

RIGHT WHALE NEWS

A Publication of the Georgia Environmental Policy Institute, Athens, Georgia

Volume 15 Number 3

August 2008

Ship Strike Reduction Rules Seek to Balance Right Whales with Economic Impacts

Bowing to political pressure, particularly from Vice President Dick Cheney's Office of Domestic Policy, the National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) is expected to release a Final Rule in October to implement vessel operational measures to reduce ship strikes of North Atlantic right whales. According to NMFS, the purpose of the rule is to "reduce the occurrence and severity of vessel collisions with North Atlantic right whales thereby contributing to the recovery and sustainability of the species while minimizing the effects on the shipping industry and maritime commerce." As a result of these dual goals, the Final Rule is expected to be significantly weaker than what NMFS had proposed 18 months ago. While the speed restriction is expected to remain at 10 knots or less, the right whale safety zones in the south and mid-Atlantic regions are reduced from 30 nautical miles to 20, and restrictions around aggregations of right whales are largely voluntary. All provisions of the rules expire in five years.

The expectation of weakened rules is based on the NMFS' release of the *Final Environmental Impact Statement to implement vessel operational measures to reduce ship strikes to North Atlantic right whales* (FEIS). The 850-page document analyses the potential environmental impacts of implementing six alternative sets of vessel operational measures and the no-action alternative. The proposed action (alternative 6) to implement vessel operational measures off the east coast of the U.S. would apply only in certain areas and at certain times of year or under certain conditions. All vessels 65 feet and greater would be required to abide by the measures. Vessels owned by or contracted to the federal government (e.g., Navy, Coast Guard) and state and local law enforcement vessels would be exempt, although NMFS requests that all federal agencies observe the proposed measures "when and where their missions are not compromised." An additional exemption would apply for vessels to maintain safe maneuvering speed under certain conditions.

The action expected to be proposed in the Final Rule involves Seasonal Management Areas (SMA), Dynamic Management Areas (DMA) and routing measures. When the SMAs and DMAs are in effect, vessel speeds would be restricted to 10 knots or less. The use of recommended routes is voluntary but the speed limits still apply within them.

A summary of the proposed action operational measures, derived from the Executive Summary of the FEIS (pages ES 1-12), follows:

Southeast Region (Georgia and Florida coasts; north boundary at Sapelo Island, 31° 27'N; south boundary south of St. Augustine, 29° 45'N; east boundary, 80° 51.6' W and west boundary, the shoreline) Measures would be in effect from November 15 to April 15. Routes to and from the ports of Jacksonville, Fernandina Beach and Brunswick are recommended.

Mid-Atlantic Region (Six separate SMAs including one from Brunswick, GA to Wilmington, NC; the entrances to Beaufort and Morehead City, NC; Chesapeake Bay, Delaware Bay, New York/New Jersey and Block Island Sound, RI) For all but Block Island, the SMAs would extend from the shoreline out to 20 nautical miles (37 km). The SMA for Block Island Sound would be a 30 nm rectangle. Measures would be in effect from November 1 to April 30. For Cape Cod Bay, an SMA would cover the entire Bay; routes from the Cape Cod Canal are recommended; measures would be in effect from January 1 to May 15.

Northeast Region (Race Point SMA north and east of Cape Cod) Measures would be in effect from March 1 to April 30; (Great South Channel SMA) April 1 to July 31.

All Three Regions: Dynamic Management Areas would be voluntary, but NMFS would monitor compliance to see if the recommended actions should be made mandatory.

The proposed operational measures would expire five years after they go into effect. During the five years the rule would be in effect, NMFS will conduct additional reviews (including economic analyses) and determine what further steps are necessary.

According to the FEIS, the proposed measures “would have major direct positive effects” on the right whale population and “indirect positive effects” on other marine mammals and sea turtles.

The total cost of the proposed measures is estimated at \$137 million per year (assuming 100% compliance with voluntary measures). The cost to port areas and vessel operations (including a 10-knot speed restriction) is estimated at \$120.1 million annually for the five years the rules are in effect. These impacts are estimated to represent 0.022 percent of the value of east coast trade. Impacts to commercial fishermen are estimated at \$1.3 million annually. Impacts to ferry vessels are \$8.6 million annually; impacts to ferry passengers would be \$5.2 million annually. Impacts to whale watch vessels are \$1.3 million annually (the cost to the whale-watch industry was significantly reduced by making compliance with DMAs voluntary). Impacts to charter vessels amount to \$796,000 annually.

The Final Environmental Impact Statement may be downloaded from NOAA's National Marine Fisheries Service Protected Resources website at <http://www.nmfs.noaa.gov/pr/shipstrike/>.

NOAA is not required to respond to comments on the FEIS, but the agency will review and consider all comments before issuing a Record of Decision. Final agency action will take place on or after September 29. Comments should be sent to David Cottingham,

Office of Protected Resources, NMFS, 1315 East-West Highway, Silver Spring, MD 20910.

Final Gear Rules Give Fishermen Some Slack

NOAA's National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) has approved a Final Rule which amends the regulations implementing the Atlantic Large Whale Take Reduction Plan (ALWTRP). This Final Rule provides an additional six months (through April 5, 2009) for trap/pot fishermen along the Atlantic east coast to comply with the broad-based sinking groundline requirement. Additionally, this Final Rule deletes the "neutrally buoyant line" term and definition from the ALWTRP regulations, so that only the "sinking line" term and definition remain. The Final Rule was published on September 2 (*Federal Register* Vol. 73, No. 170, pages 51228 – 51242).

Proposed Changes to Rules on Endangered Species Could Significantly Affect Right Whales

On August 15, the Department of the Interior and the Department of Commerce issued a Proposed Rule to change the consultation process between agencies – generally called Section 7 consultations – and to change the threshold for considering federal actions that might affect endangered species such as North Atlantic and North Pacific right whales.

If adopted, the proposed changes would mean that a federal agency initiating an action could decide on its own that there would be "no effect" on endangered species, and thus avoid consultation with government scientists. In the case of right whales, this would avoid consultation with scientists at the National Marine Fisheries Service. The proposed rule also requires a determination that effects on an endangered species be "reasonably certain to occur" and that the certainty be based on "clear and substantial information." This change could substantially lessen protection for endangered species like right whales.

One significant result of these proposed changes could be that offshore developments are able to avoid scrutiny for their potential effects on right whales. Developments such as liquified natural gas terminals and pipelines, wind farms, Navy training exercises, and oil and gas exploration and development would be evaluated by the action agency for potential harm to right whales. Most of these agencies do not have right whale scientists on staff; traditionally, they have relied on the expertise of the NMFS.

The proposed rules can be found in the *Federal Register* Vol. 73, No. 159, pp. 47868-47875; August 15, 2008. The deadline for comment is an unusually short period of 30 days, although many in Congress and the environmental community have asked for extensions.

DC Court Sends Right Whale Case to Lower Court

Led by Chief Judge Sentelle, the U.S. Court of Appeals (District of Columbia) has declined to rule on litigation brought by the Defenders of Wildlife and others against the U.S. Coast Guard for its failure to consider the impact of some of its actions on right whales. Instead, the Court remanded the case to the district court. While the Court of Appeals did not order the Coast Guard to perform a review of the ways cargo ships might endanger right whales, advocates are hoping that the lower court will require them to do so.

Massachusetts Lobster Fishing: The Right Way

A new labeling and education program in Massachusetts will encourage businesses and consumers to buy lobsters caught locally, using fishing practices that are safer for whales. The Massachusetts Lobstermen's Association, the Massachusetts Division of Marine Fisheries, the Ocean Conservancy and the Whale and Dolphin Conservation Society are working with local restaurants, fish markets and seafood dealers to inform residents and visitors about the new labels and their benefits for both lobster fishing and whales. A green whale tail-lobster claw band will signify lobster caught using safer fishing methods. These efforts ultimately support whale protection, the Massachusetts economy, and lobster fishing heritage.

