



**AGENDA  
MARINA ADVISORY BOARD  
REGULAR MEETING  
JANUARY 27, 2025  
6:00 PM  
CITY HALL COMMISSION CHAMBERS  
204 ASH STREET  
FERNANDINA BEACH, FL 32034**

- 1. CALL TO ORDER**
- 2. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE**
- 3. ROLL CALL**
- 4. APPROVAL OF MINUTES**
  - 4.1 Approval November 18, 2024 meeting minutes
- 5. PUBLIC COMMENT REGARDING ITEMS NOT ON THE AGENDA**
- 6. PRESENTATION**
  - 6.1 Amelia Island Whale Ambassadors
- 7. OLD BUSINESS**
- 8. NEW BUSINESS**
  - 8.1 ELECTRIC RATES-
- 9. MARINA MANAGER REPORT**
- 10. BOARD MEMBER REPORTS/COMMENTS**
- 11. NEXT MEETING DATE**
  - 11.1 MARCH 24, 2025, 6:00 PM
- 12. ADJOURNMENT**

All members of the public are invited to be present and be heard. Persons with disabilities requiring accommodations in order to participate in this program or activity should contact the City Clerk at (904) 310-3115 or TTY/TDD 711 (for the hearing or speech impaired). All interested

parties may appear at said meeting and be heard as to the advisability of any action, which may be considered with respect to such matter. For information regarding this matter, please contact the Marina Manager.

MARINA ADVISORY BOARD  
REGULAR MEETING MIUTES  
NOVEMBER 18, 2024  
CITY HALL COMMISSON CHAMBERS  
204 ASH STREET FERNANDINA BEACH, FL 32034

1. CALL TO ORDER- 1800
2. PLEDGE OF ALLIGANCE
3. ROLL CALL – MEMBER PHILLIPS- Present  
MEMBER SPRATTO (Non-Voting Member) - Excused  
MEMBER SHARPE- Present  
CHAIR BLANCHARD- Present  
VICE CHAIR KENT-Present  
MEMBER PATTON- Excused  
OASIS MGR CHAPMAN- Present  
MEMBER/SECRETARY Nickoloff- Present
4. APPROVAL OF MINUTES  
**MOTION:** by PHILLIPS, **SECOND:** by KENT to Approve Regular Meeting Minutes from July 22, 2024. PASSED 5-0  
**MOTION:** by KENT **SECOND:** by PHILLIPS to Approve correction to Minutes of July 22, 2024 PASSED 5-0
5. PUBLIC COMMENT REGARDING ITEMS NOT ON THE AGENDA- Commissioner Elect Touten (Arrived later in the meeting)- After hearing discussion from MAB members about parking and other issues with events in lots C and D, suggested as a solution, the event organizer pay for event security and patrol to enforce parking issues.
6. OLD BUSINESS- **SHARPE**- Bretts- Would like to approach new commission about repairing pylons versus replacing. Sees an upside to reduced cost to repair, if possible. He has talked with a vendor who says it is doable. Discussion about boat owner parking during Petanque Tournament, and solutions for next year. Plus keeping Boat Trailer Parking available during special events. **SECURITY GATE** is a work in progress. Still working through modifications on how to keep secure. Park and Rec person will continue to lock gates in evenings after regular business hours. Security Cameras have been directed towards the gates. **MARINA SIGN**- on hold for now.
7. NEW BUSINESS- **Snag-a-slip** process taking longer than normal to obtain a slip per a boater. Cathy said could be **DockWa** as they usually take longer. But Snag-a-Slip seems

to working fine. Also, Cathy will reach out with Merchant Services about using PayPal as an additional option, as well.

8. MARINA MANAGER REPORT- **October Revenue** is \$85,722. The transient dockage is up \$30k Year over Year, with fewer larger boats this year. Demonstrates the increased Tiered rates is effective. Marina has a new credit card merchant. American Cruise Lines added and additional 4 more boats to visit FB. **MARKETING**- Cathy attended a GM outreach in Port Salerno FL to promote sportfish boat traffic to FBHM. Cathy said it was successful outreach. **CAPITAL EXPENDITURE PROJECTS**- Fuel tank replacement (will be scheduled for slow time, possibly in Jan/Feb. Will entail digging up LOT A which will temporarily impact parking), Dredging and bathhouse/shower redo. **DREDGING**- Army Corps of Engineers dredging on south side of island. Completion planned for February 2025.

9. BOARD MEMBER REPORTS/COMMENTS

KENT- None

SHARPE-None

PATTON- N/A

PHILLIPS- Against the new Waterfront Park because it will disrupt parking, and frankly not needed. Must address NEEDS first versus WANTS with our limited amount of revenue. Plus curbing along rail tracks a problem. Retaining wall options (new material) to present to City Commission. New City Commission- needs to address the Retaining wall. Need to protect the City from impacts of future hurricane flooding.

SPRATTO-N/A

BLANCHARD- Board has expressed not liking concept of a new park. Several problems board sees with the concept. Discussion.

NICKOLOFF- None

10. NEXT MEETING DATE – January 27, 2024

11. ADJOURNMENT AT 1851

Respectfully submitted,  
CHRIS NICKOLOFF Secretary

**CITY COMMISSION AGENDA ITEM**  
*City of Fernandina Beach*



SUBJECT:

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ITEM TYPE: Marina Manager Report

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REQUESTED ACTION:

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SYNOPSIS:

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FISCAL IMPACT:

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CITY ATTORNEY COMMENTS:

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CITY MANAGER RECOMMENDATION(S):

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Date: January 13, 2025

Submitted By: Cathy Chapman, Marina Manager

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COMMISSION ACTION:

# Protecting the Endangered Right Whale



**Scott D. Rowley**

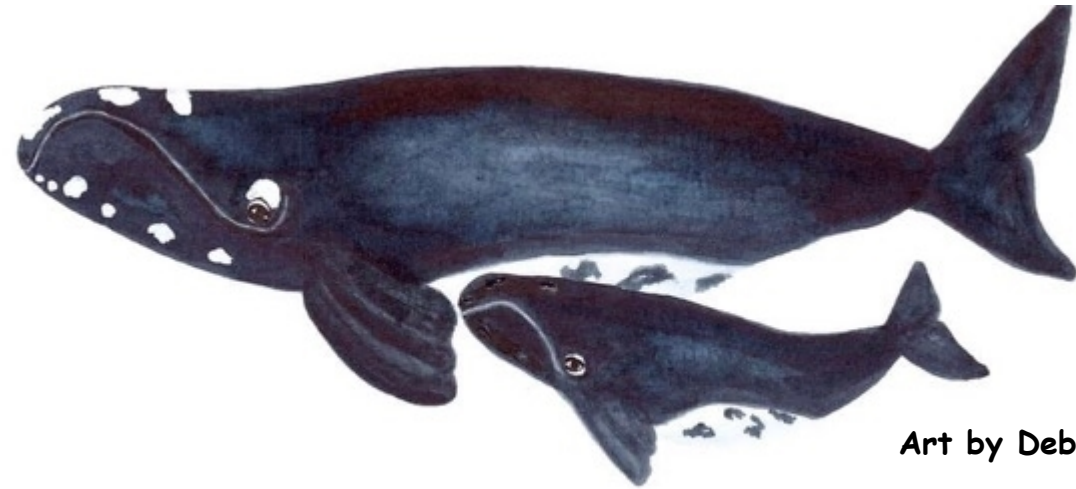
**Amelia Island Whale Ambassadors**

# Protecting the Endangered Right Whale



North Atlantic right whales are critically endangered, approx. 370\* remain, so ...

- Why are they here?
- Why are they hard to see? How to identify right whales?
- Why celebrate?
- Why worry?
- Why hope?



