

RIGHT WHALE NEWS

Volume 4, Number 2 May, 1997

BEN BLAYLOCK 1947 - 1996

Dr. Robert A. Ben Blaylock III passed away on December 31, 1996, after being diagnosed with esophageal cancer a year earlier. Before his retirement, Ben worked as a biologist for the marine mammal research program at the National Marine Fisheries Services Southeast Fisheries Science Center in Miami, Florida.

Ben was born in Waco, Texas, on September 15, 1947. He served in the Navy for four years and rose to the rank of Ensign. He graduated from Christopher Newport College and received his masters degree from William and Mary College; he received his Ph.D from the Virginia Institute of Marine Science in 1989. He then went to work for the NMFS in Miami.

Bens contributions to marine mammal science and management were numerous. He participated in marine mammal census operations and the work of the Southeast Marine Mammal Stranding Network including editing the networks newsletter, Strandings. He served as a charter member of the Southeastern U. S. Implementation Team for the Recovery of the Northern Right Whale, starting in 1994. During that time, he also served as the NMFS Contracting Officers Technical Representative, supervising grants for right whale and other studies. He authored a number of technical bulletins and was the senior author of the U.S. Atlantic and Gulf of Mexico Marine Mammal Stock Assessment (1995) which defined the northern right whales stock, range, population size, potential biological removal (PBR) and status. This stock assessment and PBR served as the basis for much of the work of the Large Whale Take Reduction Team and the NMFS Take Reduction Plans. Ben and his contributions to marine mammal biology will be remembered.

500 YARD MINIMUM APPROACH RULE GOES INTO EFFECT TO PROTECT RIGHT WHALES

On February 11, the National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) announced the implementation of a 500-yard protection zone around right whales to reduce the chance that human activity would disturb or alter the whales behavior.

The NMFS issued an Interim Final Rule to restrict approaches within 500 yards (460 meters) of a right whale, whether by vessel, aircraft or other means, in an attempt to reduce the current level of disturbance and the potential for vessel interaction and injury. The rule also requires avoidance measures if the vessel or aircraft is within the 500-yard restricted area. Generally, vessels are required to immediately depart from the area at a slow, safe speed in a direction away from the whale.

There are a number of exceptions to the 500-yard rule including emergency situations, for certain authorized aircraft operations, for certain disentanglement and rescue efforts, and for a vessel restricted in its ability to maneuver and unable to comply with the right whale avoidance measures.

The Interim Final Rule was published in the Federal Register on February 13, 1997 (Vol. 62, no. 30,

pages 6729 - 6738). The effective date for the regulation was March 17, 1997. The interim nature of the rule allows for coastal states to review the rule to ensure that it will be consistent with their approved Coastal Zone Management Programs. NMFS will also be consulting with other Federal agencies regarding the regulatory definition of territorial sea. For a copy of the rule, contact Margot Bohan at NMFS, tel. 301-713-2322.

SECOND-HIGHEST NUMBER OF CALVES SEEN OFF GA-FL THIS SEASON

During the 1996-1997 calving season, observers with the New England Aquarium, the Georgia Department of Natural Resources, the Florida Department of Environmental Protection and other groups recorded eighteen right whale calves on the Georgia-Florida calving ground. While the number of calves seen during the 1996-97 season did not reach the record high of 21 seen during the 1995-96 season, the number was the second-highest recorded since 1980. The third highest was 17 calves during the 1990-91 season. In addition to the 18 cow/calf pairs, observers saw 18 additional non-calving right whales.

In spite of the high number of calves produced this season, there is a disturbing trend: the increasing interval between moms calving this season and their previous calving event. Nine cows calved for the first time this season and nine more were repeat moms. These nine repeat moms represent only about 25% of the cows available to calve this season (available cows = cows over 10 years old who have not calved during the last two years).

Between 1980 and 1997, observers have seen a total of 205 calves on the calving ground. The numbers range from 5 to 21 new calves per season with an average of 11.39 per season (data from Scott Kraus, New England Aquarium).

Only one death was recorded during the 1996-97 season, the neonate at Flagler Beach (reported in Right Whale News, 4 (1): 7). This calf is not included in the 18 calves number above. This single death compares with a record high of six deaths last season and an 18-year average of 1.94 deaths per year (S. Kraus data).

