

RIGHT WHALE NEWS

The Publication of the Southeast United States Right Whale Recovery Plan
Implementation Team and the Northeast Implementation Team

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Four Whales and Two Fetuses Die

During a six-week period between November 2004 and January 2005, four adult right whales have died. At least three of them were female and at least two were pregnant. At least one was struck by a ship.

A 49-foot long pregnant right whale was killed off the Virginia coast after it was apparently struck by a U.S. Navy vessel, the amphibious assault ship *USS Iwo Jima*, on November 17 near the mouth of the Chesapeake Bay. The 15-year old pregnant whale (#1909) bled to death.

In December, another dead right whale was sighted 86 miles east of Nantucket.

The crew of the U.S. Coast Guard cutter *Escanaba* found the carcass of a 45-foot long female named *Bolo* 78 miles east of Nantucket on January 11. The crew took a DNA sample and attached a beacon to the carcass.

Lucky (#2143) received her name because she survived a propeller strike as a calf in 1991. This time, her name didn't help. A New England Aquarium aerial survey team sighted the carcass of a large right whale about 16 miles due east of Cumberland Island, GA, on January 12. The following day, the carcass was secured and the *Georgia Bulldog* towed it to the St. Johns River where it was passed on to a Coast Guard cutter. As the cutter turned into the river, the flukes separated from the body and the carcass was lost. It came ashore on Little Talbot Island north of Jacksonville on January 14, where a necropsy was performed under the direction of Bill McLellan of the University of North Carolina at Wilmington. The animal was *Lucky*, pregnant with her first near full-term fetus. In addition to being a critically important breeding female, *Lucky* was one of the New England Aquarium's adoptable right whales, making her loss even more poignant.

In a 2001 study published in *Nature* (414:537-541), Masami Fujiwara and Hal Caswell of the Woods Hole Oceanographic Institution showed that preventing the deaths of just two female right whales a year could allow the North Atlantic right whale population to increase to more than a replacement level, significantly improving the species' odds of survival.

NMFS Asked to Take Immediate Action

The loss of four right whales in six weeks has prompted the International Fund for Animal Welfare (IFAW), the International Wildlife Coalition (IWC), and the Whale and Dolphin Conservation Society (WDCS), to ask NMFS to immediately undertake aggressive efforts to protect North Atlantic right whales. In a January 17 press release, the three nonprofit organizations noted, "In the last six weeks, four right whales have been found dead, three of them mature females and at least two of them pregnant. This alarming rate of right whale mortality threatens the entire species with extinction. The right whale is one of the most endangered mammals on earth, and with a population numbering less than 350 individuals, each death is significant."

"To say the last 12 months have been devastating to right whales is an understatement," said Regina Asmutis-Silvia, biologist for the IWC and WDCS. "The incoming Secretary of Commerce must take immediate action or else leave a legacy of overseeing the extinction of a majestic species."

"Each death is a tragic loss," said Erin Heskett, senior program officer for IFAW. "NMFS needs to immediately implement shipping regulations, such as speed restrictions and re-routing before this entire species disappears right before our eyes. This is not a question of waiting until we have more information; if there was ever a case for precaution, this is it."

(Websites with more information on the organizations involved are: International Fund for Animal Welfare, www.ifaw.org; International Wildlife Coalition, www.iwc.org; Whale and Dolphin Conservation Society, www.wdcs.org).

NMFS Calls for Summit

"The loss of two pregnant females during 2004 is extremely damaging to this national living treasure," said Dr. William Hogarth, director of NOAA Fisheries, in a recent press release. "NOAA is pursuing a vigorous strategy to reduce human-caused deaths and turn this population around, but that takes time. What we can do right now is to ask federal ships that operate in the vicinity of right whales to consider additional ways to avoid them." While federal ships are a small percentage of overall shipping traffic, Dr. Hogarth stated, "A strengthened leadership commitment from federal agencies sends a powerful message on the critical need to reduce the risks of ship strikes."

