

RIGHT WHALE NEWS

The Newsletter of the Southeastern United States Implementation Team for the Recovery of the Northern Right Whale and the Northeast Implementation Team

Volume 9 Number 4 November 2002

Gear Modifications and Area Management Strategies Are Not Working, Scientists Say

In contrast to the good news of recent right whale calving rates in the Western North Atlantic (31 in 2001; 22 in 2002), this year also appears to be the deadliest on record for entanglements, according to Scott Kraus of the New England Aquarium. "In 2002 we can expect to lose eleven right whales," Kraus notes. "Five are already dead, one from a ship strike, one from injuries or disease due to entanglement, and three from unknown causes. An additional six right whales are entangled severely enough that they are predicted to die without intervention. ... These figures include only the animals we know about. An additional unknown number of animals are likely to die this year beyond the eleven known ones."

The situation has prompted a number of prominent right whale scientists to send a letter prepared by Kraus to Dr. William Hogarth, Administrator of NOAA Fisheries. In part, the letter reads:

"NOAA Fisheries is to be commended for their recent efforts to reduce the deaths of right whales from entanglement in fishing gear. The use of take reduction teams to develop solutions, although a difficult process, has led to some progress on this issue, and has kept fishermen involved. We also appreciate that the agency recognizes the plan is evolving to accommodate new information and technology as it becomes available. The year 2002 was the first year in which all the current thinking on managing the problem was brought to bear, and measures included limited breaking strength lines, weak links at both buoys on vertical lines and on the gillnet head ropes, some neutral and/or sinking ground lines, seasonal area management requirements (SAM's), and dynamic area management (short-term closures or DAM's).

"As you know, the potential biological removal for right whales is zero. A kill of these six animals represents a biological catastrophe for this species, and puts both the fishing industry and NOAA Fisheries at risk of another lawsuit. Since these entanglements occurred during the year in which NOAA Fisheries put its best efforts into managing the problem, it appears that a revised and aggressive approach to the problem is needed.

"Specifically, we would like to make the following recommendations.

1. Fund more enforcement for these measures. Fishermen want this, conservationists want it, and a level playing field is needed to ensure industry wide participation in mitigating measures.
2. Require all trap fisheries throughout the eastern seaboard to use neutral or sinking ground lines between traps. We recognize hard-bottom fishermen may have trouble with this requirement, but right whales cannot afford the risk floating lines present. If needed, further work could be done on modifications to keep ground lines out of the water column while keeping fishermen working on hard bottom.
3. Move quickly to get new and emerging fisheries (e.g., hagfish) under regulatory control re: whale modifications.
4. Develop and implement a research strategy to determine what will make fishing gear "whale-safe," and develop a research program to test new gear developments, including both fishability and efficacy at reducing lethal whale entanglements.

5. Develop a research program on vertical lines (buoy lines) to determine whether line characteristics, including breaking strengths, color, stiffness, composition, and degradability, can be modified to make entanglements less likely, or at the very least, turn entanglements of whales into non-fatal events.

"A lot of money has been allocated by Congress to address the conflict between the fishing industry and right whales. While some good work has resulted, it is clear that the SAM and DAM strategy, even when combined with existing gear modifications, has not been successful. We strongly recommend a reallocation of funds to address this issue – and encourage NOAA Fisheries to pursue an aggressive course of action leading to industry wide gear modifications that will work for both whales and fishermen."

New Gear Regulations Go into Effect in State Waters From Rhode Island to Maine

New regulations requiring modifications to lobster and gillnet fishing gear in most New England state waters are set to take effect January 1, 2003. The purpose of the new requirements is to reduce the risk of right whale entanglement. Illustrative of the changes are those required by the Commonwealth of Massachusetts for lobster pots fished in the Cape Cod Bay critical habitat. From January 1 through April 30, single lobster pots are banned, and ground lines must be either sinking or neutrally buoyant. Buoy lines must also be mostly sinking line and must include a weak link. From May 1 through December 31, lobstermen must use at least two of the following gear configurations: buoy lines 7/16-inch diameter or less, a weak link at the buoy of 600 pounds breaking strength, sinking buoy lines, and sinking or neutrally buoyant ground lines.

For questions regarding these and other gear modification requirements, contact Dan McKiernan in Massachusetts (Dan.McKiernan@state.ma.us), Terry Stockwell in Maine (terry.stockwell@state.me.us) or April Valliere in Rhode Island (avallier@dem.state.ri.us).

NMFS Prohibits Nighttime Straight Sets of Gillnets During Calving Season in the Southeast

The National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) has issued a final rule governing straight sets of gillnets off the southeast coast during the right whale calving season. The rule prohibits straight sets at night in a restricted area off the Georgia and Florida coasts. The final rule was published in the *Federal Register* (67:59471; September 23, 2002). Copies can be found on the web site of the Atlantic Large Whale Take Reduction Team (<http://www.nero.nmfs.gov/whaletrp/>), along with the Environmental Assessment, Regulatory Impact Review and Regulatory Flexibility Act Analysis. Information can also be obtained from Katie Moore in the Southeast Regional Office of NMFS: 727-570-5312, or Katie.Moore@noaa.gov

Ocean Conservancy Petitions NMFS to Expand Critical Habitats for Right Whales

The Ocean Conservancy (formerly The Center for Marine Conservation) has petitioned the National

Marine Fisheries Service to revise and expand the boundaries of designated critical habitats for the North Atlantic right whale in both northeastern and southeastern waters of the United States. The designation of areas deemed critical for the survival and recovery of endangered species is authorized by the Endangered Species Act.

In the northeast, the Ocean Conservancy's petition would combine the Cape Cod Bay and Great South Channel critical habitats into one. The portion in Cape Cod Bay would remain the same; the portion near the Great South Channel would roughly double in size, adding areas on all sides of the current critical habitat. The expanded area would be bounded by the coordinates: 41°41.2'N/69°58.2'W; 41°00.0'N/69°05.0'W; 41°00.0'N/68°13.0'W; 42°12.0'N/68°13.0'W; 42°12.0'N/70°30.0'W; 41°46.8'N/70°30.0'W; and on the southwest corner by the shoreline of Cape Cod Bay.

In the southeast, the petition would add approximately 2,700 square nautical miles to the current critical habitat off the Georgia and Florida coasts. The northern boundary would be moved north to Blackbeard Island on the Georgia coast (31° 30'N). The eastern boundary would be extended to 30 nautical miles offshore between Blackbeard Island and Matanzas Inlet, Florida (29° 40'N). Between Matanzas Inlet and Sebastian Inlet, Florida (28° 00'N), the eastern boundary would be extended to 10 nautical miles offshore.

The Ocean Conservancy's petition initiates a 90-day review period by NMFS, followed by an announcement in the *Federal Register*. If the petition is found to have scientific merit, a 12-month period is then initiated, at the end of which the NMFS must announce its intentions in the *Federal Register*.

The present critical habitats for right whales off the coasts of Georgia, Florida and Massachusetts were first recommended by the Recovery Team for the Northern Right Whale in May, 1990. They were officially designated by NMFS in June 1994 (*Federal Register* 59: 28793-28808).

Right Whale Calf Sighted in Eastern North Pacific

For the first time in over a century, marine mammal scientists have confirmed the sighting of a North Pacific right whale calf (*Eubalaena japonica*) in the eastern North Pacific Ocean. The calf and its mother were discovered August 24 by researchers from the National Marine Fisheries Service in the southeastern Bering Sea, southwest of Kodiak Island, Alaska, at 57°01.8 N, 164°25.4W. On occasion, right whale calves have been sighted in the western North Pacific, but this is the first sighting in the eastern North Pacific in modern times.

