

**North Atlantic Right Whale Consortium
Annual Meeting - Business meeting
November 15th, 2019**

Board Elections

Mark Baumgartner thanked the outgoing NARWC Board members and welcome those newly elected members.

Outgoing:

Chair: Mark Baumgartner	Woods Hole Oceanographic Institution
Moira Brown	Canadian Whale Int./Campobello Whale Rescue Team/NEAq
Amy Knowlton	Anderson Cabot Center for Ocean Life at NEAq
Mike Lane	South Shore Lobster Fishermen's Association
Bill McLellan	University of North Carolina, Wilmington
Genevieve Davis	University of Massachusetts, Boston/NOAA/NMFS

Incoming:

Chair: Scott Kraus	
Vice-Chair: Moira Brown	Canadian Whale Int./Campobello Whale Rescue Team/NEAq
Mark Baumgartner	Woods Hole Oceanographic Institution
Peter Corkeron	Anderson Cabot Center for Ocean Life at NEAq
Tim Frasier	St. Mary's University
Amy Knowlton	Anderson Cabot Center for Ocean Life at NEAq
Hansen Johnson	Dalhousie University

2019 Data Access Requests

Heather Pettis reviewed data access requests made to the NARWC in 2019. In total, there were 33 requests to date: 15 management, 13 publication, 4 education, and 1 for images.

Press/media policy

There was a discussion about opening the meeting to the press. In general, members felt that there hasn't not historically been a strong connection between the NARWC and the media. The need to relay our messaging to the public is a strong one, but do want to be mindful of keeping the meeting focused on the agenda of sharing science and data. Suggestions going forward included:

1. Media working group
 - a. Press release and draft report card in advance of the meeting. Create space and time at the beginning of the NARWC meeting for press conference – overview of status, year in review, questions and clarifications.
 - b. Provide space and time during meeting for interviews
2. Concern that media take away seats from participants
 - a. Limit number of participating media in room for talks
3. Recording policies
 - a. Clarify expectations and allowances around recording (video and audio) and media questions
 - b. Remains significant hesitation around recording talks. Many feel it will stifle open dialogue
 - c. Some suggestions included the NARWC video recording entire meeting, then have content to package and distribute in a controlled fashion
 - d.

Messaging

General discussion about how to better engage the public and empower people to feel invested and hopeful and provide means by which people can act.

1. In addition to "fact" sheet, draft action plan for people. What can the public do? (i.e. talking points for representatives, support for research and conservation orgs)

2020 Meeting

Overwhelming support to hold in Canada (likely Halifax) and to offer remote participation again. Several folks highlighted the need to know about remote participation options in advance so that options are known prior to submitted travel requests.

Board Representation

Noted that the SEUS/Mid Atlantic are not represented on the Board. The issue of Board representation was addressed at last year's meeting as well, with the membership agreeing that ad-hoc data access reviewers would be pulled in for requests of data from underrepresented areas.

General Comments

Mark opened the floor for general comments, with the prompt "Are there things we could/should be doing that we aren't?"

1. In crafting our messaging, we need to strike a balance between the reality of the declining numbers and optimism
2. We will help ourselves in the long run if we are more careful with language. Stop using population. It's as species. The language of losing a population is very different than losing a species. Additionally – Eggs are not (yet) listed as "critically endangered." When they are, then we can push that messaging and it will really mean something.
3. Several students in attendance commented on valuing the tremendous opportunity to learn that is provided by the meeting
4. Several comments and questions related to how the government bodies can be informed of information and suggestions coming out of the NARWC Annual meeting
 - a. Government agencies from both the US and Canada are accessing data
 - b. In Canada – species at risk act there is a recovery strategy. We have a new revamped SARA action plan that reflects all threats to right whales. Gone through review and received feedback, going through internal review and then will be put out for public review.
 - c. Suggested more time for managers to outline what they have planned
 - d. Many comments related to shipping
 - i. Suggestion to revisit ship strike working group – something like the Ropeless Consortium
 - ii. In NOAA -Review going on re: ship speed rule. Looking at rule and effectiveness. Report in the next year or so. NOAA does have lead on creating and getting through the rule, coast guard is on enforcement.
5. Future
 - a. we should be planning on how we are going to use the oceans when there are 1,000 right whales
 - b. Need to think about right whales in the context of climate change. Need to think about near time climate scenarios and how things might shift going forward, even if/when things are looking good.
6. Year of the Right Whale is 2020
 - a. Hope that it is a celebration, and that we all support the year and activities.