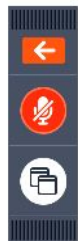


ALWTRT Informational Webinar: The meeting will begin at 10:00 am

For technical support:
Type your issue into the 'Questions' box

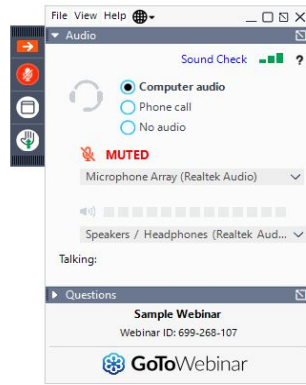
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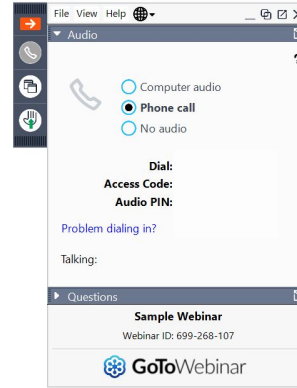


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control panel

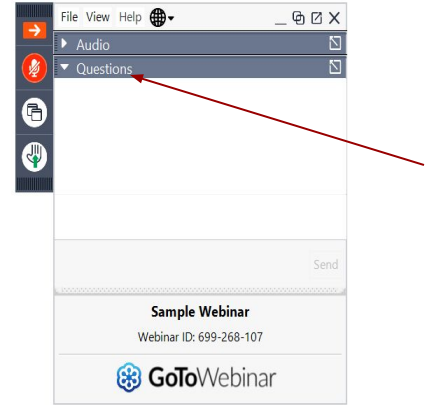
Computer Audio
(Preferred)



Cell phone for audio
(limited internet)



This is the questions box



Find the **Control Panel** and open it by clicking the orange arrow. You can usually find this on the right hand side of your screen. You can expand the grey option bars by clicking the triangle on the left hand side of "Audio" and "Questions".

The **Control Panel** also allows you to mute/unmute by clicking the microphone symbol.

Make sure you can see a red microphone symbol next to your name in attendees. If you cannot, you will not be able to speak.

Select your **audio settings**. Computer audio is recommended. If you dialed in on your phone and did not enter your audio pin, please redial and enter your audio pin.

Access the audio options by clicking on the grey bar that says "Audio".

This is the **Questions box**, you will use this to 'get in line' for the Q&A. You can also use it to let us know if you are experiencing technical difficulties.

Access the questions box by clicking the grey bar that says "questions".

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Atlantic Large Whale Take Reduction Team Informational Webinar

December 20, 2024

Jennifer Goebel, ALWTRT Coordinator
Colleen Coogan, MM/ST Branch Chief
Crystal Franco, NEPA Policy Analyst
Elizabeth Stratton, ALWTRT Implementation
Chao Zou, Chief Economist
Kaleigh Hill, NEPA Support/Economist



Agenda

- 10 am Welcome
- 10:15 am Population size estimation of North Atlantic right whales from 1990–2023
- 10:45 am Observed Entanglement Updates - Dave Morin
- 11:15 am Council Update considering Alternatives to Buoy Requirements - Allison Murphy
- 11:30 am ALWTRT Enforcement Update and On Demand Training - Caleb Gilbert
- 11:45 am Meeting Plan and Regulatory Timeline for 2025 and 2026 - Colleen Coogan
- 12 pm Q and A and Wrap Up
- 12:15 pm Public Comment

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Team Membership Changes

Thank you to our retiring and resigning members and alternates for your years of service!

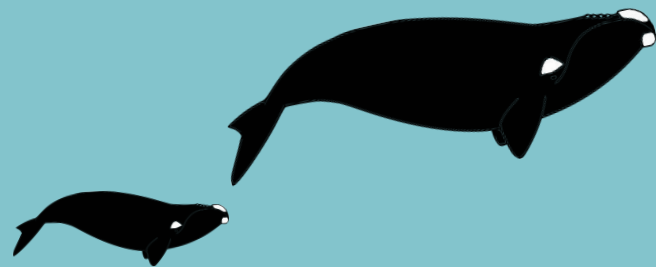
- Alex Costidis, Large Whale Strandings
- Dennis Heinemann, Marine Mammal Commission
- Stormy Mayo, Center for Coastal Studies
- Somers Smott, Virginia Marine Resources Commission
- Terry Alexander, New England Fishery Management Council

Welcome Pending New Members and Alternates

- Andy Read, Marine Mammal Commission
- Daniel Palacios, Center for Coastal Studies
- Chris Davis, Virginia Marine Resources Commission
- Robin Frede, New England Fishery Management Council
- Hayden Dubniczki, Mid-Atlantic Fishery Management Council

Please send any other upcoming changes to jennifer.goebel@noaa.gov

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Reminders: Participation in an Informational Webinar

Reminder: This is a webinar held in public, not a public meeting.

- ***Team Members, Alternates and Pending Members***
 - Use the questions box to indicate you have a question during Q&A on presentations
 - You will be called on in order of when you put your question in the box
 - Chat to host only with tech issues; not for substantive input or discussion
 - Appreciate and request that we maintain the collaborative tone of comments and questions
- ***Members of the public***
 - Welcome to observe
 - Please email any questions to us at nmfs.gar.alwtrt@noaa.gov

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Population size estimation of North Atlantic right whales from 1990–2023

Daniel W. Linden

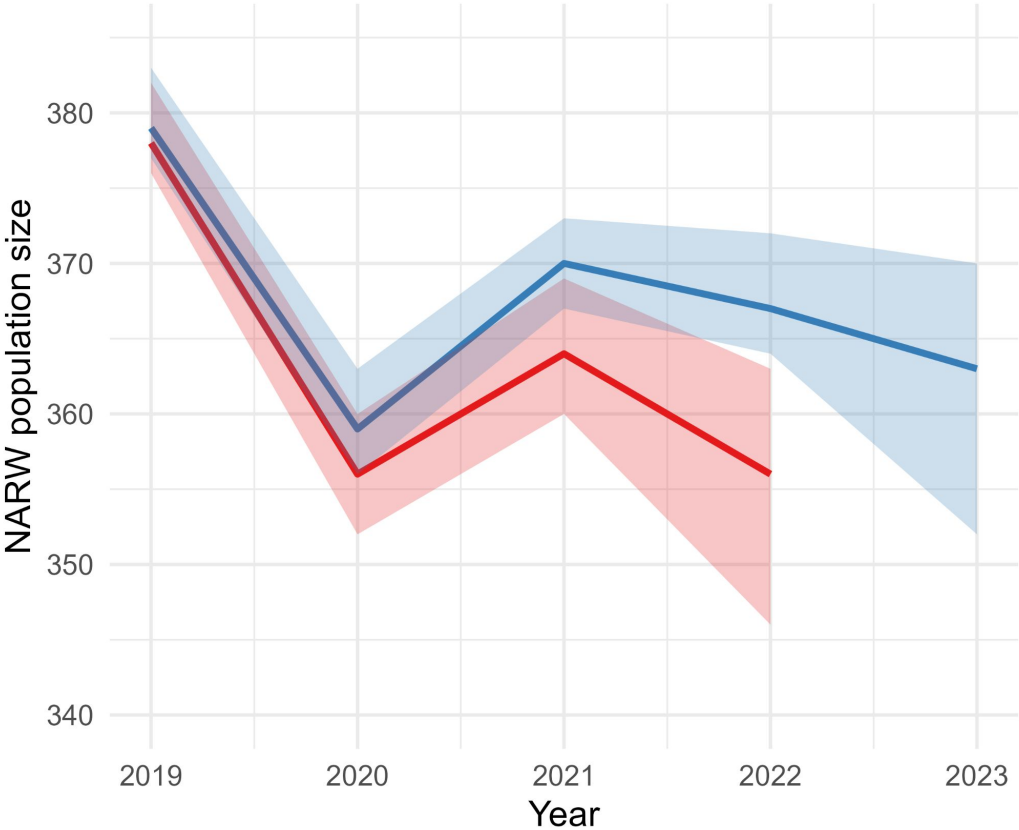
*Northeast Fisheries Science Center
NOAA National Marine Fisheries Service*

NARW Abundance Estimate

- Model based on >81,500 sightings of individual NARWs from a database curated by New England Aquarium (1990–2023)
 - Updated each year (e.g., 2024) with sightings from the prior year
 - Typically between 80–90% of individuals are observed each year
- When the model is updated each year, prior year abundance estimates can change (usually adjusted up in recent years)
 - **New for 2024:** an [update](#) to the abundance estimate model that should better stabilize recent estimates by including calves
- Annual [Tech Memo](#) documents the estimates

