

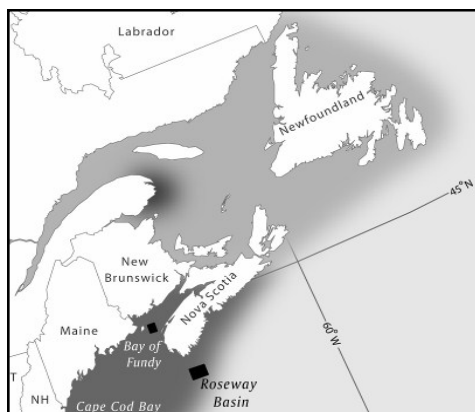


# North Atlantic Right Whale



## SEARCHING FOR NORTH ATLANTIC RIGHT WHALE FEEDING GROUNDS

The Species at Risk team at Fisheries and Oceans Canada (DFO) St. Andrews Biological Station is seeking information on the whereabouts of groups of the endangered North Atlantic Right Whale



(*Eubalaena glacialis*) in Canadian waters. While two areas, Roseway Basin and Grand Manan Basin (Bay of Fundy), have been identified and protected under the *Species at Risk Act* as Critical Habitat, researchers believe that there may be other areas where whales gather that are currently unknown.

With funding from the Species at Risk Program, biologists Lei Harris and Danielle MacDonald have begun a campaign called “Wanted! North Atlantic Right Whales” in search of these areas. Posters are being placed on wharves in Prince Edward Island, Nova Scotia, New Brunswick, Quebec, and Newfoundland and Labrador to solicit information on sightings of North Atlantic Right Whales.

North Atlantic Right Whales are one of the most endangered cetaceans in the world. Many spend their winter months in Atlantic waters of Florida and Georgia and migrate north to typically spend June to October in the waters of the Atlantic Provinces. While they mostly summer in the Bay of Fundy and off the south shore of Nova Scotia, there are also reports of sightings in the Gulf of St. Lawrence, off Newfoundland and, historically, as far north as Greenland. The most significant threats to their recovery are entanglement in fishing gear and ship strikes. In addition to the listing of the two Critical Habitat areas, recovery efforts in Canada have included changes to shipping lanes in the Bay of Fundy and the designation of Roseway Basin as an “Area To Be Avoided” in an effort to reduce the potential for ship strikes.

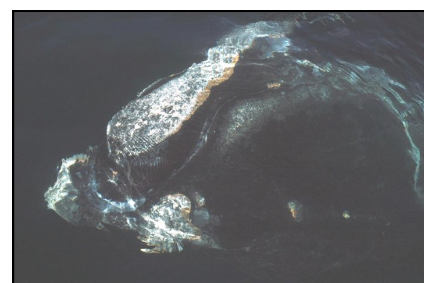
DFO is asking those who see North Atlantic Right Whales to provide the date, time, location (latitude and longitude if possible), and an estimate of the number of whales seen. If photos or video are available, those are also welcome. However, DFO cautions not to approach the group as doing so can be a safety hazard to both the mariner and the whales. Feeding, nursing and other social behaviours can be interrupted when vessels approach. There is also the hazard of potentially hitting a North Atlantic Right Whale which has unpredictable patterns of submerging and surfacing.

North Atlantic Right Whales are identified by the following characteristics:

- a broad back with no dorsal fin
- white patterns on their head
- broad paddle-like flippers
- a smooth Y-shaped fluke (tail)
- a V-shaped blow

Information on sightings can be sent by e-mail to:

[XMARWhaleSightings@dfo-mpo.gc.ca](mailto:XMARWhaleSightings@dfo-mpo.gc.ca)  
or by telephone (506)529-5838.



# NORTH ATLANTIC RIGHT WHALE

## Special points of interest:

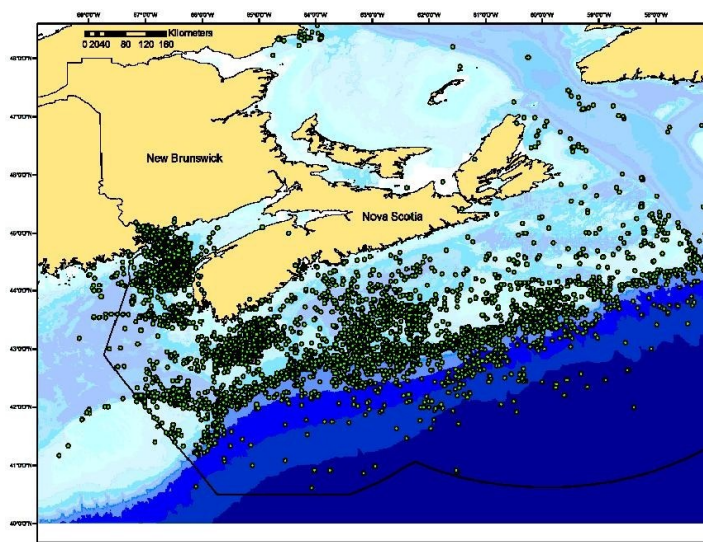
- *The North Atlantic Right Whale is listed as Endangered under the Canadian Species at Risk Act.*
- *In 2010, the global population was estimated to be about 468 individuals.*
- *Up to two thirds of the population congregate in Roseway Basin (off Nova Scotia) and Grand Manan Basin (Bay of Fundy) and these are both designated as Critical Habitat Areas under the Canadian Species at Risk Act.*
- *Researchers suspect that there are other areas where the whales gather to feed and socialize.*
- *The public is asked to participate in expanding the knowledge of North Atlantic Right Whale habitat by reporting sighting information to:*

***XMARWhaleSightings@dfo-mpo.gc.ca***  
***or by telephone (506)529-5838.***

## Maritimes Region Cetacean Sightings Database

The Species at Risk Group has designed and implemented a whale sightings database for the Maritimes Region. The vast majority of data comes from the Scotian Shelf and Gulf of Maine area, but some sightings from other areas along the east coast of Canada are included. This database allows us to input sightings records from a variety of sources including: whale watchers, researchers, fishermen and the at-sea observer program. It can also accommodate information on large marine animals such as basking sharks and sea turtles.

The database contains "interaction" codes for cases where whales and marine animals are impacted by human activity. The database is compatible with other whale databases in the United States and Canada as well as with other DFO databases.



North Atlantic Right Whale Sightings

*“If you are interested in participating in this project, or requesting data, please contact: XMARWhalesightings@dfo-mpo.gc.ca”*

A subset of these data is available directly to the general public through the Ocean Biogeographic Information System (OBIS). Fields available through OBIS include: location, date, time, species, and number.

All information on whales is useful in studying migrations, distributions, and feeding habits. Information is also used in

developing species protection measures and in environmental impact assessments.

If you are interested in participating in this project, or requesting data, please contact: XMARWhalesightings@dfo-mpo.gc.ca