“The steps that Massachusetts lobstermen have taken are an important start to getting endangered and threatened whale populations on the road to recovery. We are pleased to work with our partners on this program,” said Vicki Cornish, Vice President of Marine Wildlife Conservation at the Ocean Conservancy. “Massachusetts is the leader on doing the right thing for the right whale, and other endangered whales. We hope to see these efforts expanded and hope that other East Coast fishing industries follow their lead.”

Massachusetts lobstermen are taking important steps to make the ocean safer for whales. Massachusetts is the first and only state to require year-round use of sinking groundline – line that links five to 25 lobster traps on the ocean floor – in all state waters, which reduces the threat to whales from lines near the ocean bottom. The state of Massachusetts also conducts abandoned or lost lobster gear removal projects and restricts the kind of fishing gear that can be used when whales are present in their critical habitat in Cape Cod Bay.

“Safer waters for whales and a successful lobster industry can exist together. We are pleased that our state's lobstermen are proven innovators and are dedicated to fishing the right way,” said Paul Diodati, Director of Massachusetts Division of Marine Fisheries. “We look forward to working with our partners to distinguish the great work done by Massachusetts lobstermen.”

Buying locally-caught whale-safe lobsters in Massachusetts helps support the efforts of local lobstermen who are investing in the protection of endangered whales even at a time of soaring fuel and bait costs. This summer and beyond, consumers are encouraged to ask for and look for lobsters with the green band label showing a whale tail and lobster claws. This label assures consumers, restaurateurs and seafood buyers that lobsters were caught using gear that is safer for whales.

“Our lobstermen have made an investment in our fishery, local economy and the protection of whales,” said Bill Adler, Executive Director of Massachusetts Lobstermen’s Association. “We are the first to take important steps with our fishing gear to protect whales and we hope to set an example for other fisheries along the East Coast.”

The waters off Massachusetts are important feeding habitat for protected and endangered whales, including minke, humpback, finback, and North Atlantic right whales. At the same time, Massachusetts has a long history of lobster fishing dating back to 1808, when Ebenezer Thorndike of Swampscott invented the lobster trap. Lobster fishing in Massachusetts continues to be an important part of the Massachusetts way of life and economy. The members of this new partnership hope to create a legacy of helping to conserve whales for the next generation to appreciate and protect.

“Just this year, at least eleven large whale entanglements have been reported and half of them involved endangered right whales,” said Regina Asmutis-Silvia, Senior Biologist for the Whale and Dolphin Conservation Society. “We applaud Massachusetts lobstermen for changing their fishing methods to make them safer for whales. WDCC believes this is the right thing to do and it should be acknowledged and supported. Choosing the green banded Massachusetts lobster is a way that consumers can also help.”

Visit www.masslobster.org for more information.

Right Whale Consortium Meets November 5-6: Register Now

You are invited to the 2008 Annual Meeting of the North Atlantic Right Whale Consortium Meeting. The meeting will take place November 5-6 at the New Bedford Whaling Museum in New Bedford, MA. A business meeting will take place the morning of November 5.

A link to the meeting website can be found through the Consortium website at <http://www.rightwhaleweb.org>. Click on the Meetings tab. **Registration** for the meeting is now open, and you can register either online via the website or offline by downloading the registration form. When filling out the registration form, please be sure to include updated affiliation, address and email information.

Early registration (\$100) will run from now until October 17, after which registration

fees increase (\$150). Registration will close October 30. The Consortium Board has added a student registration option to the 2008 Annual Meeting. Please note that to register as a student, one needs to be enrolled full-time and may not receive grant or institutional assistance to attend the meeting. The student registration fee is \$75 before October 17 and \$100 after this date.

This is also an official **call for presentations**. If you would like to present at the meeting, you must submit an abstract for review by September 12. Abstracts should be submitted via the meeting website. Presenters will be notified no later than September 30.

Hotel, venue, directions, and parking information are posted on the website. Additional information, including the Meeting Agenda, will be posted as it becomes available. For those of you working with or in contact with agencies that send representatives to the Annual Consortium meeting but who may not be on the consortium member list, please have those agencies contact Consortium Secretary Heather Pettis at hpettis@neaq.org with contact information. Election day in the U.S. is November 4, so please plan your travel accordingly! For those who plan to fly to the meeting, check out airfares to both Providence and Boston; you might be surprised at the difference!