To that end, NOAA Fisheries announced in mid-December its intent to organize a summit among federal agencies to seek immediate voluntary actions that will make waters safer for migrating and calving North Atlantic right whales. The summit will be convened as a meeting of the NOAA-hosted Interagency Ship Strike Reduction Working Group. Invited participants will include representatives of agencies that operate sea-going vessels, including the Departments of Commerce, Defense, Interior, Homeland Security and the Environmental Protection Agency. The State Department also will be invited

because of the international distribution of both right whales and ship strikes. The Marine Mammal Commission is included because of their oversight role in the development of federal marine mammal conservation policies and programs. At press time, a date for the summit had not been announced.

NOAA's draft ship strike reduction strategy covers the entire East Coast. In the Mid-Atlantic, nine ports have been identified where right whales are likely to be present seasonally, and the strategy recommends speed restrictions within 20 to 30 nautical miles of each port during those times. More information on NOAA's ship strike reduction effort is available at www.nero.noa.gov/shipstrike/

Navy Issues Additional Right Whale Protective Measures For Mid-Atlantic Vessel Transits

Editor's note: The following article was written by Tom Fetherston, a biologist with the U.S. Navy's NAVSEA Newport, RI. Captain Fetherston is the immediate past chair of the Northeast Implementation Team.

In December, the U.S. Navy issued further guidance to all Fleet ships to increase awareness of right whale migratory patterns and implement additional protective measures along the mid-Atlantic coast. The guidance expands the Navy's important contributions to right whale stewardship, including standing protective measures and annual guidance in place in the southeast since 1997, and guidance for all Fleet activities focused on the northeast since 2002. The Navy's efforts in the southeast include annual funding support to the Early Warning System (EWS), and organization of a communication network and reporting system to ensure the widest possible dissemination of right whale sighting information to Department of Defense and civilian shipping. The Navy representatives serve as active members of both the Northeast and Southeast Implementation teams, and the latest guidance highlights the importance of the mid-Atlantic efforts as a component of comprehensive right whale conservation.

The Navy's December guidance includes areas where ships transit between southern New England and northern Florida. The Navy coordinated with NOAA Fisheries for identification of seasonal right whale occurrence patterns in six major sections of the mid-Atlantic coast, with particular attention to port and coastal areas of key interest for vessel traffic management. The Navy's resulting guidance calls for extreme caution and operation at a slow, safe speed within 20 nautical mile arcs of specified coastal and port reference points. The guidance reiterates previous instructions that Navy ships must post two lookouts, one of whom must have completed marine mammal recognition training, and emphasizes the need for utmost vigilance in performance of these watch-stander duties. With the issuance of this added guidance, Navy protective measures now cover ships transiting through important near-shore habitats along the Atlantic coast, continuing Navy's commitment and leadership in right whale protection efforts.

In response to the heightened concern about ship strikes, the U.S. Navy has sent a message to the Atlantic Fleet mandating “slowest safe speed” within 20 nautical miles of shore in the Mid-Atlantic migratory corridor along the east coast.

***Kingfisher* Remains Entangled**

Despite all odds, *Kingfisher* is back. A New England Aquarium aerial survey team sighted an entangled right whale nicknamed *Kingfisher* at sunset on January 11 off the southern Georgia coast. Disentanglement first-responders from Georgia and Florida re-sighted the animal on January 12, its right flipper still entangled in inshore lobster gear from Maine. The animal appeared to be fat and healthy. *Kingfisher*'s overall good health and her loss of most of the previous year's gear on the body and left flipper prompted a decision not to try to remove any more gear.

Kingfisher's story began in January 2004, when a young whale (born during the winter of 2002-2003) was sighted in southeastern waters gear-free. On March 17, the whale was observed entangled off St. Augustine, Florida. A rescue effort was mounted by the Center for Coastal Studies, and a satellite tag was attached the following day. Some of the gear was soon removed from *Kingfisher* (named after the U.S. Coast Guard cutter of the same name that was so helpful in the disentanglement effort). The whale was tracked north to the vicinity of Cape May, New Jersey, where on April 3 the satellite tag – and *Kingfisher* – were lost. The Center for Coastal Studies' web site (www.coastalstudies.org) contains additional information on the *Kingfisher* saga.

