



The Commonwealth of Massachusetts

Division of Marine Fisheries

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May 13, 2022

Marine Fisheries Advisory

UPDATE ON DMF'S MONITORING FOR RIGHT WHALES IN COASTAL WATERS

Due to inclement weather over the past week, no surveillance flights have occurred since Friday May 6th. A combination of sustained northeast winds and fog has prevented the flights from being conducted. We anticipate aerial surveillance to resume Saturday May 14th and will announce the results of that survey late on Saturday, along with a decision about whether to extend the trap/pot closure and 10-knot speed limit beyond Sunday. Fishermen using trap/pot gears should plan on the areas remaining closed this weekend (both Saturday and Sunday). The fishery is scheduled to open on Monday May 16th.

Right whales have demonstrated a consistent pattern of departing from Massachusetts coastal waters in the first two weeks of May. The last surveillance flight showed right whales were absent in lower Cape Cod Bay with scattered aggregations outside that area. Given the potential impact of recent weather on right whale food resources and the time of year, we anticipate that right whales will follow migration patterns that are consistent with past trends.

DMF appreciates the cooperation and patience of all the fishing industry participants and stakeholders. We are sensitive to the challenges these issues can have on fishers who are unable to make plans to begin their trap fishing season. DMF will issue a new Advisory late on Saturday May 14th to keep all informed of new developments.