Original Model Results

- Negative bias in recent year estimates, due to missed recruits



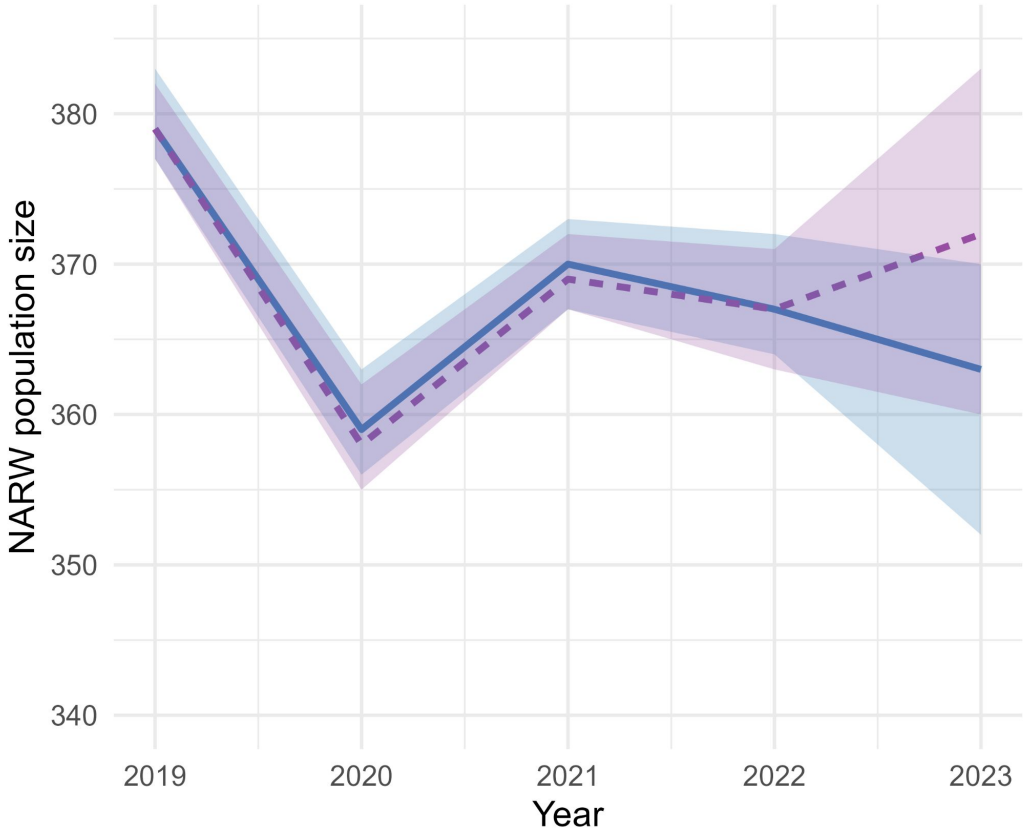
Model type: original Data: 2023 2024

Model/Year	2022	2023
Original/2023	356 [346, 363]	
Original/2024	367 [364, 372]	363 [352, 370]



Model Update

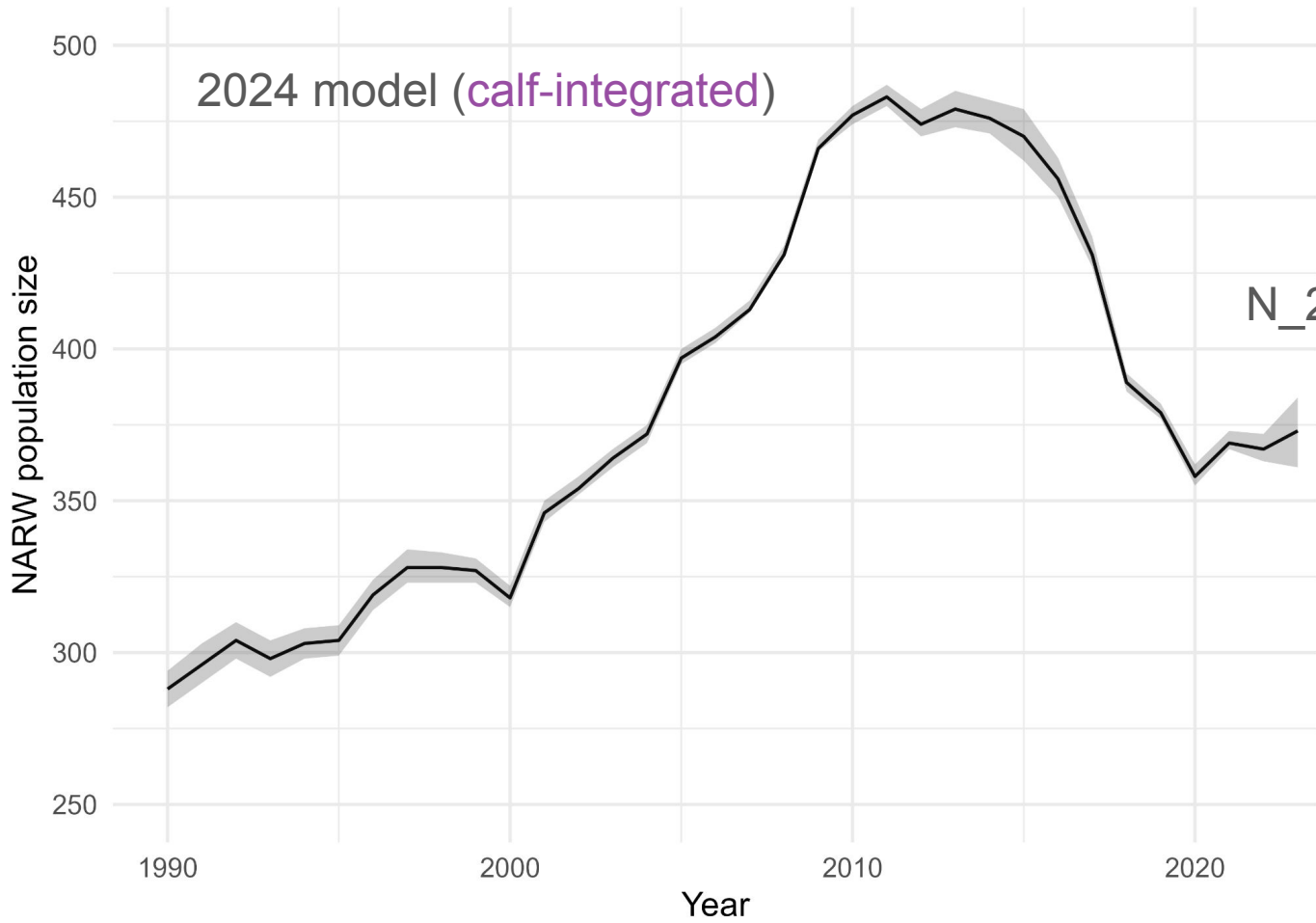
- Calves integrated as potential recruits
- Eliminates large future fluctuations
- Updated methods reviewed by ASRG

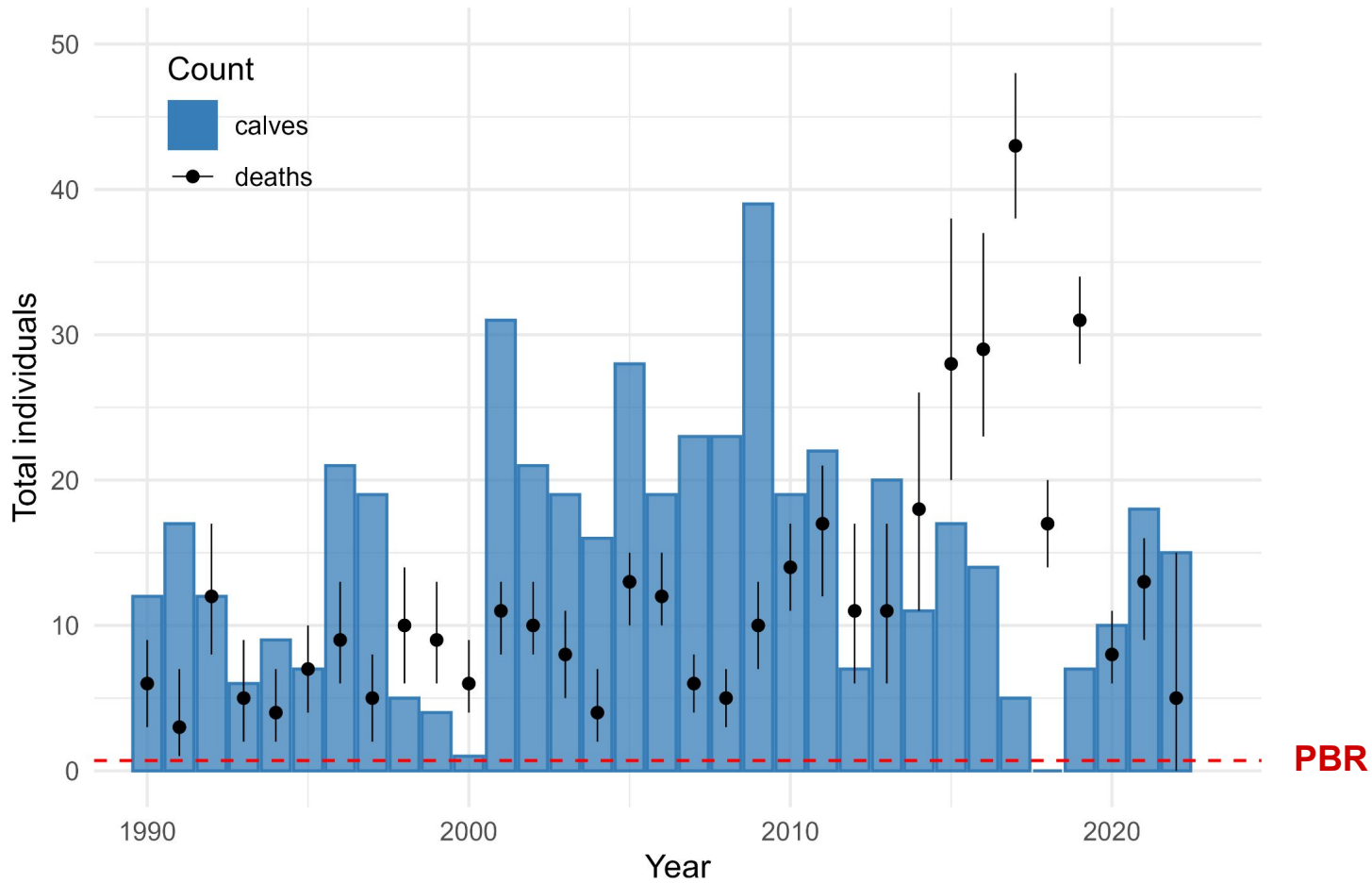


Model type — original - - calf-integrated

Model/Year	2022	2023
Original/2023	356 [346, 363]	
Original/2024	367 [364, 372]	363 [352, 370]
Integrated/2024	367 [363, 371]	372 [360, 383]