Entangled Right Whale *Yellowfin* Freed from Gear

Editor's note: This article was prepared by Scott Landry of the Center for Coastal Studies (Provincetown) and Clay George (Georgia Department of Natural Resources). In spite of this heartening success, the Marine Mammal Commission provides a sobering note that right whale disentanglement efforts are successful in only a small percentage of cases and that long term entanglements are a source of serious injury.

A right whale severely entangled in fishing gear was successfully disentangled off the coast of South Carolina on New Year's Eve. The 32-foot juvenile whale was first spotted entangled off the coast of North Carolina in early December and was re-sighted several times as it traveled south. On December 21, a Wildlife Trust/Georgia DNR right whale survey team, flying aboard a NOAA Twin Otter, located the whale off Georgia, towing a large orange buoy and approximately 300 feet of line. Biologists from Georgia DNR, Florida FWC, and NOAA responded immediately by placing a telemetry buoy on the trailing gear. Once it was tagged, researchers at the Provincetown Center for Coastal Studies (CCS) in Massachusetts and Maine were able to track the whale remotely and formulate an action plan.

Following a week of uncooperative weather, biologists from Florida FWC, Georgia DNR and NOAA, led by CCS disentanglement experts, converged on the North Carolina coast where a University of North Carolina at Wilmington research vessel had been reserved for the mission. However, by December 29, the whale had suddenly reversed course southward. Thursday morning the team shifted the operation 170 miles south to Charleston, SC, launching aboard the U.S. Coast Guard cutter *Yellowfin* and a NOAA 21-foot rigid hull inflatable. Meanwhile, the Wildlife Trust/South Carolina DNR and Georgia DNR aerial survey teams relocated the whale 15 miles offshore. Team members aboard the NOAA inflatable raced ahead to the whale, shortened the trailing lines, repositioned the telemetry buoy, and fitted it with a strobe light to facilitate tracking through the night.

New Year's Eve morning, disentanglement team members working from a smaller 15-foot inflatable added drag to the trailing lines in an attempt to slow the whale and gain access to the critical wrap around its head. The whale resisted these attempts and the team was unable to reach the head wrap. Next, as the CCS team had previously planned, additional drag was placed on the whale by hitching the gear to the tow post of the NOAA inflatable. Shortly thereafter the team felt a line part and the whale surfaced, apparently free of gear. The Wildlife Trust/South Carolina DNR aerial survey team circling overhead reported that no gear was visible on the whale. The Wildlife Trust/Georgia DNR team re-sighted the whale on January 2 and again no gear was observed. The whale was nicknamed *Yellowfin*, in honor of the U.S. Coast Guard vessel and crew that tracked the whale through the night and assisted the disentanglement team. Researchers at the New England Aquarium identified the whale as #3314, a calf born in 2003 to #2114. Its gender is currently unknown. The entangling gear removed from *Yellowfin* appears to be consistent with commercial fishing operations. NOAA Fisheries is continuing its analysis of the gear recovered to determine the origin and type of gear.

Logistical support, highly-trained specialists, equipment, air support and other resources were provided by the following federal, state, and nonprofit agencies, all of whom are members of the Atlantic Large Whale Disentanglement Network: Duke University, Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission, Georgia Department of Natural Resources, Grays Reef National Marine Sanctuary, New England Aquarium, NOAA Fisheries, Provincetown Center for Coastal Studies, University of North Carolina at Wilmington, U.S. Coast Guard, Virginia Aquarium and Marine Science Center, and Wildlife Trust.

Participating Lobstermen Make Exchange Program a Success

The International Fund for Animal Welfare (IFAW) held a fourth event in Gloucester, MA, January 10-11 at which lobstermen could exchange used floating line for vouchers to purchase non-buoyant groundline for their trawls. Over the two days, 70 lobstermen brought in over 70,000 pounds of floating groundline. To date, over 200 lobstermen have turned in over 200,000 pounds of floating line. In exchange, IFAW has issued over

\$700,000 worth of vouchers. Approximately 300 lobstermen are signed up to participate in the program.

IFAW will hold two more exchange events for lobstermen to turn in old line in exchange for sinking line. The first will be March 22 at the Transfer Station in Duxbury, MA. The final event will be March 24 at the Jodrey State Fish Pier in Gloucester, MA. These dates mark the end of a very successful pilot project to protect Atlantic Right Whales off the coast of Massachusetts. IFAW is eager to replicate this project in other critical areas of New England.