Naming Right Whales

*Prepared by the New England Aquarium Right Whale Research Team
Phil Hamilton, Marilyn Marx, Amy Knowlton, Monica Zani, Yan Guilbault,
Jonathan Cunha, Moira Brown, Heather Pettis, Scott Kraus, Roz Rolland, Kerry Lagueux
June 2008*

Background: *Since the mid 1950's, researchers from many organizations have been studying and photographing right whales. In 1986, the first North Atlantic Right Whale Consortium was formed, and it was decided that the New England Aquarium (NEAq) would manage the catalog of identified individuals for the species. Back then, some of the whales were given names to help researchers re-identify them more easily at sea. Although relatively few were named at that point, all received a four-digit catalog number – the first two digits indicating the year of birth or first sighting if birth year was unknown, and the second two digits generally indicating the mother, if known. Currently, 152 of the 519 whales with catalog numbers also have names.*

As managers of the North Atlantic Right Whale catalog, the NEAq understands that it is important to give names to more right whales: 1) to continue to aid researchers with re-identification in the field – especially as the number of juveniles in recent years has grown; 2) to help the public, managers and politicians connect more with these animals and their plight; and 3) in particular cases to recognize individuals and events. NEAq researchers have assigned most names to date, but it is time to take advantage of the experience of the broader Consortium community that has developed over the years. Many of these researchers are now collecting biopsies and other individual-specific data

and also need to be able to recognize individual whales in the field – something that a good whale name can facilitate.

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. (The NEAq is reviewing existing names for palatability and considering re-naming with this in mind).
- 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).

Name proposals: Well before the annual Consortium meeting, the NEAq team will email researchers who contribute more than 50 sightings to the Catalog annually to see if they have particular whales they want named. NEAq will sort through any suggestions along with whales that we think are good candidates and come up with a list of 10 or 20 whales to be named (the goal is to name them all eventually, but to do a smaller group the first year or two while we sort out the process). That list will then be posted on a secure portion of the Consortium web site and a link to nominate names will be sent to the Consortium email list, along with suggestions of what features should be considered when naming (this will help make the name useful for those using them the most). Those who want to participate will use the public website to review images and come up with potential names and enter them on the Consortium web site. When proposing names, please give an explanation for why that name is appropriate. We often get asked the history of whale names and have begun to include those explanations in the database, so in the future people will be able to look up the reasoning behind the name.

There have been requests to have financial donors be able to name whales or have whales named after them. We believe the most equitable decision on this is to have donors suggest names to the research organization that received money from them, and have a researcher from that organization nominate the name through the process described above. The names should follow the criteria above and it will have to be stressed that they are being given the opportunity to *nominate* a name, not necessarily name the animal.

There will always be exceptions to whatever system we decide upon. For example, spontaneous naming sometimes happens when an unnamed sick, injured, or entangled whale is sighted or a healthy whale is seen in an unusual place (i.e. basically anything that brings an individual whale into the press). The NEAq will name those whales as quickly as possible based on physical features of the animal, or other researchers can send in suggestions and we will consider them. Or we may use the Consortium web site as a way to nominate names and vote on the fly. Also, some whales do not have any distinctive features that are easily named. In these cases, names based on their history will be considered. For example, a nondescript whale was named Houdini because he escaped from three different entanglements.

Name Voting: After a three-week nomination period, the nomination site will be closed and a voting site opened. Because researchers taking pictures of right whales 1) have the best idea of what is needed to tell them apart in the field, 2) will actually be using and remembering the names, and 3) are investing a lot of hours with these animals, those people will be the ones to vote on names. Researchers who have contributed 50 sightings or more a year will be sent a link to the voting site, and the name with the simple majority of votes will win. This voting system may evolve over time depending on how well it works and how much time it takes to set up and manage. If there is a tie, we will likely send out another email to see if the tie can be broken.

The Catalog curators will have the option to challenge a name if it is unacceptable for some reason (either the feature that the name is based on will not be helpful for remembering it in the field or the name is considered potentially offensive or demeaning. For example, “News flash – the right whale “Booger” has been re-sighted entangled....”). The process of how best to resolve any potential disagreement about a name will have to be discussed.

