

R 261932Z NOV 08 ZUI ASN-A02331000021
FM COMLANTAREA COGARD PORTSMOUTH VA//AR/AP//
TO AIG 11967
CCGDONE BOSTON MA//DR/DP/DRMC//
CCGDFIVE PORTSMOUTH VA//DR/DP/DRMC//
CCGDSEVEN MIAMI FL//DR/DP/DRMC//
CCGDEIGHT NEW ORLEANS LA//DR/DP/DRMC//
INFO COMDT COGARD WASHINGTON DC//CG-5314/CG-54133/CG-0942//
COMPACAREA COGARD ALAMEDA CA//PXO/PR/PP//
CCGDNINE CLEVELAND OH//DR/DP/DRMC//
COGARD REGFISHTRACEN NE CAPE COD MA
COGARD REGFISHTRACEN SE CHARLESTON SC
COGARD REGFISHTRACEN GULF NEW ORLEANS LA
NOAA NMFS WASHINGTON DC//ENF//
NMFS SE REGION ST PETERSBURG FL

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UNCLAS FOUO //N16214//

TRACKLINE LANT 08-08

SUBJ: WHALES-USCG VESSEL SPEED, APPROACH AND STRIKE RESPONSE
GUIDANCE

- A. MY 112152Z JAN 05, WHALES- VESSEL SPEED AND APPROACH GUIDANCE
 - B. COMDTINST 16475 PROTECTED LIVING MARINE RESOURCES PROGRAM
 - C. COMDTINST M16672.2D, NAVIGATION RULES, INTERNATIONAL-INLAND
 - D. COMDTINST M5830.1A, ADMINISTRATIVE INVESTIGATIONS MANUAL
1. CANCEL REF A.
 2. PURPOSE. THIS UPDATED LANTAREA GUIDANCE ON USCG VSL SPEED AND APPROACHES REPLACES REF A. THE FOLLOWING GUIDANCE APPLIES TO ALL USCG CUTTERS AND BOATS OPERATING WITHIN THE LANTAREA AOR. THIS GUIDANCE SHALL BE INCORPORATED INTO DISTRICT OPERATING DIRECTIVES AND REGIONAL FISHERIES TRAINING CENTER CURRICULA. COMMANDING OFFICERS AND OIC'S SHALL ENSURE AWARENESS BY ALL DECK WATCH OFFICERS, COXSWAINS, AND LOOKOUTS.
 3. COMPLIANCE. COMPLIANCE WITH SPEED AND APPROACH GUIDANCE IS CRUCIAL TO THE USCG'S COMMITMENT TO MINIMIZE THE RISK OF HARMING MARINE PROTECTED SPECIES.
 4. SPEED GUIDANCE. TO AVOID COLLISION WITH A WHALE DURING THE COURSE OF NORMAL OPERATIONS, USCG VSLS TRANSITING WHALE CRITICAL HABITAT, MIGRATORY ROUTES AND HIGH-USE AREAS SHALL USE EXTREME CAUTION, BE ALERT, AND REDUCE SPEEDS, AS APPROPRIATE. UNITS SHOULD CONTACT THEIR DISTRICT DRE FOR A COPY OF THEIR DISTRICT'S PROTECTED LIVING MARINE RESOURCES PLAN WHICH IDENTIFIES WHALE HABITAT (IAW REF B). OPERATORS SHALL EMPLOY ALL POSSIBLE PRECAUTIONS TO AVOID INTERACTIONS OR COLLISIONS WITH WHALES, INCLUDING:
 - A. REDUCING SPEED AND ADJUSTING COURSE. APPROPRIATE REDUCED SPEEDS SHOULD BE BASED ON THE FACTORS IDENTIFIED IN RULE 6 (SAFE SPEED) OF THE INTERNATIONAL/INLAND NAVIGATION RULES (REF C). THE NOAA FISHERIES (NMFS) HAS STATED THAT THE MOST LETHAL WHALE STRIKES INVOLVE SHIPS TRAVELING 10 KNOTS OR FASTER. ADDITIONAL REDUCTIONS IN SPEED SHOULD BE CONSIDERED WHEN A WHALE IS SIGHTED OR KNOWN TO BE IN THE IMMEDIATE VICINITY OR WITHIN 05 NAUTICAL MILES OF THE VSL. IN THESE SITUATIONS, VSLS SHALL USE THOSE COURSES AND SPEEDS AS APPROPRIATE, YET NAVIGATIONALY PRUDENT, TO AVOID A COLLISION WITH A WHALE, AND, IF NECESSARY, REDUCE SPEED TO THE MINIMUM AT WHICH THE VSL CAN BE KEPT ON COURSE OR COME TO ALL STOP.
 - B. POSTING ADDITIONAL DEDICATED, TRAINED LOOKOUTS TO ASSIST IN

MONITORING WHALES' LOCATION.