Art by Debra Strobel

Prepared by Richard Timm, 845.325.7059

Sources: <https://www.neaq.org/about-us/press-room/press-releases/2022-population-estimate-north-atlantic-right-whale/>  
<https://www.fisheries.noaa.gov/species/north-atlantic-right-whale>

# Why are right whales here? ... Amelia Island is at the heart of the calving grounds, Nov 15 – Apr 15



Catalog #1208 'Medusa' and Calf - Video Clip 2  
by FWC Fish and Wildlife Research Institute

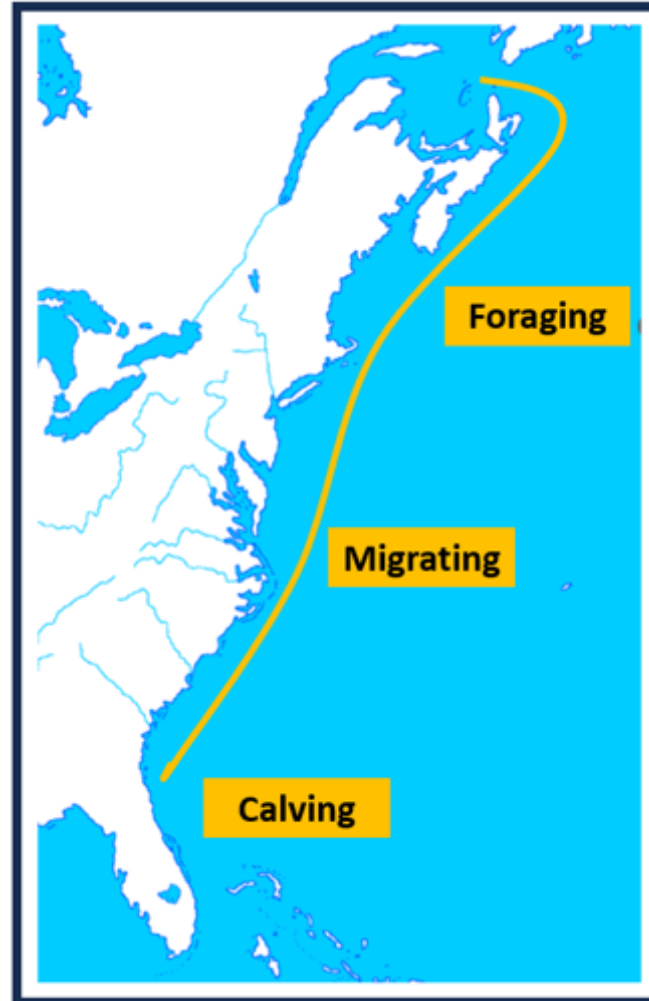


# Right Whales Migrate From As Far Away As Canada, 2500 Miles

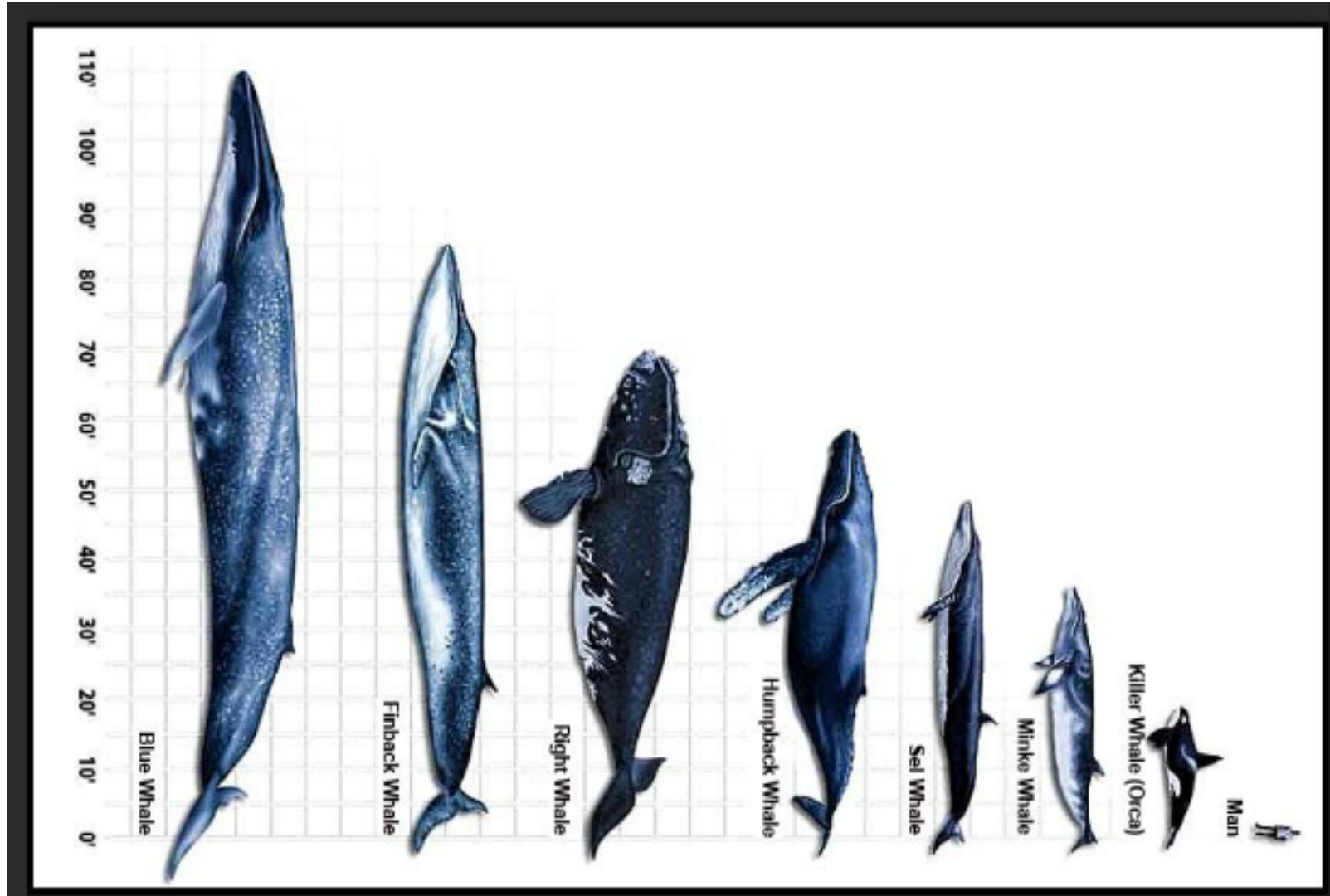
**Baleen whales**

**Feeding grounds off the coast of New England and Canada are directly related to the distribution and density of their zooplankton prey**