For more information, please contact Erin Heskett, IFAW, at 508-744-2192 or eheskett@ifaw.org

Report from the Calving Ground

Brenna Kraus reports that the Early Warning System right whale survey season began on December 1 with more than a week of good weather. This season the New England Aquarium survey team observers include Jessica Taylor, Liz Tuohy-Sheen and Brenna Kraus, led by Monica Zani. Sightings began early with the addition of the South Carolina survey team that found the first whales of the season on December 4. They had their first sighting on December 7, a pair identified as 1622 and 1245 (both reproductive females). On the same day, 1246 was seen by the South Carolina team with a calf, making her the first known mother for the 2005 season.

As of February 14, 21 calves had been sighted, compared with 16 calves sighted during the 2003-2004 season. A majority of the mothers last gave birth in 2002 or 2001, a three to four year calving interval.

Remember *Calvin*? In 2001, she was a nine-year old female (#2223) observed entangled off Provincetown on February 2. The entanglement was not judged to be serious so no rescue attempt was made. A satellite tag was attached, and *Calvin* was followed for 36 days, swimming by Cultivator Shoals, Jeffrey's Ledge and Georges Bank off the Massachusetts coast. On June 8, *Calvin* was observed gear-free (*Right Whale News* August 2001, page 4). Now 12, *Calvin* is a new mom off the southeast coast.

Marine Mammal Commission Critiques Recovery Plan

In a November 12, 2004 letter to Mike Payne, head of NMFS' Marine Mammal Protection Division, David Cottingham, Executive Director of the Marine Mammal Commission (MMC), provided comments on the Draft Revised "Recovery Plan for the North Atlantic Right Whale (*Eubalaena glacialis*).” In what could serve as a summary for the critique, Mr. Cottingham notes, “While we appreciate and support all the steps that the Service and others have taken to date to protect right whales, the fact is that they have not

successfully reduced entanglement and ship collision rates and the immediate need is therefore to develop and adopt new, more effective measures.”

The MMC’s comments focus on the conditions that must be met in order to consider changing the right whale’s status from endangered to threatened. These down-listing criteria differ from the previous draft. One criterion the MMC finds confusing and vague is that the species’ population structure “is indicative of a biologically significant increasing population.” A second criterion, “the population has increased at an average rate of at least 2 percent for 20 years” appears to the MMC to set an inappropriately low standard for reclassification. “Assuming a current population size of 300 animals, this criterion could allow down-listing when the population numbers about 450 animals, which is less than 5 percent of pre-exploitation abundance...In our opinion, this is far too low to allow consideration for down-listing.”

NMFS Will Review Endangered Status of Right Whales And Determine Critical Habitat

Several years ago, scientists led by Howard Rosenbaum of the American Museum of Natural History determined that there are three species of right whales in the world: the North Atlantic right whale (*Eubalaena glacialis*), the North Pacific right whale (*E. japonica*) and the southern right whale (*E. australis*). The National Marine Fisheries Service soon followed suit and published a technical revision in the *Federal Register* (Volume 68, page 17560; April 10, 2003).

Now, officials in the NMFS Regulatory Programs office have determined that the Final Rule identifying three different species of endangered right whales was “procedurally and substantively flawed.” In a recent *Federal Register* notice (Vol. 70, No. 7, pages 1830-1832; January 11, 2005), NMFS issued a Final Rule revoking the three-species determination and reinstating the pre-April 2003 language in which only two species of right whales are recognized: the northern right whale (*Eubalaena glacialis*) and the southern right whale (*E. australis*).

NMFS plans to conduct a status review of the “northern right whale” to determine whether it consists of more than one species as defined by the Endangered Species Act (ESA). If they find that the North Pacific right whale is indeed a separate species, they will evaluate the status of both the North Atlantic right whale and the North Pacific right whale to determine if either or both are endangered under the provisions of the ESA. Then, if warranted, NMFS will publish a proposed rule to list one or both species as endangered. They will also designate, “to the maximum extent prudent and determinable,” critical habitat for both species. This process will take two years.

