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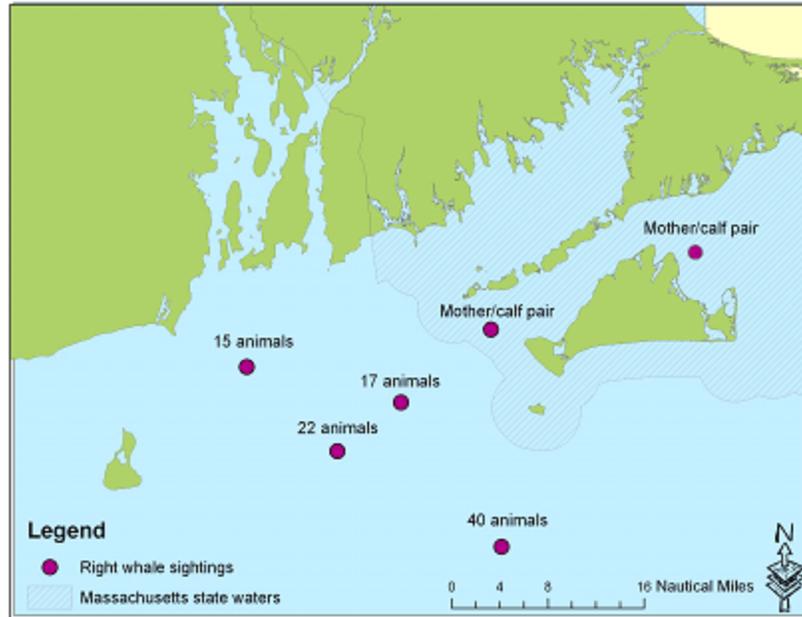


Deval Patrick
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April 22, 2010
Advisory To Mariners

RIGHT WHALES AROUND MARTHA'S VINEYARD

Aerial surveys conducted this week by the National Marine Fisheries Service spotted two right whale mother/calf pairs near Martha's Vineyard. In addition, at least 94 other right whales were seen feeding to the west and south of Martha's Vineyard in federal waters. It is unknown how much food exists in the area or how long the animals will stay there. However, mariners around Martha's Vineyard are advised to be on the look-out for the mother/calf pairs. Their near-surface feeding and traveling activities put them at risk for vessel collision. For the safety of both mariners and the whales, **vessel operators are strongly urged to reduce speed (less than 10 knots), post lookouts, and proceed with caution to avoid colliding with this highly endangered whale.**



Vessels are also prohibited by state and federal law from approaching within 500 yards of a right whale. Massachusetts Environmental Police and U.S. Coast Guard are authorized to enforce the 500- yard rule. Fishermen are reminded that the approach rule also prohibits them from starting fishing operations (setting or hauling gear) within 500 yards of a right whale.

The National Marine Fisheries Service (NOAA Fisheries) issues warnings to mariners via the Northern Right Whale Sighting Advisory System (SAS). Participating agencies in the SAS include *Marine Fisheries* and the Massachusetts Environmental Police, the U.S. Coast Guard, the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (ACOE), CCS, and other research groups. Advisories can be viewed at the NOAA Fisheries Northeast Region web site (<http://rwhalesightings.nefsc.noaa.gov>) and are broadcast over NOAA weather radio (<http://205.156.54.206/nwr/>).

For more information, visit the *Marine Fisheries* website at www.mass.gov/marinefisheries or contact Erin Burke (Erin.Burke@state.ma.us, 978 551-0152) or Dan McKiernan (dan.mckiernan@state.ma.us, 617 626-1536).

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