RIGHT WHALE NEWS

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MMC Panel Identifies Opportunities For Recovery Effort Improvement

In March 2006, the Marine Mammal Commission (MMC) convened a panel of independent scientists in Woods Hole, Massachusetts, to review and evaluate North Atlantic right whale programs. The review was part of a response to a directive from Congress to assess the effectiveness of protection programs for the most endangered marine mammals in U.S. waters. The right whale program review report was prepared by Randall R. Reeves (Okapi Wildlife Associates), Andrew J. Read (Duke University Marine Laboratory), Lloyd Lowry (University of Alaska School of Fisheries and Ocean Sciences), Steven K. Katona (College of the Atlantic) and Daryl J. Boness (Smithsonian Institution), and published by the MMC in late May 2007.

There are important findings and recommendations throughout the report, and summarizing them is a daunting task. The report preparers did not summarize their findings in an executive summary. The entire report is available for review on the MMC web site (www.mmc.gov); a limited number of hard copies are available from mherman@mmc.gov

The editors of *Right Whale News* attempt a summary of the 67-page report here:

Report Organization

The report consists of two main parts: review and evaluation of the federal government's North Atlantic right whale research and monitoring program; and review and evaluation of the right whale protection and recovery program.

The report is organized into several major categories:

1. Overview statement
2. Introduction and Project Background
3. Findings: Research and Monitoring
4. Findings: Protection and Recovery
5. Findings: Cross-cutting and General
6. Acknowledgements, References, Appendices

Overarching Themes

General themes in the findings and recommendations include:

1. There is little or no objective basis for confirming the effectiveness of actions, so the panel used its best judgment about what actions are most likely to be effective in achieving the recovery of North Atlantic right whales.

2. Existing measures to reduce ship strikes and fishing gear entanglements have not been successful.

3. NMFS should adopt emergency rules to reduce ship strikes with limits on speed and routes.

4. NMFS should disband the Atlantic Large Whale Take Reduction Team and create a North Atlantic right whale recovery team. Initial tasks for the new team should include a review of critical habitats and evaluation of management options for eliminating right whale entanglements.

5. Some essential tasks are underfunded and some non-essential tasks are funded[1].

6. Cooperation with Canada is needed to increase protection for right whales in Canadian waters.

A selection of specific findings and recommendations

- **Ship strikes**: The most cost-effective approach is to eliminate high speed vessel traffic from the whales' environment (The Report, page 1); existing measures have not been successful (p. 30); complete closure of the Great South Channel in May and June should be considered (p. 32); the effectiveness of advisories is unknown (p. 34); mandatory speed restrictions and new routing measures offer considerable promise (p. 36); the cost of the slow pace of implementing the ship strike reduction strategy has been substantial (p. 36); rulemaking should be taken with all possible haste; if further delays occur beyond spring 2007 emergency rules are recommended (p. 38); mitigation messages may not be communicated effectively (p. 39) reports of struck whales should be required (p. 40).

- **Entanglements**: Eliminate risk-conferring fishing gear (p. 1); quicker reporting of gear types is needed (p. 19); mandatory gear marking should be evaluated (p. 19); disentangling whales does not contribute to a solution, may be counterproductive, and is not cost-effective (p. 41, 49 and 50); conflicting agency mandates have led to a fishery management crisis (p. 41); the ALWTR Plan measures are inadequate

[1] *Editor's note: For example, the FY07 right whale recovery budget includes $0 for necropsies, which the panel calls indispensable, and $500,000 for disentanglements, which the panel says may be counterproductive and are not cost-effective.*

(p. 43); SAMs and DAMs don't work well (p. 44 and 49); the ALWTRT is ineffective and should be disbanded (p. 47 and 52).

- **Research and funding priorities**: There are still major knowledge gaps (p. 9); reliance on passive acoustic monitoring has benefits and drawbacks (p. 10); aerial surveys should be focused on collecting information for demographic assessments (p. 11); maintaining the Catalog and Sightings databases is essential (p. 16); knowledge of population trends is needed (p. 17); a necropsy program is indispensable (p. 18); necropsy sites are needed (p. 18); critical habitats need to be reviewed (p. 23-25); permit delays must be addressed (p. 26-27).

