

North Atlantic Right Whale Recovery Plan Northeast U.S. Implementation Team

Working towards recovery in the Greater Atlantic Region.



NEIT Priority Development

The NEIT uses priorities to consider where to focus team meetings and guide discussion. Below are the NEIT priorities that the team generated for 2019-2023 based on recovery actions and recommendations found in documents such as the North Atlantic Right Whale Recovery Plan and past 5-year reviews. For more information on NEIT priority development, see the [2019 March 27-28 Meeting Summary](#) where these priorities were developed.

NEIT Top Nine Priorities (Identified for 2019-2023)*

- *Identify where the whales are, especially reproductive females. Consider prey modeling studies.*
- *Modeling studies (present conditions and projected into the future) on (1) spatial and temporal movement of whales and copepods, (2) whale habitat and distribution, and (3) climate models*
- *Define existing fixed gear fishing locations with high degree of specificity*
- *Use necropsies to determine the cause of death, and use such data to reduce mortalities.*
- **Notify individual ships directly when their course is likely to bring them to or near a location where a whale was sighted by the aircraft. (NOTE: NEIT noted this specific to SMA/DMA Real-Time)**
- **Assess the effectiveness of ship strike measures and adjust, as necessary.**
- **NMFS should develop a long-term, cross-regional plan for monitoring right whale population trends and habitat use.**
- **Reduce or eliminate vessel collisions with right whales. Assess the potential need for modified or additional regulatory mechanisms. Compare recent mortality events with spatial gaps between management areas**
- **Reduce or eliminate vessel collisions with right whales. Assess traffic patterns and evaluate compliance with existing regulations**

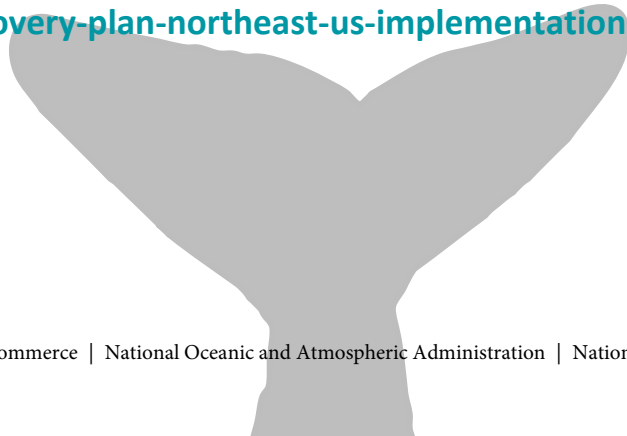
*NOTE: Bolded action items indicate the top six priority items for NEIT coordination; Italicized action items indicate the top six priority action items for recovery at large in the Northeast US. If the action item is both bolded and italicized, then that means it had received top priority for both.

Vist our website for more information:

www.fisheries.noaa.gov/new-england-mid-atlantic/endangered-species-conservation/north-atlantic-right-whale-recovery-plan-northeast-us-implementation-team



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Other Identified Priorities

- **NMFS should continue to fund right whale mortality investigations.**
- **Identify emerging risks.**
- *Long-term monitoring data on plankton.*
- *Develop and implement strategies to modify fishing operations and gear to reduce the likelihood of entanglement, mitigate the effects of entanglements, and enhance the possibility of disentanglement, and assess the effectiveness of such strategies.*
- *NMFS should conduct research to improve gear modifications and gear marking to inform management for the development of more finely scaled commercial fisheries regulations.*
- **Renewable industries including (1) aquaculture (be proactive and whale safe), (2) blue economy (e.g., wind farms).**
- **Assess the effectiveness and efficiency of the survey programs in attaining the primary goal of reducing ship strikes.**
- *Investigate infectious diseases.*
- *When possible and practicable in terms of safety, disentangle whales caught in fishing gear.*
- **Proactive management rulemaking for ropeless fishing so ready when gear is ready.**
- *Reduce amount of line in water column through ropeless fishing including gear research, development, and testing.*
- *Review and evaluate stranding and photo-identification data to monitor interactions with fishing gear and effectiveness of mitigation measures.*
- **Dynamic/flexible management and enforcement.**
- **Reduce human impact to habitat and NARWs from Ocean Energy Activities. Track BOEM and agency actions regarding permitting and development of plans (BMP)/next steps. Review monitoring plans and develop high priority questions/information gaps/data need to detect potential displacement and/or other impacts.**
- **Conduct ESA Section 7 consultations for Federal activities with the potential to affect right whales.**
- **Analyze tissue collected from stranded right whales to determine and monitor contaminant levels.**
- *Conduct radio and satellite tagging studies to increase knowledge of right whale habitat use, distribution, and habits.*
- **Promote bi-lateral cooperative efforts with Canada to maximize protection for right whales.**
- **Engage with industry to: (1) help solve problems, (2) develop incentives, (3) gain buy-in for solutions.**
- **Large whale behavioral research (e.g., Research on the distribution of large whales throughout their range in US waters (including behavior on the migratory corridor (large whale whales) and breeding grounds (for right whales)).**
- **Other-Evaluate pollutants and their biological effects on large whales.**
- **Assess the effectiveness of existing ship reporting systems and reporting areas.**
- **NMFS should continue to prioritize and fund a combination of acoustic, aerial, and shipboard surveys for right whale surveillance.**
- **Use acoustic detection technology, surveys, and other technologies to monitor right whale occurrence and distribution in the mid-Atlantic United States.**
- **Fully support alternative gear practices, gear marking and other strategies developed by the ALWTRT**
- **Fully investigate ALL blunt trauma mortality designations (past and future) to determine if the event occurred outside of a SMA. If outside enlarge size and/or duration of SMA. Every Single Mortality Exceeds PBR.**



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