NARW deaths

- Estimated deaths currently do not include non-cataloged calves:
 - a. Early calf deaths (<6 mo) that are observed
 - b. Calves that do not survive to be cataloged

**Future reports could include all known/predicted calf deaths*
- Observed deaths of cataloged individuals are “counted” in the model estimated deaths for the following year
- Total deaths (including calves or not) are still **well** above Potential Biological Removal (PBR)



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Observed Entanglements

December 20, 2024
David Morin, Disentanglement Coordinator

Right whale #5120 entanglement case



In collaboration, NOAA OLE and Maine Marine Patrol conducted their own investigations. NOAA OLE closed their investigation in December 2024 without being able to identify the ownership of the gear in question. Gear will be available for viewing in-person at our Gloucester office on January 8th.

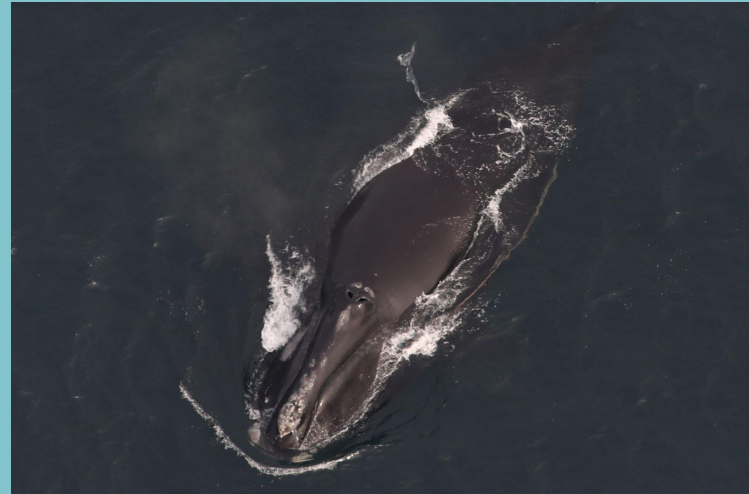
New December Right Whale Cases

Reported on December 9 by NEFSC aerial survey over 50 NM southeast of Nantucket Island, MA. Both whales have never been documented in the GoSL.

Right whale #5110, juvenile male, last seen gear free on April 26, 2024 in Cape Cod Bay.



Right whale #4120, adult female, last seen gear free on July 22, 2024 in Block Canyon.



New December Right Whale Cases

Reported on December 16 by
CMARI aerial survey over 40
NM east of Corolla, NC
Right whale #5132, juvenile
male, last seen gear free on
October 21, 2024 in Bay of
Fundy.



2022-2023 Preliminary Entanglement Summary

Year	Species	Total #	Gear marking color	Gear origin
2022	Right	5*	Purple - ME state (1)	U.S. trap - ME state (1)
	Humpback	16	Purple - ME state (2)	U.S. trap - ME state (2)
	Minke	6	Red - MA state (1)	U.S. trap - MA state (1)
2023	Right	6	Orange and Yellow - Canada (2)	Canadian snow crab (2), Canadian lobster (1), unknown Canadian (2)
	Humpback	23	Purple - ME state (1), Red & Green - MA fed (3)	Canadian lobster (1), U.S. trap - MA federal (3), U.S. trap - MA (1), U.S. trap - ME state (1), U.S. trap - ME federal (1), U.S. trap - Area 3 (1), U.S. gillnet (1)
	Minke	3		

* includes #5120, entangled in 2022, found deceased in January 2024 on Martha's Vineyard

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2024 Preliminary Entanglement Summary

Year	Species	Total #	Gear marking color	Gear origin
2024	Right	10	Orange and yellow (Canadian crab),	Canadian crab CFA 12, 1 unknown Canadian
	Humpback	34	Red - MA state (1), Red and green - MA fed. (3), Red - unknown state or fed. (2)	U.S. gillnet, U.S. pound net, MA lobster fed. (3), MA lobster state (1), MA unknown fed./state (2), Unknown Canadian
	Minke	2	Purple - ME state	ME state water lobster

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2020-2022 Entanglement Summary by Recovered Color Marks

Year	Species	Total #	Gear marking color	First Sighting Location
2020	Right	4	Orange - Canada (1)	Massachusetts
	Humpback	15	Red - MA state waters (1), Red unknown fed./state (1)	Massachusetts
	Minke	7	Purple - ME state waters (2)	Maine
	Unknown	1		
2021	Right	3		
	Humpback	21	Red - MA state (1), Purple & Green - ME fed (1)	Massachusetts
	Minke	4	Purple - ME state (1), Purple & Green - ME fed (1)	Maine
	Finback	2		
2022	Right	5*	Purple - ME state waters (1)	Canada
	Humpback	16	Purple - ME state waters (1), Purple unknown fed./state (1)	Massachusetts
	Minke	6	Red - MA state waters (1)	Massachusetts

* includes #5120, entangled in 2022, found deceased in January 2024 on Martha's Vineyard

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2023-2024 Entanglement Summary by Recovered Color Marks

Year	Species	Total #	Gear marking color	First Sighting Location
2023	Right	6	Orange and Yellow - Canada (2)	Georgia (1), Massachusetts (1)
	Humpback	23	Purple - ME state (1), Purple & Green - ME fed. (1), Red & Green - MA fed (3), Red - MA state (1),	Maine (1), Massachusetts (5)
	Minke	3		
2024	Right	10	Orange and yellow (Canadian crab)	GoSL
	Humpback	34	Red - MA state (1), Red and green - MA fed. (3), Red - unknown fed./state (2)	Massachusetts
	Minke	2	Purple - ME state	Maine

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Gear Identified by Color Marks and Overall - 2020-2024

	Non-monofilament Entanglements	Incidents with Gear Retrieved	Proportion of Incidents with Gear Retrieved	Incidents with Color Marks on Retrieved or Identified on Gear	Incidents with gear origin identified; min. country	Proportion of Incidents with origin identified
Right	28	7	25%	5	12	43%
Humpback	73	30	41%	18*	27	37%
Minke	21	9	43%	6*	9	43%
Total	121	46	38%	29	48	40%

It is important to note that not all fisheries have expanded 2021 gear marking requirements.

*A portion of the color marks were identified only in the field or through fisherman interview.

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Right Whale Gear Identified 2015-2019 vs. 2020-2024

	Non-monofilament Entanglements	Incidents with Gear Retrieved	Proportion of Incidents with Gear Retrieved	Incidents with Color Marks on Retrieved or Identified on Gear	Proportion of Incidents with recovered/ID color marks
Eg 2015-2019	31	12	39%	2	6%
Eg 2020-2024	28	7	25%	5	18%
Mn 2015-2019	94	40	42%	18	19%
Mn 2020-2024	73	30	41%	18*	25%
Ba 2015-2019	32	10	31%	10	31%
Ba 2020-2024	21	9	43%	6*	29%

It is important to note that not all fisheries have expanded 2021 gear marking requirements. Canada started marking in 2020. 2023-2024 cases are still being reviewed.

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Color Mark Sources for Right, Humpback, and Minke Whales, 2020-2024

Color Marks	Right	Humpback	Minke
Maine State	1	2	4
Maine Federal		2	1
Unknown ME fed./state		1	
Massachusetts State		4	1
Massachusetts Federal		6	
Unknown MA fed./state		3	
Canada	4		
Total	5	18	6

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Council Updates

Considering Alternatives to Buoy Requirements

Allison Murphy, Fishery Policy Analyst
Sustainable Fisheries Division, GARFO

Kara Shervanick, Southeast Right Whale Coordinator
Protected Resources Division, SERO

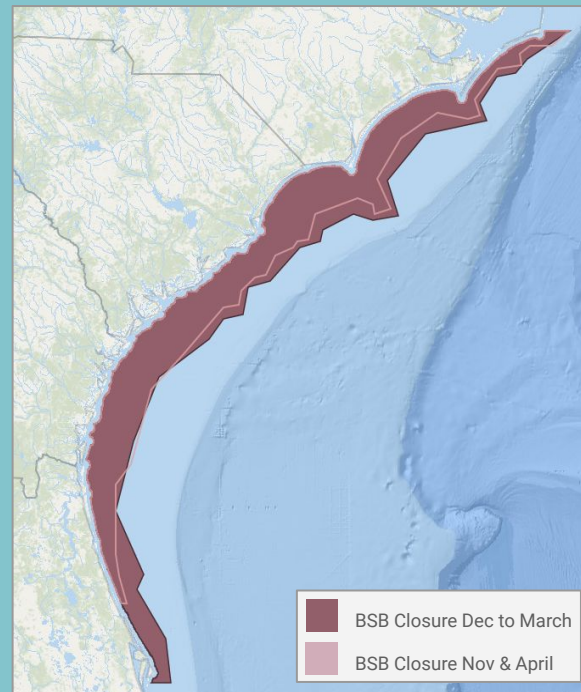
2025 Council Priorities: Gear Marking Revisions

