

# Massachusetts Officials: “Keep back: Feeding Humpbacks may not see your boat or gear!”

“Recently, humpback whales have been seen feeding close to shore from Maine to Massachusetts. In areas where baitfish are thick, humpback whales will gladly take advantage of the easy meal and may have little regard for what is on the surface, including boats.

When feeding, humpback whales can be unpredictable and active at the surface. Boaters are advised to steer clear of areas where whales are actively feeding to avoid entangling or colliding with a massive 80,000-pound whale as it rapidly surfaces.



You can protect your gear and avoid entanglement by not casting or trolling near or around humpback whales or bubble clouds. If a bubble cloud appears while you're fishing, pull

up your gear, if possible. Humpbacks create bubble clouds to corral their prey and then lunge through the center to swallow the small fish.

A collision with a vessel or entanglement in fishing lines can cause serious injuries to the whale and sometimes be fatal. Collisions with whales have also thrown boaters from vessels and caused serious injuries and even death to people. In areas where you suspect whales will be present, slowing to 10 knots helps to prevent collisions by allowing both you and the whale time to react.

Visit the NOAA website for more tips on boating and fishing safely around whales: <https://bit.ly/458ypTo>."-NOAA Fisheries New England/Mid-Atlantic.