**Amelia Island is at the heart of the calving grounds, Nov - April**

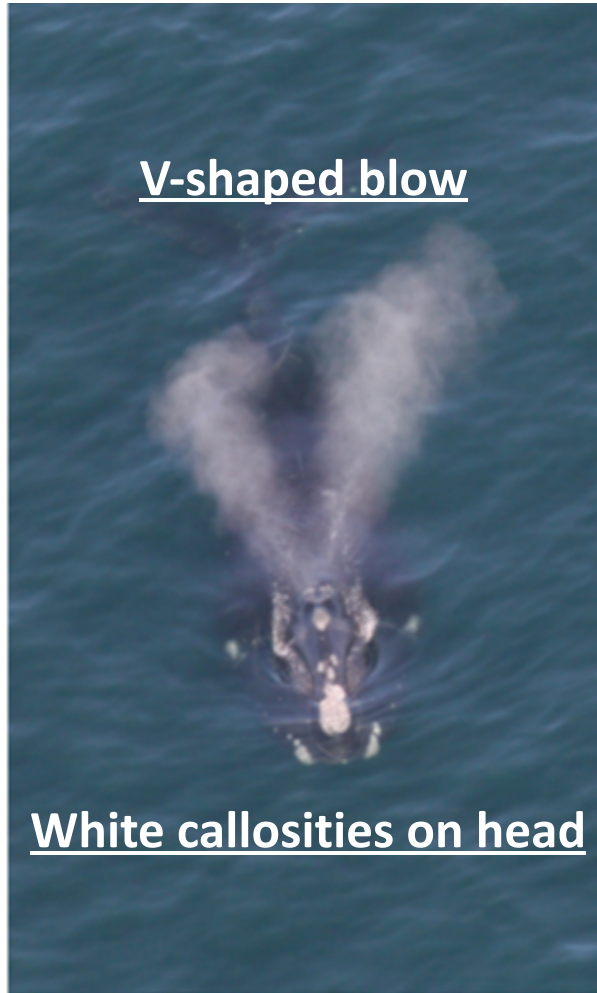


# Right Whales: Third Largest of Great Whales



**21 species  
of whales  
are  
present in  
Florida  
waters**

# How to identify a right whale?



V-shaped blow

White callosities on head

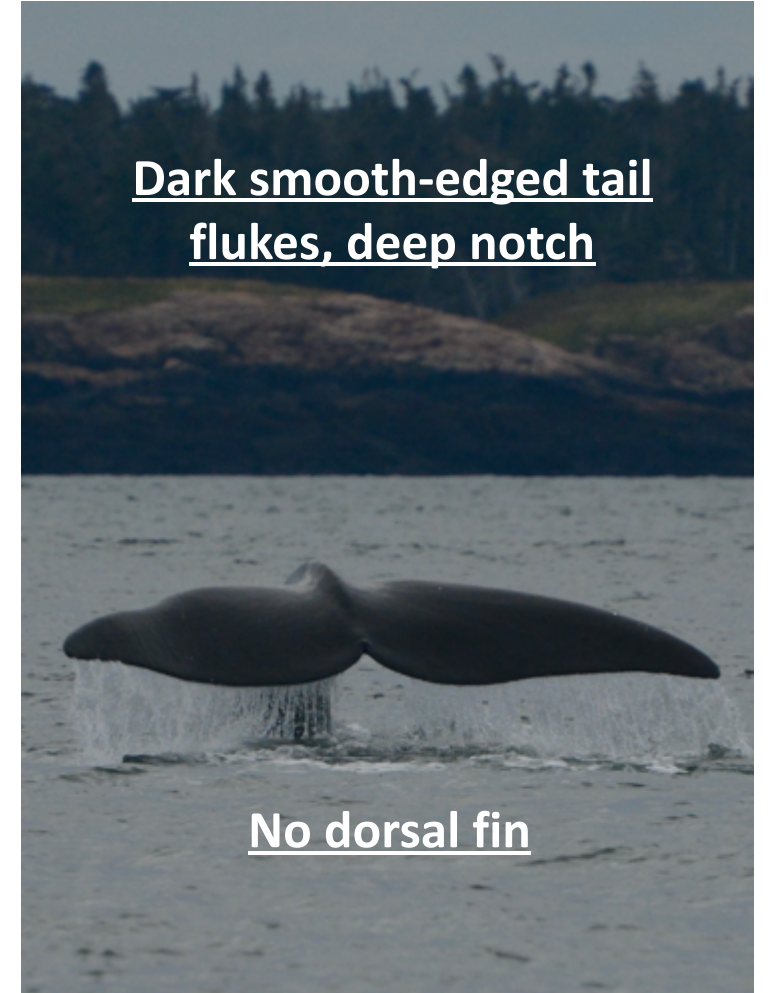
When right whales exhale out of their blowholes, their spouts are shaped like a "V." Image collected under MMPA Research permit number 17355. Photo Credit: NOAA/NEFSC/Christin Khan.



Very large head  
Paddle shaped flippers

Mostly dark skin,  
possible white patches on belly,  
throat is not pleated

<https://us.whales.org/wp-content/uploads/sites/2/2018/08/right-whale-breach-wdc.jpg>



Dark smooth-edged tail flukes, deep notch

No dorsal fin

Quoddy Link Marine, October 19, 2023, Image by DDion

# Why are Right Whales Rarely Seen?

- **Mostly black** ... plus white patches on their heads called callosities
- **Body shape** ... broad body size, no dorsal fin
- **They are not calling** ... resting quietly close to surface, nursing their calves, avoiding predators
  - (Sonobuoys may not be effective in detecting presence)



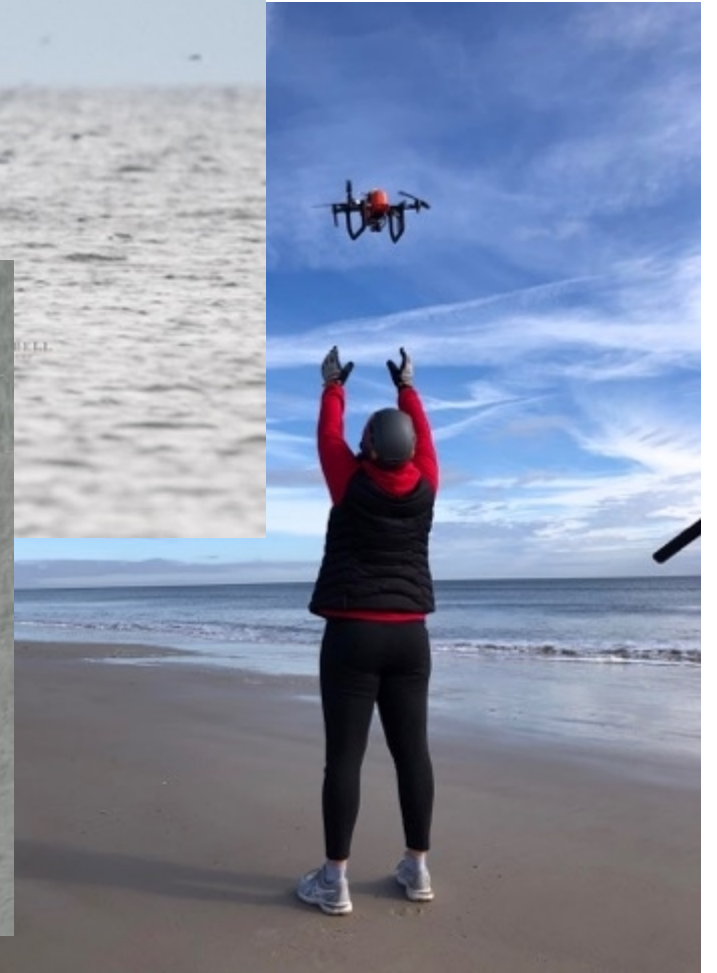


# Right Whales are Hard to See



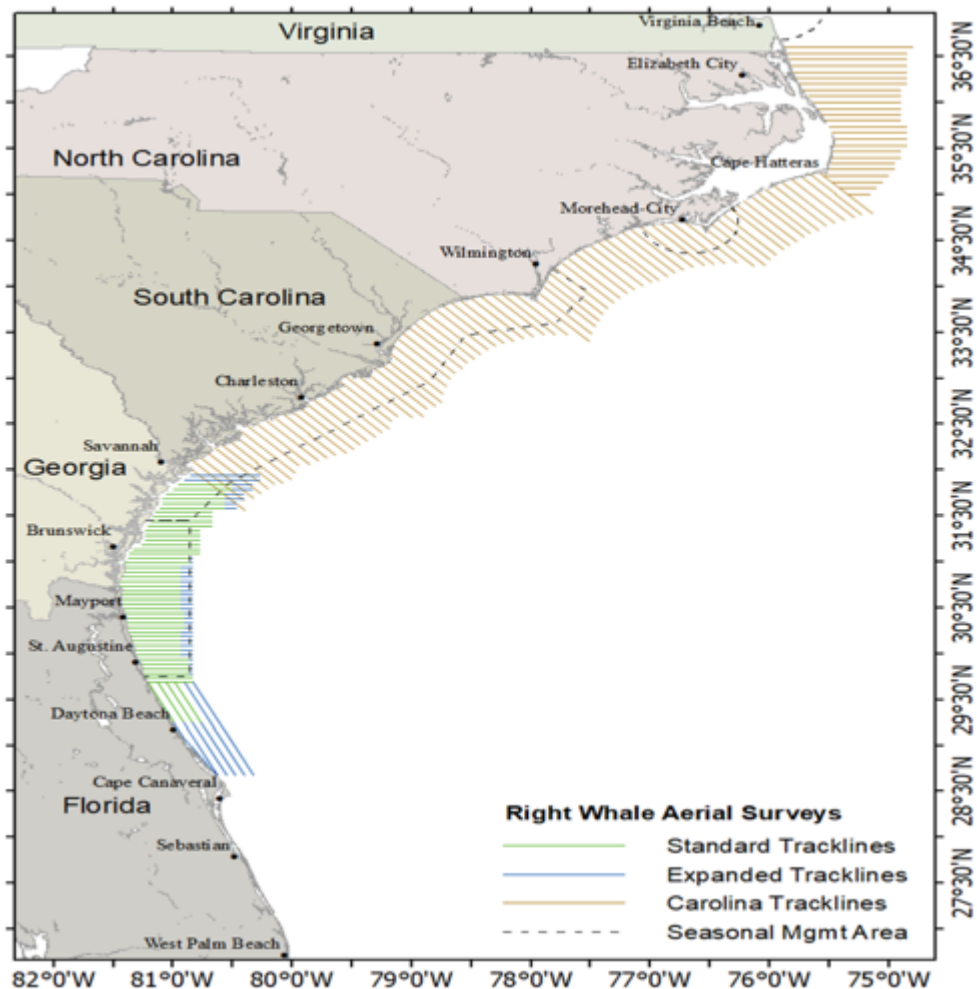
Credit: NOAA Fisheries (permit number 594-1467-02). <https://www.fisheries.noaa.gov/feature-story/all-boaters-should-reduce-their-speed-protect-north-atlantic-right-whales>