5. EMERGENCY OPERATIONS. DEFINED AS THOSE OPERATIONS FOR WHICH RAPID RESPONSE IS REQUIRED TO AVOID THE POSSIBLE LOSS OF LIFE AND PROPERTY, URGENT LAW ENFORCEMENT INCIDENTS, AND MATTERS OF NATIONAL SECURITY AS DEFINED BY OPERATIONAL COMMANDERS ON A CASE BY CASE BASIS.
6. APPROACH GUIDANCE. ALL COAST GUARD VSLs, DURING NON-EMERGENCY OPERATIONS, SHALL NOT APPROACH WHALES HEAD-ON, NOR APPROACH RIGHT WHALES WITHIN 500 YARDS. THE APPROACH DISTANCE TO ALL OTHER WHALES IS NO CLOSER THAN 100 YARDS. A WHALE SHOULD BE TREATED AS A RIGHT WHALE UNLESS THE WHALE IS POSITIVELY IDENTIFIED AS ANOTHER WHALE SPECIES. UNITS MAY OBTAIN ID GUIDES THROUGH LANTAREA (ARME). THESE STANDOFF DISTANCES DO NOT APPLY WHEN NOAA SPECIFICALLY REQUESTS AND AUTHORIZES THE USCG TO ASSIST WITH MARINE MAMMAL STRANDING/DISENTANGLEMENT ACTIVITIES, INCLUDING RESPONDING TO A DISTRESSED MARINE MAMMAL, PROVIDING TEMPORARY RESTRAINT AND/OR CAPTIVITY, DISENTANGLING, TRANSPORTING, ATTACHING TAGS, EUTHANIZING, COLLECTING SAMPLES, OR TOWING DEAD WHALES.
7. LOOKOUTS. USCG VSLs SHALL MAINTAIN A PROPER LOOKOUT AT ALL TIMES IAW REF C. LOOKOUTS SHALL BE ESPECIALLY ALERT TO WHALES UNEXPECTEDLY SURFACING WITHIN 100 YARDS OF THE VSL. IN THE EVENT OF A WHALE UNEXPECTEDLY SURFACING WITHIN 100 YARDS OF THE VSL, THE UNIT SHALL TAKE ACTION AS PRUDENT AND APPROPRIATE TO ENSURE THE SAFETY OF BOTH THE CREW AND THE WHALE AND TO MINIMIZE DAMAGE TO THE VESSEL. SUCH ACTION MAY INCLUDE STOPPING THE VSL OR REDUCING SPEED TO BARE STEERAGEWAY UNTIL SUCH TIME THAT THE VSL MAY SAFELY OPEN THE DISTANCE BETWEEN THE WHALE AND THE VSL.
8. WHALE/USCG UNIT COLLISION OR STRIKE. IN THE EVENT OF AN INCIDENT, THE UNIT SHALL:
 - A. COORDINATE ANY SAR/SALVAGE RESPONSE IF VSL IS DAMAGED OR DISABLED.
 - B. COLLECT AND DOCUMENT THE FOLLOWING INFO: DATE, TIME, LOCATION (LATITUDE/LONGITUDE) OF COLLISION, WEATHER/SIGHTING CONDITIONS AT THE TIME OF COLLISION, COURSE/SPEED AND NATURE OF UNIT OPERATIONS AT TIME OF COLLISION, DESCRIPTION OF AVOIDANCE ACTIONS MADE BY THE VSL, DESCRIPTION OF THE WHALE AND/OR SPECIES OF WHALE (IF KNOWN), OBSERVATIONS OF THE WHALE BEFORE THE COLLISION (COURSE, TIME, BEHAVIOR), DAMAGE INCURRED BY UNIT, DESCRIPTION OF WHALE AFTER COLLISION (ALIVE, DEAD, INJURIES OR BEHAVIORAL CHANGE), LENGTH OF TIME WHALE WAS OBSERVED AFTER COLLISION, LAST KNOWN POSITION OF WHALE AND DIRECTION OF TRAVEL.
 - C. NOTIFY OPCON AND TACON BY FASTEST MEANS POSSIBLE.
 - D. SEND IMMEDIATE SITREP WITH SUBJECT HEADING "POSSIBLE WHALE STRIKE" TO OPCON AND TACON, INFO COMLANTAREA COGARD PORTSMOUTH VA//AR/ARM/ARMC//, COGNIZANT DISTRICT (DRE,CC), AND COMMANDANT (CG-5314,CG-0942).
 - E. CONDUCT AN INVESTIGATION AS OUTLINED IN REF D, AND FORWARD TO OPCON WITH COPY TO LANTAREA (ARME), MLCA (L) AND COMMANDANT (CG-5314, CG-0942), WITHIN 10 DAYS OF THE INCIDENT OR SOONER IF POSSIBLE.
9. POC: MS. KATIE MOORE, LMR AND MPS SPECIALIST, (757) 398-6504.

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