NOTES FROM THE CALVING GROUND

Editors note: the following are excerpts from the reports prepared by Lisa Conger and Chris Slay, leaders of the New England Aquariums Early Warning System team who flew the southeast coast from December 5 through March 31 (weather permitting) looking for right whales and ships and other phenomena.

(February 7, 1997) Observer Laura Morse relates this report on 01/31-97: one mother/calf pair ...at 1736 hours. The container ship MarCaribe was heading inbound to Jacksonville... pair in ships path. Called vessel on channel 16, they responded, switched to channel 10. I alerted them to whales position. They responded. Said they were going to starboard to give the whales a wide berth. They did this... very cooperative. Notified Jacksonville ship pilots. Video taken. This is encouraging. It seems obvious that the ships crew immediately understood the nature of the radio call. They had probably been educated by the Jacksonville pilots (St. Johns Bar Pilots) about the presence of whales reported earlier in the day. This is the essence of the Early Warning System.

(February 14, 1997) We have a few of our moms positively identified, thanks to Amy Knowlton at right whale central in Boston....#1243 was born in 1982 and this is her second known calf. Her first calf was born here in 1991... #1004 known as Stumpy, due to her missing right fluke tip. Many of you may

remember Stumpy from the 1994 calving season (see Right Whale News 1 (1): 2). Her calf that year got caught up in some very bad luck. After seeing it numerous times in a very healthy state, breaching and frolicking all around mom, we sighted them one afternoon when it was very obvious that the calf had been fatally injured. Its flukes were flaccid pieces of flesh, undulating uselessly in the water as it tried to swim. They were later observed closely from a tug by Chris Slay and Marilyn Marx, and appeared to have been cut somehow, very deeply where they join the tail stock. We don't expect that the calf survived. Stumpy is back in baby making mode, this year's calf being her fourth.

(February 21, 1997) We've had another sparse whale week around here... However, we do know from FL-DEP and GA-DNR that there are moms spread out from offshore of St. Catherine's Island to the north down to offshore of Ft. Pierce to the south; that's about a 250 nautical mile range!

(March 7, 1997) Another calving season is coming to a close. There'll be stragglers but it looks like most of our moms slipped out of the area under the cover of fog and wind at the end of February. This is no great surprise. Most right whale cows decide to take their calves home in late February, often covering 20 - 30 nautical miles a day until they reach Cape Cod... When the water temperature climbs towards 60 F the whales get restless for cooler water and other species begin to move inshore, particularly sea turtles. It's really quite striking how pivotal that 60 mark seems to be. We hit that mark during the middle of the week (March 2) and our sightings on 03/04 and 03/05 reflect the transition from winter to spring. On those two days we saw 754 turtles, mostly loggerheads, 863 bottlenose dolphins, and 520 cownose rays... We've also recorded over 20,000 sharks... just in time for spring break.

(March 31, 1997) The Early Warning System of communications that evolved this year reached an exciting new level. The incredible efforts from the folks at FACS/FACJAX (U.S. Navy), FL-DEP, GA-DNR, NAVTEX (U.S. Coast Guard) and the harbor pilots teamed up with all of the aerial surveys, resulted in more sighting information received and dispersed than ever before. Sightings came from not only the aerial survey teams, but from the Navy and Coast Guard fleets as well as commercial fishing vessels, recreational boaters, beach walkers, people sitting on condo porches and private aircraft. The conservation effort here in the calving grounds has never been so extensive.

Thanks to our great pilots, a superb crew of observers and some good fortune, we've had a very successful survey season. It takes a great deal of dedication and flexibility to create the cohesive group that is necessary for these surveys. We would like to thank all of the observers throughout the season, Liz Pomfret, Rebecca Clarke, Laura Morse, Jennifer Beaudin, Carolyn Miller, Jennifer Gatzke and Peter Duley for a never ending dedication to a job well done. Without them, we would have an impossible task.

SHORT STAY IN CAPE COD BAY

This year, right whales arrived earlier than usual in Cape Cod Bay; they also appear to have left earlier than usual. The normal peak season of March 15 - April 15 may have been affected by an unusually large bloom of *Phaeocystis*, a known nuisance algae which forms large gelatinous colonies. The outbreak of the algae bloom was documented by the Center for Coastal Studies using an Optical Plankton Counter. The counter was acquired with funds provided by the Massachusetts Environmental Trust as part of their Endangered Species Grants. The unusually early apparent departure of the right whales and the lack of density of whales raises important issues regarding the physical and biological processes occurring in Cape Cod Bay. Discussions on this matter between the Center and the Woods Hole Oceanographic Institution have led to an agreement that it would be beneficial to convene a workshop this fall to discuss issues relating to parameters that impact whale density in Cape Cod Bay.

EARLY WARNING NETWORK CREATED FOR MARINERS ON LOCATION OF MIGRATING RIGHT WHALES OFF MASSACHUSETTS

Sea-going vessels off Massachusetts can now get updates on when and where highly endangered northern right whales are spotted by whale researchers or the U.S. Coast Guard (USCG). This early warning network is intended to reduce the chance of collisions between vessels and the whales, a significant cause of death for the whales off the U.S. East Coast. The early warning network makes sighting information available through marine radio announcements, automated fax and the Internet.

Sources of information for the network include weekly survey flights by USCG helicopters, mammal lookouts posted during USCG vessel operations and from USCG pilots, vessel-based sightings by the Center for Coastal Studies during their studies of feeding and behavior of right whales in Cape Cod Bay and when they are responding to reports of whale entanglements, and research and other vessels operated by the National Marine Fisheries Service and the Commonwealth of Massachusetts.

Sightings from these sources are reported to the NMFS Northeast Fisheries Science Center in Woods Hole, Massachusetts. A coordinator at the Center compiles the information and creates boxes that contain right whale sightings. This information is then sent to all cooperating partners for re-broadcast through their established communications channels. For instance, NOAA Weather Radio broadcasts alerts and updates through its VHS channel. The NMFS Inquiry Line (508-281-9278) announces updates and transmit location maps through its fax-on-demand system. The USCG broadcasts updates through its Notice to Mariners (VHF and single sideband) and sends telex updates to ships through NAVTEX, its international communications system. Location information is also posted on the website for the Massachusetts Executive Office of Environmental Affairs.

The early warning network is coordinated by the National Marine Fisheries Service; cooperating agencies include NOAA Weather Radio, Stellwagen Bank National Marine Sanctuary, the United States Coast Guard - District 1, the Commonwealth of Massachusetts Executive Office of Environmental Affairs, the Center for Coastal Studies and the New England Division of the U. S. Army Corps of Engineers. The network started operations on January 15.

SHIPPING/RIGHT WHALE WORKSHOP

On April 17th and 18th, the New England Aquarium, with support from the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation, Exxon Corporation, Marine Mammal Commission and the National Marine Fisheries Service, held a two day workshop to address the issue of ship/right whale collisions. These collisions are hindering the ability of this population to recover after centuries of whaling activities focussed on this species. The purpose of convening this workshop was to bring together all the interested parties within the maritime community, including federal and state agencies that are actively involved with either shipping activity or the marine environment, shipping companies, port authorities, conservation groups and research organizations to discuss the need for developing comprehensive and integrated approaches to this issue that are effective.

Approximately 70 people attended the workshop and it was considered a great success. The workshop afforded the opportunity for representatives from the various groups to share their knowledge relating to this issue. The topics included: status of the right whale population, causes of right whale mortality and their relation to ship channels and ship traffic levels, U.S. and Canadian legislation to protect right whales, efforts already underway to protect right whales from shipping, and how the shipping industry operates. Presentations were also made regarding strategies to further reduce the impacts of shipping including potential technological solutions and potential modification of ship traffic routes.

On Day 2, the group was divided into three working groups: (1) potential technological solutions, (2) modifications of ship traffic and (3) education. Each of these groups discussed in detail the approaches that could be taken to reduce the incidence of ship/right whale interactions while considering the operational aspects of the shipping industry and the potential economic impacts any measures would have on their activities.

The general tenor of the workshop was extremely positive. The shipping industry representatives were interested and concerned about the problem and will make concerted efforts to educate their ship captains about this issue. Broadening the breadth and scope of knowledge within the maritime community about this issue was considered essential for working towards solutions that would be effective and workable within the industry.

The proceedings of the workshop will be compiled and summarized over the next three months. Anyone interested in receiving these proceedings should call Debie Meck at the New England Aquarium, telephone 617-973-0249.