# Halo & Calf Visited Burney Park (2024)



Drone images taken under NOAA permit #27066

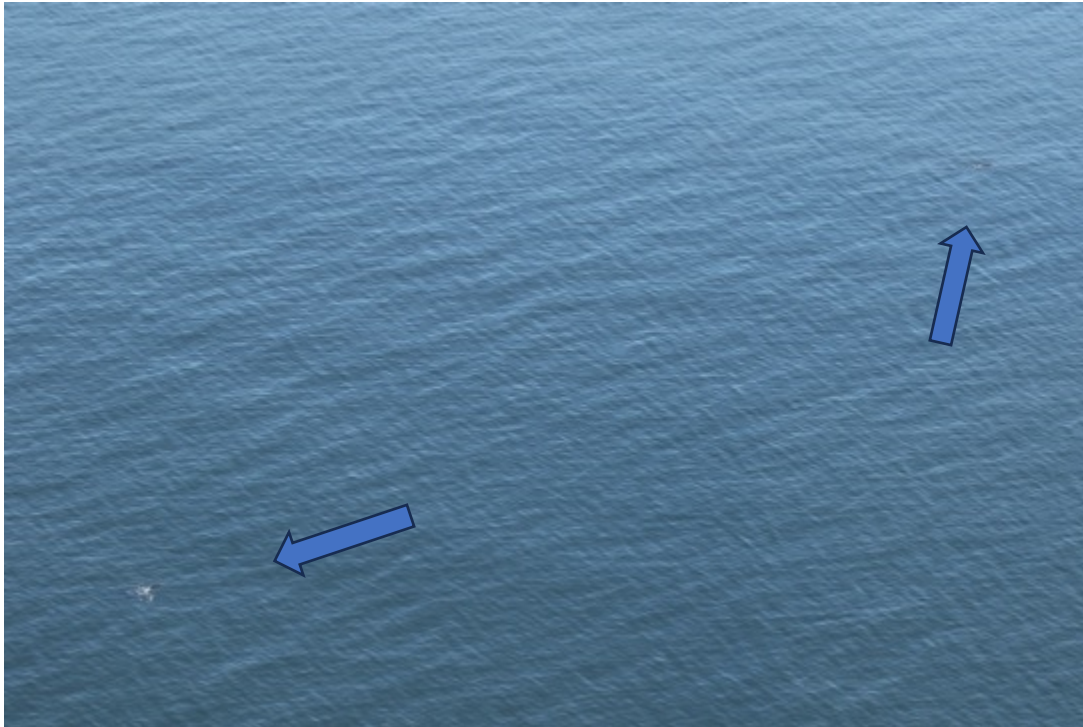
# Tracking Whales: Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission Right Whale Survey Flights



- Daily flights 12/1 – 3/31, weather permitting
- 1000 ft ASL
- 3 mile tracks, 30 miles
- Dotted lines show Seasonal Management Areas
- Goals
  - Vessel notification – prevent collisions
  - Whale health (injured or entangled whales)
  - Monitor whale calving
  - Scientific research
- Funding
  - NOAA Fisheries
  - U.S. Army Corps of Engineers
  - U.S. Coast Guard
  - U.S. Navy

Image credit: Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission, taken under NOAA research permit 15488

# Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission Aerial Photographs: North Atlantic Right Whale



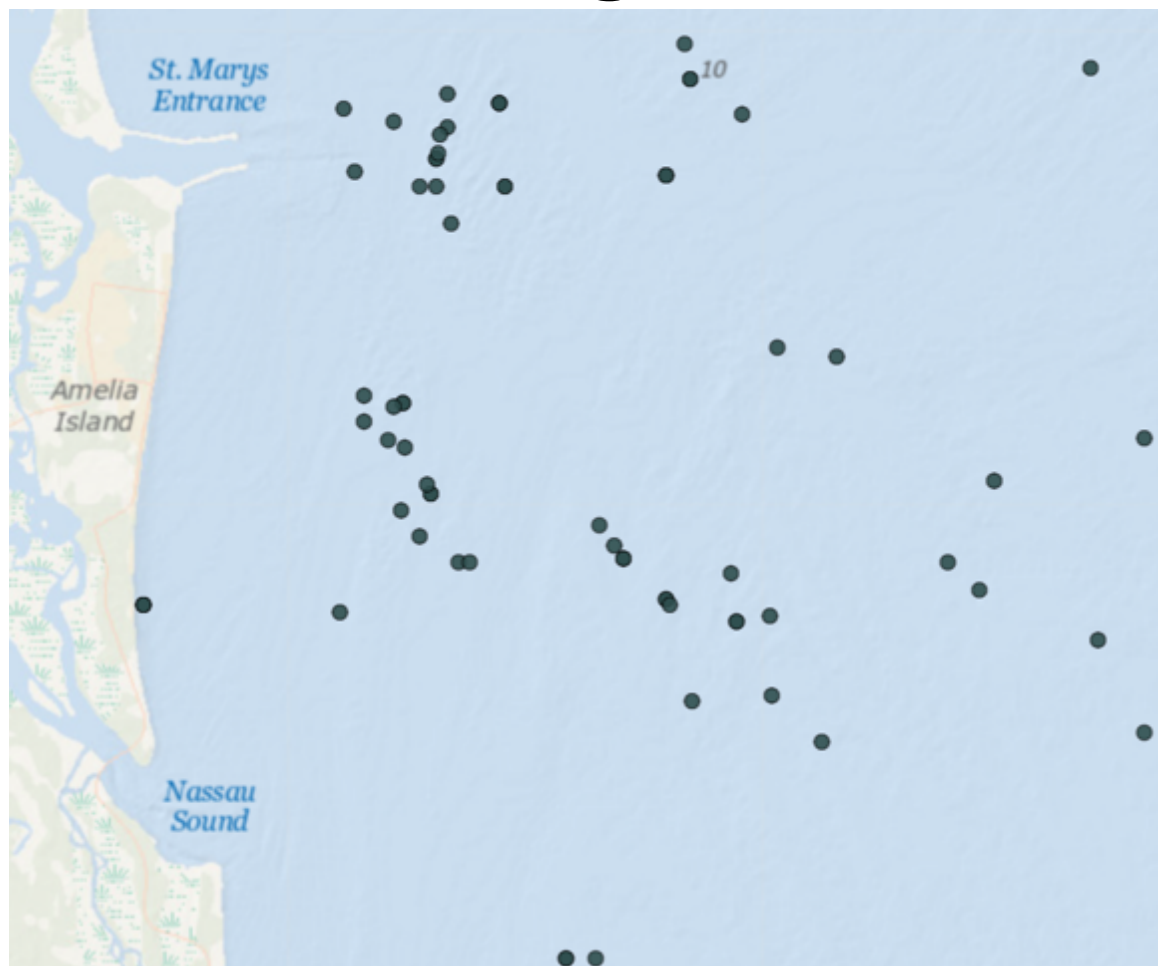
You can spot two mother-calf pairs in this zoomed out photo. This photo was taken on Feb. 27, 2016 approximately 8 NM off Cumberland Island, GA.



