**Update on the North Atlantic Right Whale Unusual Mortality Event: 2017-Present**

An Unusual Mortality Event (UME), which is defined under the U.S. Marine Mammal Protection Act as "a stranding that is unexpected, involves a significant die-off of any marine mammal population, and demands immediate response" was declared by the National Marine Fisheries Service for North Atlantic right whales (*Eubalaena glacialis)* starting in 2017, due to elevated numbers of dead or seriously injured whales along the Northwest Atlantic Ocean coast. This is a transboundary event and the investigation includes whales stranding in both Canada and the United States. The UME is ongoing with 50 known cases, including 34 dead and 16 seriously injured individuals to date. Of the 34 confirmed dead whales, 21 were first documented in Canada and 13 were first documented in the United States. The breakdown of known mortalities by year includes: 17 whales in 2017 (12 in Canada; 5 in the U.S.); 3 in 2018 (all in the U.S.); 10 in 2019 (9 in Canada; 1 in the U.S.); 2 in 2020 (both in the U.S.); and 2 in 2021 (both in the U.S., as of 20 August). Of the 24 whales that were necropsied, 20 (83%) were confirmed, probable, or suspect deaths as a direct result of human activities: entanglements (9) or vessel strikes (11). Of the 16 serious injury cases, which involve live free-swimming non-stranded whales, 14 had serious injuries from entanglements and 2 from vessel strikes. Therefore, of the 40 cases examined (both live and dead), 90% (36/40) were impacted by entanglements (23) or vessel strikes (13). Given there are fewer than 400 individual North Atlantic right whales remaining, these 50 individuals in the UME represent at minimum 12.5% of the population, which is an extremely significant impact on such a critically endangered species.

More information can be found at the National Marine Fisheries Service UME website: (<https://www.fisheries.noaa.gov/national/marine-life-distress/2017-2021-north-atlantic-right-whale-unusual-mortality-event>).