Other Exceptions: This year, the NEAq started allowing school groups to propose a name for a whale with a very distinctive mark. This is a great outreach tool that can get children excited about right whales. If there are other sponsorship programs or educational efforts that would like this opportunity, let us know. We would still be able to veto unacceptable suggestions (hopefully this won’t happen too often), so it has to be made clear that they are getting a chance to *propose* names.

As this is the first attempt at group right whale naming, the first year or two should be considered a trial process. It is likely to evolve as we all learn what works and doesn’t work. Many different opinions were expressed in developing this draft plan (both within

NEAq and from contributors) and it is impossible to incorporate all points of view. For example, the plan to do the nominating and voting on-line was chosen after much discussion. Although less fun, it has the advantage of taking less time at the Consortium, leveling the playing field (not having one particularly strong voice dominate the process), and setting the stage for naming during non-Consortium meeting times.

The winning names will be announced at the Consortium meeting and at that time we can discuss how it worked this year.

Stellwagen Bank Draft Management Plan Public Comment Period Extended

NOAA's Office of National Marine Sanctuaries has extended the period for public comment on the draft management plan and draft environmental assessment for Gerry E. Studds Stellwagen Bank National Marine Sanctuary to October 3. The original 90-day public comment period, during which eight public hearings were held throughout New England, was scheduled to end August 4. Comments on the draft management plan and draft environmental assessment will now be considered if received on or before October 3, and may be submitted by mail, emailed to sbplan@noaa.gov, or faxed to 781-545-8036.

The draft plan offers a detailed look at the current state of the Stellwagen Bank National Marine Sanctuary and focuses on key issues affecting the sanctuary, including ecosystem-based sanctuary management, ecosystem alteration, wildlife disturbance, vessel traffic and its potential threat to marine mammals, water quality and invasive species. The plan also addresses important sanctuary programs such as maritime heritage preservation, conservation science, enforcement, interagency cooperation, public outreach and education, and infrastructure development.

For a copy of the draft management plan and draft environmental assessment, contact the Management Plan Review Coordinator, Stellwagen Bank National Marine Sanctuary, 175 Edward Foster Rd., Scituate, MA 02066. Copies can also be downloaded from the sanctuary Web site at <http://stellwagen.noaa.gov>.

LNG Terminal off Gloucester Rewards Critics

Construction of a second liquefied natural gas (LNG) terminal ten miles off Gloucester, Massachusetts, began in mid-July, accompanied by some substantial payments to agencies and organizations that have been critical of the project. According to Richard Gaines of the *Gloucester Times*, a total of \$23.5 million will be used to mitigate for the impacts of the terminal and its operation. The Gloucester Fishing Community Preservation Fund, which originally objected to the LNG facility, will get \$6.3 million. Also receiving mitigation funding are the Massachusetts Lobstermen's Association,

which is slated for \$1.7 million; the Island Alliance, \$5.6 million; the Gulf of Maine Ocean Observing System, \$600,000; the Massachusetts state office of fishing and boating access, \$350,000; the Peabody Essex Museum, \$150,000; the New England Aquarium, \$750,000; the MA state Office of Coastal Zone Management, \$1.5 million; the Provincetown Center for Coastal Studies, \$1 million, the MA Division of Marine Fisheries, \$1.4 million; the state's Right Whale Conservation Program, \$750,000; and the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, \$3.25 million.

Atlantic Large Whale Take Reduction Team 2008 Meeting Summary Available

The Atlantic Large Whale Take Reduction Team (ALWTRT) met April 28-May 1, in Baltimore, MD. This meeting was open to the public. A key-outcomes memorandum of the meeting is available on the ALWTRP website (<http://www.nero.noaa.gov/whaletrp/>) under "What's New." For further information on this meeting, please contact your ALWTRT member ([go to "Take Reduction Team" on the ALWTRP website](#)) or the ALWTRP Coordinator Diane Borggaard (978-281-9300 ext. 6503 or Diane.Borggaard@noaa.gov).