- **General**: Create a North Atlantic right whale recovery team (p. 53); link right whale bycatch reduction measures and the fisheries management process (p. 53); recovery planning needs to be geared towards elimination of anthropogenic mortality, not just reduction (p. 54); improve relations with Canada (p. 55, 56); essential tasks are under-funded (p. 57); the agency's current approach is one of waiting for conclusive evidence and/or industry acceptance before moving ahead; NMFS and other agencies should act more aggressively (p. 57).

Throughout this intelligent and careful document, the conflicts, constraints and conundrums are evident. Evaluating success and cost-effectiveness of recovery activities is not easy. However, the report represents a valuable compilation of information and recommendations that should provide for lively discussion and lead to significant advances in both recovery plans and implementation.

While an excellent document, it is not without flaws. These include adherence to the notions of "failure to recover" and "a declining population." While the report was in preparation, the view changed — based on the November 2006 Consortium meeting at which an upward population trend and an increase in numbers were reported. However, the authors have anticipated this sort of eventuality by stating early on, " … the panel would like nothing better than to be proven wrong …" Science, management, and recovery are dynamic and evolving. Reviews such as this one are invaluable.

The Months Ahead

The Editors

The coming months hold both promise and challenge. Three milestone events have taken place or are in progress: NOAA's 200th anniversary; a review and assessment of the SEUS Implementation Team; and publication of the Marine Mammal Commission's Right Whale Program Review. Also, the Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS) and Final EIS (FEIS) for programmatic scientific research permits, and the FEIS for ship strike reduction and vessel operational measures are expected shortly. Right whale funding has reversed direction and declined from FY04 levels. Finally, these events are set against the backdrop of reports at the November 2006 Right Whale Consortium

meeting that the right whale population is growing. There are political and scientific dimensions to all of these developments. And there is a need and an opportunity for informed and intelligent participation to ensure the best possible outcome of these activities — for humans and for whales.

NOAA's 200th Anniversary: An Opportunity

Jim Hain
Associate Editor

The National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) is celebrating its 200th anniversary this year. The website (celebrating200years.noaa.gov) lists accomplishments, foundations, transformations, and visions. It also lists a series of nation-wide events to celebrate the agency's 200-year history. In the "Transformations" section, the website describes how NOAA is evolving to protect marine mammals and endangered species. Under "Case Studies," it includes "Protecting the North Atlantic Right Whale." In the "Visions" section, it describes what is well known; that is, NOAA has been given responsibility for the nation's most critically endangered marine animals through the Marine Mammal Protection Act and the Endangered Species Act.

In a related website, that of the NOAA strategic planning office (www.spo.noaa.gov), it describes, "Strategic planning at NOAA is an ongoing effort that works best when those who benefit from the activities of the agency and those who provide NOAA products and services are able to contribute to the process. Only by involving stakeholders, employees, and partners can we fulfill NOAA's vision and mission." How then might stakeholders and partners contribute to the agency's transformation, vision, and mission on the occasion of its 200th anniversary?

The North Atlantic right whale and its recovery provide a useful example. At the May 3, 2007, meeting of the SE U.S. Right Whale Recovery Plan Implementation Team in Ponta Vedra, Florida, stakeholders were invited to speak. This agenda item was based on Right Whale Recovery Plan Item 5.3 that calls for "[periodic] review of the mandate, goals, responsibilities, membership, and effectiveness of these [Implementation] teams." Further, "Team membership and activities should subsequently be revised accordingly."

While collaboration and communication among participants at the Team meetings was given high praise, the perception of the stakeholders regarding the relationship of the National Marine Fisheries Service to the Team was less flattering — in both tone and content. This tone and content was somewhat divergent from that of NOAA's 200th website. Likewise, the Marine Mammal Commission's Right Whale Program Review (*see lead article*) makes a number of recommendations.

