CO-OPS ENVIRONMENTAL BEST MANAGEMENT PRACTICES (BMP'S) CHECKLIST FOR VESSEL WORK

Version 2.0, March 2025

Date of proposed visit:

Name station(s) covered by this form:

		COMMENTS
ANNUAL TRAINING REQUIREMENT - *Training of relevant staff must be conducted **at least annually prior** to field activities* - *Vessel crew must maintain at least one Protected Species Lookout (PSL) at all times. This individual may perform other duties simultaneously. PSLs should use all means necessary to enhance visibility (e.g., spotlights, night vision, Forward Looking Infrared), and will be trained annually by reviewing the provided training video.* - *All project personnel and vessel crew members should review the Protected Species Lookout Training annually: https://www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PLelbJSOUpxx7lG2QodflAiKGVFJMx8ONk*		
VESSEL AND EQUIPMENT MAINTENANCE - *Was invasive species prevention procedures implemented, including vessel and equipment washdown (including diving equipment), cleaning, and de-ballasting (i.e., exchange ballast water in open ocean waters). Instruments, diving gear, and tools cleaned to ensure no biofouling was present.*		
OPERATING OR MAINTAINING A VESSEL - *Was the vessel hull kept free of aquatic nuisance species through regular cleaning and/or use of environmentally friendly, anti-fouling hull coatings (for vessels with hull coatings).* - *Was engine idling reduced when possible (such as by using dedicated anchorages, moorings, and/or rafting vessels together).* - *Was the number of transits reduced to and from shore to the extent practicable.* - *Was propeller wash and seafloor disturbance minimized in coastal waters and deep water transit routes followed when available.*		
PROTECTION OF MANATEE HABITAT - *All personnel associated with the project were instructed about the presence of manatees and manatee speed zones, and the need to avoid collisions with and injury to manatees. All crews were advised that there are civil and criminal penalties for harming, harassing, or killing manatees.* - *Vessels were operated at "Idle Speed/No Wake" where the draft of the vessel provided less than a four-foot clearance from the bottom. Vessels will follow routes of deep water whenever possible.* - *Ceased in-water operations, including vessels if a manatee came within 15 m (50 ft) of the operation. Did not resume until all manatees moved at least 15-m (50-ft) from the vessel, or until 30 minutes elapses if the manatee(s) has not reappeared*		

within 15 m (50 ft) of the vessel. Animals were not herded away or harassed into leaving. - *Any collision with or injury to a manatee shall be reported immediately. To report dead, debilitated, or distressed manatees in the Southeast Region, call 1-877-942-5343.* *Complete the NOS Vessel Strike Incident Reporting Form* *Please list any encounters in comments.*		
PROTECTION OF MARINE MAMMALS AND/OR MARINE SPECIES. - *Avoided excessive speed or abrupt changes in direction until the cetacean has left the area. Attempted to remain parallel to the animal's course, if feasible.* - *Attempted to maintain a distance of 45 m (50 yd) or greater if one or more sea turtles were sighted while vessel was underway.* - *Avoided approaching within 91 m (100 yd) of in-water seals and sea lions.* - *Sighting of any injured, dead, or entangled ESA-listed species. Immediately report to the applicable NMFS stranding hotline. Be prepared to answer the responder's questions, such as species (if possible), your geographic location, the animal's condition, and your contact information. Provide any on-water assistance requested.*		
ANCHORING - *Did not anchor in coral critical habitat or other known areas of coral.* - *Avoided anchoring in abalone habitat* - *Avoided anchoring in seagrass habitat.* - *Did not drag anchor chains.* - *Minimized anchoring. Use designated anchoring areas when available. Selected the anchor location based on depth, protection from seas and wind, and bottom type. Preferred bottom types are sticky mud or sand, as those characteristics allow the flukes of the anchor to dig into the bottom and hold the chain in place.*		
BUOY DEPLOYMENT, MAINTENANCE AND RETRIEVAL - *Moored instruments and buoys were securely placed on/anchored into uncolonized, unconsolidated bottom types and were properly secured to minimize bottom disturbance.* - *Avoided placing instruments in rocky habitats on the West Coast or on the East Coast from Maine to North Carolina. Ensure that any buoys attached to the sea floor use the best available mooring systems. All mooring lines and ancillary attachment lines must use one or more of the following measures to reduce entanglement risk: shortest practicable line length, rubber sleeves, weak-links, chains, cables or similar equipment types that prevent lines from looping, wrapping, or entrapping protected species. Buoys, lines (chains, cables, or coated rope systems), swivels, shackles, and anchor designs must prevent any potential entanglement of listed species while ensuring the safety and integrity of the structure or device. When possible, field crews should use retrievable equipment and not abandon material on the seafloor.* - *During buoy deployment and retrieval operations, buoys were lowered and raised slowly to minimize risk to listed species and benthic habitat. Additionally, Protected Species Lookouts (PSLs) should monitor for listed species in the area prior to and during deployment and retrieval. Work should be stopped if listed species are observed in the area, to minimize entanglement risk.* - *All buoys were properly labeled with owner and contact*		

information. - *A live or dead marine protected species that becomes entangled in buoy lines, immediately report to the applicable NMFS stranding hotline using the contact information*		
TIDE GAUGE INSTALLATION (along shorelines in manatee habitat) - *Siltation or turbidity barriers were made of material in which manatees cannot become entangled, were properly secured, and were regularly monitored to avoid manatee entanglement or entrapment. Barriers must not impede manatee movement.*		
OTHER. *If yes, please describe and explain in comments.*		

Additional Comments: