Nominees for NARWC Board Positions 2021-2023

Regina Asmutis-Silvia, Whale and Dolphin Conservation

Regina is the Senior Biologist and Executive Director of Whale and Dolphin Conservation's North American office. She has a graduate degree in Biology and has been involved in marine mammal research, conservation and education since 1990. As a federally appointed member of the Atlantic Large Whale Take Reduction Team, she has helped to move forward protective measures to reduce accidental entanglements of right whales in US fishing gear. In addition, she worked directly toward the expansion of federally designated right whale critical habitat and the extension of the right whale ship strike speed rule beyond its sunset date. Through the development of boater outreach programs, she helped to increase the reporting of live and entangled right whales from commercial whale watching vessels along the US east coast.

Sean Brillant, Canadian Wildlife Federation, Department of Oceanography at Dalhousie University

Sean Brillant is the Senior Conservation Biologist for Marine Programs at the Canadian Wildlife Federation and an Adjunct in the Department of Oceanography at Dalhousie University in Halifax NS. In 2007, Sean began working to reduce human threats to marine wildlife focusing particularly on North Atlantic right whales. Projects related to this include collaborating with fishers on gear research, investigating movement patterns of right whales, developing active dialogue with a broad range of stakeholders, and contributing to the mitigation of entanglements and ship strikes through quantitative risk modelling. Sean has a PhD in experimental marine ecology, and is originally from Saint John NB, where he spent his school years exploring, studying, fishing, and freezing in the Bay of Fundy.

Tim Cole, National Marine Fisheries Service

Tim Cole is a Fisheries Biologist at the NOAA Fisheries Northeast Fisheries Science Center. He leads NOAA's Northeast right whale aerial surveys, is involved in NOAA's large whale serious injury determination process, and works with the US Coast Guard developing systems and protocols for right whale protection.

Genevieve Davis, National Marine Fisheries Service

Genevieve has been an active member of the NARWC and research community for over 10 years. She previously served on the NARWC board as the Student Representative, helping arrange the student roundtables for the annual meetings among the other board duties, while attending UMass Boston for her PhD. She's attended the NARWC meeting every year since 2011, when she started working at the Northeast Fisheries Science Center, and has been an active presenter, or co-author at the annual meeting over the last five years. Her research focuses on passive acoustic monitoring, contributing to our understanding of NARW distributions and movements, and she's part of the team working on creating an acoustic detections database for the NARWC. Additionally, she plays an active role on the team implementing NARW Slow Zones (established this year), based off of near real-time acoustic detections from the Robots4Whales system.

Delphine Durette-Morin, Dalhousie University

Delphine is finishing up her Masters degree at Dalhousie University, Canada. Her thesis work aims to measure the distribution of right whales using passive acoustic technology at multiple scales to help advance right whale conservation in Canadian waters. She also has worked as a research assistant for the Canadian Whale Institute. Delphine has participated in the right whale research and NARWC annual meetings since 2015.

Erica Fuller, Conservation Law Foundation

Erica Fuller joined Conservation Law Foundation's Boston Office in 2018 after 8 years as an attorney at Earthjustice, and 20 years as an equine veterinarian. Her work at CLF is primarily related to ocean issues on the Atlantic seaboard. She received a BS degree in Forestry in 1981 and a Doctorate of Veterinary Medicine in 1985 from the University of Georgia. She received a J.D. from the University of Maine in 2007 where she earned the Outstanding Scholastic Achievement Award in Environmental Law. Since Erica joined CLF she has litigated to protect and rebuild the endangered North Atlantic right whale populations as well as the overfished Atlantic cod stocks. She also works on several other oceans issues in the Northeast, including protecting depleted forage fish populations and Magnuson-Stevens Act Reauthorization.

