

# Naming Right Whales

Each year, we will select 15-20 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.

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.

## 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 well-known people who had distinctive mustaches).

Once the nomination period ends, voting on names begins. People/organizations who have submitted an average of 50 sightings or more over the previous 3 years are eligible to vote. This year we are piloting a Ranked Choice Vote for whale naming. Below is a brief explanation of how this will work. RCV allows for increased input on names from voters, even if their top choice name is not selected.

1. Voters will rank the names nominated for each whale by preference (1 being most preferred name).
2. If a name wins an outright majority of first-preference votes (i.e., 50 percent plus one), that name will enter the final voting confirmation phase.
3. If, on the other hand, none of the nominated names wins an outright majority of first-preference votes, the name with the fewest first-preference votes is eliminated.
4. All first-preference votes for the failed name are eliminated, and the second choice preference for whale name are distributed to the remaining names
5. A new tally is conducted to determine whether any name has won an outright majority of the adjusted votes.
6. The process is repeated until a name wins a majority of votes cast.

The name voting process concludes with a final “confirmation vote” during which voters confirm they would like to name the whale with the “winning” name. As always, people can vote for the whale to remain unnamed.

Winning names are announced at the North Atlantic Right Whale Consortium Annual Meeting.

# Whales to name in 2021

More pictures can be found at the Catalog web site:

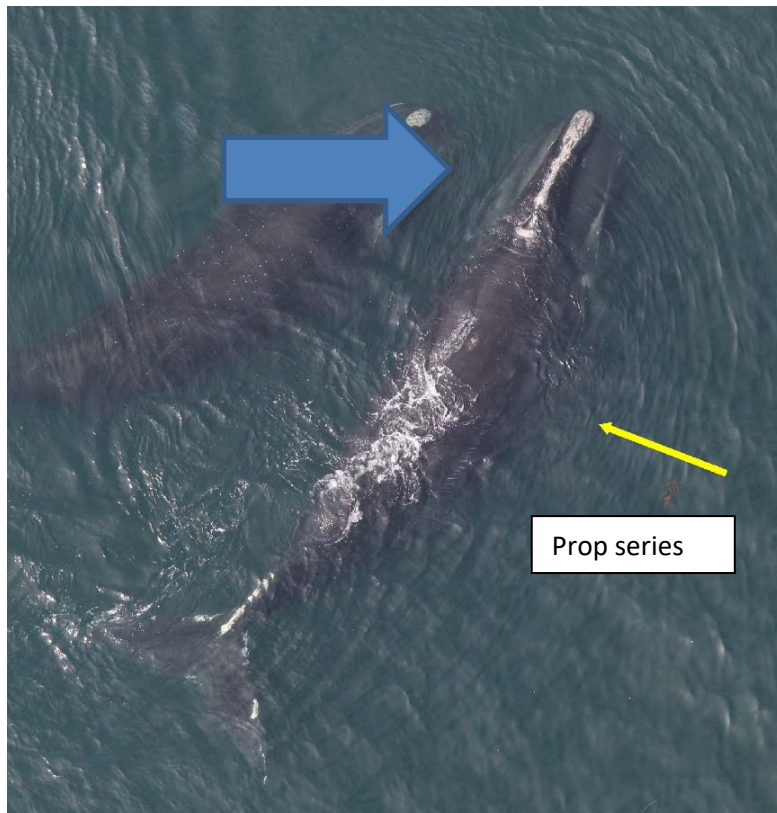
<http://rwcatalog.neaq.org/>

Existing names can be found here:

<https://bit.ly/3jRJhiy>

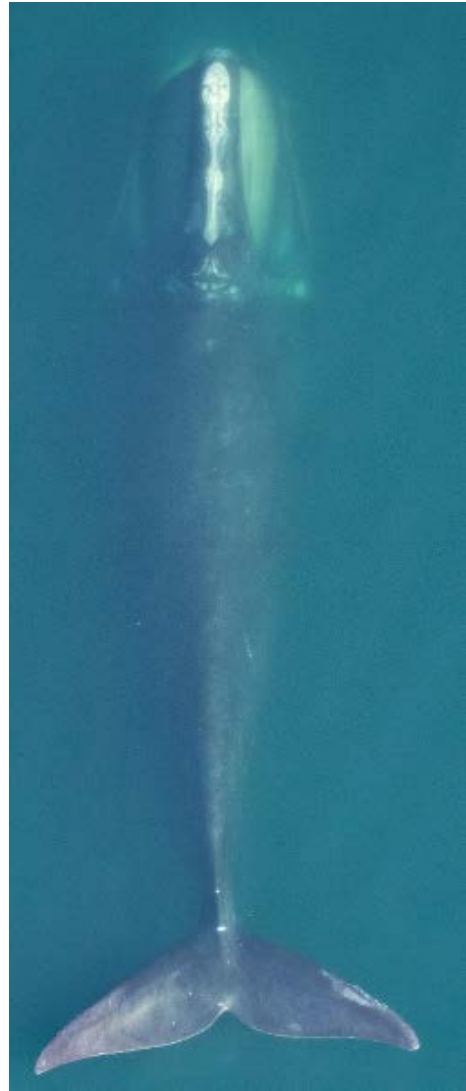
**#1017**: 41+, male.

R lip scars, white scar in coaming, prop series R body, fluke scars, one post blowhole callosity





**#1204:** 39+, calving female, (9 calves to date)  
Symmetrical peninsulas



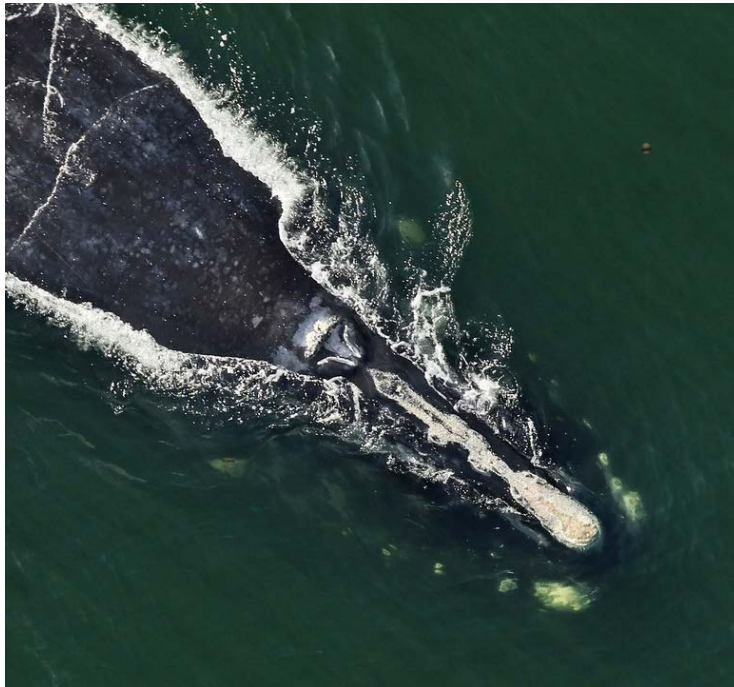
**#2303:** 28yo, male

scars in bonnet and in front of bonnet, unique callosity, post blowhole callosities