It is difficult to tell from the bureaucratic language in the January 10 *Federal Register* notice whether this status review will have any effect on current levels of protection for

the North Pacific right whale or whether the three currently designated critical habitats for North Atlantic right whales (off Massachusetts and Georgia/Florida) will change.

Canadian Right Whale Recovery Implementation Team Meets

Somehow, in between three snowstorms in a single week, the Canadian Right Whale Recovery Implementation Team managed to sneak into Dartmouth, Nova Scotia, to hold their annual meeting on January 19. Highlights of the meeting included presentations on: Right Whales and Fishing Gear: Estimating the relative probabilities of interactions in the Bay of Fundy and Roseway Basin; Information on the season, area and gear description of the Jonah Crab fishery, and on the World Wildlife Fund modified fishing gear trials; Right Whales and Shipping: Speed analysis for ships in the Bay of Fundy and on Roseway Basin, and an update on conservation measures to reduce the risk of ship strike on Roseway Basin; Right Whales in Quebec: Sightings of right whales in waters near the Quebec shoreline, and the status of oil and gas exploration in the Gulf of St. Lawrence. Of note was the announcement that the North Atlantic right whale was soon to receive Schedule I endangered status under the new Species At Risk legislation (June 2003) (see <http://canadagazette.gc.ca/partII/2005/20050126/html/sor14-e.html> http://www.speciesatrisk.gc.ca/legislation/default_e.cfm)

There is no denying the species is endangered, but the status had not been reviewed for more than 10 years, and Schedule I listing required a recent status report from the Committee on the Status of Endangered Wildlife in Canada. The status report, published in May 2004, is available at http://www.cosewic.gc.ca/eng/sct5/index_e.cfm The team now has one year to draft a Recovery Strategy compliant with the new legislation, which is being undertaken by Moira Brown, Kent Smedbol and Jerry Conway. There probably will be another meeting within six months to discuss the draft recovery strategy.

Moira Brown and Jerry Conway, co-chairs.

Bay of Fundy Research Coordination Meeting Will Be Held April 12-13

The Canadian Department of Fisheries and Oceans will host the annual right whale research coordination meeting April 12-13 in St. Andrews, New Brunswick. The purpose of the meeting is to give right whale researchers the opportunity to coordinate their research programs in the Bay of Fundy for the coming year. Hopefully, this coordination will minimize the impact and any effects that research would have on right whales and their calves, as well as allowing the researchers to optimize their time on the water. For further information, contact Jerry Conway at 902-426-6947 or ConwayJ@mar.dfo-mpo.gc.ca

Rebecca “Reb” Clark

Amy Knowlton and Philip Hamilton provide this tribute.

It is with a heavy heart that we inform you that one of our friends was killed in the Tsunami in Thailand. Rebecca Clark (Reb) was halfway through a two month field project working with "Naucrates," a company from Italy. She was staying at the Golden Buddha Beach Resort, Phra Thong, Thailand, doing turtle nesting surveys and educational work in the community. Colleagues reported that the morning before the disaster, Rebecca had been educating the locals about her project and was excited about finding a new turtle nest. She was very happy and cheerful with a big smile on her face.

Reb had worked for a number of years on the New England Aquarium's right whale project beginning in the early 1990's – both in the Bay of Fundy and doing aerial surveys on the calving ground. She had shown quiet dedication to endangered species ever since.

Rebecca was cremated in Thailand at a Buddhist ceremony and her ashes are to be returned to Canada where they will be spread on the Atlantic ocean at some later date. A memorial service was held in Annapolis Royal, Nova Scotia, January 5.

Please send your best memories of Rebecca to her mother, Sarah Clark, at lhho@ns.sympatico.ca Reb's family is asking for donations in her memory to be made to the Red Cross Relief Fund.

Changes

At the beginning of 2005, **Dr. Philip J. Clapham** moved to Seattle to take over direction of large whale research for the National Marine Mammal Laboratory in the Alaska Fisheries Science Center. His duties there will closely parallel those of his old position at the Northeast Center in Woods Hole, and will involve coordination and oversight of research on several whale species in the North Pacific. This will include the critically endangered population of right whales that summer in the Bering Sea and Gulf of Alaska. Phil will continue to be involved with North Atlantic right whale issues as well as with the International Whaling Commission. A replacement will be sought for him in Woods Hole, and the position will likely be advertised in the spring.