We, all of us, accept that individuals, institutions, and agencies are imperfect. We also accept that compromise is an essential ingredient of a participatory democracy. Considering the North Atlantic right whale recovery, and the functioning of the

implementation team as a case-in-point — with all of our best efforts, perhaps divergence can move toward convergence.

Fishing Gear Progress

More Entangled Whales

An entangled right whale was sighted January 15 in the southeast U.S.; it was first seen entangled by the New England Aquarium Sept 27, 2006, in the Bay of Fundy. The whale had line through the mouth, potentially around the right flipper and over the back. This animal is still not matched to the catalog, but appears to be a juvenile. A multi-team/agency disentanglement effort was undertaken after a telemetry tag was attached. Despite a number of efforts, one in the southeast and another off of North Carolina, they were unable to fully disentangle the whale. They removed as much gear as possible but some gear still remains in the mouth and on the body. The gear that was removed had hooks in it, suggesting it was long-line gear.

A 16-year old female (*Eg*#2029) was observed entangled with rope in her mouth and both flippers in Cape Cod Bay on March 21. Disentanglement efforts by the Provincetown Center for Coastal Studies were unsuccessful. The rescue team considered her condition life-threatening.

Litigation Leads to Mediation

In February, the Humane Society of the United States and the Ocean Conservancy filed suit against the National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) seeking to force the agency to adopt rules to protect right whales from entanglement in fishing gear by requiring either sinking ground line or neutrally-buoyant line, specifically from floating line. John Grandy with the HSUS stated: “The time for this agency to take action has long since passed. Congress gave the agency 60 days and they have taken 17 months. We can’t afford to wait any longer.”

In May, Judge Ellen Segal Huvelle of the U.S. District Court of the District of Columbia granted the Maine Lobstermen’s Association’s motion to intervene. She also ordered the parties to submit their dispute to mediation. With the principals all at the table, hopefully a solution can be found soon that protects both right whales and the lobster fishing industry.

Late in 2006, Max Strahan filed suit in Federal District Court in Boston seeking to enjoin the Commonwealth of Massachusetts from issuing lobster licenses. In February, Whale Safe U.S.A., with which Mr. Strahan is affiliated, also sued a Massachusetts lobsterman whose “whale-safe gear” was found tangled around a humpback whale, seeking monetary damages and to permanently bar him from fishing in the future. While not ruling in the case, the judge ordered the Commonwealth to monitor developments in fishing gear

technologies and make periodic reports to the court until February 2009, at which time the judge will look at the entire issue again.

Voluntary Gear Buy-back Starts

With a $2 million grant from the National Marine Fisheries Service, the Gulf of Maine Lobster Foundation will initiate a program to pay lobstermen for their floating gear, thus helping them to change over to sinking line as will be required by the NMFS if their proposed rule is adopted. The first buy-back took place in Scarborough, Maine, in late May, with more than 100 fishermen participating. Lobstermen there received vouchers worth $1.40 per pound of float rope. The vouchers can only be used to purchase sinking rope, which costs about twice as much as floating rope. The total cost of the changeover is estimated at $14 million, although NMFS is reviewing that estimate.

Sink Rope Discussion Forum

Commercial Fisheries News (CFN) has recently launched a new web forum called the Sink Rope Discussion Forum. The intention of this forum is to foster the exchange of ideas among fishermen, scientists, and others on "whale-safe" sinking groundline or alternatives. CFN invites national and international parties with an interest in gear technology to join in these discussions. CFN's goal is to foster a rational discussion that will help fishermen make the best rope-buying decisions, and the web site will include the most complete and up-to-date information available on rope development, durability, and use strategies. For more information go to: http://www.fish-news.com/cfn and click on "CFN Sink Rope Discussion Forum." Additionally, a link to this Forum can be found on the Atlantic Large Whale Take Reduction Plan website (http://www.nero.noaa.gov/whaletrp/) under "What's New," as well as under the "Gear Research and Development" link under "The Plan."