*Amy Knowlton
Right Whale Research
New England Aquarium*

LARGE WHALE TAKE REDUCTION TEAM FAILS TO REACH CONSENSUS ON PLAN

After six intense and arduous meetings over a period of five months, the participants in the Large Whale Take Reduction Team failed to reach consensus on a plan to reduce the take of right whales and three other species of large whales by four U.S. fisheries (lobster gear, the New England sink gillnets, the mid-Atlantic coastal gillnet fishery and the shark net fishery in the southeast). Agreement was reached on a number of components of the plan but a comprehensive plan could not be agreed to within the time allowed. A draft plan reflecting the status of discussions was submitted to the National Marine Fisheries Service on February 3, 1997. Copies may be obtained from the NMFS: contact Kim Thounhurst at 508-281-9368.

NMFS PROPOSES LARGE WHALE TAKE REDUCTION PLAN

As a result of the failure of the Large Whale Take Reduction Team to reach a consensus on a Large Whale Take Reduction Plan (see previous article), the National Marine Fisheries Service had to prepare their own draft Plan. The NMFS used the Teams report in developing its draft.

The NMFS estimated that each year, a minimum of 1.2 right whales are seriously injured or killed by entanglement in U.S. fishing gear. Of those entangled whales, lobster gear is estimated to have entangled an annual average of 0.4 whales over the last five years. The Southeastern U.S. drift gillnet fishery for sharks is assumed to have entangled an annual average of 0.2 whales over the same period. To reduce the take of right whales down to a Potential Biological Removal (PBR) of 0.4, the probability of entanglement by all U.S. fisheries must be reduced by more than 67%.

The draft Plan proposes to reduce the take of large whales by the four fisheries by: (1) restricting the setting of gear during certain seasons, times and areas in the northern right whales critical habitats off Massachusetts and Georgia-Florida and possibly at Jeffreys Ledge and Stellwagen Bank areas; (2) requiring gear modifications such as using break-away buoys, weak vertical lines or sinking line, designed to allow whales to break through encountered gear or reduce the severity of entanglement; (3) improving the response and assistance to entangled large whales; and (4) holding skipper workshops to increase awareness of fishing practices, responsibilities for marine mammals and gear technology for

take reduction.

The draft Plan was published in the April 7th edition of the Federal Register (Volume 62, number 66, pages 16519 - 16538). Comments are due by no later than May 15 to P. Michael Payne, Chief, Marine Mammal Division, Office of Protected Resources, NMFS, 1315 East-West Highway, Silver Spring, MD 20910.

In a related matter, the Atlantic Offshore Cetaceans Take Reduction Team reached consensus on their Plan and submitted it to the NMFS on November 25, 1996. The NMFS is expected to publish the proposed plan in the Federal Register shortly.

THE FURTHER NORTH YOU GO, THE ANGRIER THEY GET

The NMFS held eleven public hearings on their proposed Large Whale Take Reduction Plan. The hearings were held in Norfolk, Virginia, Machias, Maine, and nine locations in between. U.S. Senator Olympia Snowe, chair of the Senates Oceans and Fisheries Subcommittee, also held a hearing on the issue in Maine. Observers noted that the participants grew more numerous and angrier the further north the meetings were held. Reflecting the growing political nature of the issue, both Maines Governor Angus King and Congressional Delegation have expressed skepticism about the proposed rules. The greatest concern appears to be the cost to the lobster fishermen, variously estimated at between \$40 and \$80 million, and the alleged negligible benefit of the gear modifications in reducing right whale entanglement.

The draft Plan is expected to change significantly as a result of the public comment.

NMFS ISSUES EMERGENCY RESTRICTIONS ON LOBSTER GEAR IN RIGHT WHALE CRITICAL HABITAT

In December, 1996, the National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) found that the current operation of the lobster fishery would jeopardize the existence of right whales unless changes were made in either the fishing practices or the gear used. NMFS recommended that right whale critical habitat off Massachusetts be closed to unrestricted lobster pot fishing gear until gear modifications are developed that significantly reduce the risk of entanglement of whales.