Clay George, Georgia Department of Natural Resources

Clay George has coordinated the Georgia Department of Natural Resources' right whale recovery project since 2005, including aerial surveys, field research, management, policy and outreach. He is a Level 5 disentanglement responder and represents the state of Georgia on NOAA's Atlantic Large Whale Take Reduction Team and Southeast Implementation Team. Clay previously served on the NARW Consortium board from 2007 to 2016. He has a MS in Wildlife Ecology and Management from the University of Georgia.

Allison Henry, National Marine Fisheries Service

Allison currently works as a Fishery Biologist on NEFSC's large whale team. She has been an observer and data collector on right whale aerial and shipboard projects conducted by NOAA and various NGOs since 2003, ranging from the Scotian shelf to the SEUS. When not in the field she is usually mired in serious injury and mortality determinations for all North Atlantic large whales. She has been serving on the NARWC board for the past 3 years.

Christin Khan, National Marine Fisheries Service

Christin Khan is a Fishery Biologist in the Protected Species Branch at NOAA's Northeast Fisheries Science Center in Woods Hole. She is an aerial survey observer and data curator of the North Atlantic Right Whale Sighting Survey which conducts aerial surveys to monitor right whale abundance and distribution from New Jersey to Canada. When not in the air, Christin also works on AI for automated image recognition (Kaggle / Flukebook), identifying whales from very high resolution satellite imagery, right whale outreach signs, the Right Whale Sighting Advisory System, the Whale Alert app, and right whale social behavior.

William A McLellan, University of North Carolina, Wilmington

Bill McLellan (WAM) is a Research Biologist at the University of North Carolina Wilmington. He has been working in the field for over 35 years and has been involved in mortality investigations by conducting 30+ North Atlantic right whale necropsies and determining the seasonal and spatial distribution of NARWs through 20 years of aerial survey effort. WAM sits on the Atlantic Large Whale TRT, the Northeast Implementation Team, the Southeast Implementation Team, the Core Investigative Team for the NARW Unusual Mortality Event and is a Master Necropsy Team Leader. He is a past Board member of the NARWC."

Erin Meyer-Gutbrod, University of South Carolina

Dr. Erin Meyer-Gutbrod has 10 years of experience developing mechanistic models to understand the impacts of climate change and prey availability on right whale distribution and demography. As a new Assistant Professor at the University of South Carolina, she will expand on her previous research by examining the impacts of the current novel foraging environment on right whale migration timing and occupancy of the Southeast US calving ground. Dr. M-G is broadly interested in supporting research trajectories within the right whale community that improve the efficacy of fishery and vessel speed policies in mitigating serious injury and anthropogenic mortality. Dr. M-G is also heavily invested in increasing diversity and inclusion in the fields of oceanography and marine biology; in that capacity, she is currently serving a 3-year term on The Oceanography Society's Justice, Equity, Diversity and Inclusion committee.

Carolyn Miller, Woods Hole Oceanographic Institution

Carolyn is a scientist at the Woods Hole Oceanographic Institution where she investigates microbiomes of baleen whales in the context of health and nutrition. She has more than 25 years of experience in right whale research, including a dissertation tying significant variations in body condition (measurements of blubber thickness and body width) to prey availability and reproduction. Carolyn is currently leading a study exploring the relationship between right whales' respiratory microbiome and body condition through comparisons of blow microbiomes collected from right whales around the world. She is also investigating the role of the gut microbiome in digestion of dietary lipids to study how microbial activities influence nutrition and body condition in balaenid whales. She has been a member of the North Atlantic Right Whale Consortium since 1995 and previously served two terms on the board as a general member (2006-2012). When she is not sequencing and analyzing microbiomes or co-piloting unmanned aerial drones to collect samples of blow, she is spending time exploring the beaches and marshes of Cape Cod with her son.

Michael Moore, Woods Hole Oceanographic Institution

Michael Moore is a veterinary scientist at the Woods Hole Oceanographic Institution. He has studied the effects of trauma from the shipping and fishing industries on North Atlantic right whale (NARW) survival and welfare. He is currently assessing NARW health using aerial photogrammetry, and working with a group of stakeholders to establish buoyless fishing systems as a viable tool to remove line from the water column.

