



RULES AND PROCEDURES OF THE FARALLON PATROL

V5 April 2014

Introduction

The Farallon Patrol has a long and distinguished record of service to Point Blue Conservation Science and its staff members who conduct scientific research on the Farallon Islands. The Patrol's safety record in providing that service has been exemplary and is something of which Farallon Patrol skippers can be proud. For this record to continue it is appropriate that the rules and procedures under which skippers operate be set down in writing in a single document so that both new and experienced Patrol members are clear as to what is expected of them. For the most part, skilled sailors and operators of power boats with experience on the waters between San Francisco Bay and the Farallon Islands will find what follows to be common sense.

The paramount issue on trips to and from the Farallones is the safety of all on board. Very few Point Blue staff or others who benefit from the services of the Farallon Patrol have meaningful, if any, skill or experience aboard boats on the ocean. Their well-being during relatively long and sometimes demanding passages is entrusted to Patrol skippers and their crews and, therefore, it is a condition of serving with the Farallon Patrol that all skippers agree to observe and enforce these Rules and Procedures. A failure to do so may, at the discretion of the Commodore in consultation with Point Blue, be grounds for suspension or dismissal from the Patrol.

- 1) Designation as a Member of the Farallon Patrol: Only approved skippers may make runs to the Farallones. To become a member of the Farallon Patrol an applicant must complete an Application Form and submit it to the Commodore of the Farallon Patrol for review. Upon approval by the Commodore, a newly designated skipper shall make one trip to the Farallones aboard the boat of another skipper who has previously been to the islands before undertaking a trip on his or her own.
- 2) Cancellation of Scheduled Trips: Particularly during winter months, weather conditions can be such that it is not safe to travel by boat to the Farallones or, once there, to get ashore. The decision to embark on a run or cancel it, or abort a trip already underway is solely that of the skipper after considering weather reports, observing weather and sea conditions and speaking with Point Blue staff

on the Farallones. In exercising judgment about whether to make a trip, skippers should err on the side of caution. The decision whether it is safe to offload passengers and supplies at the Farallones shall be made by the Farallon Biologist on the island. Skippers shall abide by this decision.

- 3) Crew: The number and experience of crew aboard a boat headed to the Farallones is in the discretion of the skipper. However, in no event shall a skipper make a trip without at least one experienced crew member aboard who is fully capable of safely getting the boat to the Farallones and back should something incapacitate the skipper.
- 4) Vessel Safety Check: Prior to making a first run to the Farallones as a Patrol skipper, satisfactory evidence must be submitted to the Commodore by the skipper that within the last year his/her boat has had a U.S. Coast Guard Safety Check. Thereafter, such an inspection should be carried out not less frequently than every two years.
- 5) National Wildlife Refuge and Marine Protected Areas: The Farallon Islands are a National Wildlife Refuge managed by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. When on or in the vicinity of the Farallones, skippers shall obey all rules of the Fish and Wildlife Service. In addition, Point Blue conducts sensitive scientific research on the Farallones and all rules of Point Blue relating to the islands shall be respected. Regulations involving Marine Protected Areas within state waters adjacent to the islands should also be obeyed.
- 6) Discharge Regulations: During passages to and from the Farallones boats pass through environmentally sensitive areas. Therefore, skippers should insure that they are familiar with discharge regulations applicable to San Francisco Bay and the coastal waters off of San Francisco and assume that they are applicable all the way to the Farallones.
- 7) Marine Sanitary Devices: At the onset of a trip all non-crew passengers shall be given appropriate instruction in the use of Marine Sanitary Devices. Regardless of the distance offshore, all discharge from such devices shall be to a holding tank. In addition, for safety reasons, male passengers should not be permitted to relieve themselves overboard.
- 8) Safety Equipment and Procedures: All vessels must carry all safety equipment required by Coast Guard for their vessel, including enough life jackets for every passenger. While not required, a liferaft capable of carrying all the vessel's passengers is highly recommended. Before leaving the dock on the outbound leg of a run to the Farallones (and again before departing the Farallones if there are new passengers aboard) all passengers should be fully briefed by the skipper on safety matters, including the location of life jackets and other safety equipment and man overboard procedures.