Pat Gerrior, ship strike liaison for the Northeast Regional Office of NOAA Fisheries (Gloucester, MA) has retired from federal service. The new point of contact for right whale ship strike and whale avoidance issues in the northeast is **Kristen Koyama**; she can be reached at 978-281-9300, ext. 6531 or Kristen.Koyama@noaa.gov

Dr. Salvatore Testaverde has also retired from the Northeast Regional Office of NOAA Fisheries. Sal was a biologist with a background of a Gloucester fisherman. During his tenure at NOAA Fisheries, he played many roles, including a number that related to right whale recovery. He served as liaison between the agency and the Northeast

Implementation Team; he monitored the Boston sewage outfall issue; he analyzed the Draft Revised Recovery Plan for the North Atlantic Right Whale; and he managed several of the Region's right whale grants programs. His last position was Assistant to the Regional Administrator.

NOAA Fisheries' Northeast Regional Office announced the selection of **Jamison Smith** as its new Disentanglement Coordinator. The disentanglement coordinator position has been newly created within the Northeast Region. It will focus on disentanglement efforts for all cetaceans along the east coast, with an emphasis on right whales. Formally, this position is part of the NER Stranding Program. The disentanglement position was created to help expand NOAA Fisheries disentanglement efforts throughout the entire range of the whale species that frequent our region. Jamison will coordinate on a regular basis with the Center for Coastal Studies, which is the only NOAA Fisheries-authorized disentangler of right whales.

Jamison has a degree in biology from the University of Central Florida and was formerly employed by the Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission where he served as chair of the Southeast United States Right Whale Recovery Plan Implementation Team. He served as coordinator for right whale and manatee research in northeast Florida. He will begin his employment with NOAA Fisheries in early February and will relocate to Gloucester, Massachusetts in April.

With Jamison's departure, it is not clear yet who will be the next chair of the Southeast Implementation Team – or for that matter, who will pick the next chair. It may be **Tom Pitchford**, who currently oversees the activities at the Marine Mammal Pathobiology Laboratory in St. Petersburg; he has accepted the position of right whale research coordinator for the State of Florida. Until the formal selection is made, **Leslie Ward** will serve as interim chair of the Southeast Implementation Team. She can be reached at the Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission, 100 SE Eighth Avenue, St. Petersburg, FL 33701. Tel. 727-89626; email: leslie.ward@myfwc.com

New Resource Center on Bycatch

In January 2002, the World Wildlife Fund (WWF) organized an international workshop that brought together the world's leading experts on cetacean bycatch to formulate a plan for making progress towards solving the global bycatch problem. The workshop resulted in a call for action, an international strategy for bycatch mitigation, the formation of an International Cetacean Bycatch Task Force, and the creation of a resource center to assist fishermen, scientists, environmentalists and the public in working together to address cetacean bycatch.

The Cetacean Bycatch Resource Center has now been formed; sponsored by WWF, its goal is to promote information exchange and strategy-sharing between people working to reduce entanglement and incidental catches of cetaceans around the world. The Center's web site (www.cetaceanbycatch.org) serves as a clearing house for information on

various bycatch issues. Current features include a virtual library with over 160 scientific papers, abstracts, and citations from 1984 to 2004. Press coverage and recent events are posted to the news section, and the strategy section includes international agreements, workshop recommendations, and action plans. For advice on bycatch research and mitigation, readers can get in touch with the Center's expert task force members.

Proposals Sought for Large Whale Gear Competition

The National Fish and Wildlife Foundation (NFWF), in cooperation with the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration National Marine Fisheries Service (NOAA Fisheries), the Northeast Consortium, and the Gulf of Maine Lobster Foundation, recently announced a Request for Proposals for the Large Whale Gear Competition, a new project under NFWF's National Whale Conservation Fund. The challenge grant, the Large Whale Gear Competition, was established to support the development of innovative fishing gear and/or gear modifications that decrease the incidence of entanglement of large whales, especially right whales.