Dave Morin, NOAA, Greater Atlantic Regional Fisheries Office

Dave Morin has been employed for NOAA Fisheries GARFO since 2008 as the large whale disentanglement coordinator. He works with gear specialists to analyze the gear and provide entanglement and gear data to various stakeholders. Given the impact of entanglements on protected species, he has also assisted in other areas where entanglements may be of concern such as aquaculture development, Atlantic Large Whale Take Reduction Team, enforcement and fishing gear development.

Hannah Myers, Woods Hole Oceanographic Institution & University of Alaska, Fairbanks

Hannah Myers has been involved in the North Atlantic Right Whale Consortium since 2018. As a Guest Investigator at the Woods Hole Oceanographic Institution, she studied the economic impacts of policies designed to reduce fishing gear entanglements of North Atlantic right whales and ropeless fishing technologies. She also helped plan the Ropeless Consortium meetings in 2018 and 2019. She is affiliated with the University of Alaska Fairbanks and the Woods Hole Oceanographic Institution.

Richard Pace, National Marine Fisheries Service (Retiring)

Richard Pace, aka LoRider, is currently a research Wildlife Biologist with the National Marine Fisheries Service. By the time of the next RIWH Consortium meeting he will likely be retired from that post which he has held since September of 1999. His primary role at the NE Fisheries Science Center was as an analyst focusing on characterizing demographic patterns of NA right whales and Gulf of Maine Humpback whales. He also acted as a statistical consultant within the Protected Species Branch at the Center. Dr. Pace came to work with marine mammals having already established a career in wildlife Science. He has a Bachelor degree from the University of Georgia in Forest Resources with an emphasis in Wildlife management. He received an M.S. in Forestry from Clemson University and produced a Thesis on wintering woodcock ecology in coastal South Carolina. He attended Purdue University where he was awarded an M.S. in applied statistics and a Ph.D. in Wildlife Science. Pace worked briefly as a statistician for the School of Agriculture at Purdue before taking the post as Wildlife Biometrician for the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources working in the Wildlife Populations and Research Branch serving primarily as an analyst and consulting statistician. From Dec 1998 to Sep 1999, Pace served as an Assistant Leader of the Louisiana Cooperative Fish and Wildlife Research Unit and member of the Graduate Faculty within the School of Forestry Wildlife and Fisheries at Louisiana State University where together with his graduate students worked on several wildlife research project including a 12-year long research project looking at many aspects of Louisiana Black Bear Ecology. He is best known among Right Whale Consortium members for using equations and greek letters as featured components of his many presentations instead of great whale picks. He also has a bit of a reputation at making NMFS regulators cringe as he speaks his mind about the effectiveness of purported mitigation measures to reduce human-caused mortality of large whales. After he leaves his post at NEFSC, he plans to engage in wildlife research through his yet unregistered consulting firm, Grizzlywhaler Consulting Services.

Susan Parks, Syracuse University

An Associate Professor of Biology at Syracuse University, Susan Parks has been a member of the North Atlantic right whale consortium since 1999, previously serving as a member of the general board (2008-2010), as Vice-Chair (2010-2013), and as Chair of the consortium (2013-2016). Her research focuses on the study of acoustic behavior and behavioral ecology of right whales, with an emphasis on providing data on baseline behavior to improve the utility of passive acoustic monitoring and to identify potential behaviors that put right whales at increased risk throughout their migratory range.

Dan Pendleton, New England Aquarium

Dan Pendleton is a Research Scientist at the New England Aquarium. His primary research interests include climateinduced phenological change (especially for right whales), space-based remote sensing, ocean model outputs, species distribution modeling and risk assessment. He has ongoing collaborations with several members of the Consortium. Through that work, Dan has developed an intimate knowledge of the NARWC Sightings Database, and has spent more hours than he would care to admit studying 'The North Atlantic Right Whale Consortium Database: A Guide for Users and Contributors'. Dan has participated in most NARWC meetings since 2005. Dan began working with NEAq as a Bay of Fundy field-work volunteer in 2006. He earned his BS at Minnesota State University (Mathematics), and his MS (Soil Science) and PhD (Natural Resources) at Cornell University. He returned to NEAq in 2012 after working as a Postdoctoral Associate at the NOAA Northwest Fisheries Science Center.