- Requirements for a vessel to use surface markings on Fixed Gear
 - Northeast Multispecies: [50 CFR 648.84\(b\)](#)
 - Atlantic Deep-Sea Red Crab: [§ 648.264\(a\)\(5\)](#)
 - Black Sea Bass: [§ 648.144\(b\)\(1\)](#)
- EFPs currently required to trial on-demand gear
- NEFMC: Joint action with MAFMC and GARFO to revise gear marking regulations across FMPs
- MAFMC: Engage with the New England Council's On-Demand Fishing Gear Conflict Working Group and initiate/coordinate on any joint actions as appropriate
- Process: GARFO will serve as lead on development of action with joint approval by NEFMC and MAFMC
- Timeframe & Specifics: TBD, with final action in 2025



South Atlantic Black Sea Bass Updates

- **SE BSB Fishery:**
 - In 2017, SAFMC regs implemented closures from Nov-Apr from NC-FL.
 - 32 endorsements, ~10 active fishermen that fish 35 pots as singles.
 - Must bring gear in at the end of the day, therefore short soak times.
- **On-Demand Testing:**
 - Fishery testing on-demand gear since 2020 under EFPs (currently testing within the closure).
- **2022 ALWTRT Meeting:**
 - The ALWTRT recommended adding the SAFMC BSB Closure to the Plan and mirroring other closures which prohibit persistent vertical buoy lines.
- **SAMFC Happenings:**
 - In 2023, the SAMFC began to discuss opening the closures under their regs to on-demand gear.
 - It was determined that given there are no surface buoy requirements, on-demand gear is allowed under SAFMC regulations (but not in the closure).
[50 CFR 622.177\(a\)\(2\)](#); [50 CFR 622.183\(b\)\(6\)](#)
 - Expected implementation in 2025 of Council [regulations](#) that clarify allowance of on-demand gear and revise transit stowage requirements.
 - Ongoing: SAFMC [processes](#) to allow on-demand gear in the closure under SAFMC regulations, so that if the closure is added into TRT regs, fishermen can use on-demand gear.





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ALWTRT OLE/NED ALWTRP Enforcement Update

**Caleb Gilbert, Compliance Liaison
Office of Law Enforcement
Northeast Division**



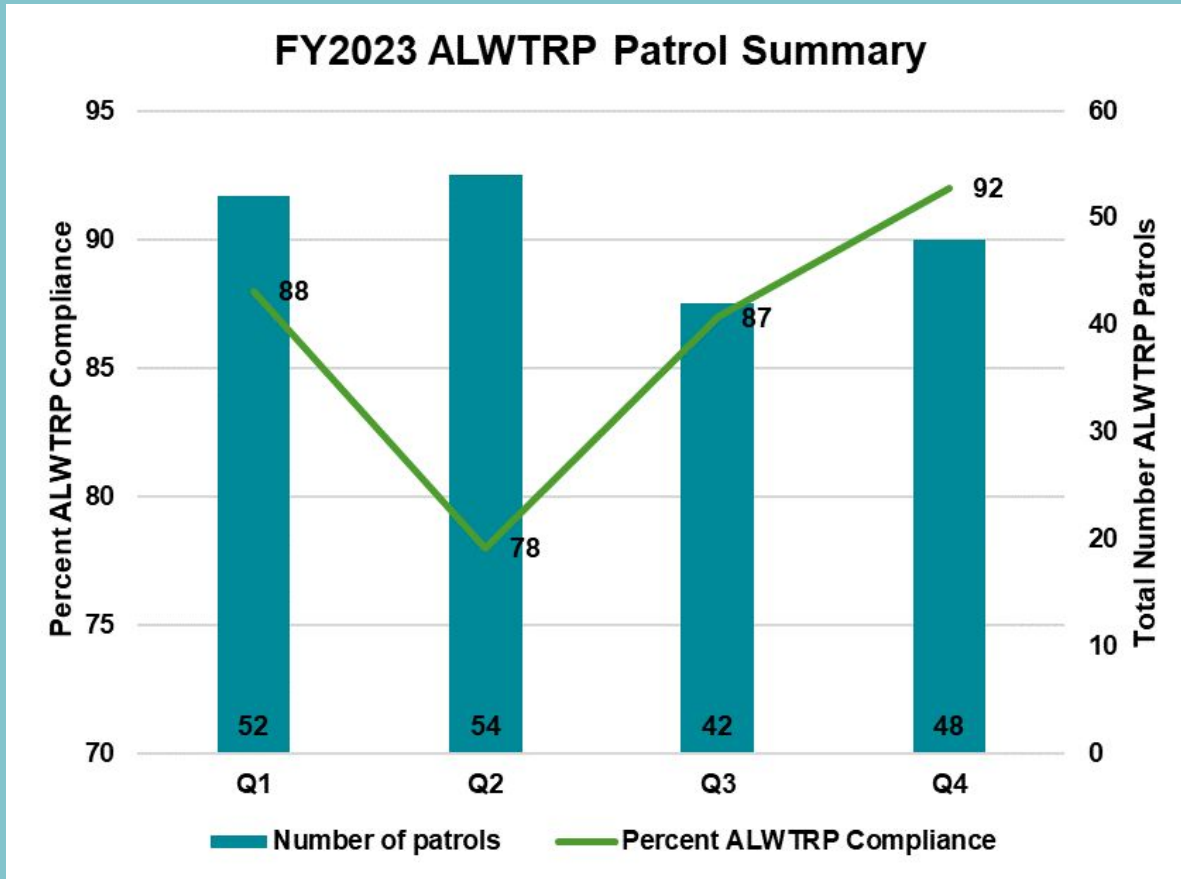
Right Whale Enforcement



Two prongs of our support for NARW Conservation:

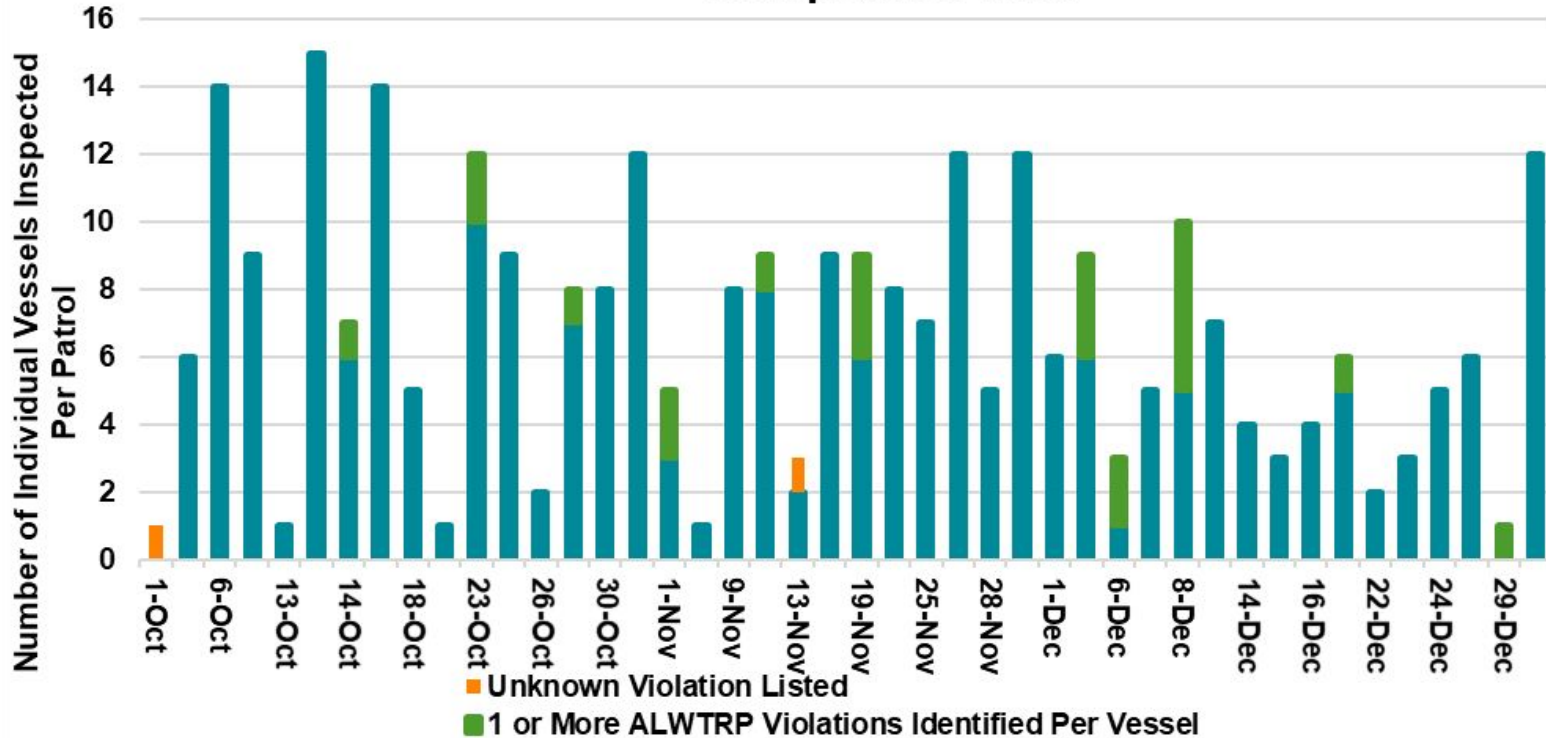
- **Speed Rule/SMA enforcement**
- **ALWTRP/Gear enforcement**

