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Marine Fisheries Advisory

RIGHT WHALE ADVISORY LIFTED IN WESTERN CAPE COD BAY

Aerial and vessel surveillance efforts by the Center for Coastal Studies and the Division of Marine Fisheries have determined that the feeding aggregation of right whales in western Cape Cod Bay near the shipping lanes has dispersed. No right whales were sighted in that area from the aircraft or boat, and habitat monitoring revealed a decline in the zooplankton resource, suggesting that right whale aggregations are not likely to return to this area in the near future. With the departure of these animals from western Cape Cod Bay, the Commonwealth is lifting the April 2nd advisory to mariners in this area.

Mariners should remain on the lookout for right whales since they are still present in the Bay. The majority of them are concentrated in the eastern portion of the Bay off Truro. The right whale's food resource is now dominated by various stages of *Calanus* of moderate density eliciting near-surface foraging behavior. Right whale aggregation and feeding will likely continue in the northeast quadrant of the Bay but the concentration of whales will slowly decline due to the limited resource.

Marine Fisheries would like to thank fishermen, whale watch companies, and others for their assistance and compliance with measures designed to protect this highly endangered animal. *Marine Fisheries* monitors the presence of right whales in Cape Cod Bay through aerial surveys, habitat sampling, and acoustic monitoring. Sightings observed through these efforts allow *Marine Fisheries* to address threats to right whales on a real-time basis. We greatly appreciate the diligence and alertness of mariners and our surveillance team during the 2009 season.

The National Marine Fisheries Service (NOAA Fisheries) issues warnings to mariners and others through the Northern Right Whale Sighting Advisory System (SAS). Advisories regarding Cape Cod Bay and surrounding waters can be viewed at the NOAA Fisheries Northeast Region web site ([http:// www.nero.noaa.gov/ro/doc/whale.htm](http://www.nero.noaa.gov/ro/doc/whale.htm)) and are broadcast over NOAA weather radio ([http:// 205.156.54.206/nwr/](http://205.156.54.206/nwr/)).

For more information, contact Erin Burke at 978-551-0152 or visit the *Marine Fisheries* website at <http://www.mass.gov/marinefisheries> .

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