The program is open internationally to all who meet the eligibility criteria. The agencies are especially interested in colleges, universities and other educational organizations. Interested applicants must form a team and secure an advisor from a college or university, or from a related fishing industry, private company, fishing association or other entity qualified to advise on potential solutions to gear-whale interactions.

Awarded applicants will receive up to \$10,000 (US) grants, as well as travel stipends, to build gear prototypes to test their gear at sea with commercial New England fishermen. An additional grant of up to \$50,000 (US) will be awarded to the team that designs and tests a prototype that shows the most promise in becoming a new, commercially-viable whale-friendly fishing gear or gear modification. The deadline for submitting a pre-proposal through NFWF's online application system was February 15. For additional information, please go to www.nfwf.org/programs/large_whale_gear.htm or contact Amanda Johnson at (978) 281-9328 x6513 or Amanda.Johnson@noaa.gov.

No New Right Whale Grants This Year

NOAA Fisheries has announced that there will be no new grants for right whales this fiscal year (FY05). The available funds in the budget have all been allocated to second and third-year funding for multi-year projects funded in the FY03 and FY05 grants programs.

Scientific Literature and Reports

Baker, C.S. and P.J. Clapham. 2004. Modeling the past and future of whales and whaling. *Trends in Ecology & Evolution* 19(7):365-371.

Hunt, K.E. and R.M. Rolland. 2003. Fecal glucocorticoid analysis as a potential tool for investigating physiological stress in North Atlantic right whales (*Eubalaena glacialis*). *Integrative and Comparative Biology* 43(6):1007.

Nichols, O.C. and P.K. Hamilton. 2004. Occurrence of the parasitic sea lamprey, *Petromyzon marinus*, on western North Atlantic right whales, *Eubalaena glacialis*. *Environmental Biology of Fishes* 71:413-417.

Reeves, R.R. and E. Josephson. 2004. Putative historical occurrence of North Atlantic right whales in mid-latitude offshore waters: 'Maury's Smear' is likely apocryphal. *Marine Ecology – Progress Series* 282:295-305.

Toolika, R., M.W. Brown, B.A. McLeod, T.R. Frasier, R. Grenier, S.L. Cumbaa, J. Nadarajah and B.N. White. 2004. Genetic analysis of 16th century whale bones prompts a revision of the impact of Basque whaling on right and bowhead whales in the western North Atlantic. *Canadian Journal of Zoology* 82(10):1647-1654.

Calendar of Events

March 1: Deadline for submitting National Whale Conservation Fund general grant pre-applications to the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation. See www.nfwf.org/programs/WhaleFund.htm for details.

March 1: Deadline for submitting Fishing Gear Research Program applications to the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation. See www.nfwf.org/programs/WhaleFund.htm for details.

March 22 and 24: IFAW lobster gear exchange, Duxbury and Gloucester, MA. See article on page 5 for details.

April 1 (deadline extension): Deadline for submitting Atlantic coastal states pre-proposal grant applications to the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation. See www.nfwf.org/programs/WhaleFund.htm for details.

April 12-13: Right whale research coordination meeting. St. Andrews, New Brunswick. See article on page 8. For further information, contact Jerry Conway at 902-426-6947 or ConwayJ@mar.dfo-mpo.gc.ca

May 5: Southeast US Implementation Team meeting. Location to be determined. For further information, contact Leslie Ward, interim chair, Southeast Implementation Team, Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission, 100 SE Eighth Avenue, St. Petersburg, FL 33701. Tel. 727-896-8626; email: leslie.ward@myfwc.com

September 1: Deadline for submitting fishing gear mini-grant applications to the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation. See *Right Whale News* November 2004:5 for details.

November 2-3: North Atlantic Right Whale Consortium annual meeting. New Bedford Whaling Museum, New Bedford, Massachusetts. For further information, contact Consortium secretary Heather Pettis at hpettis@neaq.org

December 11-16: 16th Biennial Conference on the Biology of Marine Mammals, San Diego, California. Sponsored by the Society for Marine Mammalogy. For more information, visit the Society's web site: <http://www.marinemammalogy.org/>

Right Whale News

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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: gipi@ix.netcom.com