The eastern North Pacific population of right whales is the world's rarest large whale population, and is perhaps the most endangered as well. A reliable estimate of the eastern North Pacific right whale population does not exist, and scientists have spotted only a dozen or so individuals in recent years. "This is cause for celebration," said Jim Balsiger, Regional Administrator for NMFS in Alaska. "The North Pacific right whale population is in danger of extinction. A mother and calf embody hope for the whales."

NMFS researchers from the Southwest Fisheries Science Center in La Jolla, California, and from the National Marine Mammal Laboratory in Seattle, Washington, spotted the calf late on the evening of August 24. They were on the NOAA *Research Vessel McArthur* for a dedicated study of right whales in the southeastern Bering Sea. "The weather was heavily overcast when we first made the sighting," said Southwest Fisheries Science Center scientist Lisa Ballance, the research cruise leader. "We immediately launched a small boat with three scientists aboard to get a closer look, and to take photographs and biopsy samples. The rest of us worked from the flying bridge of the main ship, recording video and still

photographs. We tracked the pair for over an hour before a rainsquall swept over us and shut us down."

"When the small boat was brought aboard, well after 10 p.m.," Balance continued, "we compared notes, and the conclusion was that this was a female-calf pair. One animal was decidedly smaller than the other, its blow was smaller in size and more frequent, it swam in a position alongside the flank of the larger whale in a drafting position typical of whale calves in general, and the larger animal seemed intent on keeping itself between the small boat and the calf. It was a very, very exciting conclusion."

On September 2, the *R/V McArthur* returned to Kodiak Island, Alaska, and the field project came to an end. Since then, a larger group of scientists has examined what was found. Although the photos were taken in such low light levels that they did not reveal much, the skin sample taken from the larger whale confirmed that it was a female.

Scientists have identified six individual North Pacific right whales – all male – through skin sampling since 1997. Nine skin samples, including one from the mother of the calf, were taken this year. The 2002 samples are not yet genotyped, but only one is from a female.

In July 1996, another NMFS research expedition came across right whales in the same area. Pamela Goddard took photos that proved there were at least four adults and possibly a calf, but the photo evidence was not clear enough to confirm the calf sighting. Goddard's report inspired a research effort that has led scientists to use ships, aircraft and acoustic equipment to search for right whales in this area ever since.

Most scientists now divide the North Pacific right whales into two populations, the eastern and western. The eastern population is more severely depleted than the western. Between 1900 and 1994 there were only 29 reliable sightings of right whales in the eastern North Pacific. Since then scientific expeditions have found a few whales – between about four and 13 individuals – in the eastern North Pacific each year. A minimum of six clearly-identified individual right whales and as many as seven more individuals were seen from the *R/V McArthur* this summer in the Bering Sea.

North Pacific right whales were hunted extensively by whalers in the 1800s and early 1900s because they were easy to catch, they floated after they were killed, and they were very rich in oil. Right whales have received international protection since 1935. However, illegal Soviet Union whaling between 1963 and 1967 killed at least 523 North Pacific right whales and pushed the eastern population of North Pacific right whales even closer to the brink of extinction. There was one report of a right whale from the western North Pacific population being caught in a Russian gillnet in the 1980s. Since then, there have been no known human-caused right whale deaths in the North Pacific.

Kudos

Captain Andrew Bielecki and the crew of the *Stena Timer* were presented with a Certificate of Appreciation from the National Marine Fisheries Service on October 8 for their efforts and ship management practices during the 2001 northern right whale calving season. Captain Bielecki and his crew were recognized for taking "extraordinary measures" to avoid ship strikes while transiting right whale critical habitat off Florida. The certificate was presented by Captain Don Lewis of NMFS, who said, "It recognizes the demonstrated commitment to the bridge management and navigational practices of the captain and crew to protect the right whale. A program for right whale protection onboard ship usually incorporates three elements: awareness of issues and concerns, intelligence and action. Captain

Bielecki and the crew of the *Stena Timer* have done a model job on all three elements." The *Stena Timer* is under charter to Crowley Liner Services, headquartered in Jacksonville, Florida (www.crowley.com).

Diane Strickland of the Georgia Ports Authority was awarded a Certificate of Appreciation for her "initiative and creativity to educate the public and the shipping community about the North Atlantic right whale." The certificate was presented at the October 17 meeting of the Southeast U.S. Implementation Team by Kathy Wang on behalf of Joseph E. Powers, Acting Southeast Regional Administrator for NMFS. Ms. Strickland created the Georgia Ports Authority's coloring book, The North Atlantic Right Whale, which is available on the web at www.gaports.com. She also created a crossword puzzle, a temporary tattoo and other educational materials.

Barb Zoodsma of the Georgia Department of Natural Resources also received a Certificate of Appreciation from NMFS for her "outstanding dedication to North Atlantic right whale conservation and [her] service on the Southeastern Implementation Team for the recovery of the North Atlantic right whale."

People on the Move

Barb Zoodsma will be leaving her post at the Georgia Department of Natural Resources in December to become Southeast Regional Right Whale Coordinator for the National Marine Fisheries Service. In her new role, she will continue to serve on the Southeast U.S. Implementation Team as a representative of NMFS. Barb will be based out of Fernandina Beach, Florida. Her immediate supervisor will be **Dr. Kathy Wang** in the Protected Resources Division of the Southeast Regional Office of NMFS in St. Petersburg, Florida.

With Barb Zoodsma's new responsibilities, **Jamison "Jamie" Smith** of the Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission becomes the new chair of the Southeast U.S. Right Whale Recovery Plan Implementation Team. The vice chair position is currently vacant. By tradition, it will probably be filled by someone from the Georgia Department of Natural Resources' Nongame-Endangered Wildlife Program.

Joining the Southeast U.S. Right Whale Recovery Plan Implementation Team are four new members: **LCDR Mike Fendley** of the U.S. Navy's Submarine Group 10 (Kings Bay, GA), **Commander Daniel R. MacLeod** of the U.S. Coast Guard (Washington, DC), **Daniel Small** of the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (Atlanta, GA) and **David Cupka** of South Carolina Wildlife and Marine Resources (Charleston, SC).

David Cottingham is the new Executive Director of the Marine Mammal Commission. Formerly, he was with the NMFS Office of Protected Resources in Silver Spring, MD. His predecessor, **Robert Mattlin**, has resigned to go to New Zealand to help start a marine mammal research institute there.

On October 29, the participants in the North Atlantic Right Whale Consortium annual meeting elected **Bill McLellan** (University of North Carolina at Wilmington), **Jamie Smith** (Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission) and Doug Nowacek (Woods Hole Oceanographic Institution) to the Consortium board. Reelected to the board were **Moe Brown** (Center for Coastal Studies and Canadian Whale Institute) and **Laurie Murison** (Grand Manan Whale and Seabird Research Station).

Implementation Team Members

There are three official teams actively working to bring the North Atlantic right whale back from the brink of extinction: the Canadian Right Whale Recovery Implementation Team, the Northeast Implementation Team and the Southeast United States Right Whale Recovery Plan Implementation Team. Names, affiliations and e-mail addresses for the team members follow. Mailing addresses, telephone and fax numbers are also provided for each team's officers.

Canadian Right Whale Recovery Implementation Team

Co-chair: Jerry Conway, Department of Fisheries and Oceans, Marine Aquatic Species at Risk Office, P.O. Box 1035, Dartmouth, Nova Scotia, Canada B2Y 4T3. Tel. 902-426-6947. Fax 902-426-2331. Conwayj@mar.dfo-mpo.gc.ca

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Laurie Murison, Grand Manan Whale and Seabird Research Station, Gmwhale@nbnet.nb.ca

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Deborah Tobin, East Coast Ecosystems, Deb.tobin@ns.sympatico.ca

Fred Webster, Marine Communications and Traffic Services, Canadian Coast Guard, Websterf@mar.dfo-mpo.gc.ca

Nancy Witherspoon, Department of National Defense, witherspoon.nb@forces.ca

Northeast Implementation Team

Chair: Dr. Thomas French, Massachusetts Division Fish and Wildlife, Non-Game and Endangered Species, Route 135, Westborough, MA 01581. Tel. 508-792-7270, ext 63. FAX 508-792-7275. Tom.French@state.ma.us

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Secretary: Joseph Pelczarski, Massachusetts Coastal Zone Management, 100 Cambridge Street, Boston,

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Terry Stockwell, Maine Department of Marine Resources, terry.stockwell@state.me.us
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Southeast United States Right Whale Recovery Plan Implementation Team

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Vice Chair: To be determined, Georgia Department of Natural Resources, Nongame-Endangered Wildlife Program, One Conservation Way, Suite 310, Brunswick, GA 31520-8687. Tel. 912-264-7218. Fax 912-262-3143.

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Kathy Wang, National Marine Fisheries Service, kathy.wang@noaa.gov
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Barb Zoodsma, National Marine Fisheries Service

Northeast Implementation Team Focuses on Its Future

The primary topic of discussion at the October 31 meeting of the Northeast Implementation Team was the future of the team itself. After review of a number of written comments and a lively discussion, the team clarified its role as an advisor to all agencies, institutions and citizens (and not just as an advisor to

the Northeast Regional Office of NMFS). Its scope will remain broad, although its primary focus will be on ship strikes of right whales. As needed, the team will address other issues, including (but not limited to) humpback whale recovery and proposals for wind-generated energy farms, critical habitat expansion and natural gas pipelines. The team will do more of its work in committees and become more product oriented. An ad hoc subcommittee was formed to develop new procedures for team set-up (e.g., membership) and operations (e.g., priorities) with hopes that its recommendations will be adopted by the team before its next meeting on February 5.

Ship Strike Reduction Strategy: An Update

The National Marine Fisheries Service has assembled an in-house working group to address the "Russell report" ("Recommended Measures to Reduce Ship Strikes of North Atlantic Right Whales," prepared by Bruce Russell and others) that was forwarded to the agency by the Southeast U.S. Right Whale Recovery Plan Implementation Team in September 2001, and by the Northeast Implementation Team in January 2002.

The working group, led by Dr. Greg Silber, is preparing a "Draft Strategic Plan to Address Ship Strikes of Right Whales." The draft plan identifies ship strike reduction efforts already underway (such as the Early Warning System of aerial surveys off Georgia and Florida, and a similar system off Massachusetts) and reviews options. The working group has added some options to those in the Russell report and eliminated others.

Among the options being considered are boundaries (where and when a measure will be in effect); species (so far, there's a right whale focus); vessel size (at present, 65 feet and larger); area restrictions; areas to be avoided; speed restrictions; combinations of speed and routing; and education, outreach and "omnibus actions" (such as dynamic management for unexpected events).

The working group plans to complete a draft plan by the fall of 2002 and submit it to the hierarchy in NMFS, NOAA and the U.S. Department of Commerce for review and approval.

Implementation is expected to occur in at least three steps. Short term options (such as surveys, educational outreach and expanding the NAVTEX notifications to mariners) may take two years. Mid-term options (such as rerouting ships and identifying areas to avoid) will take further study and interagency consultation. Major options (such as restricting ship speeds) may involve legislation and approval by the International Maritime Organization and could (optimistically) take four or five years. All of these timetables can easily be complicated by a variety of factors, including Biological Opinions on reasonable and prudent alternatives, compliance with various laws (such as the Endangered Species Act and the National Environmental Policy Act), and the level of interagency cooperation.

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National Whale Conservation Fund Requests Proposals from Atlantic States

The National Fish and Wildlife Foundation and NOAA Fisheries have teamed together in a special partnership project in support of Atlantic Coast States Cooperative Planning for Right Whale Recovery. The partnership seeks to fund projects that have a strong likelihood of reducing death and serious injury to right whales through the development or implementation of recovery plan tasks.

