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Marine Fisheries Advisory

Notice to Lobster Fishers and Mariners: Persistent Aggregation of North Atlantic Right Whales Present off Gloucester

Fifty-two endangered North Atlantic right whales were observed this week in Massachusetts Bay, including 30+ individuals concentrated off Gloucester in the vicinity of position 42° 36' N, 70° 27' W (Figure 1). There were also 6 mother/calf pairs documented in Massachusetts Bay during this time. Click [here](#) for an interactive right whale observation map. There is a substantial amount of lobster gear in the area off Gloucester outside the boundaries of the seasonal Massachusetts Restricted Area trap/pot closure (more on the MRA [here](#)). This poses an acute entanglement risk to the whales feeding and socializing in this area. **DMF strongly urges any lobster fishers with gear in the area off Gloucester to move their gear as soon as possible and keep away from the area until surveys indicate that the whales have moved on.** As these whales are also at a substantial risk of vessel strike, NOAA Fisheries has initiated a series of voluntary Slow Zones (Figure 2) in response to these sightings where mariners are requested to reduce their speed to at least 10 knots. The current Slow Zones in this area in effect through May 6, 2026. **DMF strongly urges lobster fishers and all mariners transiting this area to use extreme caution and not exceed speeds of 10 knots.**

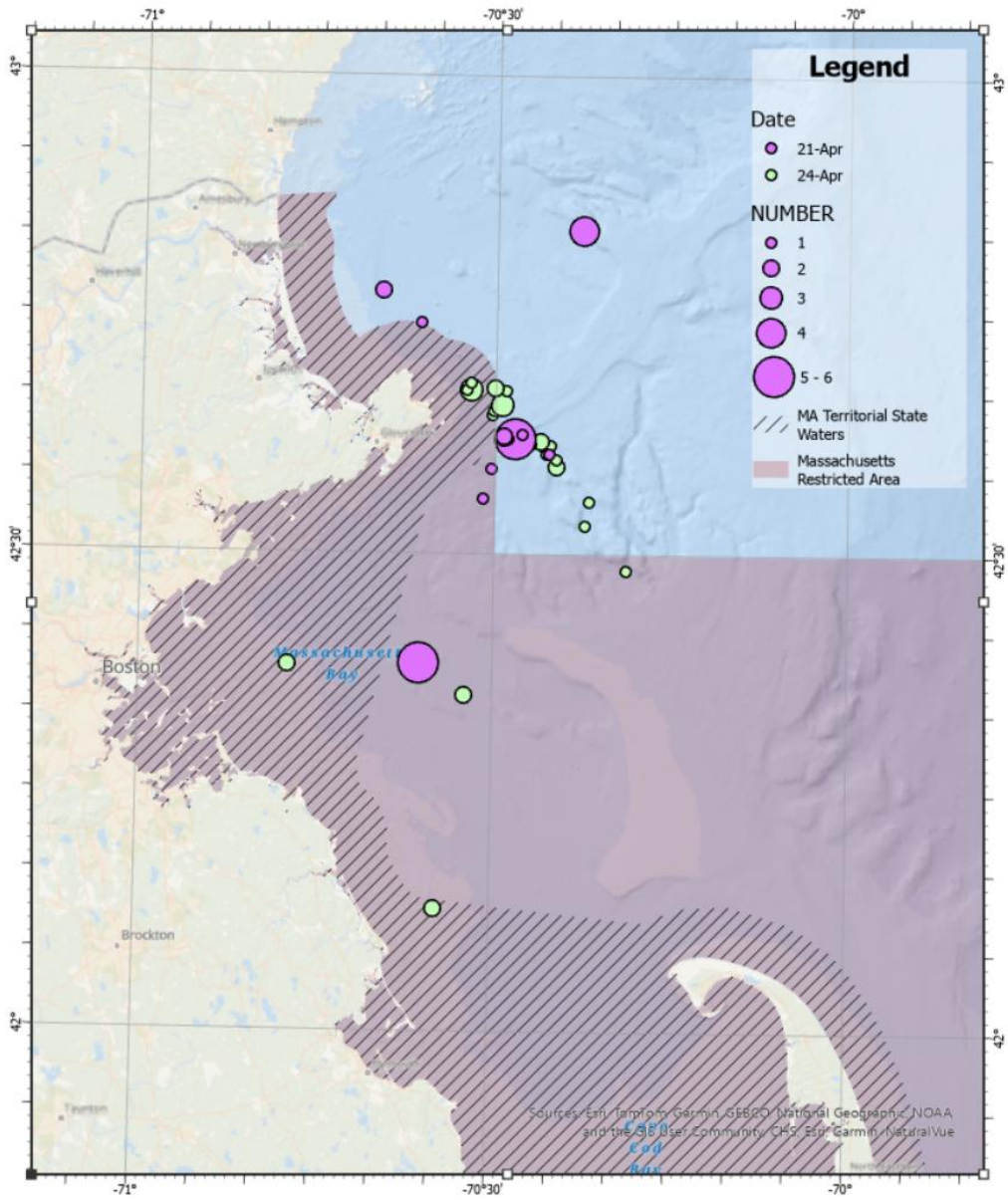


Figure 1: Sightings of North Atlantic right whales by the Center for Coastal Studies aerial surveys on April 21 and 24, 2026.

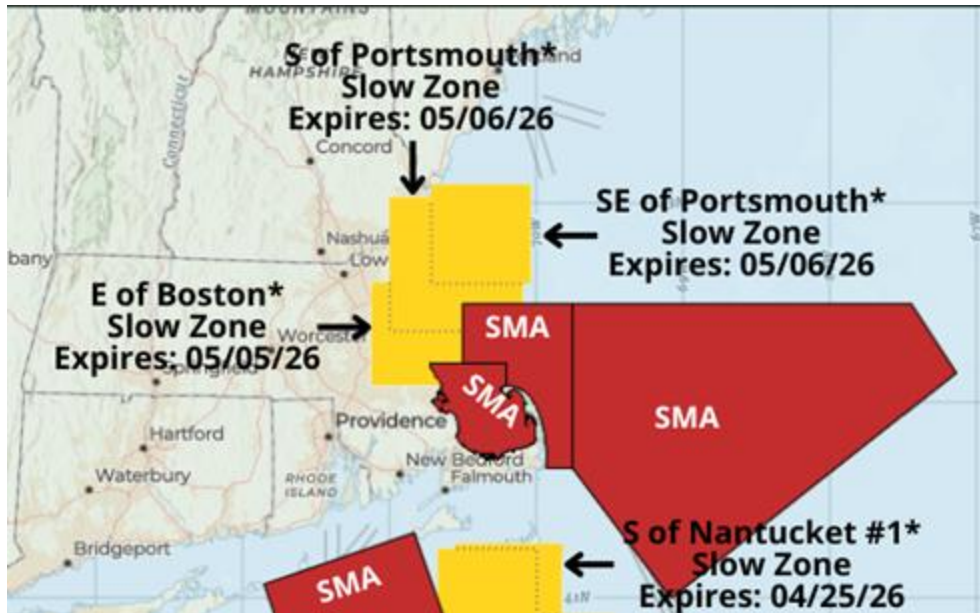


Figure 2: NOAA Fisheries Voluntary Slow Zones (yellow) and Mandatory Season Management Areas (red) relevant to vessel speed restrictions.

For more information on Right Whale Slow Zones, click [here](#).