Fishing Gear that Could Harm Whales Will Be Cleared from Cape Cod Critical Habitat

NMFS is partnering with the Massachusetts Division of Marine Fisheries, the Massachusetts environmental police, and the nonprofit Provincetown Center for Coastal Studies to locate and remove lost or illegal fishing gear in the Cape Cod Bay and adjacent waters. Endangered right whales use these waters for feeding until the late spring and could become entangled in the gear. Retrieval operations started in January and will continue through May 2007. The effort is being funded by NOAA's Marine Debris Program, through a grant administered by NMFS.

For more information, read the NOAA news release (http://www.publicaffairs.noaa.gov/releases2007/feb07/noaa07-r404.html).

International *Smart Gear* Competition

The 2007 International *Smart Gear* Competition is now open. World Wildlife Fund and its partners created the International *Smart Gear* Competition to inspire innovative, practical, cost-effective ideas that allow fishermen to "fish smarter" – to better target their intended catch while reducing bycatch. The competition is open to all – fishermen, professional gear manufacturers, teachers, students, engineers, scientists and backyard inventors.

The deadline for proposal submissions is July 31, 2007. For more information please go to the following website: http://www.smartgear.org/.

Right Whales and Lobster Fishing in the 21st Century

Amy Knowlton
New England Aquarium

Editor's note: This editorial was originally submitted to the Bangor Daily News *(Bangor, Maine), which printed an abbreviated version on May 2.*

As a right whale research scientist for the past 25 years, I would like to offer some perspective on the issue of right whales and entanglement that was detailed in the article "Lobstermen prepare for legal battle over whales" on April 16th. The article contains three errors in fact.

First, it notes that "lobstermen are facing a significant challenge to the way they have plied their trade …. a way of life that has sustained people on the Maine coast for hundreds of years." Yes, lobster fishing has a long history but it is not an unchanged way of doing business. Technological change, especially in the way that rope is manufactured, has dramatically changed the way lobster is fished. Prior to the 1950's, rope was made out of natural fibers with relatively low breaking strength and a tendency to rot. From the 50's to the early 90's, polypropylene was used to create a stronger, more durable rope. In the early 1990's, polypropylene and polyethelene blends were discovered, substantially increasing the breaking strength of rope used in lobster fishing. This last technological advance has been the most damaging to right whales (and all large whales) as researchers have noted an increased level of severe injury and mortality from entanglement. Rope that a whale could in most instances easily break prior to the 1950's and perhaps even through the 1980's, is now too strong for whales and can become a death trap. Concurrent with this increased breaking strength has been an offshore expansion of lobster fishing and the use of heavier and larger offshore traps, both also negative impacts for this species that is found throughout the Gulf of Maine. If the lobster industry were still primarily coastal, and still using natural fiber lines as they did when this industry started, it is highly unlikely the whales would be in this mess.

The second point is the statement that for the "vast majority of [lobstermen in Maine] their gear is not a problem because it is not placed where whales are found." Although aggregations of right whales have not been documented in coastal Maine waters, right whales do venture near the coast and have even been seen in bays and rivers along the coast of Maine. Sighting records include right whales in East Boothbay, Casco Bay, at Bar Harbor, and inside Isle au Haut. In fact, one severely entangled right whale, named Kingfisher, picked up his lobster gear just two miles from the Maine shoreline during the winter months. The nearshore Maine waters where lobster gear is dense are just as problematic for a lone right whale that happens to venture close to shore as areas further offshore where right whales tend to aggregate but where gear density is lower.

Lastly, the Maine Lobstermen's Association (MLA) "opposes these [anticipated] regulations because they are excessive, are not based on science, and do not demonstrably reduce entanglement risk to whales." Of the gear taken off of large whales during disentanglement events, 30 percent has been documented as floating groundline with the remainder as vertical line or of unknown origin. By requiring these arcs of floating groundline, which can float 30 feet above the seafloor, to be replaced with sinking groundline, there would definitely be a reduction in entanglement risk – a whale cannot get entangled in a line that is not in the water column. Sinking groundline is a critical step in creating lobster gear that is safer for all large whales. The state of Massachusetts has recognized these facts and as of January 1, 2007, now requires sinking groundline in all their state waters.

