

# Naming Right Whales

Each year, we will select 10-15 whales to be named. Anyone can email [phamilt@neaq.org](mailto:phamilt@neaq.org) to request a whale to be named. Once we have a list of potential candidates, we go through and choose the ones that have distinctive enough traits to be likely to get reasonable names (right whales are particularly difficult to name because we use such a diverse set of features on each animal to match against). Once the final list has been compiled, the entire North Atlantic Right Whale Consortium receives an email with a link to a web site where potential names can be submitted. Anyone who is registered with the Consortium can submit names. You can also submit names on behalf of someone who is not registered. We try to leave a month for the nomination process.

When thinking of names, it is important to remember that recognizing whales in the field *is* the primary purpose for naming right whales. Real-time recognition of individuals allows researchers to determine, while at sea, whether we need a biopsy sample, if a whale has been satellite tagged previously, whether and when it was last seen entangled, etc. Therefore, the most useful names will be those that serve as a mnemonic device based on some physical feature that is stable and readily visible from a boat. It is researchers in the field that will most benefit from these names. Having said that, names also serve as a way for the general public to connect better with these animals and are extremely useful when an individual right whale is in the press. So, the aim is to have all names be both useful and tasteful (which we recognize not all of the past names have been!)

## Criteria

In general, names should

- Be based on any physical feature that is regularly visible from a boat (callosity, scars, body or head shape). Try to avoid belly-based names as those will be less useful. Because cyamid coverage can change and obvious patterns in the callosity can come and go, the outline of the callosity is more useful than topographical features in the center of the callosity.
- Be palatable to the public. Because entangled, injured, or dead right whales can receive quite a bit of press, think about seeing the name splashed across the newspaper when you think of ideas.
- Not be names of corporations
- Not be proper names unless that name/person relates to the markings (for example, we have two whales with especially long lip callosities that are named after people who had distinctive mustaches).

After a month, nominating closes and the voting begins. People/organizations who have submitted an average of 50 sightings or more over the previous 3 years are eligible to vote. People can vote for one of the names, or vote for no name to be given. In the event of a tie, we ask for a re-vote for just the two names. Winning names are announced at the annual Consortium meeting in November.

## Whales to name in 2019

More pictures can be found at the Catalog web site: <http://rwcatalog.neaq.org/>

1036- Adult male: Scars right flank and on rostrum



1616- Adult male: Unusual callosity and tooth decay



2010- Adult male: Scar on left head



2340- Adult male: Scar off left callosity, wrapping white chin



2413- Adult female: Callosity pattern (specifically unique bonnet shape)



2510- Adult male: Callosity pattern, dorsal fluke marks, check mark behind the pbh's



3120- Adult male: Scars both sides of the head parallel to coaming





3290- Adult female: Unusual callosity pattern and no pbh callosities



3620- Adult male: Boomerang's Texas calf, 4 distinctive PBH callosities



3823- Adult female: Head scars and uninterrupted scarring on peduncle and both leading edges



3912- Adult female: Distinctive scar off coaming





3920- Adult male: Very distinctive bonnet



4194- Juvenile male: Wild callosity pattern and scar on right flank



4601- Juvenile unknown sex: Massive head wound



4650- Juvenile male: Shoey head, toothdecay, lesions, went into Sebastian Inlet with mom Clipper

