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Marine Fisheries Advisory

DMF to Host Scoping Meeting on State Response to Anticipated Changes to Federal Atlantic Large Whale Take Reduction Plan Affecting Trap Fisheries

The Division of Marine Fisheries (DMF) has scheduled two scoping meetings to discuss the state's response to anticipated changes to the federal Atlantic Large Whale Take Reduction Plan (ALWTRP). The meeting schedule is as follows:

6PM

February 18, 2020

Admiral's Hall, MA Maritime Academy

101 Academy Drive

Buzzard's Bay, MA 02532

6PM

February 19, 2020

DMF's Annisquam River Field Station

30 Emerson Avenue

Gloucester, MA 01930

In response to recent population trends, NOAA Fisheries' Atlantic Large Whale Take Reduction Team (TRT) has been working to amend the ALWTRP to consider federal regulatory adjustments to reduce the risk of serious injury and mortality posed by trap fishing gear, specifically vertical buoy lines, to endangered right whales that may become entangled therein. The TRT subsequently endorsed a preliminary framework that established a 60% risk reduction target. Over the course of the last year, DMF staff has been working with NOAA fisheries to provide updated data analyses and regulatory advice. The purpose of this meeting will be to review NOAA Fisheries analyses regarding how the state can achieve this federally imposed risk reduction target. Comments received will help DMF engage on federal rule making moving forward.

Right whales are a critically endangered species. They seasonally migrate into Massachusetts waters and aggregate in Cape Cod Bay to feed on zooplankton during the late-winter and early-spring. In recent years about 65% of the known right whale population has been seasonally observed in our waters. The entanglement of whales in fixed fishing gear, particularly vertical buoy lines, is a substantial source of human-caused mortality.

Please note, starting February 1, 2020, all DMF advisories will be posted through our new email subscription service. To ensure your subscription with DMF continues, we kindly ask you review your [subscriber preferences](#). With this new service you can customize emails based on your personal interests such as newsletters, commercial and/or recreational fishing advisories, event updates and more. Thank you for your continued interest in DMF.

For more information regarding the management of protected species, please visit our [website](#).