The National Fish and Wildlife Foundation is a not-for-profit 501(c)(3) organization established by Congress in 1984. The foundation operates the National Whale Conservation Fund (NWCF), which was also established by Congress to support research, management, conservation and education/outreach activities related to the conservation and recovery of whales. The foundation operates the NWCF under the direction of the National Whale Conservation Fund Advisory Council, a panel of conservation leaders and representatives of cooperating entities.

The National Whale Conservation Fund seeks to foster the conservation and recovery of whales by supporting innovative research, management and education projects of high quality and promise. NWCF actively seeks to form new partnerships with corporations, organizations, and individuals to leverage NWCF's resources sufficiently to meet its aggressive conservation goals.

Any Atlantic coast state government agency is eligible for funding. Applicants who propose to build on existing cooperative efforts with NOAA Fisheries or to enter into additional collaboration with other states and/or federal agencies are encouraged. Matching funds are not required under this program. Application forms and additional

information are available from Michelle Pico at 202-857-0166 or pico@nfwf.org

Proposals should reference a federal or state right whale recovery plan that requires the proposal activity, or indicate plans to establish such a plan for the state. Applicants should demonstrate coordination and/or collaboration across state boundaries, with federal agency counterparts, with industry, and other interested parties where applicable.

Project funding priorities include:

- * Ship strike mitigation to reduce right whale interactions via technology or other acceptable means, including developing better understanding of right whale behavior and responses to approaching vessels and developing a merchant mariner training curriculum;
- * Enforcement as it applies to individual or cooperating states;
- * Gear investigation and testing to reduce entanglement;
- * Disentanglement activities which will reduce mortality and/or serious injury of entangled whales; and
- * Education and outreach programs for fishermen, mariners, recreational vessel operators (commercial and private), and the general public to facilitate reduction of gear interactions.

While this grant program focuses on five areas of emphasis, the overall goal of the program is to address right whale mortality, with priority given to those projects that work with industry toward real solutions.

Proposals must be received (by e-mail, fax, hand-delivery or through the mail), no later than 5:00PM EST December 4. Letters notifying all applicants of final funding decisions will be sent by March 1, 2003.

Needed

Educational materials: What works? A committee of the Southeast U.S. Right Whale Recovery Plan Implementation Team is currently reviewing right whale educational materials & broadly defined & with the intent of promoting the use of materials that have proven to be highly effective in getting a message across to specific audiences. If you know of such material, please contact committee chair Don Lewis at Don.Lewis@noaa.gov

The Center for Coastal Studies is looking for a **whale rescue assistant** to join their large whale rescue team. The full-time position requires good physical health and knowledge of small boat and engine operation. Not to mention guts! If you are interested, contact Janet E. Young at 508-487-3622, ext. 110 or jeyoung@coastalstudies.org

Will seed-mussel farming affect right whales near Peninsula Valdez? Vicky Rowntree is seeking information on mussel cultivation structures and their potential effects on the southern right whale nursery ground at Peninsula Valdez, Argentina. If you are familiar with such structures and have ideas of how they should be designed so as to not endanger marine mammals, send your suggestions to Vicky Rowntree, Department of Biology, University of Utah, 257 South 1400 East, Salt Lake City, UT 84112.

Frank's Whales: A Review

Frank's Whales, by Frank Gromling. 2002. Ocean Publishing, Flagler Beach, FL. ISBN: 0-9717641-1-5. Price: \$14.95.

Often people ask, "What can I do to help?" and "Can I make a difference?" In a refreshing narrative, Frank Gromling convincingly answers these questions, using the volunteer right whale sighting program that operates along Florida's north coast as an example. In the process, he also educates people about the plight of the North Atlantic right whale. He provides a good summary of what is known about right whales without getting bogged down in minutia.

So what can you do to help? Become involved in a volunteer program, learn more about the plight of the North Atlantic right whale & Nature's other creatures & enjoy meeting like-minded people and have fun. The book is a good read.

