fishing line in a Monofilament Fishing Line Recycling Bin.
- If no recycling bins are available, place broken or used fishing line that has been cut into pieces in a lidded trash can.

10) Stash Your Trash

- Littering is illegal and can be harmful to wildlife.
- Collect any trash you've left behind and place it in a lidded trash can.

To report feeding or harassment of wild dolphins, call the NOAA Fisheries Office of Law Enforcement at: 1-800-853-1964.

To report an injured or entangled dolphin, or other wildlife, call the Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission at: 1-888-404-FWCC (3922).

These “Best Practices” were developed by a team of experts from NOAA’s Fisheries Service, the Chicago Zoological Society, Mote Marine Laboratory, and Hubbs-SeaWorld Research Institute after interviews with boaters, anglers, and fishing guides. They emphasize current conservation efforts and existing regulations.