An emergency rule was published in the April 4th Federal Register restricting the Federal portion of Cape Cod Bay right whale critical habitat to certain types of gear approved by NMFS from April 1 until May 15 and closes the entire Great South Channel right whale critical habitat to lobster pot fishing from April 1 to June 30.

SOUTHEAST U.S. IMPLEMENTATION TEAM MEETING HIGHLIGHTS

Editors note: The Southeastern U.S. Implementation Team for the Recovery of the Northern Right Whale met on May 1 and 2, 1997, in Brunswick, Georgia. Here are some highlights of the meeting. Minutes from the meeting will be available in the near future from the Team chairman, Mike Harris. For a copy, contact him at 912-264-7218.

Right whales vocalizing at night: Commander Dale Liechty of the Office of Naval Research reported on the preliminary results of the U.S. Navys acoustics array experiment off Jacksonville, Florida (described in Right Whale News 4(1): 9-10.) Among the findings: at least some right whales vocalize while on the

calving ground and the vast majority of the vocalizations take place at night, between 2200 and 0400 hours. The fixed array of 20 hydrophones could detect right whales from up to 15 1/2 miles away and could locate them with an accuracy of up to 100 feet. The analyses are expected to be completed by this summer. In the meantime, for more information, check out the Office of Naval Research's home page at: <http://www.onr.navy.mil>

Most right whales observed west of the 10 fathom curve and the 20 degree Celsius line: Several presenters at the team meeting noted that most right whale observations appeared to be concentrated between the shoreline and the ten fathom line and in water temperatures that were 20 degrees Celsius or colder. During the calving season, these water temperatures are generally found to the west of the Gulf Stream and from northern waters south to below Cape Canaveral. The 20 degrees should be regarded as a working hypothesis that requires more testing; if it proves to be a predictable limit, it could be very helpful in simplifying right whale management in southeastern waters.

Right whale population review underscores need to continue and improve conservation measures: Dr. Phil Clapham reported on the results of a review that he and Dr. Robert Brownell had conducted on the status of northern right whales. Their estimates: in the Eastern North Pacific, there are probably fewer than 50 animals; the Western North Pacific population numbers in the low hundreds. The Eastern North Atlantic population is in the tens of animals, if that. The Western North Atlantic population numbers about 300. Dr. Clapham noted that conservation biologists have identified a number of factors which can make endangered species more vulnerable to extinction. These include (1) only one or a few populations, (2) small population size, (3) large home range, (4) large body size, (5) low rate of increase, (6) migrates between different habitats, (7) little genetic diversity, (8) specialized niche requirements and (9) forms temporary or permanent aggregations. Because all of these factors apply to the northern right whale, Dr. Clapham recommended that we need to continue to help the right whale, doing what were doing now and more.

Seawolf shock trials delayed: Jerry Wallmeyer reported that a delay in the production of the U.S. Navy's Seawolf submarine will also mean a delay in the shock testing into a 1998-99 time frame. This will enable the Navy to collect an additional 18 months of biological data before proceeding. The five shock tests will take place one week apart sometime between May and October, thus avoiding the right whale calving season. The Draft Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) on the tests was published in June, 1996 and a Biological Opinion issued in December, 1996. The Final EIS is anticipated to be released this summer.

Uniform dates for future team meetings: The Team decided to meet twice a year, on regularly scheduled days: the fourth Thursday and Friday of October and the first Thursday and Friday in May. The next team meeting is scheduled for October 23 and 24, 1997. The tentative location will be the Naval Submarine Base at Kings Bay, Georgia. The following meeting will be on May 7 - 8, 1998, with location to be determined.

SALES OF GEORGIAS GIVE WILDLIFE A CHANCE LICENSE PLATE EXCEEDS EXPECTATIONS

The sale of Georgias Give Wildlife a Chance license plate has exceeded all expectations. David Waller, Director of the Georgia Department of Natural Resources Wildlife Resources Division, in an April 28th meeting with members of the Georgia Environmental Council, explained that the Division originally expected to sell about 100,000 plates but the enthusiastic response from Georgia motorists has caused them to revise the estimate upwards to about 400,000 plates. With \$14 coming to the Division from each plate sold, an infusion of up to \$5.6 million is expected over the next five years for non-game programs including work by Mike Harris, Barb Zoodsma and others on behalf of the right whale. This funding will provide stability for Georgias non-game programs which in the past, have been funded from

uncertain sources at about \$1.19 million per year.