Patrol Summary



First Quarter 2024

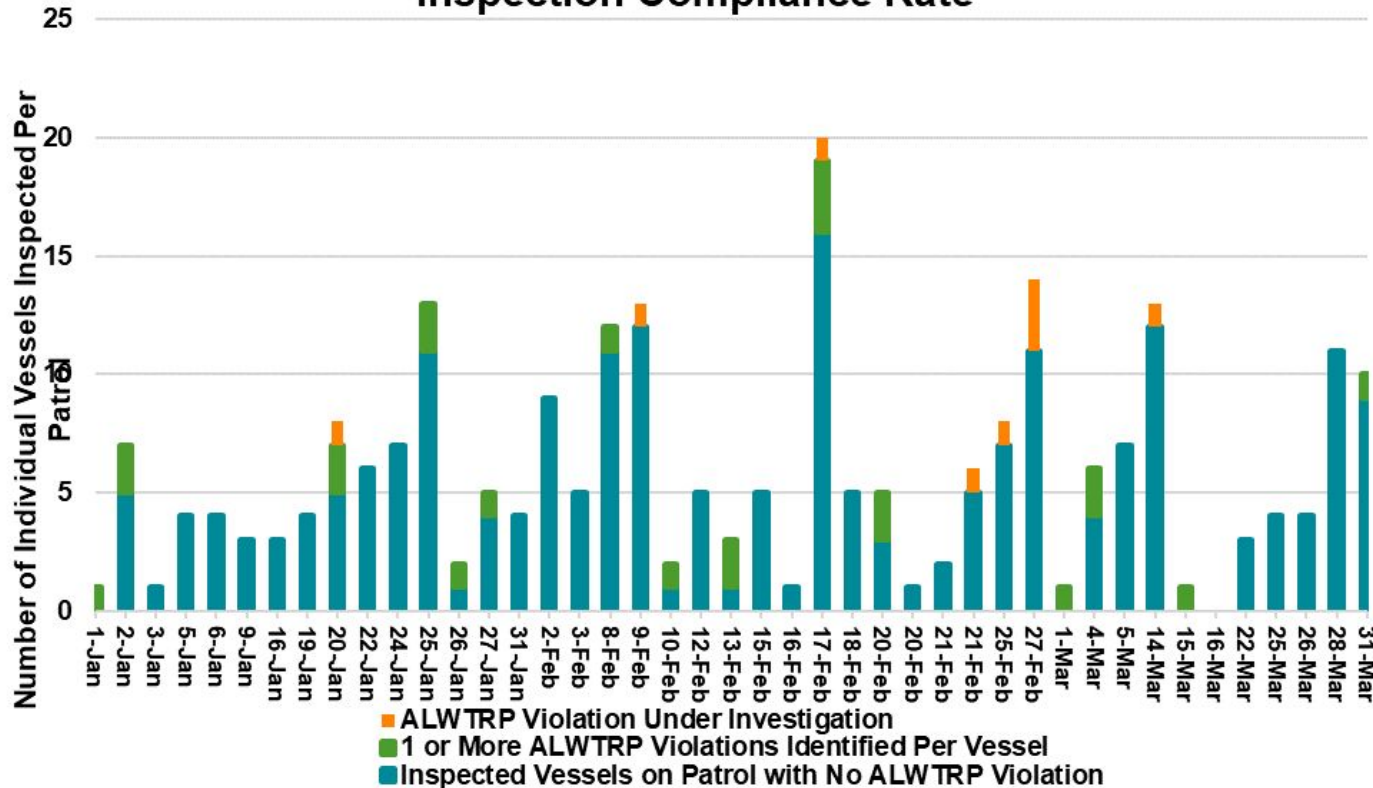
First Quarter FY 2024 ALWTRP Lobster Vessel Inspection Compliance Rate



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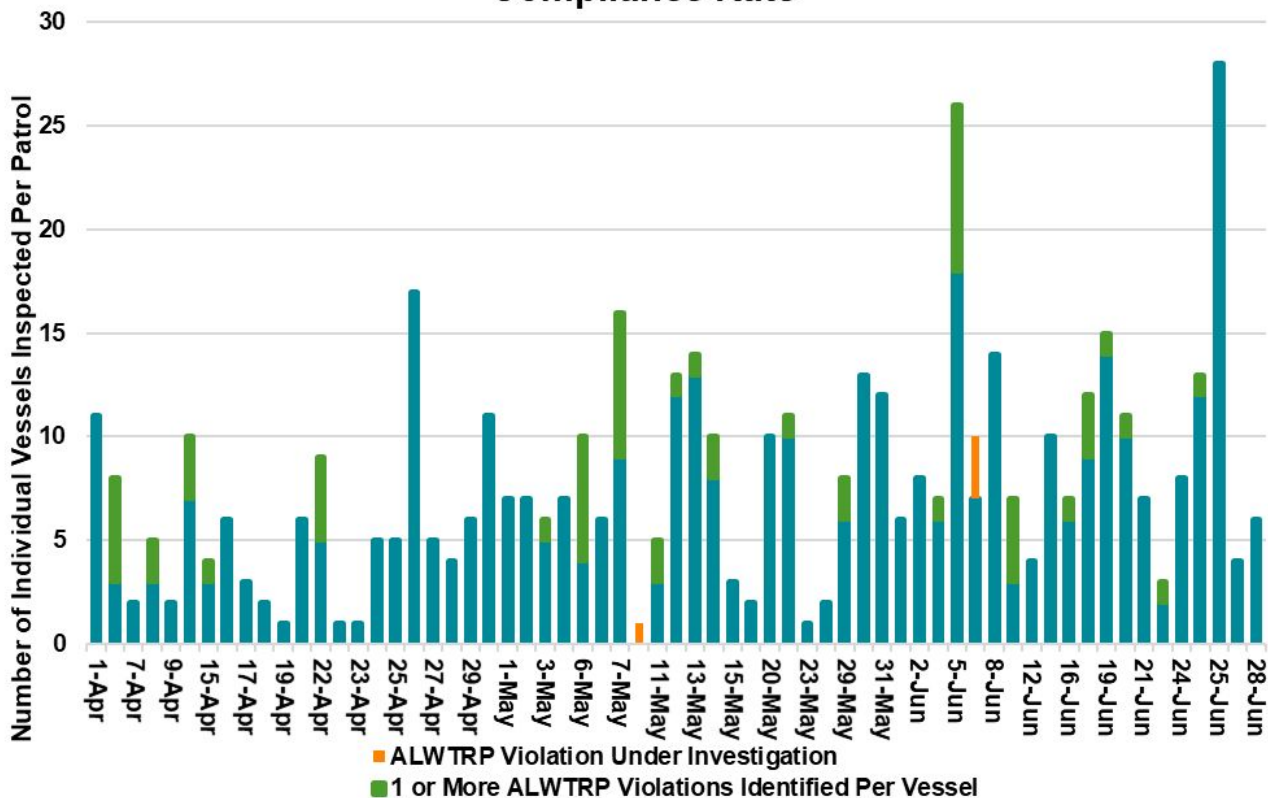
Second Quarter FY 24

Second Quarter FY 24 ALWTRP Lobster Vessel Inspection Compliance Rate



Third Quarter FY 2024

Third Quarter FY 24 ALWTRP Lobster Vessel Inspection Compliance Rate



On Demand Enforcement Workshops



- October 2023 USCG NRFTC Workshop
- September 2024 MMP Workshop
- November 2024 RI DEM Workshop
- December 2024 NH F&G Workshop
- Next?
- Other Stuff

Additional OLE efforts to support On-Demand fishing

- Gear Conflict – Geofences/Investigations
- Collaboration with Gear Research Team
- Begin hauling gear from EFP Participants?
- Publicly available enforcement input?



What We Can Tell You So Far from Our Enforcement Discussions

- Universal Deck Box and/or single acoustic standard
 - Adequate training in advance of operational fishery
 - Limiting initial operational fishery to RGAs (ME only?)
 - Ability to see virtual gear marking and associated metadata from a set distance at sea (5 miles or some estimated equivalent to what we have now with line of sight of a surface buoy?)
 - Ability to haul and reset on demand gear covertly
 - Ability to reference specific gear marking performance standards in the regulations (output from Nov 18 NEFMC EC discussion)
 - Trap trawl directionality/orientation visible
 - Need to see virtually marked gear real time
-
- Ability to see virtual gear marking positions and associated metadata from shore/anywhere
 - Improved gear conflict regulations
 - Regulations requiring setting gear with multiple remaining surface deployments remaining
 - Grappling not a viable on demand fishing method
 - Automatic gear marking



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Questions?