This right whale mother-calf pair are difficult to see due to a light chop on the water and glare from the sun scattered across the surface. This pair was sighted approximately 23 nautical miles off Ponte Vedra, FL on February 15, 2019.



# Right Whales Near Amelia Island During 2024 Calving Season



**81 unique right whales were observed in SE US Waters during the 2024 calving season**

Source: <https://whalemap.org/WhaleMap/>



# A Reason to Celebrate: 20 Mother/Calf Pairs During 2024 Calving Season



*Right whale Juno (Catalog #1612) and calf sighted off Cane Island, SC, on November 28, 2023*

PHOTO: CLEARWATER MARINE AQUARIUM RESEARCH INSTITUTE, TAKEN UNDER NOAA PERMIT #26919. FUNDED BY UNITED STATES ARMY CORPS OF ENGINEERS



Source: <https://neaq.org/2023-2024-right-whale-mother-and-calf-pairs/>

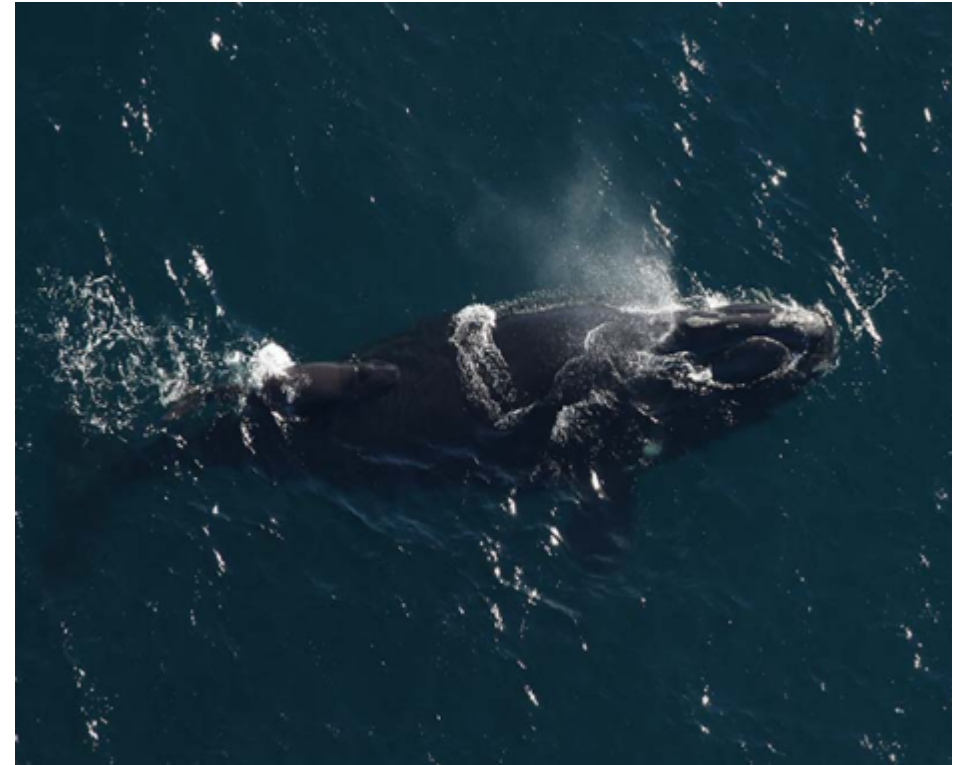
# New Moms are Something to Celebrate

**2023 new mom: Pilgrim**



*Photo credit: Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission, NOAA permit #20556-01*

**2024 new mom: #3780**



*PHOTO: FLORIDA FISH AND WILDLIFE CONSERVATION COMMISSION, TAKEN UNDER NOAA PERMIT #26919.*

# Why Worry: Extinct in Our Lifetime?

- **Critically endangered, ~370 remain**
  - 70 breeding females
  - Calving interval has increased
  - Fewer than 20 calves each year
- **Death and injury - anthropogenic**
  - **Entanglement** ... lobster and crab fishing
  - **Vessel strikes** ... commercial and recreational
  - **Stress** ... noise, food scarcity, plastics, etc.



Image Courtesy of NOAA/NEFSC/Peter Duley  
<https://www.science.org/content/article/north-atlantic-right-whale-faces-extinction>



Infinity's calf, Feb 13, 2021, St. Augustine, Anastasia State Park  
<https://ameliaislandliving.com/fernandinabeach/2021/02/right-whale-calf-fatally-wounded-by-boat-aerial-search-locates-mom/>

Photo: FWC/Tucker Joenz, NOAA Fisheries (permit #18786)

