

Sharing the Seas: Safe Boating for Sailors and Whales



© Dolphin Fleet

Information provided by [Sharing the Seas](#) for the Marblehead to Halifax- July 2017

Beware: Whale Crossing

Did you know that collisions with vessels is one of the leading causes of death among whales such as the endangered North Atlantic right whale?



Collisions can also cause thousands of dollars in damage to boats and injure crew. The Audubon Society of Rhode Island, New Bedford Whaling Museum and Whale and Dolphin Conservation have joined forces with US Sailing to make the oceans safer for both humans and whales.

During the Marblehead to Halifax Ocean Race race crews may experience whales who are migrating and feeding along the same route as the race course. We have developed the following information to provide you with safe boating practices for you and the whales during the race.

Why Is This Important?

- To understand human impacts on the ecosystem.
- Address the need for better communication and partnership among stakeholders.
- Since sailors are already on the water, you can help authorities monitor populations by reporting sightings and collisions.
- Become ocean stewards by picking up debris underway.
- To protect both sailors and whales.

Protecting Sailors

“I hit something hard with the keel. It was a violent shock and the boat came to a standstill. The rear bearings of the keel were ripped off and the keel is hanging under the boat kept in place simply by the keel ram, which is in the process of cutting through the hull...”

...The situation has been stabilised for the moment. I have my survival kit alongside me. Someone is going to have to come and get me.” –Kito de Pavant during the 2016 Vendée Globe



The rear part of the keel housing On the right the keel head, which is beginning to cut through the hull © Kito de Pavant / Bastide Otio / Vendée Globe



Video recovered shows it was a collision with a baleen whale

Protecting Whales

- Ship strikes and entanglement are the leading causes of whale mortality
- 85% of North Atlantic right whales have scars from entanglement



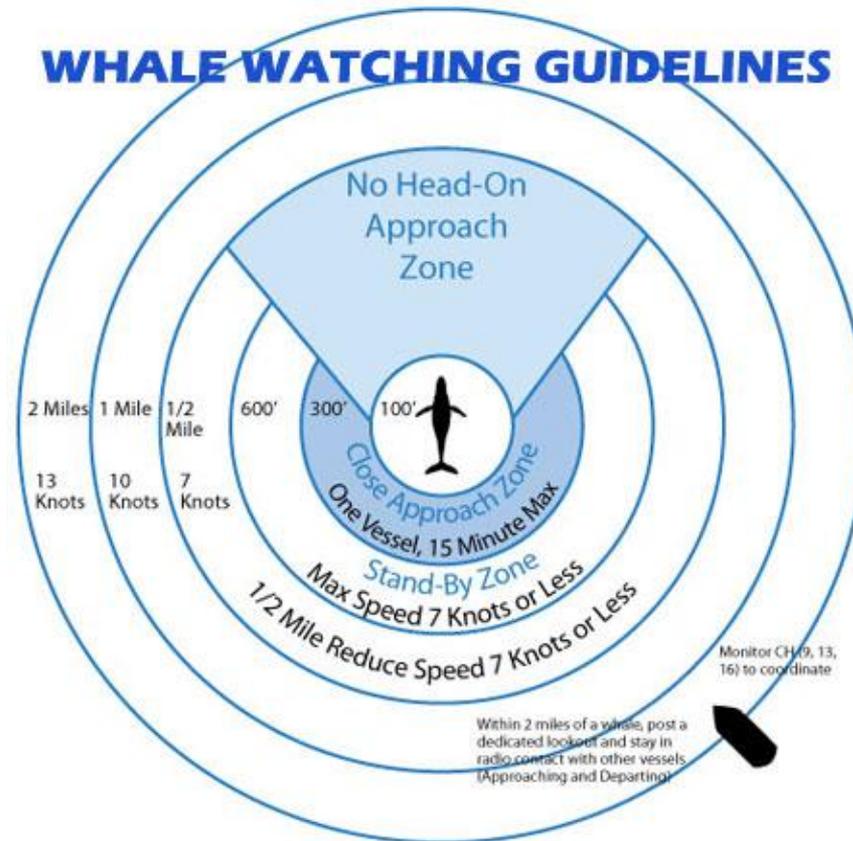
- * **S** Safe Boating Practices
- A** Alert Authorities
- I** Important Information to Know
- L** Limit Litter

