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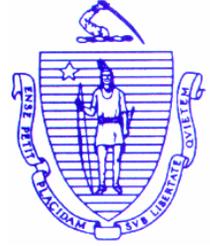
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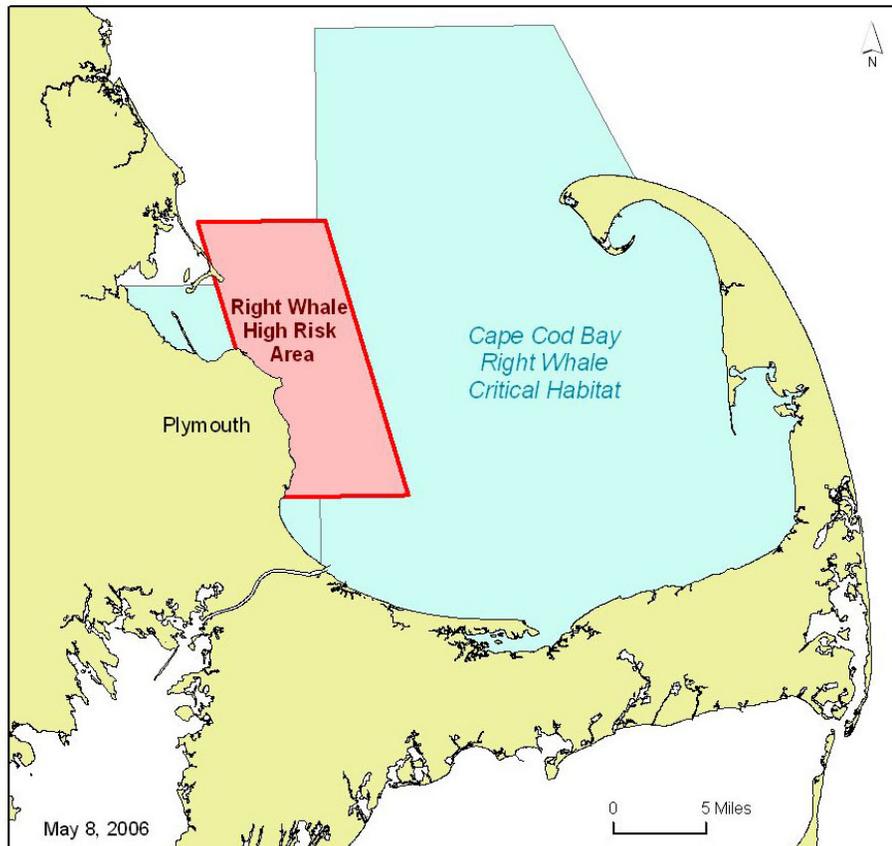


ADVISORY TO MARINERS

RIGHT WHALES CONTINUE TO AGGREGATE IN WESTERN CAPE COD BAY

Right whales continue to aggregate and feed in western Cape Cod Bay. The extremely dense zooplankton resource in this area places feeding right whales at an elevated risk of ship strike. *Marine Fisheries* issued an initial advisory for this area on April 25, however, the current High Risk Area has been shifted to the west. This corresponds with a change in distribution of the whales and the zooplankton resource, now overlapping with the Cape Cod Canal shipping lanes. Zooplankton surveys indicate that right whales will continue feeding in this area for several days.

Marine Fisheries recommends that vessel operators use extreme caution in this area. Reduce speeds (as slow as 12 knots) and post lookouts to avoid colliding with this highly endangered whale. It is recommended that ships transiting between Cape Cod Canal and Boston use extreme caution. The Massachusetts Environmental Police and the Coast Guard have been notified.



OTHER RIGHT WHALE UPDATES

The High Risk Area off Race Point has been suspended. Zooplankton densities are not high enough to support right whale foraging. Thus the risk of ship strike in this area is expected to be low.

In another action, the National Marine Fisheries Service has triggered a DAM closure of an area east of Boston from May 10-24. Lobster trap/pot and anchored gillnet fishing gear in this zone must comply with required gear modifications. <http://www.nero.noaa.gov/whaletrp/>

A portion of the DAM overlaps with Cape Cod Bay Critical Habitat, which has state-mandated gear regulations. The gear requirements inside the Critical Habitat are still in effect until May 15, after which the DAM requirements will continue in that area until May 24. Setting single pots in state waters will be allowed during this DAM, so long as buoylines are composed of non-buoyant line (except the bottom third) and all buoys have a 600-lb weaklink. It should be noted that setting single pots in Cape Cod Bay Critical Habitat is only allowed after May 15.

More information on gear modifications can be found at the following sites:

Commonwealth of Massachusetts Regulations related to right whales
<http://www.mass.gov/dfwele/dmf/commercialfishing/322cmr12.htm#12.03>

Atlantic Large Whale Take Reduction Plan gear modifications
<http://www.nero.noaa.gov/whaletrp/>

If you have any questions, please contact Erin Burke (Erin.Burke@state.ma.us, 978 551-0152) or Dan McKiernan (dan.mckiernan@state.ma.us, 617 626-1536). Center for Coastal Studies (www.coastalstudies.org) right whale researchers Dr. Charles (Stormy) Mayo and Dr. Nathalie Jaquet can be reached at (508) 487-3623.

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