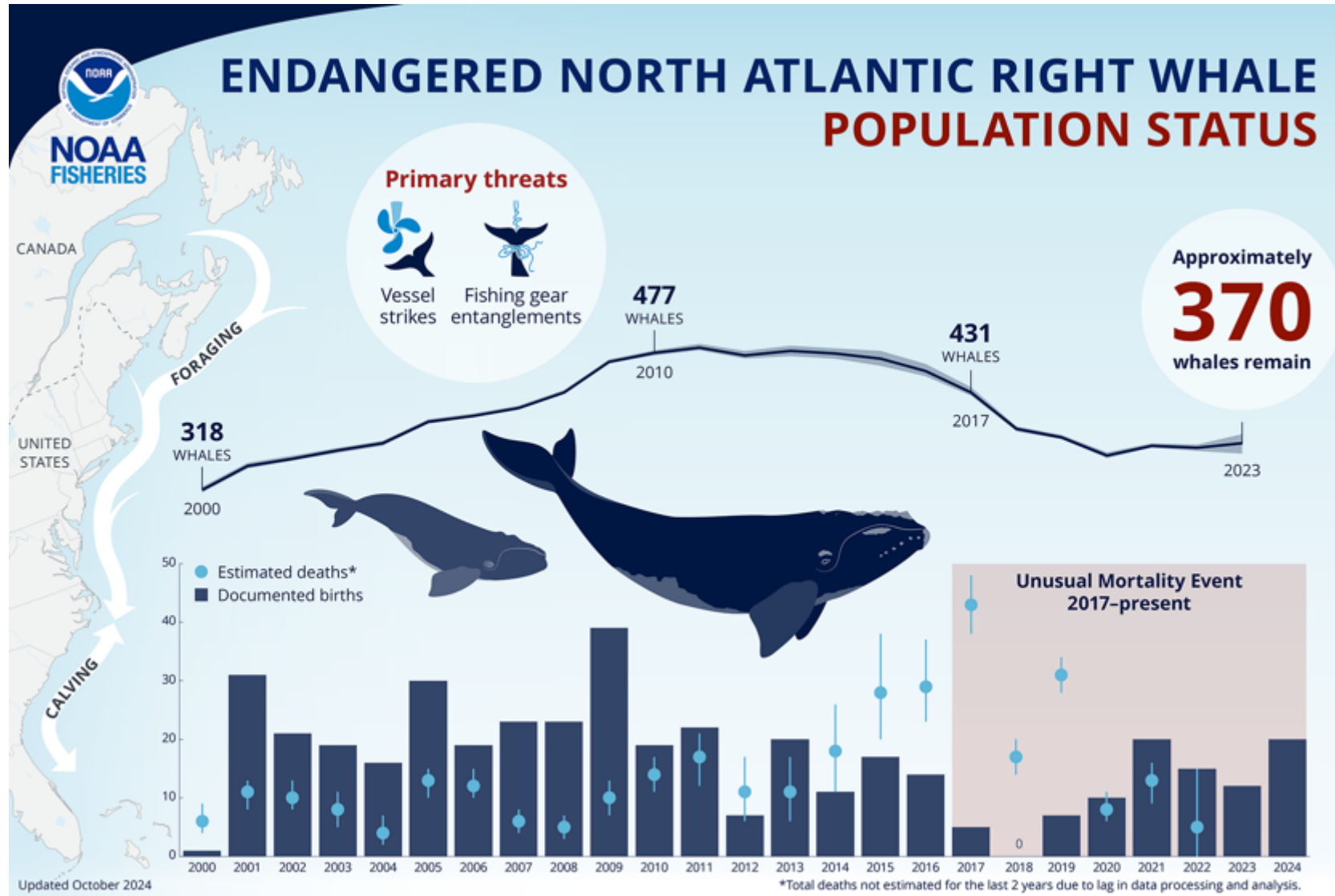
# 2024 Calving Season – 20 Calves



# North Atlantic Right Whale Births and Deaths Since 2000

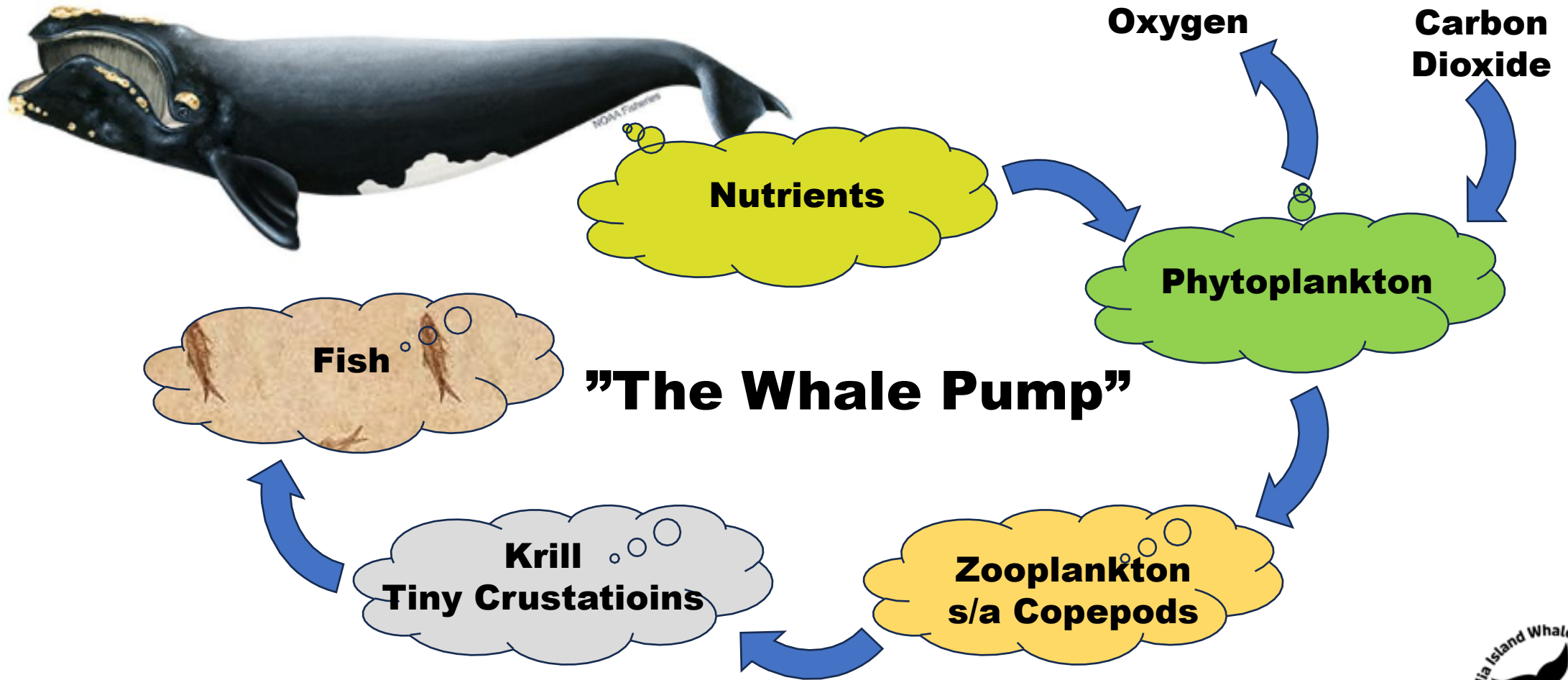


- 2008 NOAA speed restriction in SMAs
- 2022 NOAA proposed add'l restrictions



- 2017 Canadian speed restrictions in SMAs.
- No known deaths in 2020-2023.
- 97% vessel compliance in 2024

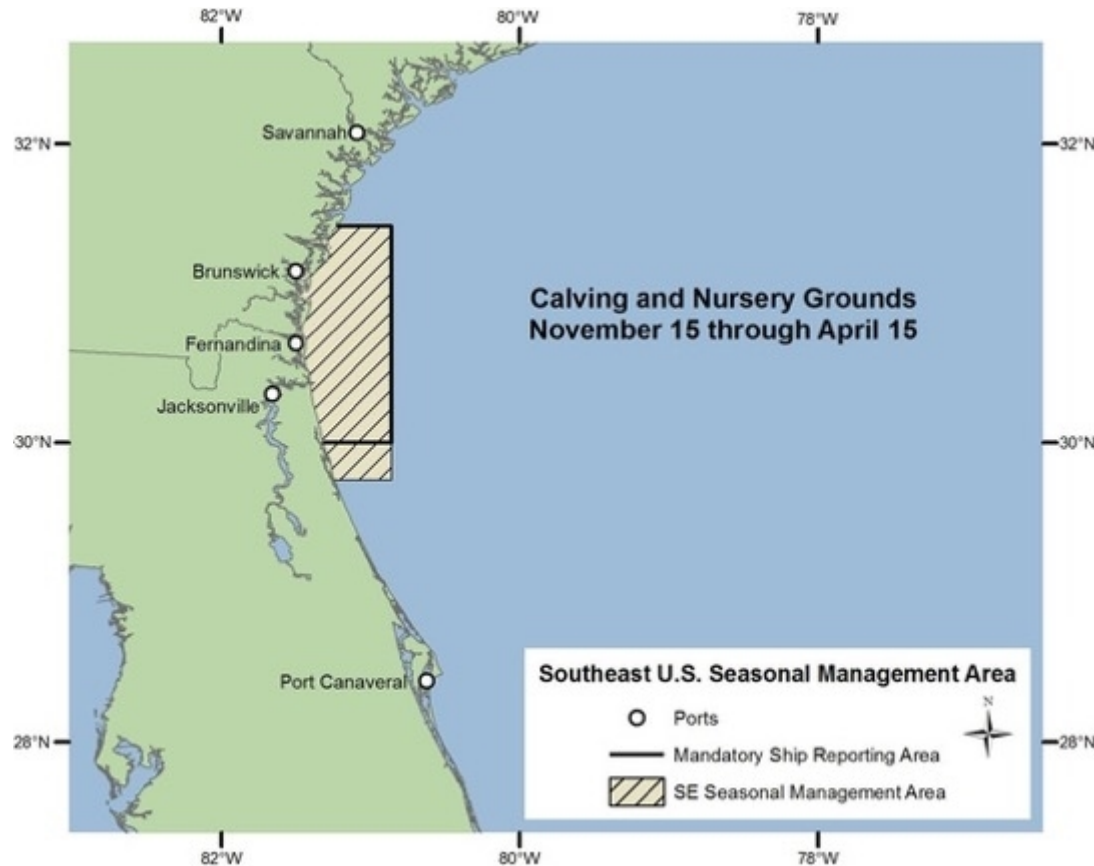
# Whales are an Essential Component of Ocean Ecology



Sources: <https://www.blueoceansociety.org/blog/whale-poop-and-the-circle-of-life/ity-event>  
<https://us.whales.org/green-whale/>  
<https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Krill>



