



The Commonwealth of Massachusetts

Division of Marine Fisheries

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April 29, 2025

Marine Fisheries Advisory

Reminder: Seasonal Trap and Gillnet Gear Closure to Protect Right Whales Will Remain in Effect

This advisory serves as notice that the Massachusetts Seasonal Trap and Gillnet Closures to Protect Right Whales is in effect until May 15 due to the continued presence of right whales. DMF is closely monitoring visual and acoustic detections of right whales in our coastal waters and may lift these closures (and the small vessel speed limit in Cape Cod Bay) prior to May 15 if right whales have migrated out of Massachusetts waters. 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 and the recreational buoyed trap gear closure applies to all state waters. These closures are designed to prevent endangered right whales from becoming entangled in buoy lines associated with fixed gear. DMF has also extended the seasonal speed restriction in Cape Cod Bay until May 15, given the dense aggregations of right whales (see [Notice](#)).

The Division of Marine Fisheries, in conjunction with the Provincetown Center for Coastal Studies, continues to monitor the presence of right whales in Cape Cod Bay and Massachusetts Bay through aerial survey. On April 29, 2025, a partial aerial survey of Cape Cod Bay detected 49 right whales, including 1 mother/calf pair (Figure 1). Additional visual and acoustic detections have been reported in Massachusetts coastal waters over the last week (Figure 2). DMF has also been tracking acoustic detections of right whales at near real-time monitoring stations in Cape Cod Bay and off Cape Ann in collaboration with Woods Hole Oceanographic Institution. The monitoring buoy in Cape Cod Bay continues to show strong presence of right whales in the area, with detections confirmed every day since deployment in late February. While the Cape Ann buoy has recently begun picking up detections in the last week. This is an expected pattern of presence in late April. Information about acoustic detections can be found [HERE](#). 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.

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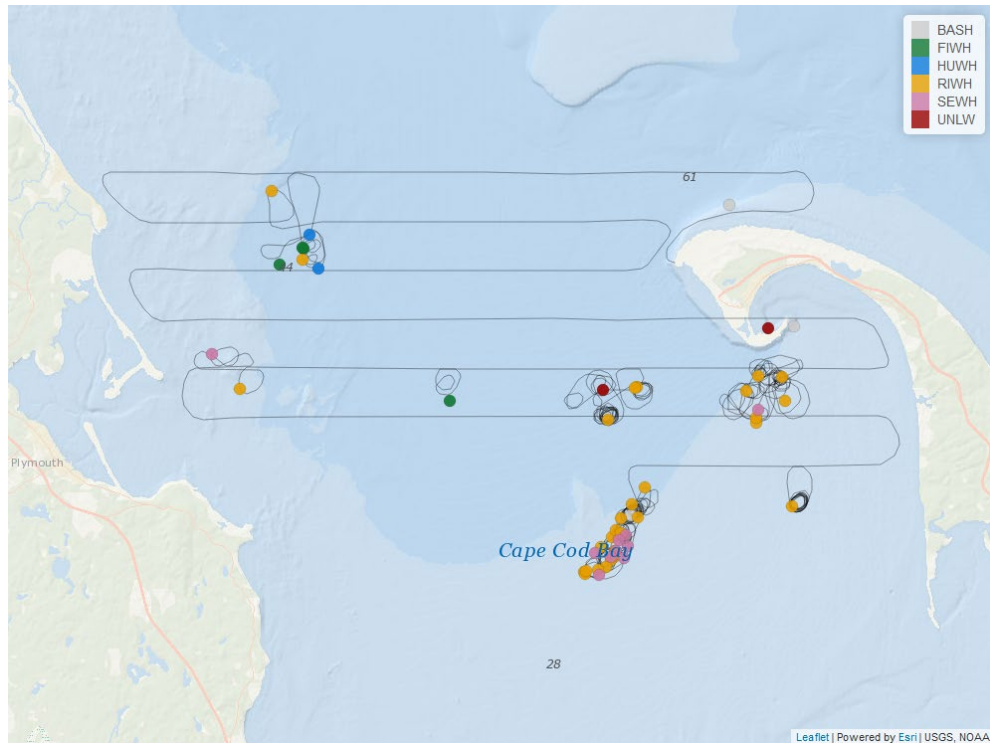


Figure 1. April 29, 2025 partial aerial survey of Cape Cod Bay (right whale sightings in orange).

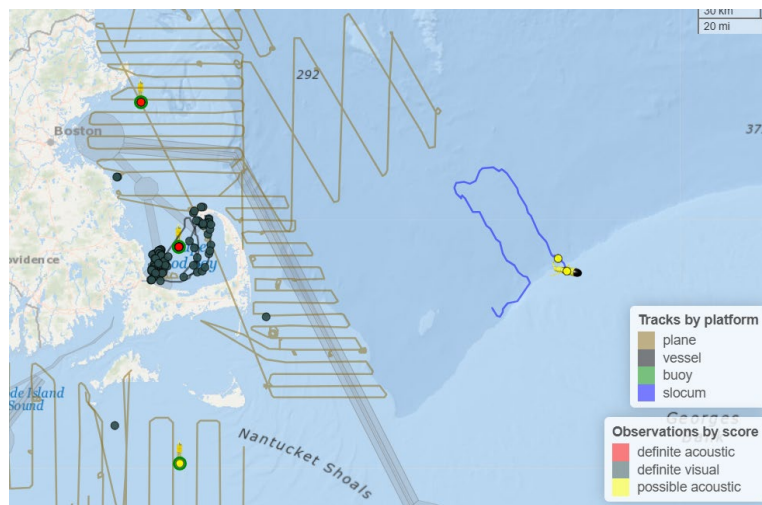


Figure 2. Visual sightings and acoustic detections of North Atlantic right whales April 22, 2025 through April 28, 2024. Black dots are definite visual sightings, while yellow and red represent possible and definite acoustic detections, respectively. (Data source: [Whale Map](#))

For more information regarding the management of protected species in Massachusetts, please visit our website: <https://www.mass.gov/info-details/conservation-of-protected-marine-species>