SE Implementation Team Spring 2008 Meeting Summary Available

The Final Meeting Summary of the Southeast U.S. Right Whale Recovery Plan Implementation Team (SEIT) meeting on May 6 is available from Tom Pitchford, SEIT co-chair, at Tom_Pitchford@MyFWC.com. Topics discussed at the meeting and included in the Final Summary are:

- Meeting Purpose
- Mid-Atlantic Survey Update
- South Carolina/ Northern Georgia Survey Update
- Early Warning System (EWS) Surveys
- Volunteer Sighting Network
- Marineland Right Whale Project and Marine Resource Council Whale/Vessel Interactions)
- Two Southeast Right Whale Calf Mortalities and Necropsies
- Biopsy Sampling
- Disentanglement Network: Updates and Southeast Plans
- Passive Acoustic Monitoring Results
- Preliminary Analysis of Recommended Lanes and Other Automatic Identification System (AIS) Updates
- Issuing EWS Alerts to Mariners: Accomplishments and Challenges
- Southeast Regional Office Update

Proposed Mayport-Area Navy Initiatives
Ocean Dredged Material Disposal Sites Site Locations
Automated Marine Species Detection and Classification for Navy Operations
Can California Smog Benefit North Atlantic Right Whales: The Ports of Los Angeles and Ports of Long Beach Emissions Reduction Efforts
AIS and Right Whale Alerts: A New Messaging Tool?
Focus Group Discussions
Passive Acoustic Monitoring Subcommittee
Updates on Education/Outreach Strategy

The next meeting of the SEIT will be Thursday, October 23, at the Environmental Education Center, Guana Tolomato Matanzas National Estuarine Research Reserve, Ponta Vedra, Florida. For information, contact SEIT co-chair Leslie Ward at Leslie.Ward@MyFWC.com

Workshop: Identifying and Assessing Technologies to Reduce Ship Strikes of Large Whales

NOAA/NMFS convened a workshop in Providence, Rhode Island, July 8-10, 2008 to assess technologies that may reduce ship strikes on whales. The goals of the workshop were a) identify existing or emerging technologies that might be useful in reducing ship strikes, b) assess the feasibility of each in reducing ship strikes, and c) identify R&D and timelines needed to make a given technology useful in reducing the threat. The expected products are a) an update on a 2002 NMFS summary paper on technologies, b) an identification of emerging technologies based on input from inventors or companies with candidate technologies, and c) an evaluation and ranking of technologies considering R&D needs, costs, and overall feasibility. The meeting was attended by about three dozen invited participants, representing technology, biology, shipping, and government interests. A report is in preparation.

GEAR Marking Research Grants Awarded

NOAA's National Marine Fisheries Service and the International Fund for Animal Welfare (IFAW) have partnered to support two research projects aimed at new technologies for gathering data to help understand when, where and how entanglements happen. The Provincetown Center for Coastal Studies (PCCS) and the University of New Hampshire (UNH) have each received grants for the work. With its \$22,000 grant, the PCCS will develop coded wire tags that would be embedded into fishing line used on gear known to entangle whales, primarily pot/trap and sink gillnet. The work will be carried out in cooperation with the Massachusetts Division of Marine Fisheries, and Northwest Marine Technologies.

The UNH Zoology Department was awarded \$48,000 to develop a system for remote, real-time tracking of fishing gear location. The system would use a radio frequency

identification scheme and global positioning system. The UNH team will partner with Blue Water Concepts of Maine to develop this innovative technology. For further information, see IFAW's press release at:

<http://www.ifaw.org/ifaw/general/default.aspx?oid=231428>

NOAA Seeks Research Proposals For 2009 Saltonstall-Kennedy Grant Program Funding

NOAA's National Marine Fisheries Service is now accepting proposals for funding under the Saltonstall-Kennedy Grant Program, which provides federal support for fisheries research and development projects on U.S. commercial and recreational fisheries. Applications are due October 1, 2008.

Research priorities for 2009 include mitigating risks posed to North Atlantic right whales by entanglement in fishing gear, aquaculture development, reducing or eliminating problems that limit the use of harvested resources owing to disease, human health hazard or other quality problems, improving what we know about the socioeconomics of fishing, and conservation engineering projects to reduce or eliminate bycatch or harmful interactions between fishing operations and protected species.