The MLA, the lobster fishing industry, and Maine politicians need to recognize that the problem for right whales is any line in the water column wherever right whales roam (including the nearshore waters of Maine). The proposed rule would dramatically reduce the amount of line in the water column, thereby lowering the risk of entanglement. Their efforts to keep this proposed rule from seeing the light of day will ensure that some right whales and other large whales will continue to face a slow, painful death in lobster gear that is in no way the same kind of gear that their forefathers fished.

Calvin Project Presentation Leads to Commitment from Senator Collins to Protect Both Right Whales and Fishermen

Bill McWeeny
The Adams School

On May 5, students from the Adams School in Castine, Maine, presented the Calvin Project to Maine's U.S. Senator Susan Collins. The presentation was initially limited to five minutes because of Senator Collins' schedule but it actually lasted 12 minutes because of her interest in the project. The presentation so impressed her that she committed on the spot to the protection of both right whales and lobster fishermen.

Presented by Calvineers David Bertrand, Truman Forbes, Tess Lameyer, Storme Macomber, and Meredith Olivari, the program informed Senator Collins about a right

whale named Calvin whose mother was entangled in fishing gear and killed by a ship strike. She learned that 71 percent of right whales have entanglement scars and last year, six right whales were killed by accident. A rubber band was placed around the Senator's fingers and she was asked to try to get it off with only the entangled hand. While attempting to untangle herself, she mentioned how hard it was and how getting untangled for a right whale would be even more difficult. The demonstration brought the entanglement experience to life for the Senator.

The students told Senator Collins that the National Marine Fisheries Service had proposed rules requiring the use of sinking ground line on lobster traps and slowing ships down in right whale habitats. The rules were proposed in 2005, and now it is 2007 and the rules are being held up in the Office of Management and Budget. The students asked her what she was going to do to help lower the risk of accidentally killing right whales and what she was doing about the proposed rules.

Senator Collins responded:

First of all I think that you Calvineers said it very well when you said that everyone cares about the whales, and that we all want to take steps to make sure that they're not harmed.

And that's why we're working at the federal level with the National Marine Fisheries Service on new regulations. But we want to make sure also that what we propose actually works and that it doesn't put all of our fishermen out of business, as well.

So what I have proposed is that we give our lobstermen, our fishermen, some help in changing their gear…we want to preserve the right whale, that's absolutely critical … but we also want to preserve our lobstermen, and … our fishing industry, which is already very regulated too.

So one way to do that is to help them switch to gear … to new kinds of sinking line, and other kinds of gear that will make it easier for them to afford to switch to gear that is less likely to get entangled with the whales and I think that's the best approach to do.

I also support the rules on requiring ships to travel more slowly when they're in the habitat areas of the right whales. You taught me a lot today. From what I understand they're likely to be in certain places at certain times of the year. So it seems to me that you can craft the regulations to take into account where they're likely to be. But I think you said it very well when you said this is a goal that everybody has. I think all of us love whales and they are magnificent creatures and it would be awful if the right whale became extinct, and that's why we do need regulations to help make sure that those four hundred that are left not only survive but they can grow.

Right Whale Interactive Virtual Field Trip for Students

The Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission is hosting an interactive field trip that explores the "North Atlantic Right Whale: A struggle to avoid extinction." The field trip is available through www.eFieldTrips.org and consists of three components: a one-page eFieldTrip Journal, an interactive flash virtual visit and an opportunity to post questions for experts. This and other field trips are offered free as a service by Distance Learning Integrators, Inc.

More Dead Whales

- A two-year-old male (*Eg*#3508) was found 18 miles off Jekyll Island, Georgia, on December 30. The 20 propeller cuts indicate a vessel strike, possibly by a "large pleasure craft;" the propeller responsible for the cuts was estimated to be 32 to 38 inches in diameter. Preliminary drift analyses suggest the vessel strike occurred close to Jacksonville.