Jessica Redfern, New England Aquarium

Dr. Jessica Redfern is a Senior Scientist and Chair of the Spatial Ecology, Mapping, and Assessment Program (EcoMap) at the New England Aquarium's Anderson Cabot Center. The goal of this program is to assess risk to marine species from human use and climate change. The program uses innovative monitoring and modeling techniques to provide a framework for internal and external collaborators to develop solutions to marine conservation challenges. Examples of the conservation challenges that this program addresses include ship strikes, chronic noise, entanglement, and minimizing impacts of wind energy.

Rob Schick, Duke University

Rob Schick is a quantitative ecologist working at Duke University with over 20 years' experience in marine mammal science. Currently his work focuses on developing and applying statistical models to better understand the impact of anthropogenic disturbance on marine mammals at 2 scales: short-term changes in movement and diving behavior, and longer term changes in health and body condition. His active projects include the Atlantic Behavioral Response Study off Cape Hatteras that examines diving and avoidance behavior in Cuvier's beaked whales, and the Population Consequences of Multiple Stressors (PCOMS) case study on North Atlantic right whales. He has worked on the migratory patterns of right whales, capture-mark-recapture, impacts of entanglement, and models of individual and population level health. He is currently working on developing spatial models to better understand the distribution and abundance of right whale prey in Cape Cod Bay as part of the PCOMS project. He is a former board member (2012-2015), and a member of the Population Consequences of Disturbance working group since 2010.

Sarah Sharp, International Fund for Animal Welfare

Sarah Sharp is the Veterinarian for IFAW's Marine Mammal Rescue and Research Program, based on Cape Cod, MA. She has been involved with marine mammal necropsies and forensic investigations for almost 20 years, with an increased focus more recently on right whales as their deaths became more prevalent off Cape Cod. In 2019, Sarah was the lead author on a large collaborative publication summarizing all NARW mortality data from 2003-2018. Sarah manages the NARW necropsy database and necropsy report archive for the NARW Consortium. She is also a lead investigator on a NOAA Prescott grant working collaboratively with the Center for Coastal Studies and WHOI to further refine large whale medical intervention at sea, including using sedation as a tool to facilitate disentanglements. Sarah continues to be heavily involved with NARW necropsies for the ongoing Unusual Mortality Event involving this critically endangered species.

Jamison Smith, Blue World Research Institute

Jamison Smith has been involved in right whale research and conservation efforts for over 25 years all along the eastern seaboard of the United States. Starting initially as a Research Scientist with the Florida Fish and Wildlife Commission in Florida, then as the lead for the Entanglement Response Program with NOAA Fisheries, and now as the Chief Scientist with the Blue World Research Institute (BWRI). Jamison is situated in Florida and primarily studies right whales using advanced technologies like Unmanned Aerial Systems (UAS or drones) while they are on the calving grounds of the Southeast U.S. Jamison is also involved in initiatives to study the effectiveness of ropeless fishing to minimize fishing and whale interactions.

Tonya Wimmer, Marine Animal Response Society

Tonya Wimmer is a marine mammal biologist and the Executive Director of the Marine Animal Response Society based in Nova Scotia, Canada. Tonya's focus is on protecting marine species and reducing impacts from human activities. This is primarily done through collaboration with many partners from academia, government and industry to study and monitor the health of cetaceans, including human interactions, that are reported dead or in distress in the Canadian Maritime Provinces. A core element of this work has been to ensure collaborative response operations exist and are supported in Canada and ensuring investigations and necropsies are conducted through which valuable scientific and conservation data are obtained.