- Email: caleb.gilbert@noaa.gov
- Cell: (978) 675-5062
- Office (978) 281-9338
- NED Main Line: (978) 281-9213 (Option #2 for compliance assistance goes to me)
- Enforcement Hotline 24/7: 800-853-1964





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Right Whale Mortality and Serious Injury Update

Right Whale UME



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ENDANGERED NORTH ATLANTIC RIGHT WHALE POPULATION STATUS

Primary threats



Vessel strikes



Fishing gear entanglements

477
WHALES

2010

431
WHALES

2017

Approximately

370

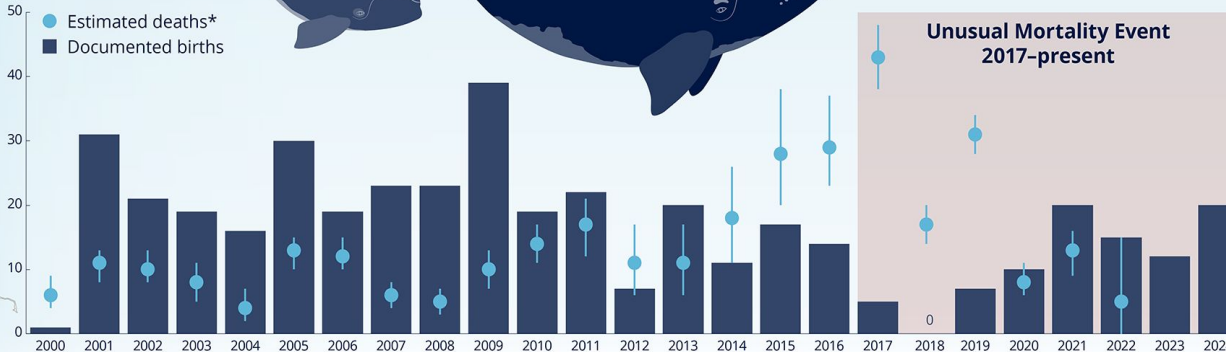
whales remain

2023

318
WHALES

2000

● Estimated deaths*
■ Documented births



Unusual Mortality Event 2017-present

UME Entanglements

10 Deaths

35 Serious Injuries

54 Sublethal injuries

3 new entanglement cases in December:

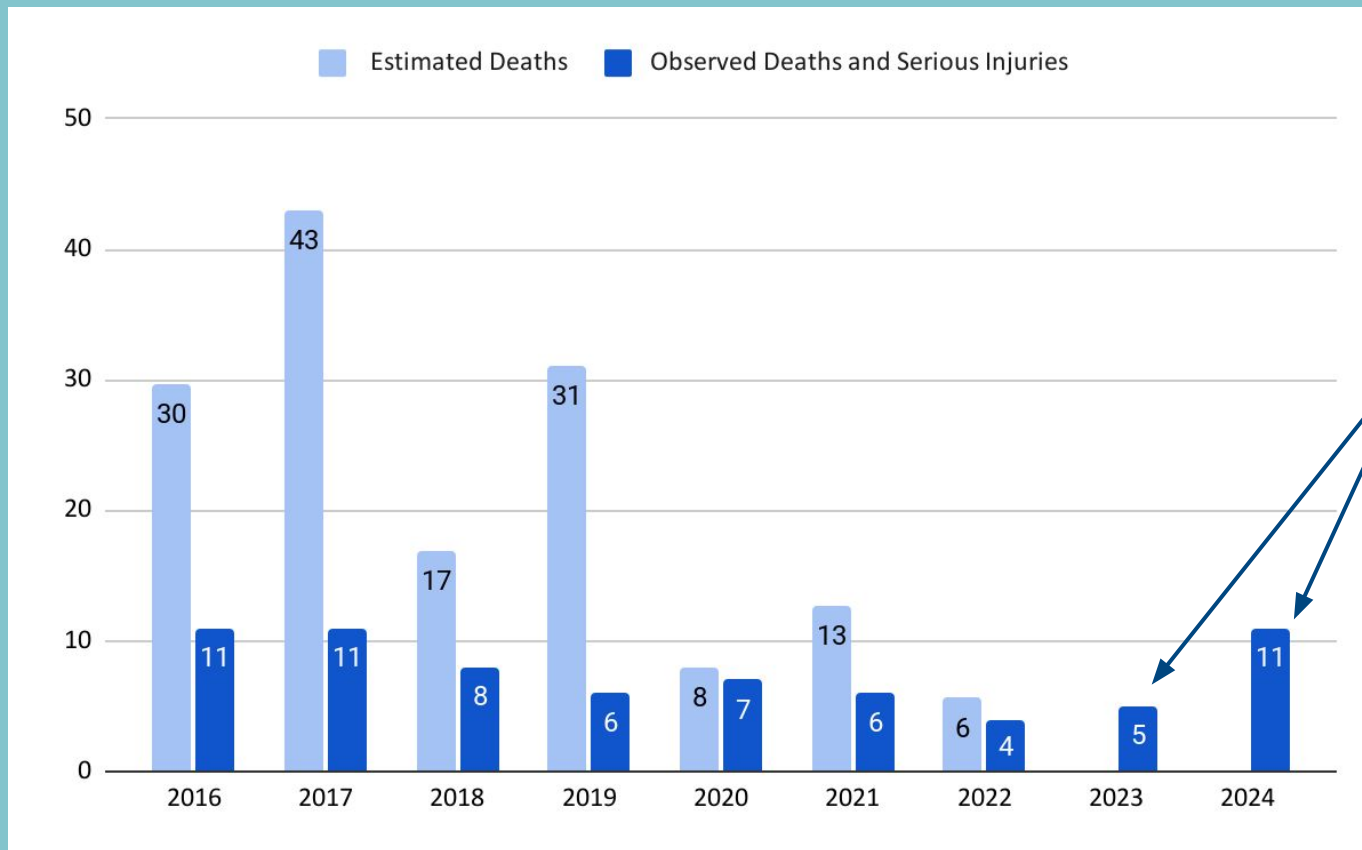
- 2 preliminary SI
- 1 sublethal



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*Total deaths not estimated for the last 2 years due to lag in data processing and analysis.

Observed and Estimated M/SI



Estimated mortality not available for 2023 & 2024 yet

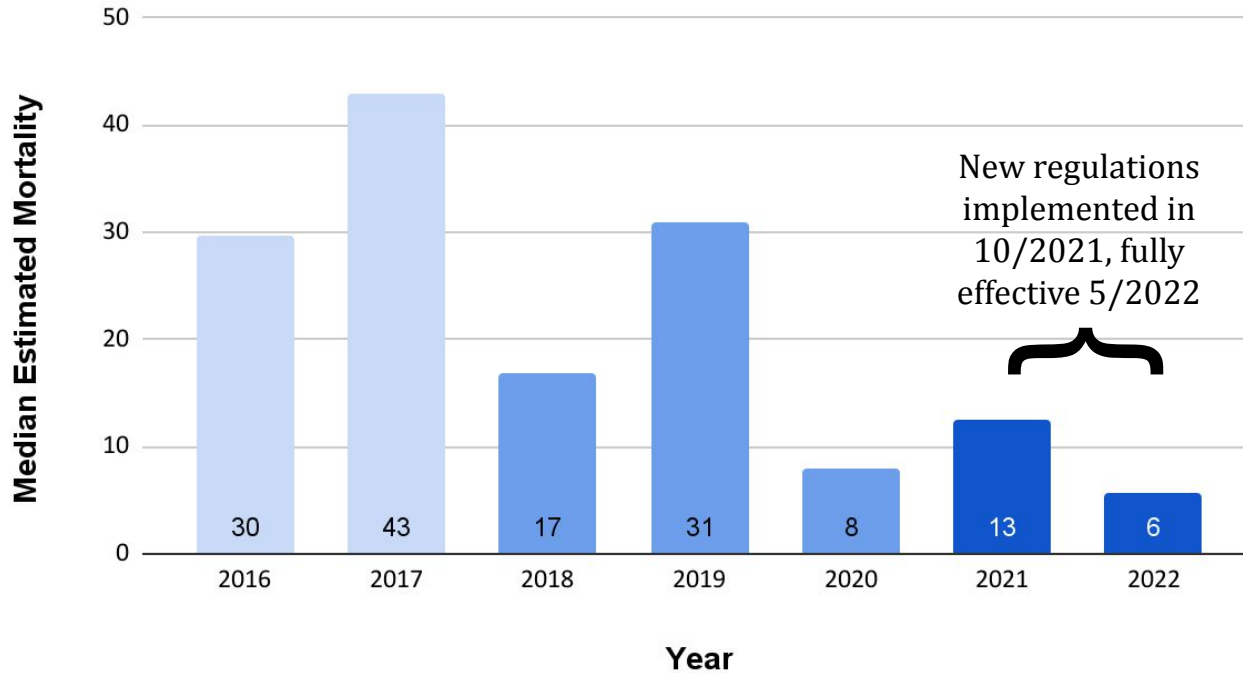
Estimated Incidents
[Linden 2024](#)

Observed Incidents
2017-2022 from A. [Henry et al. 2023](#), 2018-2022
from A. [Henry et al. 2024](#)
2023-2024 from [UME website](#)

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Right Whale Annual Estimated Mortality*