Safe boating practices

- Watch for signs of whales:
 - Large flocks of gulls and other marine birds
 - Bubbling water (*image 1*)
 - Blow (*image 2*)
 - Large school of fish
 - Fluke print (*image 3*)
- Reduce your speed and **drop sail when possible**
- Turn on engine to create noise
- Post a look out
- Maintain a safe distance. In US waters:
 - 100 ft approach for ALL marine mammals
 - 1,500 ft approach for North Atlantic right whales (**federal regulation**)
- Always stay parallel to the whale's course and don't approach head-on or cut off the whale's path.
- Drone Operators: Maintain a 1,500-foot minimum altitude.



NOAA Fisheries Greater Atlantic Region Whale Watch Guidelines



<https://www.greateratlantic.fisheries.noaa.gov/Protected/mmp/viewing/approaching/>

S Safe Boating Practices



A Alert Authorities

I Important Information
to Know

L Limit Litter

Alert Authorities

- Dead, injured, ship struck or entangled marine mammals & North Atlantic right whale sightings call
 - **Call 1-866-755-NOAA (6622) in US waters**
 - OR Hail Coast Guard on Ch.16**
- Mark your location (Latitude/Longitude)
- Maintain a safe distance
- If possible, stand by injured or entangled animal until help arrives or you receive instruction by authorities.
- **Do not intervene. Do not get in the water.**
- Take pictures and/or video
- Be prepared to answer a list questions and describe what you see in detail
- If the whale is entangled watch for trailing lines that can foul your prop

Alert Authorities

During your race, keep these hotline #'s handy

**Injured, Dead, Ship Strike or
Entangled Marine Mammals &
Sea Turtles**

**Hail Coast Guard-VHF Channel 16
or call:**

**NOAA HOTLINE Greater Atlantic
Region**

**(Maine to Virginia): 1-866- 755-
6622**

Canadian Waters:

**Nova Scotia, New
Brunswick and Prince**

Edward Island

Marine Animal

Response Society

1-866-567-6277

S

Safe Boating Practices

A

Alert Authorities

I

Important Information
to Know

L

Limit Litter

Important Information

- Know before you go! Study whales as you would a chart.
- Educate yourself on the species of marine mammals in your area.
- Understand marine mammal behavior and migration patterns.
- Familiarize yourself with speed reduction areas and critical habitat zones in the areas you are traveling.
- Keep a marine mammal field guide onboard or download a helpful app such as [See & ID Dolphins and Whales](#) or [WhaleAlert](#).



Four Commonly Seen Species in the Northeast Atlantic

 <p>N. Atlantic right whale</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• 45-55ft. in length• Produce a V-shaped blow• No dorsal fin• Distribution from Canada to Florida• Critically endangered species
 <p>Humpback whale</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• 45-55ft. in length• Long, white flippers• Notable hump before dorsal fin• Distribution from Canada to the Caribbean• Endangered species
 <p>Common dolphin</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• 6-9ft in length• Hourglass coloration• Travel in pods• Distribution from Canada to North Carolina• Protected species
 <p>Leatherback sea turtle</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• 6.5 ft in length• Forage in coastal waters• Distribution from Maine to the Caribbean• Endangered species