Funding for potential projects depends upon the availability of fiscal year 2009 appropriations. Grants will be awarded competitively.

For complete details on how to apply, please visit the Grants Online website at <http://www.grants.gov>.

- Under "Quick Links" for applicants (right side of page) click on "Grant Search."
- Search for Funding Opportunity Number NMFS-FHQ-2009-2001464

The objective of the Saltonstall-Kennedy Grant Program is to address the needs of fishing communities in optimizing economic benefits within the context of rebuilding and maintaining sustainable fisheries. Please go to http://www.nefsc.noaa.gov/press_release/2008/News/nr0819/index.html, to view NOAA Fisheries Service's full news release on this funding opportunity.

Smithsonian's Sant Ocean Hall Features Life-size Right Whale Model

The Smithsonian Institution's National Museum of Natural History (NMNH) in Washington, DC, will open the Sant Ocean Hall exhibition to the public on September 27. According to the NMNH web site (www.nmnh.si.edu), the Ocean Hall "presents the global ocean from a cross-disciplinary perspective, demonstrating how the ocean is intrinsically connected to other global systems and to our daily lives." Dominating the

exhibit is a full-scale model of a North Atlantic right whale – specifically *Phoenix*, a 45-foot long female. The whale is “the Ocean Hall’s ambassador, linking all the major themes of the Hall and serving as a dramatic central icon.” A number of subscribers to *Right Whale News* were involved in insuring the scientific accuracy of the diving and feeding model, including Marilyn Marx and Amy Knowlton of the New England Aquarium, Michael Moore of the Woods Hole Oceanographic Institution, Bill McLellan of the University of North Carolina – Wilmington, and Charley Potter and Jim Mead of the NMNH.

***Leviathan* Now Out in Paperback**

Leviathan: The History of Whaling in America by Eric Jay Dolin is now out in paperback. Published by Norton and available for \$15.95, the book offers a fascinating history of U.S. whaling for right whales, sperm whales and other species over more than two hundred years. A review of *Leviathan* by Michael Dyer of the New Bedford Whaling Museum may be found in the February 2008 issue of *Right Whale News*. Randall Reeves provided another review in *Marine Mammal Science* 24(1): 248-250.

Scientific Literature and Reports

Bannister, J. 2008. Great Whales. CSIRO Publishing, Collingwood, Australia. x + 142 pp.

Baumgartner, M.F., S.M. Van Parijs, F.W. Wenzel, C.J. Trambly, H.C. Esch and A.M. Warde. 2008. Low frequency vocalizations attributed to sei whales (*Balaenoptera borealis*). *Journal of the Acoustical Society of America* 124(2): 1339-1349.

Bonar, S.A. 2007. The conservation professional’s guide to working with people. Island Press, Washington, DC. 199 pp.

Elvin, S.S. and C.T. Taggart. 2007. Right whales and vessels in Canadian waters. *Marine Policy* 32(3): 379-386.

Josephson, E., T.D. Smith and R.R. Reeves. 2008. Historical distribution of right whales in the North Pacific. *Fish and Fisheries* 9(2): 155-168.

Moore, S.E. 2008. Marine mammals as ecosystem sentinels. *Journal of Mammalogy* 89(3): 534-540.

Nichols, O.C., R.D. Kenney and M.W. Brown. 2008. Spatial and temporal distribution of North Atlantic right whales (*Eubalaena glacialis*) in Cape Cod Bay and implications for management. *Fishery Bulletin* 106(3): 270-280.

NOAA National Marine Fisheries Service. 2008. Final Environmental Impact Statement to implement vessel operational measures to reduce ship strikes to North Atlantic right whales. 850 pp. Available at: <http://www.nmfs.noaa.gov/pr/shipstrike/>.

Nicol, S., A. Worby and R. Leaper. 2008. Changes in the Antarctic sea ice ecosystem: Potential effects on krill and baleen whales. *Marine and Freshwater Research* 59(5): 361-382.