Encyclopedia of Marine Mammals

Encyclopedia of Marine Mammals. Perrin, W.F., B. Würsig and J. G. M. Thewissen, editors. 2002. Academic Press, San Diego. ISBN: 0-12-551340-2.

Academic Press has recently released its *Encyclopedia of Marine Mammals*, edited by Drs. William F. Perrin, Bernd Würsig and J. G. M. Thewissen. This monumental volume & with more than 1414 pages & includes a number of entries relating to right whales. The primary right whale entry is by Dr. Bob Kenney of the University of Rhode Island's Graduate School of Oceanography. Dr. Kenney covers the topics of systematics and nomenclature, description, distribution and abundance, ecology, behavior, life history, fossil record and interactions with humans for all three species of right whales. The Encyclopedia also includes entries on baleen whales (by J. L. Bannister), callosities (M. T. Weinrick), endangered species and populations (J. E. Reynolds III, D. F. DeMaster and G. K. Silber), entrapment and entanglement (J. Lein), filter feeding (D. A. Croll and B. R. Tershy) and other topics related to right whales.

Consortium Papers

A record 170 people attended the 2002 Annual North Atlantic Right Whale Consortium meeting held October 29-30 at the New Bedford Whaling Museum in New Bedford, Massachusetts.

The following presentations were made.

Biology

Lisa Conger - Catalog update and 2002 update

Heather Pettis - Visual health assessment of North Atlantic right whales

Philip Hamilton - Some initial findings of associations among North Atlantic right whales

Ted Durbin - North Atlantic right whales exposed to paralytic shellfish poisoning (PSP) toxins via a zooplankton vector, *Calanus finmarchius*

Roz Rolland - Reproductive and stress hormones in right whales
Roz Rolland (for Greg Doucette)
- Evidence for the occurrence of PSP toxins in

North Atlantic right whales (*Eubalaena glacialis*) and their zooplankton prey in the Bay of Fundy, Canada

Management

Jerry Conway - Department of Fisheries and Oceans (DFO) Update

Rob Stephenson - Development of a new right whale research program at DFO's St. Andrews Biological Station

Tim Cole - Management implications of observed right whale distribution off the Northeastern U.S. during 1998-2002

Diane Borggaard - Atlantic Large Whale Take Reduction Plan 2002 regulations

Pat Gerrior - Vessel management measures for the protection of northern right whales off the U.S. east coast

Hauke Kite-Powell - Right whale population distribution and ship-strike management measures

Modeling

Hal Caswell - Demography, population dynamics, and population viability of the North Atlantic right whale

Richard Pace - Revised and new, not necessarily improved, estimates of right whale survival rates

Surveys

Jim Hain - Shore-based observations of right whales: Science and stewardship

William McLellan - Results of two years of mid-Atlantic aerial surveys for right whales

Rick LeDuc - News from the western front: An update on research on North Pacific right whales

Fishing

John Higgins - Report on gear modification and ongoing research

David Morin - Right whale entanglements of 2002

Scott Kraus - New data on fisheries conflicts

Technology

Bob Bowman - Tail harnesses: Their purpose and a brief history

Michael Moore - Large whale disentanglement technology workshop, December 14, 2001: A report and a video on tail harness trial on water workshop

Wayne Perryman - Aerial photogrammetry of western North Atlantic right whales

Bruce Mate - Tag development: A communal scientific process that gets results

Lei Harris - Observations from an aerostat: A developing capability

Bill McLellan - Infrared thermography

Genetics

Tim Frasier - Development and analysis of genetic profiles of North Atlantic right whales: Application to paternity analyses

Matt Hare - Estimates of historical demography from nuclear DNA variation in right whales

Carl Gaines - Evaluating relationships among right whales using nuclear gene regions

Howard Rosenbaum - Were right whales from the eastern and western North Atlantic populations genetically distinct?