- A neonate male calf (401 cm, 749 kg) was sighted off Ponta Vedra Beach, Florida, on January 25, dead of complications associated with birth. The calf's mother has not been identified but it is possible that genetic analysis will tell us who she was.

- An adult male (*Eg*#1424) was found dead in the Gulf of Maine on March 25. The carcass was not retrieved so the cause of death cannot be determined. However, the animal had been entangled for at least five years.

- A 3 to 4 month-old male calf was seen floating off the Outer Banks of North Carolina on March 31. While there was evidence of entanglement, the cause of death could not be determined.

- Probably dead: An 11-year old female (*Eg*#2425) was hit by 43-foot boat off Georgia two years ago; it was sighted this March off Cape Cod in very poor health and ghostly white. It appears to by dying of a systemic infection from the propeller wounds.

Report from the Calving Ground

Data provided by Amy Knowlton and Monica Zani of the New England Aquarium

The 2006-2007 calving season resulted in 21 known calves, of which two have died so far. One of these died of complications associated with birth, and the other was found off North Carolina with signs of entanglement but dead of undetermined cause(s). Eighteen of the calves were first seen in the southeastern waters of Florida, Georgia and South

Carolina. On April 21, the University of North Carolina at Wilmington survey team led by Bill McLellan sighted a cow and a new calf off the coast of North Carolina near the Virginia border; the mother was not in the New England Aquarium's catalog, and the calf had not been seen previously. In late April, the Provincetown Center for Coastal Studies sighted a new calf off Cape Cod; it had not been seen previously. Of the 20 known mothers, nine were first-time mothers. The calving interval for the 2006-07 season is 3.6 years.

State Department Contests Canada's Desire to Protect Its Coastal Waters from Proposed LNG Terminals in Maine

On March 10, the U.S. State Department issued a statement indicating that they will contest Canada's stand to protect the Quoddy Region on the Maine/New Brunswick border from liquefied natural gas (LNG) development in coastal Maine. Currently, there are three proposals before the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission to build and operate LNG facilities on the Maine shore of Passamaquoddy Bay.

Massachusetts Bay LNG Facility Issued Incidental Harassment Authorization

The National Marine Fisheries Service has authorized the incidental take of right whales and other whales by harassment during the construction and operation of the offshore LNG terminal 13 miles off the Massachusetts coast and a 16-mile long pipeline to shore. The authorization, issued to the Northeast Gateway Energy Bridge and Algonquin Gas Transmission, is described in the *Federal Register* (72 (92): 27077 – 27091; May 14, 2007).

As a result of public comment submitted by the Marine Mammal Commission, the Whale Center of New England, the Provincetown Center for Coastal Studies, the Humane Society of the US and others, several measures were included in the authorization to protect whales, including speed restrictions, routes, and the use of night-vision glasses and passive acoustic monitoring and a prohibition on blasting during construction. The NMFS found the Whale Center's assertion that 100 right whales could be taken each year by the project was not "scientifically supported," and stated that right whales were sporadic visitors to the project area during the April to November period.

Oil Drilling off Virginia in 2011?

A triangular slice of the outer continental shelf off Virginia may be opened to oil and gas exploration and development if the Minerals Management Service has its say.

On April 30, Secretary of the Interior Dirk Kempthorne announced the MMS' Five-Year Outer Continental Shelf Oil and Gas Leasing Program, which includes lease sales in the Western and Central Gulf of Mexico, Alaska, and possibly the Mid-Atlantic off Virginia. The Virginia tract lies offshore of a 50-mile buffer and avoids shipping conflicts off Cheasapeake Bay. The Virginia lease sale, scheduled for 2011, would require the President to modify the withdrawal of the Mid-Atlantic from OCS exploration and development, and the Congress would have to discontinue its annual appropriations moratorium.

