

GUIDELINES FOR INTERACTIONS WITH WILD CETACEANS

- (1) At any time no more than two boats should be engaged in interactions with dolphins and whales.
- (2) Never feed dolphins or whales.
- (3) When entering within 100 yards of an area where there are dolphins and whales, slow boat speed to no more than 8 miles per hour.
- (4) When entering within 50 yards of the dolphins and whales, slow boat speed to no more than 5 miles per hour.
- (5) Boats and swimmers should never chase, block, crowd or box cetaceans or approach them from the front or back or from a perpendicular angle.
- (6) Any time a dolphin or whale changes course to move away from the boat, even if you are approaching correctly, never pursue them.
- (7) Approach slowly from the side or in a parallel manner, letting the dolphins or whales make the decision whether or not to approach the boat. Never separate group members by running through the middle. By leaving plenty of space for the dolphins or whales to approach the boat on their own, you are showing respect and creating the kind of conditions that could lead to a very successful encounter.
- (8) Observe the dolphins and whales to determine if they are feeding, resting, traveling, playing or engaged in some other behavior. Determine if a further approach is appropriate. (This determination should be made by a certified guide only)
- (9) Engine noises should be as quiet as possible since cetaceans are acoustically sensitive. If dolphins or whales approach your boat, slow down, then stop, and turn your engines off if you are with dolphins, or in neutral if you are with whales. (This is because whales do not have the same echolocation that dolphins do and become startled by your boat if they do not know you are there)
- (10) Do not change direction or speed, or make sudden movements with your boat if dolphins or whales are riding in your bow wake.
- (11) If it is determined that the dolphins are interested in the people on the boat and are inviting an interaction, and a qualified guide gives the okay, no more than two persons at a time should quietly slip into the water. If the dolphins stay around, and more people enter the water, the group should stay together as much as possible letting the dolphins move around freely.
- (12) It is best to approach cetaceans from the side at a parallel angle rather than directly or chasing them from behind.
- (13) Never try to touch or grab cetaceans. Swim with arms at your sides or behind your back.
- (14) As with any polite guest, it is important to know when to leave. If the dolphins or whales begin to show disinterest, it is necessary to discontinue the encounter at once letting them leave at will.