O'Shea, T.J., and D.K. Odell. 2008. Large-scale marine ecosystem change and the conservation of marine mammals. *Journal of Mammalogy* 89(3): 529-533.

Pereira, C.S., S.D. Amorim, A.F.M. Santos, S. Siciliano, I.M.B. Moreno, P.H. Ott and D.P. Rodrigues. 2007. *Vibro* sp. isolated from marine mammals captured in coastal regions from southwestern to southern Brazil. *Pesquisa Veterinaria Brasileira* 27(2): 81-83.

Read, A.J. 2008. The looming crisis: Interactions between marine mammals and fisheries. *Journal of Mammalogy* 89(3): 541-548.

Tyack, P.L. 2008. Implications for marine mammals of large-scale changes in the marine acoustic environment. *Journal of Mammalogy* 89(3): 549-558.

Calendar

September 12: Abstracts for papers to be presented at the Nov. 5-6 North Atlantic Right Whale Consortium meeting in New Bedford are due. Send to the meeting website at: <http://www.rightwhaleweb.org> . Presenters will be notified no later than September 30.

September 15: Deadline for comment on the Proposed Rule to change the Endangered Species Act Section 7 consultation process. See article starting on page 3 for details.

September 29: Comment period ends on the Final EIS evaluating vessel operational measures to reduce ship strikes to right whales. See article starting on page 1 for details.

October 1: Applications are due for funding under the Saltonstall-Kennedy Grant Program, which provides federal support for fisheries research and development projects on U.S. commercial and recreational fisheries. See article starting on page 12 for details.

October 3: Deadline for public comment on the draft management plan and draft environmental assessment for the Gerry E. Studds Stellwagen Bank National Marine Sanctuary. See article on page 9 for details.

October 17: Last day to register at reduced rates for the Nov. 5-6 North Atlantic Right Whale Consortium meeting in New Bedford. See article starting on page 5 for details.

October 23: Southeast U.S. Right Whale Recovery Plan Implementation Team (SEIT) meeting at the Environmental Education Center, Guana Tolomato Matanzas National Estuarine Research Reserve, Ponta Vedra, Florida. For information, contact SEIT co-chair Leslie Ward at Leslie.Ward@MyFWC.com

October 30: Registration closes for the Nov. 5-6 North Atlantic Right Whale Consortium meeting in New Bedford.

November 5-6: North Atlantic Right Whale Consortium annual meeting. New Bedford Whaling Museum, New Bedford, Massachusetts. See article on page 5 for details. For further information, contact Heather Pettis, the Consortium Secretary, at hpettis@neaq.org

October 12-16, 2009: 18th Biennial Conference on the Biology of Marine Mammals sponsored by the Society of Marine Mammalogy, to be held in Quebec City, Canada. For details, go to www.marinemammalogy.org

2011: 19th Biennial Conference on the Biology of Marine Mammals sponsored by the Society of Marine Mammalogy, to be held in Tampa, Florida. For details, go to www.marinemammalogy.org

Right Whale News

Right Whale News is a publication of the Georgia Environmental Policy Institute. The editor is Hans Neuhauser; the Associate Editor is Jim Hain. The editorial board consists of Bill Brooks, Moe Brown, Scott Kraus and Sigrid Sanders.

The Georgia Environmental Policy Institute underwrites the costs of *Right Whale News*. Thanks to the Institute's supporters, *Right Whale News* is published quarterly and is distributed electronically free of charge.

Back issues of *Right Whale News* published between 1994 and 2008 are available on request from the Editor (see below).

Citing *Right Whale News*: The requested format for citations from *Right Whale News* is: Right Whale News. [year]. Volume/number/page(s). Publication of the Georgia Environmental Policy Institute, 380 Meigs Street, Athens, GA 30601, USA. [Month and year of issue].

To subscribe to *Right Whale News* or to submit news, articles or commentary for publication, please contact the editor, Hans Neuhauser, at the Georgia Environmental Policy Institute, 380 Meigs Street, Athens, Georgia 30601 USA. Telephone 706-546-7507. Fax 706-613-7775. E-mail: hansneuhauser@bellsouth.net