Estimated Deaths by Year



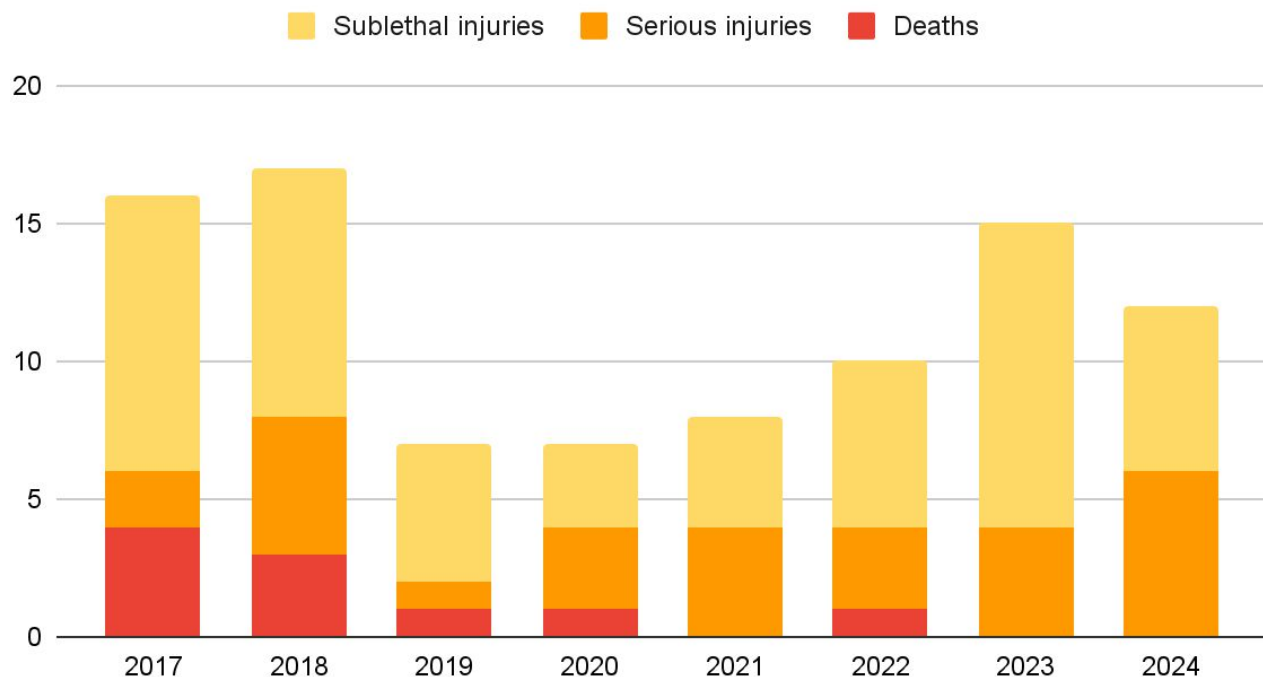
5-Year Average: 15
2-Year Average: 9

Estimated Incidents
[Linden 2024](#)



Rangewide Observed Entanglements 2017-2024

Entanglement Injuries and Deaths



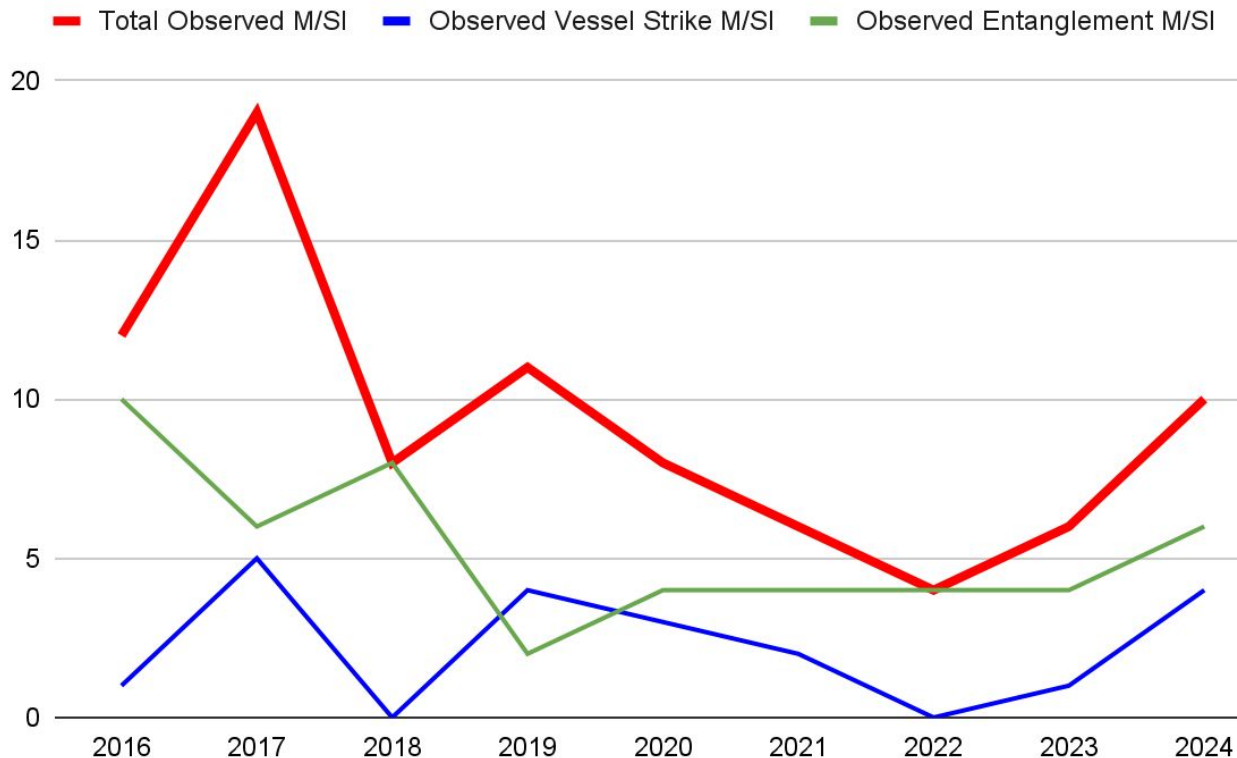
Observed Incidents
2017-2022 from A. [Henry et al. 2023](#) and [2024](#);
2023-2024 from [UME website](#); Sublethal entanglements from [UME website](#)

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Rangewide Observed Right Whale M/SI



Total Observed M/SI

5-Year Average: 6.8

3-Year Average: 6.7

Total ENT M/SI

5-Year Average: 4.4

3-Year Average: 4.7

Observed Incidents

2017-2022 from A. [Henry et al. 2024](#)

2023-2024 from [UME website](#)

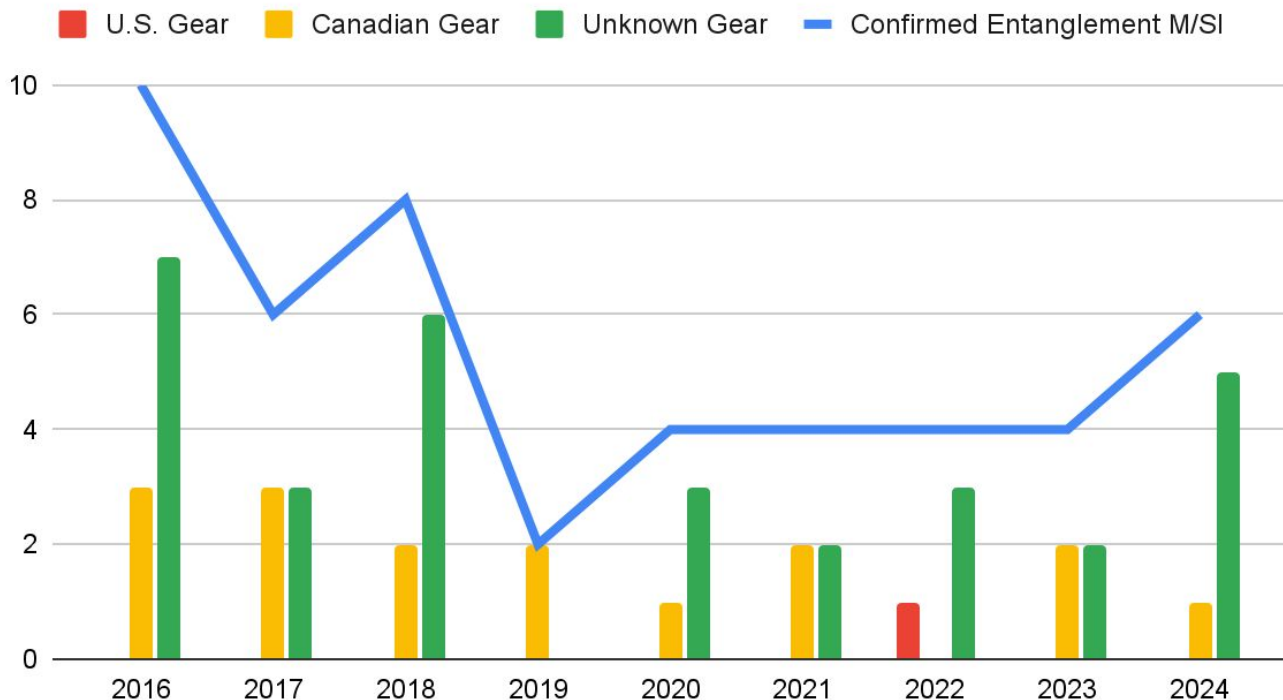
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M/SI Entanglements by Gear Country of Origin 2016-2024