Whale Habitat Within Course

Right Whale Migration

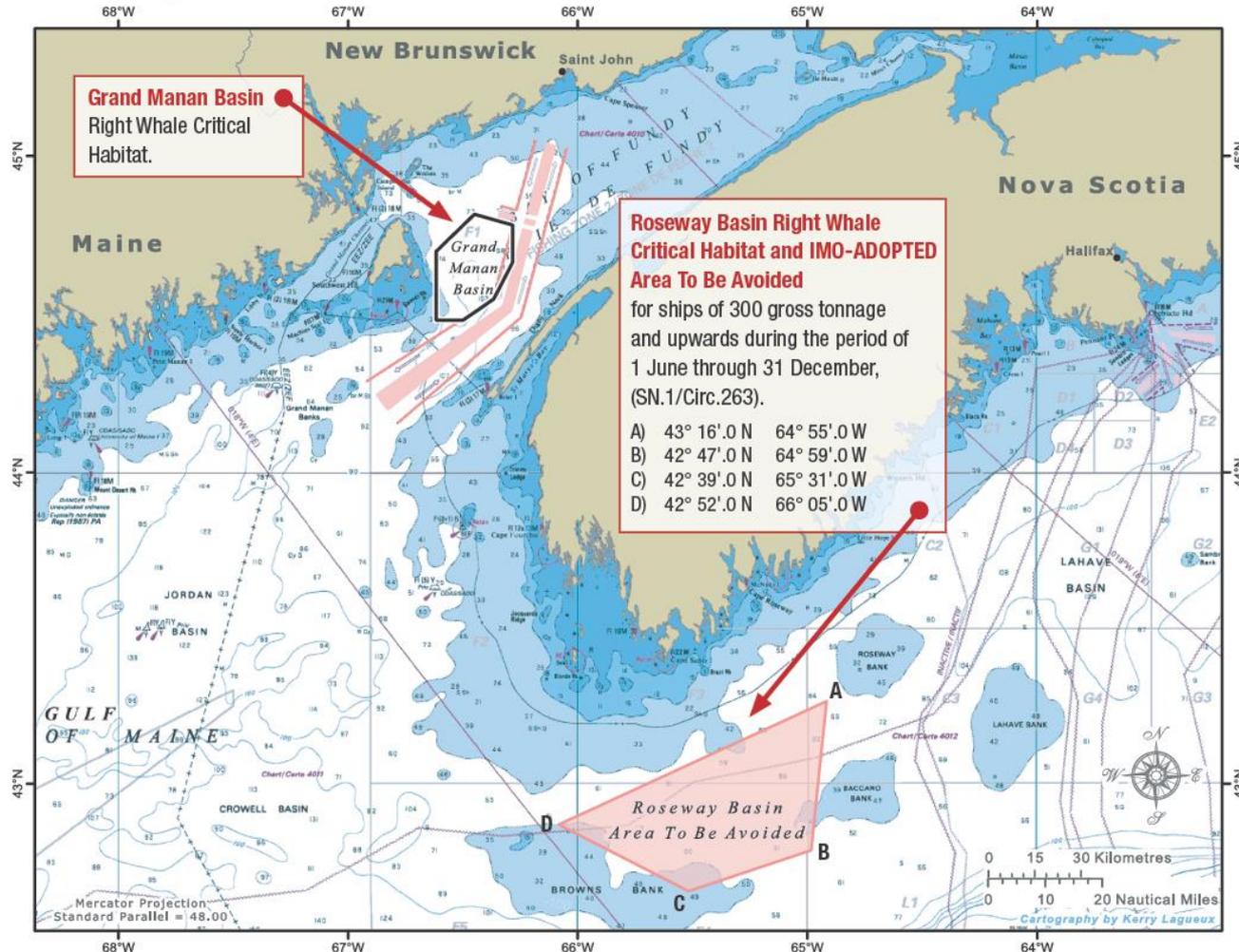


MHOR Route



Important Information

Roseway Basin- Area To Be Avoided
Summer/fall habitat for right whales
Close proximity to race route