# Right Whale Seasonal Management Area Amelia Island

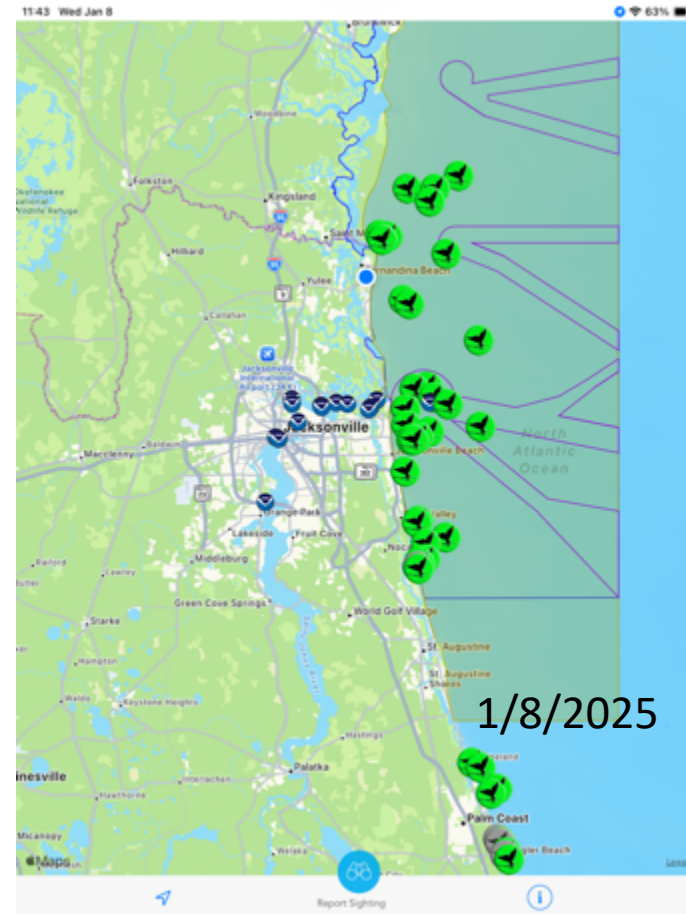
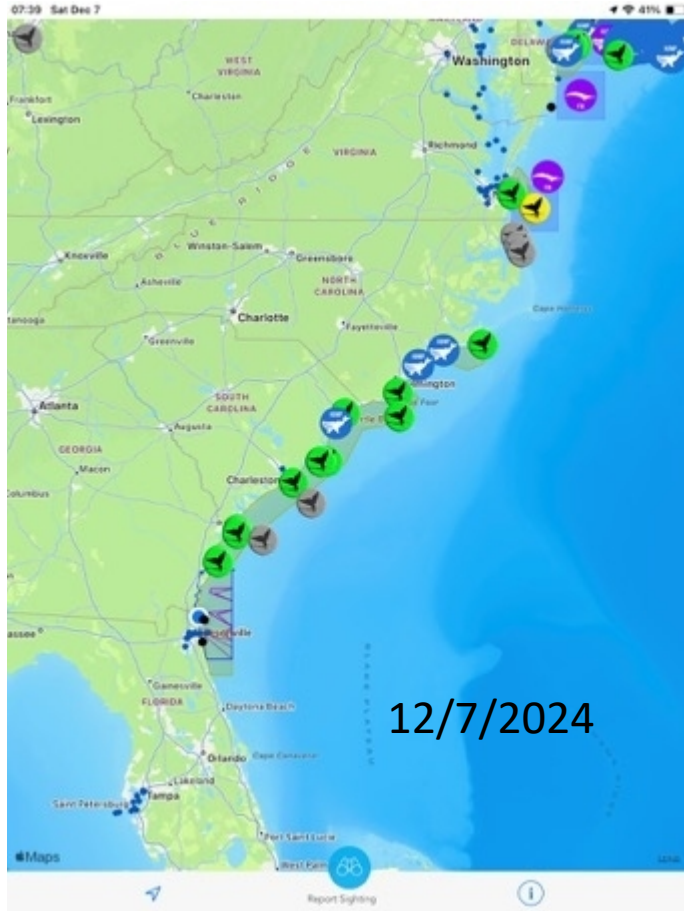


**Southeast SMA extends to the north of 31°27'N,  
south of 29°45'N, and east of 080°51'36"W**



**Eastern boarder of SMA is ~28 NM from  
Amelia Island lighthouse**

# Rationale for Expanding SMA Sizes Whale Sightings



Whale sightings during previous 30 days

Screen shots from “Whale Alert”



# Rationale for Including Smaller Vessels

## Small Vessel Prop Strike



Shown is right whale #4540 with fresh propeller cuts as a calf off Georgia, 2013.

Photo by Clearwater Marine Aquarium Research Institute, taken under NOAA permit #15488

Adapted from: NOAA-NMFS-2022-0022



# Amendments to the North Atlantic Right Whale Vessel Strike Reduction Rule



*NOAA Fisheries proposed rule changes (controversial)....*

- **Modify timing and boundaries of speed restrictions in Seasonal Management Areas**
  - **NMFS designated 10 SMAs reflective of temporal trends in right whale habitat use**
  - **NMFS selected 10-knot speed limit based on analysis of vessel strikes**
- **Create mandatory (not optional) Dynamic Speed Zone framework for speed restrictions when whales are outside active SMAs**
- **Include vessels  $\geq 35$  ft (previously,  $\geq 65$  ft)**
  - **Vessels  $\leq 65$  ft in length accounted for 5 of the 12 documented lethal strike events since 2008**
- **NMFS is separately addressing risk from fishing gear entanglement**