The proposed lease sales in Alaska include Bristol Bay, habitat for the North Pacific right whale (*Eubalaena japonica*). Bristol Bay has been off limits for oil drilling for two decades but in January, President Bush lifted the ban. Bristol Bay has been called the epicenter of the Bering Sea fishery, with commercial harvests of salmon, halibut, herring and crab generating more than $2 million annually.

A Notice of Availability of the five-year program and the Final Environmental Impact Statement appeared in the *Federal Register* May 2.

Funding Status and Outlook

As of June 1, at the end of the eighth month of the FY07 fiscal year and 67 percent of the way through the year, the gleanings on right whale funding are as follows:

National Fish and Wildlife Foundation

Susie Holst, Assistant Director for Marine Programs reports that there will be no FY07 funds specifically for right whale conservation, but that approximately $450,000 will be available under the National Whale Conservation Fund. Right whale projects will be able to apply so long as they fit within the priorities of the RFP, which will be posted shortly on the NFWF website (www.nfwf.org/whalefund).

Right Whale Grants Program

Richard Merrick, Northeast Fisheries Science Center/NMFS, reports that there will be no Right Whale Grants Program for FY07.

Right Whale Spending Plan

Funding for right whale recovery has decreased significantly over the last several years. In Fiscal Year 2004, $12.45 million was available for right whales; in FY05, $11.83 million; and in FY06, $7.78 million.

With the cooperation of the National Marine Fisheries Service, *Right Whale News* has published fiscal year spending plans — the most recent for FY06 (August 06 issue). With the assistance of Phil Williams and David Cottingham, Office of Protected Resources/NMFS, *RWN* is able to provide the FY07 spending plan:

NMFS Right Whale Spending Plan for the FY07 Congressional appropriation item of $7.8 million. Dollar amounts are expressed in thousands.

	NEC	NER	SEC	SER	F/PR	Total
Total Received	2,734	2,303	653	1,655	488	7,833
Right whale necropsy	0	0	0	0	0	0
Disentanglement	0	500	0	0	0	500
Right whale gear research	0	0	0	0	0	0
Aerial surveys (non-state cooperative funded)	549	0	480	250	0	1,279
NMFS salaries (Full time equivalents and contract)	1253	1070	163	369	208	3,063
Take Reduction Team support	0	125	0	0	0	125
State cooperative funding (including funds for aerial surveys, recovery implementation, and enforcement)	50	568	0	976	0	1,594
Ship strike reduction	0	20	0	0	260	280
Health assessment	0	0	0	0	0	0
Stranding response	0	0	0	20	0	20
Habitat research	80	0	0	0	0	80
Whale detection technologies	0	0	0	0	0	0
Sightings database/Photo-ID catalog	408	0	0	0	0	408
Travel and Misc. Administrative costs	394	20	10	40	20	484

Key: NEC=Northeast Center, NER=Northeast Region, SEC=Southeast Center, SER=Southeast Region, F/PR=Protected Resources Headquarters.

Of the $7,833,000 received, $3,063,000, or 39 percent, is used for salaries of NMFS staff and contractors. This item has gradually increased over the years, being 33 percent in FY06.

Changes

Jim Hain, Associated Scientists at Woods Hole and Associate Editor of *Right Whale News*, has been elected to the University-National Oceanographic Laboratory System Scientific Committee for Oceanographic Aircraft Research (SCOAR) for a three-year term.

The board of directors of the Provincetown Center for Coastal Studies elected **Richard Delaney** as executive director, effective July 1. He will replace **Peter Borrelli,** who is retiring after 12 years at the helm. Mr. Delaney previously worked for the Massachusetts Office of Coastal Zone Management. He was founding director of the Urban Harbors Institute at the University of Massachusetts – Boston. He also helped establish environmental programs at the Cape Cod National Seashore and the Waquoit Bay National Estuarine Research Reserve.