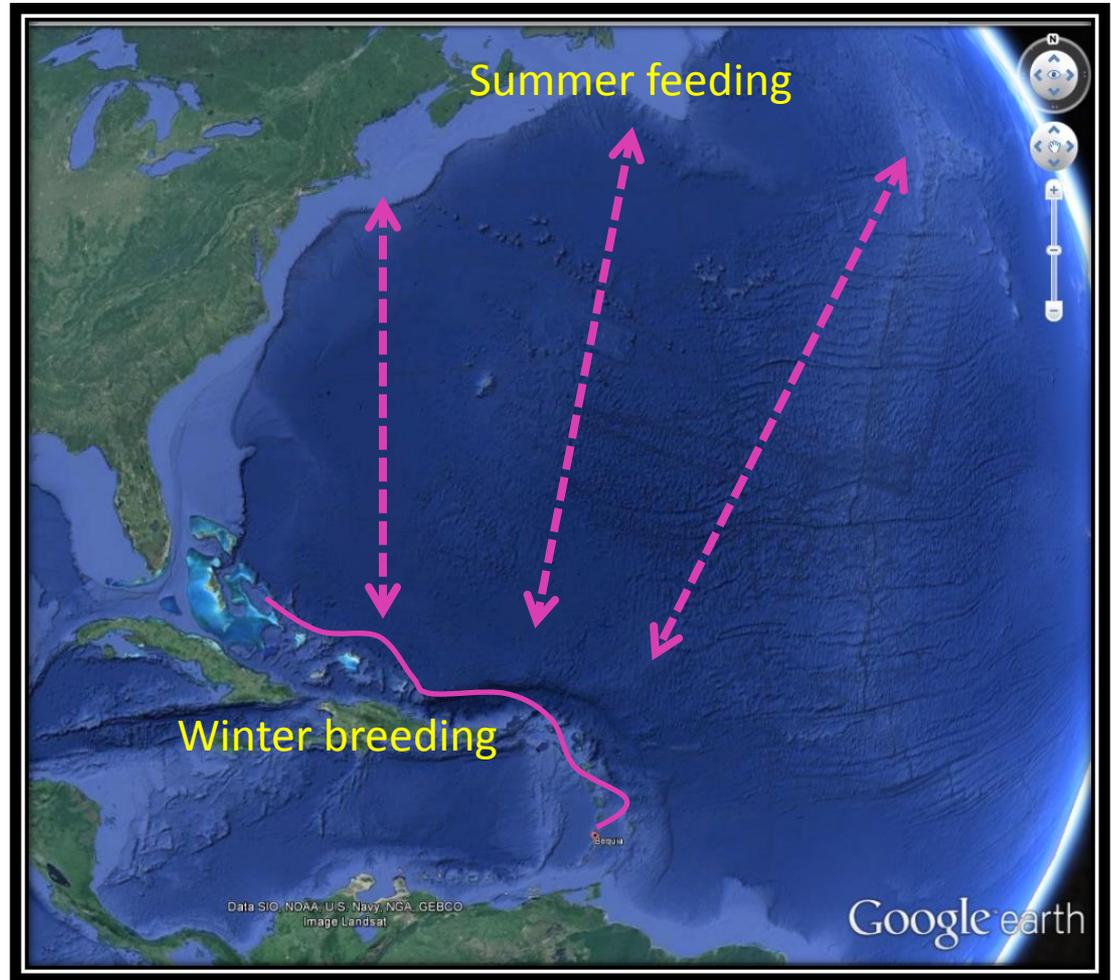


Important Information

Whale Habitats and Migration

Most large whale populations spend winters in tropical regions and summers in temperate/polar regions, migrating between the two during spring and fall.

Dolphins, porpoises and other toothed whale species usually travel shorter distances and are sometimes resident populations.



North Atlantic humpback migration

S

Safe Boating Practices

A

Alert Authorities

I

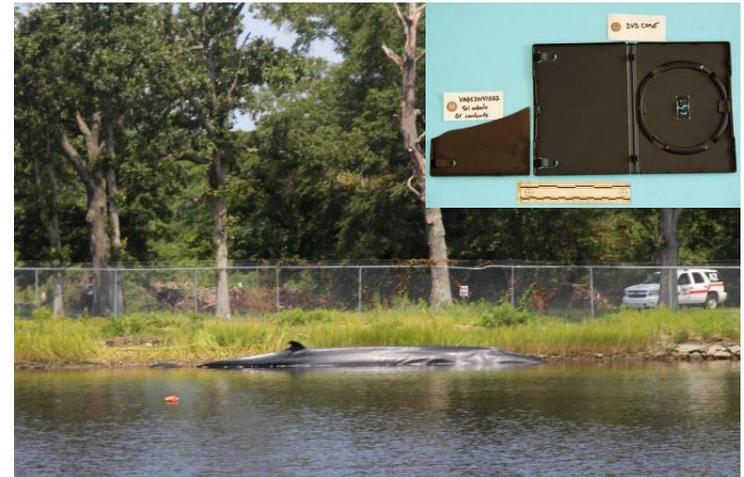
Important Information
to Know

L

Limit Litter

Limit Litter, Lead By Example

- Marine debris kills thousands of animals each year and causes millions of dollars of damage to vessels and coastal economies.
- Prevention is vital!
- Do not let trash go over board
- Do not lighten your load at sea
- Pump out at approved [pump out stations](#)
- Your boat hook is the ocean's best friend. If you see trash in the water hook it or scoop it!
- Even the smallest trash in the water, like a DVD case or an old bathing suit, can kill or injure a marine mammal.
- Download the [Marine Debris Tracker](#) app to report sightings of debris



DVD case recovered from the stomach of a sei whale

Go to www.seespout.org/sail for more simple tips and to download your copy of our field guide!

