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Director

Commonwealth of Massachusetts

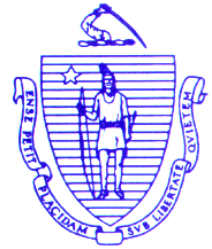
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April 26, 2019

Marine Fisheries Advisory

SEASONAL SPEED LIMIT RESTRICTION EXTENDED THROUGH MAY 8TH

As a result of the continued presence of endangered right whales off Cape Cod, the Director of the Division of Marine Fisheries is extending the seasonal speed limit restrictions through May 8th ([Notice of Declaration](#)). Accordingly, all vessels with an overall length of less than 65' (small vessels) operating within those waters of Cape Cod Bay south of 42° 08" north latitude and north and east of Cape Cod west of 70° 10' west longitude may not travel at a speed of greater than 10 knots (see map). Vessels with an overall length of 65' or greater are subject to a federal 10 knot speed limit rule in this area through May 15th ([federal rule](#)).

Exempt from this are law enforcement and emergency personnel operating within their course of authorized duties, including federal whale disentanglement personnel responding to an entangled whale, as well as any small vessel operating in the inshore waters of Plymouth, Kingston, Duxbury, Barnstable and Wellfleet harbors. The duration of this speed limit restriction may be shortened or extended based on continuing aerial and vessel based surveys. DMF will update the public regarding any such adjustments.

On April 25, 2019, the Provincetown Center for Coastal Studies conducted an aerial survey for right whales along Cape Cod. The survey estimated there were approximately 57 right whales feeding at or near the surface in Cape Cod Bay. Additionally, *Calanus* plankton counts are high indicating that the whales are likely to remain aggregated in the area to feed. The extension of this speed limit restriction will protect these endangered whales from ship strikes, which are a major source of mortality for these animals. Right whales are critically endangered species and their population has been decreasing since 2010 due to continued mortality and low birth rates. They seasonally migrate into Massachusetts waters and aggregate in Cape Cod Bay to feed on zooplankton. In recent years more than 50% of the known right whale population has been observed in our waters during late winter and early spring.

For more information about the management of protected species in Massachusetts, contact DMF at 617-626-1520 or visit our website at www.mass.gov/marinefisheries.

Small Vessel Speed Restricted Area Extended through May 8, 2019

