



Clearwater Marine Aquarium Research Institute & USACE taken under NOAA permit # 20556-01

The North Atlantic Right Whale

Due to the critical need to protect and learn more about the North Atlantic right whale, the U.S. Navy has developed specific mitigation measures, funds monitoring and research projects, and participates in efforts to alert vessel traffic to the presence of right whales.

Early Warning System

- Aerial surveys are flown December through March each year in the Southeast United States to detect North Atlantic right whales in their primary calving area
- Sightings are collected by the U.S. Navy's Fleet Area Control and Surveillance Facility in Jacksonville, Florida, and right whale locations are broadcast to mariners in the waters of Florida and Georgia
- The U.S. Navy, Coast Guard, Army Corps of Engineers, and the National Marine Fisheries Service jointly fund the Early Warning System and contribute right whale sightings to the Early Warning System

Navy Mitigation Measures

- The Navy employs lookouts aboard ships to search for the presence of marine mammals, including North Atlantic right whales
- If a right whale is sighted during certain Navy training and testing activities, vessels will slow down until the whale leaves the area or has not been sighted for a period of time
- Navy vessels maintain 500-yard "no approach" safety zones for right whales

North Atlantic Right Whale Facts

- Critically endangered species listed under the Endangered Species Act since 1970
- The main threats to their population are entanglements in fishing gear and vessel strikes
- Anthropogenic factors (e.g., ocean noise from shipping and oil and gas exploration) and climate change may also impact calf production
- Since 2007, the number of calves born into the population each year has ranged from zero (2018) to thirty-nine (2009), but typically range between 10 and 20
- Primarily occur in coastal waters on the continental shelf but are also known to travel far offshore over deep water
- Migrate seasonally and may travel alone or in small groups from New England and Canadian waters to calving grounds off South Carolina, Georgia, and Northeastern Florida

To learn more about the ways the U.S. Navy contributes to the conservation and protection of right whales, check out this video: https://youtu.be/RSe_ZM9M0wE

**For More
Information:**



www.facebook.com/usnavystewardsofthesea



www.youtube.com/usnavystewardsofthesea



www.navymarinespeciesmonitoring.us



www.usff.navy.mil/environmental



Monitoring and Mitigation

Monitoring Efforts

The Navy monitors North Atlantic right whales using various methods, including passive acoustics, visual surveys, and tagging, in order to:

- Establish baseline occurrence of right whales off the East Coast
- Track location of animals within training and testing areas
- Tag animals (that meet permit conditions) to collect information on movements, vocal activity, and environmental data

Scientific research funded by the Navy is authorized under National Marine Fisheries Service Scientific Research permits. These permits authorize researchers to approach a right whale within 500 yards.



North Atlantic Right Whale Mitigation Areas

The Navy coordinated with the National Marine Fisheries Service to create three “mitigation areas” along the East Coast and in the Gulf of Maine specifically for North Atlantic right whales. Each mitigation area has implementation requirements; for example, prohibiting or minimizing certain events during calving season, or checking for the latest sighting information before conducting an activity.

Southeast North Atlantic Right Whale Critical Habitat Special Reporting Area	Southeast North Atlantic Right Whale Mitigation Area	Northeast North Atlantic Right Whale Mitigation Area
November 15 – April 15	November 15 – April 15	Year-Round
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Report total hours and counts of active sonar and in-water explosives to NMFS annually 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Report hours of sonar and counts of in-water explosives - Prohibit most sonar and explosive events (some exceptions) - Obtain Early Warning System data on right whale locations - Minimize north-south transits - Speed reductions when right whales observed or within 5 NM of a recent sighting 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Report hours of sonar and counts of in-water explosives - Minimize sonar to the maximum extent practicable - Specific mitigation measures for non-explosive torpedo testing - Web query of right whale locations from the Sighting Advisory System

