



FARALLONES MARINE SANCTUARY ASSOCIATION

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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NOAA's Farallones, Cordell Bank marine sanctuaries requests ships to slow down to reduce collisions with endangered whales

To protect whales from death by ship strike, NOAA's Greater Farallones and Cordell Bank national marine sanctuaries have requested large ships slow down inside the shipping lanes beyond San Francisco's Golden Gate to reduce the threat of ship strikes on endangered blue, humpback and fin whales.

NOAA recommends that all vessels of 300 gross registered tons or larger reduce speeds to a maximum of 10 knots per hour (approximately 11.5 mph) from May through November 15 when whales gather to feed. The whales are protected under the federal Endangered Species Act, the Marine Mammal Protection Act, and the National Marine Sanctuaries Act. The U.S. Coast Guard is currently broadcasting this speed reduction request in its Notice to All Mariners.

The Golden Gate shipping lanes extend into Cordell Bank, Greater Farallones, and Monterey Bay national marine sanctuaries. An estimated 7,500-9,000 transits into and out of the Bay Area are made by large class ships each year.

"By working with the maritime shipping industry, conservation groups, and others, we hope to minimize the outcomes of impacts from vessel-whale interactions," said Maria Brown, superintendent of Greater Farallones National Marine Sanctuary. "At lower ship speeds whales are more likely to survive collisions."

During the speed reduction period, NOAA will be monitoring whales in the sanctuaries, as well as vessel traffic. NOAA asks mariners to report any collisions with whales or any observed injured or dead whales to NOAA at 877-SOS-WHALE ([877-767-9425](tel:877-767-9425)) or to the U.S. Coast Guard on VHF-FM Channel 16. To help with monitoring, boaters can also report whale sightings to whales@noaa.gov, or through the free, downloadable Whale Alert App, <http://www.whalealert.org>

Greater Farallones and Cordell Bank national marine sanctuaries contribute greatly to ocean and coastal management in the San Francisco Bay Area. The sanctuaries engage in public outreach and education to promote stewardship, conduct scientific and applied research initiatives, and develop and support programs that strengthen resource protection for the long-term health of the region.

NOAA's mission is to understand and predict changes in the Earth's environment, from the depths of the ocean to the surface of the sun, and to conserve and manage our coastal and marine resources. Join us on Twitter, Facebook, Instagram and our other social media channels.

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