

WATER PLANET

GUIDELINES FOR ENCOUNTERS WITH WILD DOLPHINS

1. Always put out a dive flag when anyone is in the water. Remember that boats and snorkelers are not easy to see in the water.
2. Do not feed or touch the dolphins, either from the water or from a boat. Feeding and touching dolphins disrupts their natural behavioral patterns and it puts young dolphins that are not “boat-wise” at risk from boating injuries. It puts dolphins at risk of inhaling boats’ exhaust fumes. Dolphins can also become sick from eating contaminated fish and get injured by fishing hooks. Feeding dolphins, like chasing them, is illegal and can cost you a hefty fine.
3. If a dolphin approaches you while you are swimming, do not reach out and try to touch him. These dolphins are wild animals and rarely tolerate physical contact from humans. Trying to touch or grab a dolphin is illegal and is virtually guaranteed to scare them away.
4. Dolphins’ interest in people is frequently based on curiosity. Diving, twisting, spiraling, and making unusual sounds underwater often succeed in attracting a dolphin’s attention. Be playful and active in a non-aggressive way.
5. Spend as much time as possible underwater. Dolphins live underwater.
6. Swim in a fluid and as graceful a style as you can. Avoid using your hands for swimming as much as possible. Dolphins do not have hands and many dolphins avoid people who wave their arms in front of them.
7. Try swimming with a friend and playing underwater games (follow the leader) with one or more friends. Dolphins are social creatures and are sometimes curious about our social interactions.
8. Dolphins are often curious about our children. Do not allow small children to swim alone with dolphins. Dolphin games are sometimes rough and aggressive; many children can become frightened in this situation. Dolphins keep their youngest close to them when exploring something new. We should follow this example.
19. Remember that RESPECT is the key to any interaction. Dolphins must initiate any interaction and they have the right to terminate it. Most dolphin encounters last less than 1 minute. Do not pursue a dolphin if it is getting away from you.