Habitat

Mark Baumgartner - Right whale habitat in the lower Bay of Fundy and Roseway

Basin: Why might a right whale be in this particular place at this particular time?
Cherie Keller - North Atlantic right whale distribution in relation to sea surface temperature in the Southeast U.S. calving grounds: Implications for management

Shipping

Amy Knowlton - Right whale sightings and survey efforts in the mid-Atlantic region: Migratory corridor, time frame, and proximity to port entrances
Kelly Houle - An aerial survey perspective on shipping traffic in the northeastern U.S.
Jessica Damon - An acoustically-mediated ship strike avoidance model for the North Atlantic right whale, *Eubalaena glacialis*, in the Gulf of Maine
Moe Brown - Progress on Canada's proposal to amend the Bay of Fundy Traffic Separation Scheme to reduce interactions between vessels and right whales

Acoustics

Chris Clark - Right whales in Cape Cod Bay: Numbers and distributions from listening, looking and knowing about food
Douglas Gillespie - Automatic detection of right whale calls. Is that really a right whale I'm hearing?
Doug Nowacek - Playback experiments to study risk factors for vessel collision in right whales
Peter Tyack - Policy implications of alarm responses to playbacks of alerting signals
Susan Parks - Surface active groups: Group composition and acoustic characteristics

Abstracts are available for \$5.00 each from the Consortium secretary, Marilyn Marx. To order, contact her at mmarx@neaq.org or 617-973-6584.

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Calendar of Events

December 4: Proposals to the National Whale Conservation Fund must be received by 5:00 PM Eastern Standard Time. (See article on page 9.)

Late January, 2003 (date not set at press time): Next meeting of the Canadian Right Whale Recovery Implementation Team. For information, contact Jerry Conway at the Department of Fisheries and Oceans, Marine Aquatic Species at Risk Office: 902-426-6947 or Conwayj@mar.dfo-mpo.gc.ca

February 5, 2003: Next meeting of the Northeast Implementation Team. Location to be determined. For further information, contact Pat Gerrior at Pat.Gerrior@noaa.gov

May 8-9, 2003: Spring meeting of the Southeast U.S. Right Whale Recovery Plan Implementation Team. Location to be determined. For further information, contact team chair Jamison Smith at 904-573-4910 or Jamison.Smith@fwc.state.fl.us

November 4-5, 2003: Annual North Atlantic Right Whale Consortium meeting, New Bedford Whaling Museum, New Bedford, Massachusetts. For further information, contact the Consortium secretary, Marilyn Marx at mmarx@neaq.org or 617-973-6584.

December 14-19, 2003: 15th Biennial Conference on the Biology of Marine Mammals, Greensboro, North Carolina. Sponsored by the Society for Marine Mammalogy. For more information, visit the SMM web site: <http://pegasus.cc.ucf.edu/~smm>

Right Whale News

Right Whale News is the newsletter of the Southeastern U.S. Right Whale Recovery Plan Implementation Team and the Northeast Implementation Team. The editor is Hans Neuhauser. The editorial board consists of Bill Brooks, Moe Brown, Phil Clapham, Jerry Conway, Jim Hain, Scott Kraus, Mike Payne, Sigrid Sanders and Jerry Wallmeyer.

The Gray's Reef National Marine Sanctuary, the Massachusetts Environmental Trust, the Southeast Regional Office of NOAA Fisheries, the Northeast Implementation Team and the Savannah Presbytery's M.K. Pentecost Ecology Trust Fund (www.savannahpresbytery.org) underwrite the costs of Right Whale News. Thanks to their support, Right Whale News is published quarterly and is distributed free of charge.

The current issue of Right Whale News is now available on line at a web site maintained by the Georgia Environmental Policy Institute: www.GEPInstitute.com An index of the first eight years of Right Whale News (1994-2001) is available along with current and back issues on the Internet, thanks to Alex Score and Marcy Lee of the Gray's Reef National Marine Sanctuary. The web site address is: <http://www.graysreef.nos.noaa.gov/rightwhalenews.html>

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

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