

PDCs for In-Water Activities

For an activity to be covered under this Opinion, the USACE authorization must include the following conditions. Failure to comply with these conditions could result in enforcement action by the USACE and/or NMFS.

AP.7. Education and Observation: The permittee must ensure that all personnel associated with the project are instructed about the potential presence of species protected under the ESA and the Marine Mammal Protection Act (MMPA). All on-site project personnel are responsible for observing water-related activities for the presence of protected species. All personnel shall be advised that there are civil and criminal penalties for harming, harassing, or killing ESA-listed species or marine mammals. To determine which species may be found in the project area, please review the relevant Protected Species List at:
http://sero.nmfs.noaa.gov/protected_resources/section_7/threatened_endangered/index.html

AP.8. Reporting of interactions with protected species:

- a) Any collision(s) with and/or injury to any sea turtle, sawfish, whale, or sturgeon occurring during the construction of a project, shall be reported immediately to NMFS's Protected Resources Division (PRD) at (1-727-824-5312) or by email to takeareport.nmfs@noaa.gov and SAJ-RD-Enforcement@usace.army.mil.
- b) Smalltooth sawfish: Report sightings to 1-844-SAWFISH or email Sawfish@MyFWC.com
- c) Sturgeon: Report dead sturgeon to 1-844-STURG 911 (1-844-788-7491) or email nmfs.ser.sturgeonnetwork@noaa.gov
- d) Sea turtles and marine mammals: Report stranded, injured, or dead animals to 1-877-WHALE HELP (1-877-942-5343).
- e) North Atlantic right whale: Report injured, dead, or entangled right whales to the USCG via VHF Channel 16.

AP.9. Vessel Traffic and Construction Equipment: All vessel operators must watch for and avoid collision with species protected under the ESA and MMPA. Vessel operators must avoid potential interactions with protected species and operate in accordance with the following protective measures:

- a) *Construction Equipment:*
 - i) All vessels associated with the construction project shall operate at "Idle Speed/No Wake" at all times while operating in water depths where the draft of the vessel provides less than a 4-foot (ft) clearance from the bottom, and in all depths after a protected species has been observed in and has departed the area.
 - ii) All vessels will follow marked channels and/or routes using the maximum water depth whenever possible.
 - iii) Operation of any mechanical construction equipment, including vessels, shall cease immediately if a listed species is observed within a 50-ft radius of construction equipment and shall not resume until the species has departed the area of its own volition.

- iv) If the detection of species is not possible during certain weather conditions (e.g., fog, rain, wind), then in-water operations will cease until weather conditions improve and detection is again feasible.
- b) *All Vessels*:
 - i) Sea turtles: Maintain a minimum distance of 150 ft.
 - ii) North Atlantic right whale: Maintain a minimum 1,500-ft distance (500 yards).
 - iii) Vessels 65 ft in length or longer must comply with the Right Whale Ship Strike Reduction Rule (50 CFR 224.105) which includes reducing speeds to 10 knots or less in Seasonal Management Areas (<http://www.fisheries.noaa.gov/pr/shipstrike/>).
 - iv) Mariners shall check various communication media for general information regarding avoiding ship strikes and specific information regarding right whale sightings in the area. These include NOAA weather radio, USCG NAVTEX broadcasts, and Notices to Mariners.
 - v) Marine mammals (i.e., dolphins, whales [other than North Atlantic right whales], and porpoises): Maintain a minimum distance of 300 ft.
 - vi) When these animals are sighted while the vessel is underway (e.g., bow-riding), attempt to remain parallel to the animal's course. Avoid excessive speed or abrupt changes in direction until they have left the area.
 - vii) Reduce speed to 10 knots or less when mother/calf pairs or groups of marine mammals are observed, when safety permits.