Sharing the Seas: Safe Boating for Sailors and Whales

See a Spout, Watch Out!



www.seespout.org/sail

S

Safe boating practices:

Maintain a safe distance for their safety and yours
100ft. approach limit for all marine mammal species
By US law, you must stay 1,500ft. away from N. Atlantic right whales
Reduce your speed and post a lookout

A

Alert authorities to important sightings:

For right whale sightings and/or dead, entangled, ship struck
or injured marine mammals and sea turtles, call **1-866-755-NOAA**
or call **US Coast Guard on Ch.16**

I

Important information:

Understanding protected species and their behavior is important for
your safety. Learn more at www.seespout.org/sail

L

Limit litter:

Marine debris kills thousands of marine animals each year
and enters the human food chain. It also causes millions
of dollars of damage to vessels and coastal economies through
warped propellers, fouled engines, and decreased tourism.
Prevention is vital: do not let your trash go overboard.



**Sailors can help to save protected species
through safe boating and sightings reports.**

How you can help!

- Know the species in your region before you get on the water
- Become familiar with [regulations](#) and [recent sightings](#)
- Keep an eye out for blows- they can sometimes be seen from miles away
- Report sightings of whales in distress
- [Sign up for the “amber alert” system on our website](#)

Want to do more?

When you are on the water, help us help the whales. Be informed when authorities need assistance locating or monitoring a sick or injured whale. Simply use the comment form to provide us with your name, email, and location, then check the box above the comment section. We will send you an email with a description of the whale in need of help and where it was last seen. If you see the whale, simply report it to Coast Guard on VHF or call 1-866-755-NOAA.

Don't forget to check out our [list of resources](#) for more helpful information.

Name (required)

Email (required)

State (required)

Please include me on important whale sightings alerts via email

Additional Question/Comment

Submit »

Resources

Help Hotlines • Website Links • Educational Curriculum • Apps • Field Guides • Books • and more!

Contact us at:

www.seaspout.org/sail

Facebook: [Face-ing Extinction: The North Atlantic Right Whale](#)

**North Atlantic Right Whales
Need Your Help!**

This endangered species visits our region throughout the year. Please protect right whales by reporting sightings and keeping a safe distance.



If You See A Right Whale:

- Report the sighting to NOAA Fisheries or US Coast Guard.
- Operate vessel at slowest safe speed.
- Remain alert for other whales in the area.
- Depart area slowly and safely if whale approaches.

You Can Help!
Report sightings of right whales or marine mammals and sea turtles in distress to the Greater Atlantic Region NOAA Fisheries Marine Animal Hotline
866-755-NOAA (6622)
or the US Coast Guard on VHF Channel 16

Remember:

- It is illegal to approach North Atlantic right whales within 500 yards (1,500 feet).
- The law requires vessels 65 feet or greater to slow to 10 knots within seasonal management areas.*
- All vessels should consider slowing to 10 knots in seasonal management areas.
- If you see whales, basking sharks, or birds feeding on plankton patches, pay close attention; a right whale might also be feeding nearby.

Look Out For Right Whales!



Download a free right whale reporting and sighting app: www.whalehot.org
View responsible whale watching guidelines for other species: www.seaspout.org
*Learn about seasonal management areas and speed restriction regulations: www.greateratlantic.noaa.gov/rightwhale



Anne DiMonti, Director

[Audubon Society of Rhode Island Environmental Education Center](#)

401-245-7500 x 3116

adimonti@asri.org

Monica Pepe, Policy Manager

[Whale and Dolphin Conservation](#)

508-746-2522

monica.pepe@whales.org

Robert Rocha, Director of Education and Science Programs

[New Bedford Whaling Museum](#)

508-997-0046 x 149

rrocha@whalingmuseum.org