MARINE MAMMAL COMMISSIONS 1996 ANNUAL REPORT REFLECTS BUSY YEAR FOR RIGHT WHALES

The Marine Mammal Commission recently released its Annual Report to Congress, 1996. This latest edition contains more than the usual number of pages devoted to right whales, reflecting the increase in attention being paid to this critically-endangered species. The 21 pages in the 1996 Annual Report compares with seven pages in the 1995 Annual Report. Space does not permit a summary of the contents but a listing of the sub-headings is illustrative of the scope of the report. These are: Right whale mortalities and injuries in 1996, Actions taken by the Navy during the 1995-1996 right whale calving season, Actions by the Navy to prepare for the 1996-1997 right whale calving season, Actions taken by the Coast Guard to protect right whales, Southeast U.S. Implementation Team for the Recovery of Right Whales, New England Whale Recovery Plan Implementation Team, Assessments of strategies to mitigate ship collisions with right whales, Regulations on approaches to right whales, Interactions between northern right whales and fisheries, Take reduction teams, Other fishery-related actions by the National Marine Fisheries Service, Right whale litigation and the Marine Mammal Commission northern right whale review.

To obtain a copy of the MMC Annual Report, contact the Marine Mammal Commission at 4340 East-West Highway, Room 905, Bethesda, MD 20814. Telephone 301-504-0087. Fax 301-504-0099.

CANADAS ENDANGERED SPECIES LEGISLATION: BACK TO SQUARE ONE Parliament was to vote to approve the Canadian Endangered Species Protection Act on April 7. The measure was expected to lead to additional protection for right whales in Canadian waters. However, two weeks prior to the vote, some 47 amendments were brought forward for consideration. Representatives of environmental advocacy organizations felt that some of the amendments went too far, giving too much power to the Ministry. Their opposition is credited with preventing the April 7th vote. Now that the national election campaign has gotten underway, progress on the legislation has come to a halt. The Endangered Species Protection Act will have to be reintroduced next year, with the approval process starting at square one - all over again. Thus, Canada is not likely to pass the legislation for another two years.

While this set of events is a disappointment to many, it does not impede the strong and growing rapport between Canadas Department of Fisheries and Oceans (DFO) and the Northeast Regional Office of the NMFS and others in furthering efforts to protect the right whale. Informal agreements have been reached on joint research efforts, communications and participation. For example, Jerry Conway of DFO serves on the New England Whale Implementation Team and was active in the deliberations of the Large Whale Take Reduction Team and the recent New England Aquarium shipping/right whale workshop.

ARE THERE RIGHT WHALES IN THE *EASTERN NORTH ATLANTIC*?

Conventional wisdom (e.g., Brown, 1986, in International Whaling Commission Special Report #10) holds that there is no current evidence to suggest that a viable population of northern right whales exists in the Eastern North Atlantic. Such an assessment may still be true, but some interesting evidence is beginning to accumulate to suggest that if there is no resident population, at least re-population is a possibility. Among the evidence is the 1991 sighting of a right whale off Sardinia in the Mediterranean (Notarbartolo di Sciara, 1996, in Marine Mammal Society Newsletter) and the February 3, 1995, sighting of an adult right whale and calf at 37 07N, 08 58W, 400 m off the coast of Cape St. Vincent, Portugal (Martin and Walker, 1997; see reference below). Then there is METOMPKIN.

Lisa Conger and Chris Slay of the New England Aquarium tell the story: Remember the 9 year-old female sighted last winter in early January entangled in fishing gear shed picked up off the coast of New England? We named her Metompkin after the Coast Guard cutter that took us out on 01/24/96 to attach a satellite tag to the gear she was towing (man it was rough as a cobb that day...) You may also know that we tracked the movement of the tag nearly to the Azores. It quit transmitting on 07/04/96 after circulating for three months in an area of the Atlantic where right whales have been taken during the old days of whaling. There is no conclusive evidence, according to the oceanographers who have reviewed the data, to suggest the tag was or was not still tethered to the whale. There were some pretty interesting daily movements by the tag that seemed unlikely to have been drift. Others say its unlikely such a track is that of a whale. I like to think that on 07/04, Metompkins burden fell away. Independence Day. She did make an appearance in the Bay of Fundy this past August and we were ecstatic to see that shed lost the gear and was swimming free. Whatever the case, this young whale was pregnant during the whole ordeal because she is here (in the southeast) with her first calf.