AP.10. Turbidity Control Measures during Construction: Turbidity must be monitored and controlled. Prior to initiating any of the work covered under this Opinion, the Permittee shall install turbidity curtains as described below. In some instances, the use of turbidity curtains may be waived by the USACE project manager if the project is deemed too minimal to generate turbidity (e.g., certain ATON installation, scientific survey device placement, marine debris removal) or if the current is too strong for the curtains to stay in place. Turbidity curtains specifications:

- a) Install floating turbidity barriers with weighted skirts that extend to within 1 ft of the bottom around all work areas that are in, or adjacent to, surface waters.
- b) Use these turbidity barriers throughout construction to control erosion and siltation and ensure that turbidity levels within the project area do not exceed background conditions.
- c) Position turbidity barriers in a way that does not block species' entry to or exit from designated critical habitat.
- d) Monitor and maintain turbidity barriers in place until the authorized work has been completed and the water quality in the project area has returned to background conditions.
- e) In the range of ESA-listed corals (St. Lucie Inlet, Martin County south to the Dry Tortugas and the U.S. Caribbean) and Johnson's seagrass (Turkey Creek/Palm Bay south to central Biscayne Bay in the lagoon systems on the east coast of Florida):
 - Projects that include upland earth moving (e.g., grading to install a building or parking lot associated with a dock and seawall project), must install sediment control barriers to prevent any upland sediments from reaching estuarine or marine waters.
 - The turbidity curtain requirement cannot be waived for any project that moves or removes sediment (e.g., dredging, auger to create a pile, trenching to install a cable

line). If turbidity curtains are not feasible in an area based on site conditions such as water current, high wave action, or stormy conditions, the project must undergo individual Section 7 consultation and is not covered under this Programmatic Opinion.

AP.11. Entanglement: All turbidity curtains and other in-water equipment must be properly secured with materials that reduce the risk of entanglement of marine species (described below). Turbidity curtains likewise must be made of materials that reduce the risk of entanglement of marine species.

- a) In-water lines (rope, chain, and cable, including the lines to secure turbidity curtains) must be stiff, taut, and non-looping. Examples of such lines are heavy metal chains or heavy cables that do not readily loop and tangle. Flexible in-water lines, such as nylon rope or any lines that could loop or tangle, must be enclosed in a plastic or rubber sleeve/tube to add rigidity and prevent the line from looping and tangling. In all instances, no excess line is allowed in the water.
- b) Turbidity curtains and other in-water equipment must be placed in a manner that does not entrap species within the construction area or block access for them to navigate around the construction area.

PDCs for Mangroves, Seagrasses, Corals and Hard Bottom for All Projects

Note: **For projects authorized in reliance on this Opinion only**, the PDCs below supercede any other guidance documents otherwise applicable to reduce or avoid impacts to mangroves, seagrasses, and corals. This includes the NMFS's *Construction Guidelines in Florida for Minor Piling-Supported Structures Constructed in or over Submerged Aquatic Vegetation, Marsh, or Mangrove Habitat* dated August 2001, and NMFS's *Key for Construction Conditions for Docks or Other Minor Structures Constructed in or over Johnson's Seagrass (Halophila johnsonii)*, dated October 2002. NMFS may still apply these guidance documents in other consultations, including consultations on Essential Fish Habitat under the Magnuson-Stevens Fishery Conservation and Management Act, as appropriate.

AP.12. Mangroves

- To qualify for coverage under this Opinion, all projects must be sited and designed to avoid or minimize impacts to mangroves.
- Mangrove removal must be conducted in a manner that avoids any unnecessary removal and is limited to the following instances:
 - Removal to install up to a 4-ft-wide walkway for a dock.
 - Removal to install up to an 8-ft-wide walkway for public docks, where the walkway is necessary to address compliance with the Americans with Disability Act (ADA).
 - Removal to install culverts necessary to improve water quality or restore hydrology between 2 water bodies. Such mangrove removal is limited to a maximum of 20 linear feet (lin ft) of shoreline per culvert opening.
 - Removal of mangroves above mean high water (MHW) provided that the tree does not have any prop roots that extend into the water below the MHWL.