87 FR 46921, 8/1/2022 (withdrawn 1/15/2025)

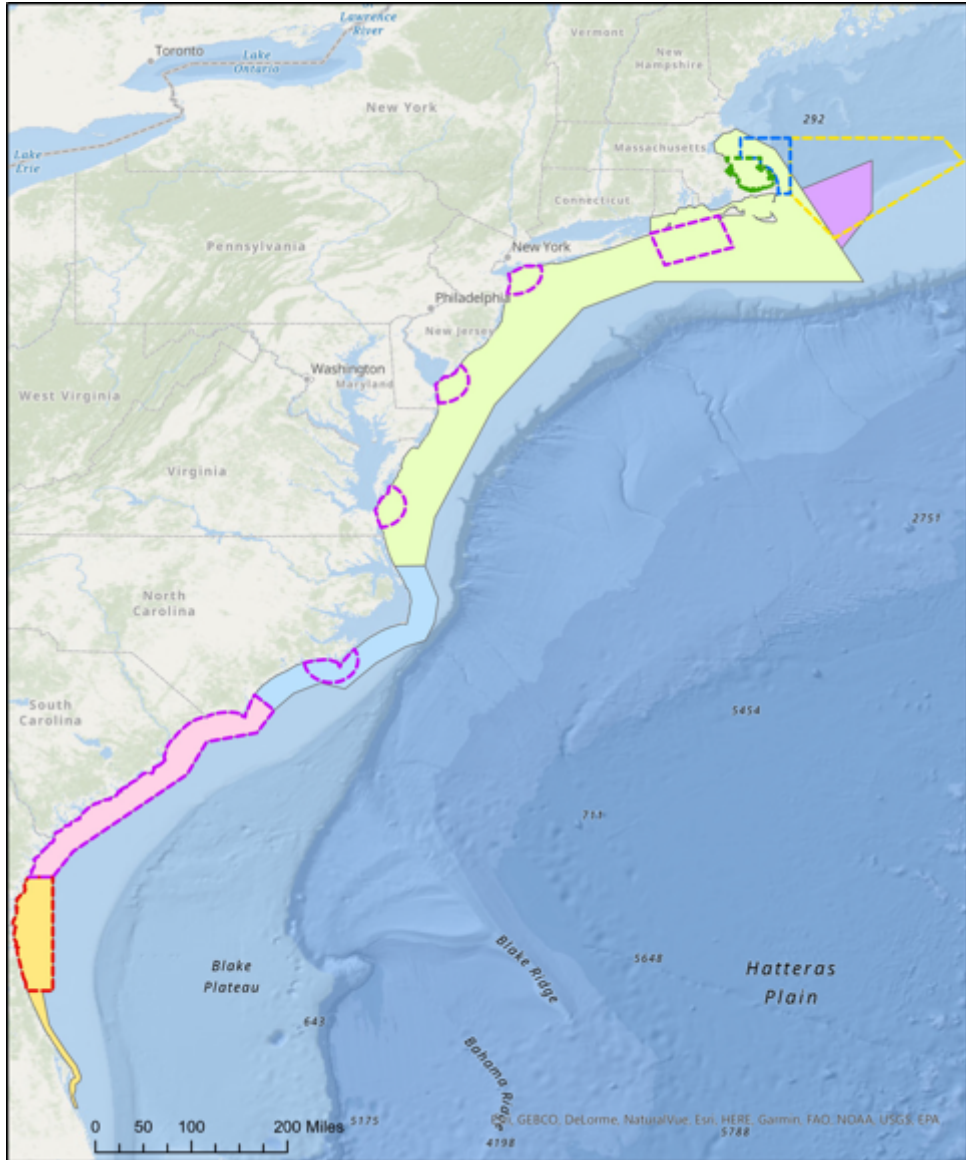
# PROPOSED MODIFICATIONS TO SEASONAL MANAGEMENT AREAS/SPEED ZONES

## Proposed Seasonal Speed Zones

- Great South Channel (Apr 1 – Jun 30)
- Atlantic (Nov 1 – May 30)
- North Carolina (Nov 1 – Apr 30)
- South Carolina (Nov 1 – Apr 15)
- Southeast (Nov 15 – Apr 15)

## Current Seasonal Management Areas

- Cape Cod Bay (Jan 1 – May 15)
- Race Point (Mar 1 – April 30)
- Great South Channel (Apr 1 – Jul 31)
- Block Island to Georgia (Nov 1 – Apr 30)
- Southeast (Nov 15 – Apr 15)



Adapted from: NOAA-NMFS-2022-0022

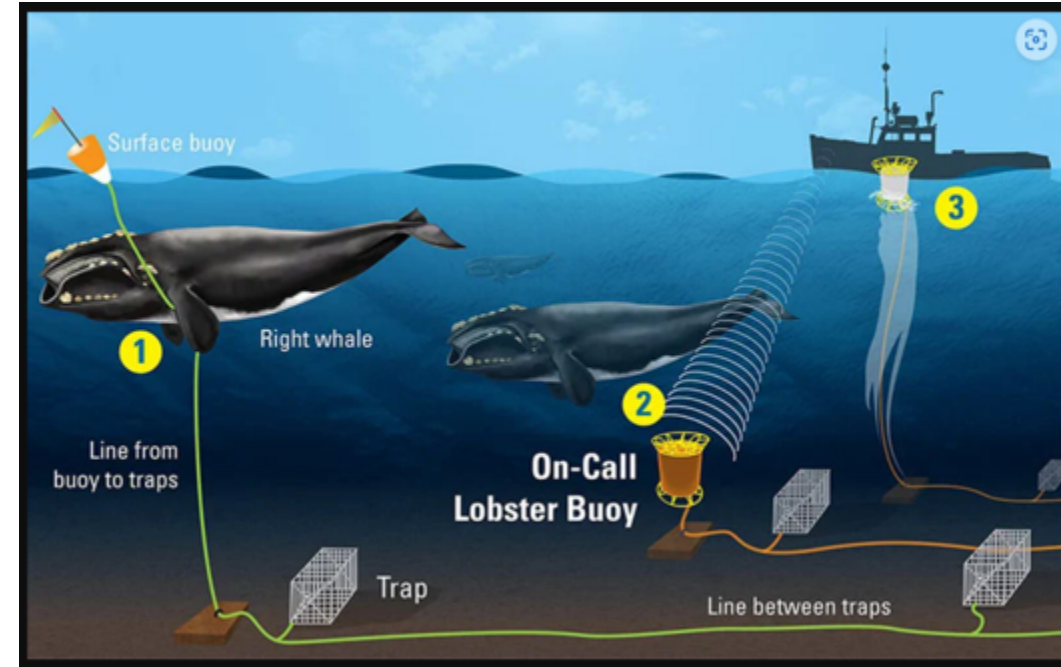




# Why Hope?

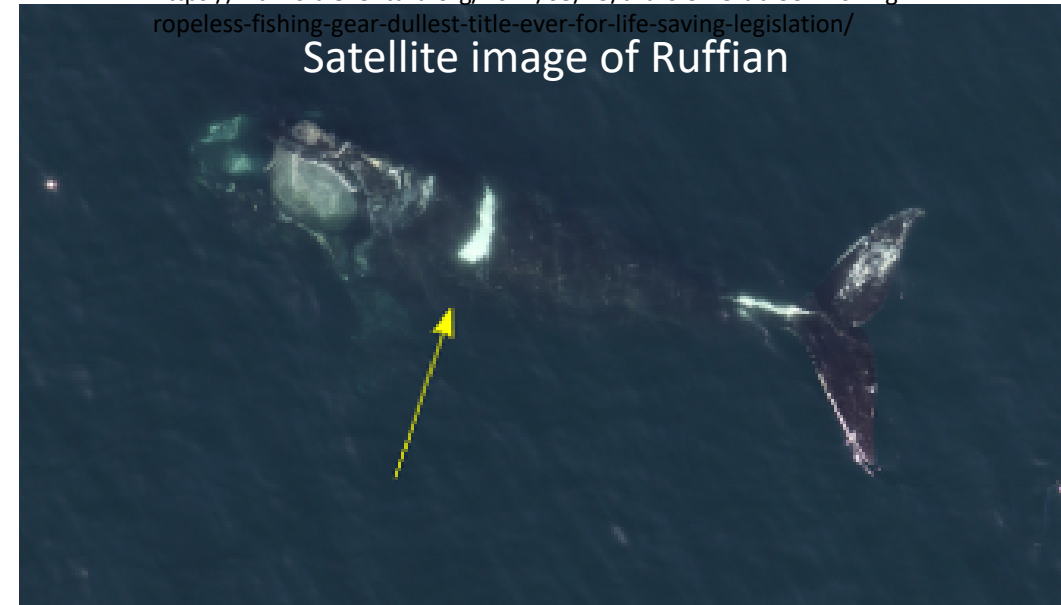
## Efforts to Reduce Mortality

- **Speed reductions in Seasonal Management Areas (50 CFR 224) established 2008 (2017 Canada)**
  - **Decreased fatal vessel strikes**
  - **See and avoid still current only option**
- **Emerging technology such as**
  - **On-demand traps**
  - **Satellite surveillance**
  - **Drones with artificial intelligence**
  - **Sonobuoys with machine learning**
  - **Automated Information System**



<https://indivisibleventura.org/2021/03/25/thurs-3-25-ab-534-fishing-ropeless-fishing-gear-dullest-title-ever-for-life-saving-legislation/>

### Satellite image of Ruffian



Hodul et al 2022 Individual North Atlantic right whales identified from space



# Key Messages

- **North Atlantic right whales are critically endangered**
- **Amelia Island is at the heart of the calving grounds**
- **Right whales are large yet very hard to detect**
- **Known primary causes of death or injury are entanglement and vessel strikes**
- **Right whale mortality can be reduced**
  - **Boat speeds reduced to 10 knots in Seasonal Management Areas**
    - **Proposed modified rules were withdrawn on 1/15/2025**
  - **“On demand” fishing buoys in active testing**
  - **Other new technology being developed**

# Questions? ... Thank you



Catalog #3370 'Archipelago' and Calf  
Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Co

## AIWA Activities 2024-2025

- Public presentations
- Youth activities
- Museum of History display (Dec 2025)
- Transient boaters' tote bags
- Marina signage
- Informational displays
- Whale Festival
- Shrimp parade
- Baby shower

