



# The Commonwealth of Massachusetts Division of Marine Fisheries



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April 29, 2022

## Marine Fisheries Advisory

### **Reminder: Trap Gear and Gillnet Closures to Remain in Effect Until May 15**

This advisory serves as a reminder that state-waters portions of the Massachusetts Restricted Area and the state-wide gillnet closure will remain in effect through May 15 to protect right whales. The commercial trap gear closure applies to all state waters north of Cape Cod to the New Hampshire border and east of Cape Cod east of 70°00' west longitude (see [map](#)), whereas the commercial gillnet closure applies to all state waters. These closures are designed to prevent endangered right whales from becoming entangled in fixed gear and their buoy lines. Given the density of right whales around Massachusetts waters, DMF has also extended the seasonal speed restricted area in Cape Cod Bay until May 15 (see [notice](#)). Should observational data demonstrate right whales have migrated out of Massachusetts waters, DMF may lift the trap and gillnet closures, as well as the small vessel speed limit, prior to May 15.

The Division of Marine Fisheries, in conjunction with the Provincetown Center for Coastal Studies, continues aerial surveillance of right whales within Cape Cod Bay and Massachusetts Bay. The most recent flight, on April 25, 2022, observed 59 right whales including 10 mother/calf pairs in the waters of Cape Cod Bay, southern Massachusetts Bay, and Stellwagen Bank (Figure 1). All tracklines were not able to be completed due to documentation of an entangled whale (Snowcone), thus it is likely there are more than 59 right whales in the Bay. In addition, other right whale observations during the month of April have demonstrated aggregations of right whales throughout the spatial extent of Massachusetts coastal waters and surrounding areas (Figure 2). This heavy use of Massachusetts waters in the month of April is very common. Additional surveillance flights are anticipated to occur over the next several days to update our understanding of whale distribution. DMF will reevaluate the status of this closure based on the presence or absence of whales.

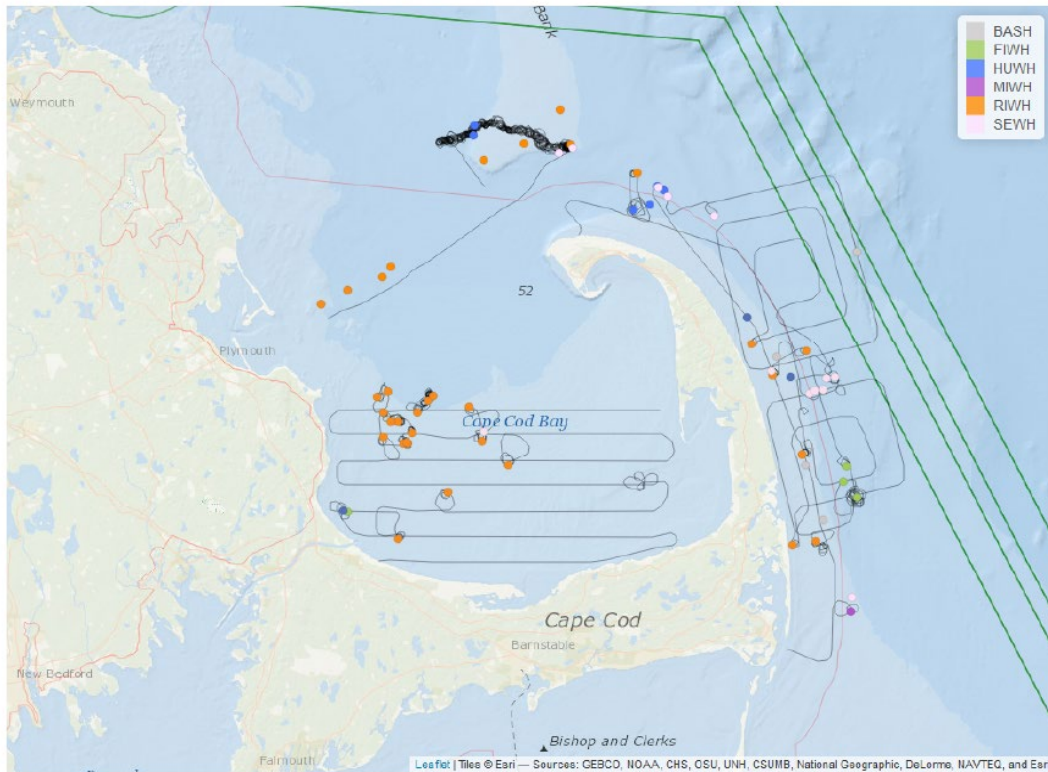


Figure 1. April 25 aerial survey of Cape Cod Bay (right whale sightings in orange).

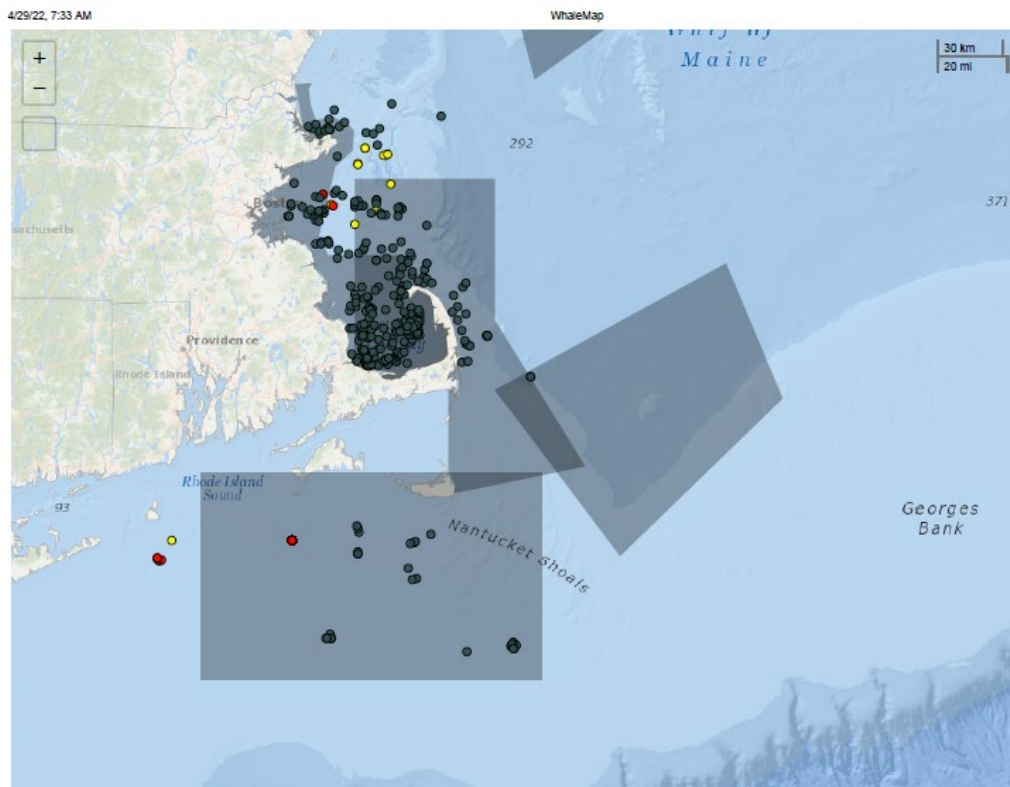


Figure 2. Sightings/detections of North Atlantic right whales April 1, 2022 through April 28, 2022. Black dots are definite visual sightings, while yellow and red represent possible and definite acoustic detections, respectively.

For more information regarding protected marine species in Massachusetts, please visit our website: [www.mass.gov/marinefisheries](http://www.mass.gov/marinefisheries).