Confirmed M/SI Entanglements with U.S., Canadian, and Unknown Gear



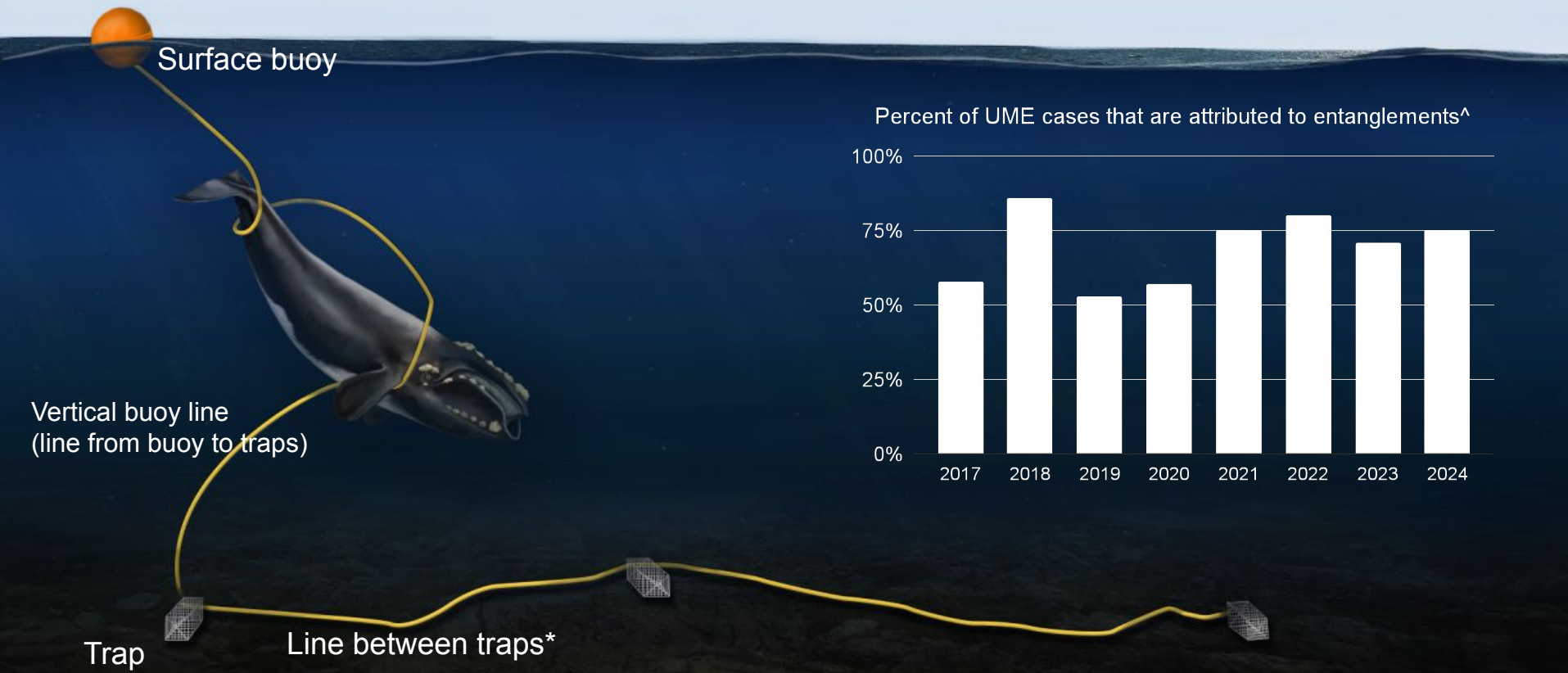
In every year except 2019, for 50-75% of all observed entanglements, the gear's country of origin cannot be identified.

Observed Incidents
2017-2022 from A.
[Henry et al. 2024](#)
2023-2024 from
[UME website](#)

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^Entanglements generally, not specific to a gear type; 2023 and 2024 are preliminary

**Not applicable in SE as BSB TPs are set as singles*

Post Regulation Risk Landscape

2021 U.S. Regulations:

- Closures in effect in 2021
- Other measures May 2022 (8 months of 2022)

Available Post Regulatory Data

Estimated Mortality

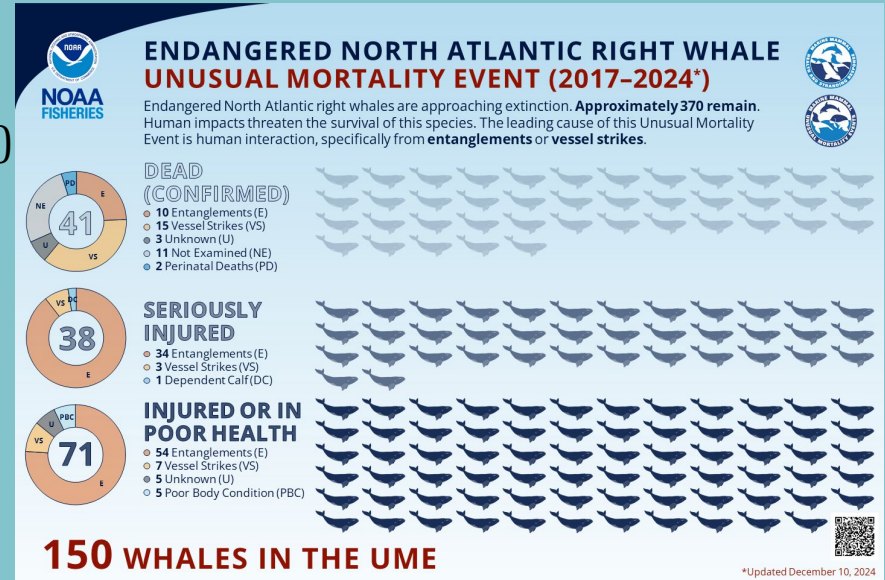
- 2022 only (only 8 months of full implementation)

UME Observed M/SI

- 2022 (4)
- 2023 (5)
- 2024 (11) - preliminary only - SI likely to change

Most entanglements of unknown origin; complicates country apportionment

M/SI seemed to be back to 2014 levels, but 2024 observed M/SI higher than 2022 & 2023



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NOAA
FISHERIES

Meeting Plan and Regulatory Timeline for 2025 and 2026

2024

**December 20
Informational Webinar
(virtual)**

Purpose: Updates, including new NARW population estimates, and entanglement incidents

Ongoing: Talk to your stakeholders!

2025

**January -April
90 Day Scoping Period**

**March
Updated DST fishery layer**
Fishery layers updated with data through 2023

**March 18-19
Team Meeting (in-person**)**

Purpose: Provide members with TRT process training/refreshers and information on updated DST

**Summer
Updated Whale Layer in DST**

Whale layer data to incorporate sightings through summer 2023

Summer Webinars TBD
Purpose: Provide members with the latest information on the DST, population, risk reduction targets, etc.

**Nov 17-20
Team Meeting (in-person**)**

Purpose: Preliminary package development

2026

**January 13-15
Team Meeting
(in-person**)**

Purpose: Develop and vote on recommendations

**TBD
Updated DST
Lobster/Jonah crab
fishery layer**

Fishery layers expected to be updated with electronic vessel tracking data for federally permitted lobster vessels as it becomes available

** Locations of in-person meetings TBD, but likely Providence, RI

2027 and Beyond

**Late 2026/Early 2027
Proposed Rule**

**Public Comment
Period**

**Late 2027/Early 2028
Final Rule**

**December 31, 2028
Final Rule effective**

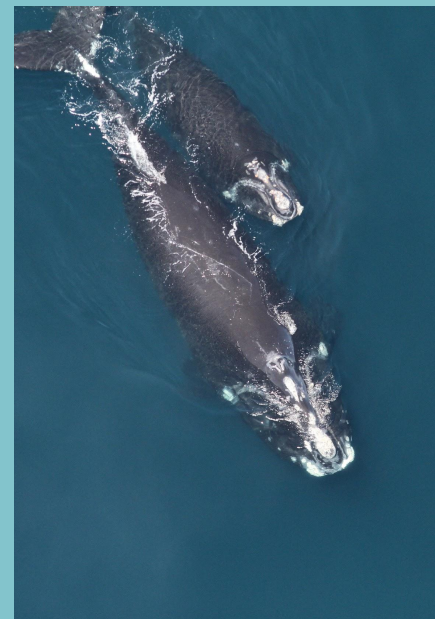
Scoping

NEPA Scoping Period

- Early states of preparation of an Environmental Impact Statement
- Identify concerns, potential impacts
- Relevant effects of past actions and possible alternative actions

Planning for a 90-day scoping period - end of January to end of April

- Presentation to the TRT at March meeting
- Presentations at the Commission and Council Meetings during the scoping period
- Online recorded presentation
- 3 call-in days



Scoping

Topics for Input (Not Limited to These)

- Line Reduction
 - *Gillnet Line Reduction and Modifications in Fishing Operations*
 - *Trap/Pot Effort Reduction*
 - *Reducing Rope on Surface and in the Water Column*
- Weak Rope/Weak Links
- On-Demand Fishing Gear
- Seasonal Restricted Areas
 - *Closed Areas*
 - *Adaptive Closure Management and Dynamic Management*
 - *Dynamic Temporary Area Closures*
- Gear Marking
- Wet Storage Prohibition
- Whale Conservation



#2413 (Nauset) and her 2025 calf. Credit: Clearwater Marine Aquarium Research Institute, NOAA permit #26919.



Questions?



#2430 (Minus One) and her 2025 calf swimming off Amelia Island, Florida. Credit: Georgia Department of Natural Resources, NOAA permit #26919