



The Commonwealth of Massachusetts

Division of Marine Fisheries

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Marine Fisheries Advisory

NOAA Fisheries Proposed Vessel Speed Limit Rule to Protect Right Whales

The federal government, through NOAA Fisheries, is currently taking public comment on proposed changes to their current 10-knot vessel speed limit rule to further reduce the likelihood of lethal vessel collisions with right whales. The current and proposed regulation would apply to all vessels – not just fishing vessels.

The proposed rule seeks to: (1) modify the spatial and temporal boundaries of current speed restriction areas; (2) apply the existing 10 knot seasonal speed limit rule to most vessels between 35' and 65' length; and (3) creating a dynamic framework to implement speed restrictions at times and places outside of speed restricted areas when right whales are known to be present. Relevant to Massachusetts, the proposed Atlantic speed restricted area would occur during the period of November 1 – May 30 and apply within most waters under the jurisdiction of the Commonwealth, as well as adjacent federal waters (see [map](#)). NOAA Fisheries is accepting public comment through October 31, 2022 and written public comment may be submitted through their [online portal](#). For more information, please view NOAA Fisheries' [notice](#) and [website](#) for this proposed rule.

Please visit our website (www.mass.gov/marinefisheries).