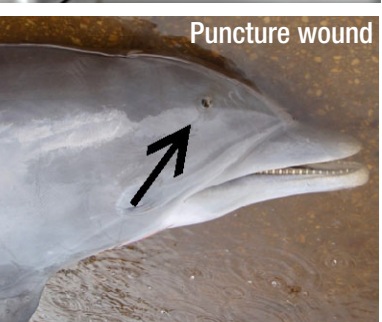




Fishing lure



Puncture wound



Vandalism



Shark bite



Fishing line entanglement



Corralling - Harassment

Dolphins have a reputation for being friendly...

however, they are really wild animals who should be treated with **CAUTION** and **RESPECT**.

Interactions with people change the behavior of dolphins for the worse.

They lose their natural wariness which makes them easy targets for **VANDALISM** and **SHARK ATTACKS**.

NOAA Fisheries Enforcement Hotline:
1-800-853-1964



The maximum fine for violating the MMPA is \$20,000 and one year in jail.

For the dolphin's sake, and your safety, please DON'T FEED, SWIM WITH, TOUCH or HARASS WILD DOLPHINS.

Don't closely approach, chase or tease wild dolphins. It's dangerous for them and for you.

Please observe the natural behaviors of wild dolphins from a distance of at least 50 yards.

Please use binoculars or telephoto lenses to get a closer view.



NOAA FISHERIES

**Southeast Regional Office
Protected Resources Division
263 13th Avenue S
St. Petersburg, Florida 33701
(727) 824-5312**

http://sero.nmfs.noaa.gov/protected_resources/
<http://www.dontfeedwilddolphins.org>

Photographs provided by: Hubbs-SeaWorld, Mote Marine Laboratory, Sarasota Dolphin Research Program, Dolphin Research and Conservation Institute, Alabama State, G. McKenna, and YouTube.

Let the **WILD** ones stay **WILD...**

Protect Dolphins

Admire them from a Distance





Don't feed wild dolphins!

Dolphins are hunters, not beggars...

but when people offer them food, like most animals, they take the easy way out. They learn to beg for a living, lose their fear of humans, and do dangerous things.

They swim too close to churning boat propellers...

and can be severely injured. They learn to associate people with food and get entangled with fishing hooks and lines, and die. They get sick from eating bait and people food like beer, pretzels, candy and hot dogs.



Dolphin scientists have proof of injuries...

feeding wild dolphins disrupts their social groups which threatens their ability to survive in the wild. Young dolphins do not survive if their mothers compete with them for hand-outs and don't teach them to forage.



Dozens of bites have been reported...

and people have been pulled under water. Dolphins can bite the hands that feed them. A woman who fed a pair of dolphins and then jumped in the water to swim with them was bitten. "I literally ripped my left leg out of its mouth," she said during her week stay in the hospital.



Dolphins are not water toys or pets...

the Flipper myth of a friendly wild dolphin has given us the wrong idea. Flipper was actually a trained, captive dolphin who did not bite the hand that fed him. However, truly wild dolphins will bite when they are angry, frustrated, or afraid. When people try to swim with wild dolphins, the dolphins are disturbed. Dolphins who have become career "moochers" can get pushy, aggressive and threatening when they don't get the hand-out they expect.

For all these reasons, it is against the law to feed or harass wild dolphins.

The Marine Mammal Protection Act (MMPA) prohibits the "taking" of marine mammals. The term "take" means to harass, hunt, capture, kill or feed, or attempt any of these activities.



Screen shot from YouTube video.