Vessel-Quieting Workshop

Brandon L. Southall, Director, NOAA Ocean Acoustics Program

NOAA's international symposium "Potential Application of Vessel-Quieting Technology on Large Commercial Vessels" was held May 1-2 in Silver Spring, Maryland. Nearly 100 people attended the symposium from diverse sectors of industry, government, academia, environmental NGOs, and the media, including speakers and participants from eight different countries. Speakers and working groups discussed target characteristics for vessel quieting, identified noise measurement data needs; debated which of the many possible quieting technologies may be most relevant and feasible for large ships; and proposed economic and other potential incentives for the shipping industry to implement quieting technologies. Overall, participants clearly felt that this was a relevant issue for consideration, but one that is not widely known among the industry, and that there was significant potential for at least moderate degrees of vessel-quieting with minimal to moderate effort and cost. Next steps include production of a meeting report by workshop participants with an options "menu" of vessel-quieting options with respective pros and cons, the introduction of an information paper on the issue to the International Maritime Organization and industry trade journals, and follow-on discussions with ship designers and architects to hopefully begin implementing some quieting technologies in the relatively near term. A subset of attendees at the symposium also intends to meet with business leaders in the community to discuss potential obstacles to vessel-quieting efforts posed by the complex economics of ship designing, building, and operation.

Fact Sheet on North Atlantic Right Whale

Student members of the Society of Marine Mammalogy may win free registrations to the Society's biennial meeting in Cape Town in November - December (*see Calendar of Events*) by submitting a one or two page fact sheet on the North Atlantic right whale. The fact sheet should be written for a general undergraduate audience. Winning entrants may be invited to prepare a second version of the fact sheet for a more general audience (particularly for educators of K-12 students). Closing date for proposals is June 30. For further information, contact Helene Marsh, chair of the society's Scientific Advisory Committee at helene.marsh@jcu.edu.au

NMFS Denies Petition to List All Right Whales As Single Species

On March 8, the nonprofit organization GreenWorld petitioned the National Marine Fisheries Service to designate the global populations of right whales as a single species with the common name Black Whale. On May 30, NMFS denied the petition, citing the lack of substantial scientific or commercial information justifying the change (*Federal Register* 72 (103): 29973-29974). NMFS currently recognizes two species of northern right whales, the North Atlantic right whale (*Eubalaena glacialis*) and the North Pacific right whale (*E. japonica*); the agency is also reviewing the status of the Southern right whale (*E. australis*).

Post Doctoral Fellow Sought

The World Wildlife Fund-Canada and Dalhousie University are seeking a highly qualified Post Doc to participate in a 2 ½ year quantitative North Atlantic right whale conservation initiative based in Halifax, Nova Scotia. The Post Doc would lead research in quantitative special and temporal oceanographic habitat determination and analyses related to right whale migration and habitat occupancy. For further information, contact Ms. Maya Ahmad at WWF-Canada: mahmad@wwfcanada.org

Scientific Literature and Reports

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Calendar of Events

June 30: Deadline for student members of the Society of Marine Mammalogy to submit right whale fact sheet entries. See article on page 14 for details.

July 24-26: Third International Workshop on Detection and Localization of Marine Mammals using Passive Acoustics. Boston, Massachusetts. For more information, contact Heather Pettis at the New England Aquarium: hpettis@neaq.org

September 1: Deadline for submitting abstracts for the annual meeting of the North Atlantic Right Whale Consortium meeting (see Nov. 7-8, below).

October 18: Fall meeting of the Southeastern United States Implementation Team for the Recovery of the North Atlantic Right Whale (SEIT). Tentative location: Environmental

Education Center, Guana Tolomato Matanzas National Estuarine Research Reserve, Ponta Vedra, Florida. For information, contact SEIT co-chair Leslie Ward at Leslie.Ward@MyFWC.com

November 7 - 8: Annual meeting of the North Atlantic Right Whale Consortium, New Bedford Whaling Museum, New Bedford, Massachusetts. For further information, contact Heather Pettis, Consortium Secretary, at hpettis@neaq.org

November 29-December 3: 17th Biennial Conference on the Biology of Marine Mammals, Cape Town, South Africa. Sponsored by the Society for Marine Mammalogy. For more information, visit the Society's web site: http://www.marinemammalogy.org/

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