**#2420:** 27+ calving female, mom in 2021  
unique callosity pattern, post blowhole callosities.



**#2740**: 24yo male.

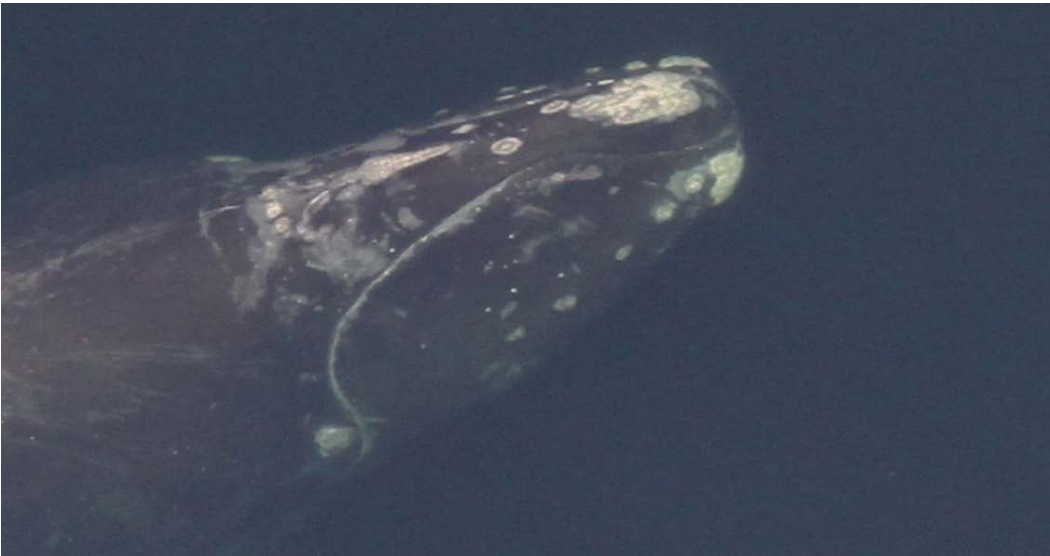
Offspring of Baldy (#1240) with similar patchy callosity





**#2743:** 24yo male.

Three post blowhole callosities, split left lip callosity



**#3351**: 18yo male.

Scar touching callosity (R), big lip callosities, similar callosity to mom  
([Mavynne #1151](#))





**#3510:** 16yo male.

Scars around rostrum, severe tail stock scarring



**#3596**: Unknown age and sex (first seen 2005, seen in 2021)  
Callosity, L head scars, post blowhole callosities, blunt fluke tips





**#3790**: 14yo female.

Distinct callosity with fused islands, tooth decay



**#3812:** 13yo male.  
Large lip lesions





**#4091**: 11yo female, offspring of Echo (#2642)

Scars on head, shape of post blowhole callosity, faint prop series on fluke



**#4150:** 10+ female.

Propeller scars, can appear broken or continuous





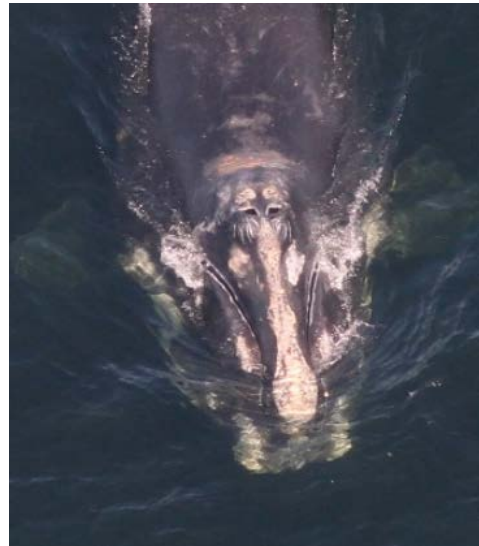
**#4360**: unknown age and sex (first seen 2013)  
Distinct back scar and callosity pattern



**#4423:** 7yo male.

white chin wrapping, tail stock and fluke scarring.

*(Note: head scars may not persist, and likely shouldn't be named after)*





**#4440:** 7yo male.

Callosity, dots on blow holes, tail stock scarring, ventral fluke/notch scars



**#4457:** 7yo male.

Back scars, distinct raised scar on R leading fluke edge, callosity can appear continuous





**#4510:** female, first seen 2015  
callosity pattern, back scar