- 9) Alcohol Consumption: It is the responsibility of Patrol skippers to ensure that the consumption of alcohol by themselves and their crew should be limited, to the end that there should be no impairment of the crew's ability to safely handle the boat.
- 10) Insurance: Point Blue carries extensive insurance to protect Point Blue employees and volunteers who work on the Farallon Islands, which in turn helps to protect Patrol skippers and their crew. Highlights of our coverage that help to protect Farallon Patrol skippers include \$3 Million General & Excess Liability Insurance per occurrence and \$4 Million aggregate. We also have \$1 Million Worker's Compensation Insurance per occurrence, which covers staff as well as Farallon Island volunteers (not skippers or crew) traveling over water. We have liability protection for skippers from State Compensation Insurance Fund (our Worker's Compensation insurer) in the form of a Waiver of Subrogation. This means that in a situation in which an injury occurs that is the fault of the skipper or crew, SCIF agrees not to sue or hold them liable. Finally, there is \$25,000 Excess Medical Volunteer Accident insurance (covers costs not covered by a volunteer's personal health insurance policy for accidents on land--if costs exceed \$25,000 this would be covered by General Liability policy). This includes coverage for skippers and crew while on the island. Point Blue requires all skipper's to carry a minimum of \$1 Million in liability insurance and to provide to Point Blue a copy of the Declarations page of the skipper's insurance policy.
- 11) Expeditious Passages: For reasons of safety and comfort, trips to and from the Farallones should be made as directly and expeditiously as practicable, using, in the case of a sailboat, the boat's engine, if necessary. It is not appropriate for skippers to insist on sailing the entire trip if wind conditions are not conducive to maintaining reasonable boat speed. Skippers should ensure that their boats have sufficient fuel on board to comfortably make the round trip entirely under power if necessary.
- 12) Night Passages: Night passages to the Farallones should be avoided. It is, however, appropriate to begin a run before first light, particularly when tide conditions are such that this might be necessary to ensure a return to San Francisco Bay before dark.
- 13) Navigation: A fully functional GPS [plus a backup], and preferably marine radar as well, shall be on board for all trips to the Farallones. An up-to-date paper or electronic chart covering the waters between San Francisco Bay and the Farallon Islands, together with tide and current tables, shall also be carried.
- 14) The Potato Patch: The so-called "Potato Patch" outside of the Golden Gate can be extremely dangerous and should be crossed only in calm conditions.
- 15) Loaning of Boats: Under no circumstances shall a member of the Farallon Patrol lend his or her boat to any Point Blue staff member, regardless of seniority, for any purpose whatsoever, or, except in an unavoidable emergency (which shall be

reported to the Commodore as soon a possible), leave his or her boat at the Farallon Islands.

- 16) Size of Boat: All Farallon Patrol boats must be at least 35' in length for sailboats and 28' for powerboats and be designed and suitably built for use offshore. If a Patrol skipper acquires a new boat, the boat information portion of an Application Form must be submitted for approval to the Commodore. Until such approval, the skipper may not undertake any trips to the Farallones in the new boat.
- 17) Personal Floatation Devices: If a run to the Farallones is to be made aboard a sailboat, the skipper and his crew shall wear inflatable personal floatation devices equipped with tethers, and jack lines shall be rigged and used when circumstances warrant.
- 18) Crew Remaining on Board: If the crew of a Farallon Patrol boat goes ashore at the Farallones, at least one member of the crew or Point Blue staff shall remain on board the boat at all times. That staff member shall be instructed as to how to start the boat's engine and drive the boat, if necessary.
- 19) Fenders: Small craft with outboard motors are used to off-load and load passengers and supplies at the Farallones. The seas around the mooring used by Patrol boats are rarely calm. It is the responsibility of each skipper to provide an adequate number of fenders and other equipment to protect his or her boat from damage during this process.
- 20) Notice of trip: The Patrol Coordinator typically will send out an email detailing the boat location, estimated trip departure, passengers, etc. 3-5 days prior to the outing. Usually a call is made by the Sr. Point Blue person from the island to the skipper the night before the departure to confirm the landing conditions at the island. The landing is on the SE corner of the island and is not very protected, so it is subject to continuous swell and occasionally windwaves.
- 21) Departure tactics: Check the tides as they can be a big determinant of the trip timing – ideally leaving on ebb and returning on a flood is desirable, but not critical. An early departure (sunrise) leaves time to make the 25 mile trip out and get back in time before dark if the boat is fairly fast.
- 22) Overnight onboard: Point Blue personnel may want to stay onboard the night prior to departure if there is an early start, if there is room onboard and it is not an imposition to the skipper. Point Blue personnel provide their own sleeping bag.
- 23) Stowage of the gear: Stowing gear below deck is a consideration in rough conditions – expect 10-15 boxes of food, some gas/propane tanks, and research equipment on a trip along with personal gear for each passenger. The number of passengers can be light in the winter (1-2) and heavier in the summer (4-5). Point Blue members rarely are involved in the boating aspects of the trip. In rough

conditions some may get seasick – if so having them don a lifejacket and harness is a good idea as a precaution.

- 24) Pre-arrival: A call to the island on VHF channel 80 is usually made one hour before arriving to confirm arrival and check the conditions if in doubt. Look for the large mooring ball near the crane – there is a crane to the north and south of the eastern side of the island. The southeast landing is preferred, but the northern side is an option if conditions are better there. The island has a SAFEBOAT which the Farallon Biologist will use to put out a floating mooring line for you to pick up.
- 25) Offloading: Put out generous fenders for the unloading – usually done on either quarter. Having two crew members take the fore and aft line of the tender to steady the boats in the likely swell will make for a smoother unloading. Another crew member can transfer the supplies and personal bags into the tender. It can take a number of trips by the tender back and forth to the crane to off-load. Some boxes of trash are usually also taken off the island and can be strapped to the deck.
- 26) Visiting the island: Crew are extended an invitation to tour the island depending on the conditions for offloading via the crane (the entire boat and crew are lifted out of the water) and time available for the return. A walking trip on the island can take 1 – 1 ½ hours and is a very special experience. The decision as to whether an island tour will be possible is solely that of the Farallon Biologist.
- 27) Return trip: Point Blue crew will help unload the boat and usually take the vehicle that is left by the outgoing personnel.