These observations lead one to ask if we are missing something in the Eastern North Atlantic in the same way that we overlooked the Georgia-Florida calving ground for three-quarters of a century. A 750 kilometer-long survey for Cetaceans off Southern Morocco in early 1997 failed to find right whales (Notarbartolo di Sciara, 1997; see reference below). More effort - and a good bit of luck - is needed to clarify the Eastern North Atlantic situation.

SCIENTIFIC LITERATURE AND REPORTS

Clapham, P. J. and R. L. Brownell. 1996. The potential for interspecific competition in baleen whales. Report of the International Whaling Commission 46: 361-367.

Kostka, B. A. 1997. Right Whale Tracking and Conservation. Skidaway Scenes 13(1): 5 - 7.

Marine Mammal Commission. 1997. Annual Report to Congress, 1996. Released 31 January 1997.

Martin, A. R. and F. J. Walker. 1997. Sighting of a right whale (*Eubalaena glacialis*) with calf off S. E. Portugal. Marine Mammal Science 13 (1): 139 - 140.

NMFS Northeast Regional Office. 1997. Emergency Action to Restrict American Lobster Fishery in Cape Cod Bay and Great South Channel Right Whale Critical Habitat Areas. Draft Environmental Assessment. March 10, 1997.

Notarbartolo di Sciara, G. 1997. Cetacean Survey in Southern Morocco. Marine Mammal Society Newsletter 5 (1): 4.

U.S. Navy. 1996. Shock Testing of the Seawolf Submarine. Draft Environmental Impact Statement.

CALENDAR OF EVENTS

May 15, 1997: Comment period ends on NMFS proposed regulations to reduce take of right whales and three other species by certain U.S. fisheries. See article starting on page 5. For more information, contact Kim Thounhurst, Northeast Regional Office, NMFS, at 508-281-9138.

May 20, 1997: Next meeting of the New England Whale Recovery Plan Implementation Team. The meeting will be held at the offices of the New England Fisheries Management Council, Suntaug Office

Park, 5 Broadway (U.S. RR #1), Saugus, Massachusetts. For more information, call Dr. Sal Testaverde at 508-281-9368.

June 6 - 10, 1997: Society for Conservation Biology Annual Meeting, Victoria, British Columbia. Several sessions on marine mammal issues are planned.

June 30, 1997: Deadline for abstract submission for the World Marine Mammal Science Conference (a combination of the 12th Biennial Conference on the Biology of Marine Mammals and the 12th Annual Conference of the European Cetacean Society) to be held in Monaco, January 20 - 25, 1998.

September 3 - 5, 1997: Bycatch technical workshop sponsored by the Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission. Location to be determined. For information, contact Ms. Robin Peuser at 202-289-6400.

October 23 - 24, 1997: Next meeting of the Southeast U.S. Implementation Team for the Recovery of the Northern Right Whale. Tentative location: the Naval Submarine Base at Kings Bay, Georgia. For more information, contact Barb Zoodsma at 912-264-7218.

RIGHT WHALE NEWS

Right Whale News is the newsletter of the Southeastern United States Implementation Team for the Recovery of the Northern Right Whale. The editor is Hans Neuhauser. The editorial board consists of Bill Brooks, Lorraine Guise, Scott Kraus, Mike Payne and Jerry Wallmeyer.

The press of other duties has resulted in Barb Zoodsma resigning from the editorial board of Right Whale News. She has provided outstanding service to the quality of the newsletter and she will be missed. Thanks, Barb, for your contributions. You will be missed!

To subscribe or submit news or articles for publication, contact the editor, Hans Neuhauser, at the Georgia Environmental Policy Institute, 380 Meigs Street, Athens, GA 30601; telephone 706-546-7507; fax 706-613-7775. If you wish to receive Right Whale News over the Internet, please contact Hans Neuhauser at: gepi@ix.netcom.com

The Massachusetts Environmental Trust has underwritten production costs of this issue of Right Whale News. The Grays Reef National Marine Sanctuary has underwritten the printing and mailing costs. Thanks!