

Protected Resources Division Aquaculture Best Management Practices

NMFS recommends the following best management practices for aquatic farms to minimize interactions with marine mammals:

1. Choose a farm location that minimally overlaps with marine mammal important habitats or migration corridors.
2. Minimize the number of vertical lines in the water to reduce entanglement risks for marine mammals.
3. Regularly maintain and monitor aquatic farm structures, keep lines secured, and keep lines tensioned under all tidal conditions.
4. Mark and maintain all buoys with the aquatic farm's ADL number or other unique identifier to facilitate identification of the source if the gear is separated from the farm. Markings must withstand the elements over time.
5. Remove grow lines and culture gear from the water when not in use.
6. Inspect moorings and anchors at minimum annually, and after storm events.
7. Collect and properly dispose of waste materials, excess line, and other debris.
8. Do not allow aquatic farm staff to interact with or feed marine mammals.
9. Practice avoidance techniques prior to attempting to deter any marine mammal. Avoiding interactions is the safest method for preventing death, serious injury, or significant adverse effects to marine mammals.
10. Maintain a documented predator avoidance plan that uses only benign, non-lethal deterrents (e.g., predator netting, increased net rigidity, electric fencing).
11. Operate vessels at slow speeds and with caution for marine mammals when transiting to the farm site and around the farm site.
12. Adhere to the [Alaska Humpback Whale Approach Regulations](#) when vessels are transiting to and from the project site. Specifically:
 - a. Do not approach, by any means, including by interception (i.e., placing a vessel in the path of an oncoming humpback whale), within 100 yards of any humpback whale.
 - b. Do not cause a vessel or other object to approach within 100 yards of a humpback whale.
 - c. Do not disrupt the normal behavior or prior activity of a whale by any other act or omission.
13. Maintain a record of visits to the farm and gear inspections.

AKR PRD Aquaculture BMPs

5-1-20

14. Participate in the [Whale Alert program](#) to report real-time sightings of whales while transiting in the waters of Alaska and to minimize the risk of vessel strikes.
15. Follow NMFS [marine mammal viewing guidelines](#)
16. Immediately report any marine mammal observed entangled or otherwise directly interacting with the facility structures to the NMFS Alaska 24-hr. Stranding Hotline: 877-925-7773.