

Website with web-based app data entry form with instructions and outreach

← → ↻ apps-nefsc.fisheries.noaa.gov/rightwhalesight/RWBatch.php

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Right Whale Sightings

Paste in right whale sightings data - NEFSC version

Sighting Date (adjust as necessary):

Category:

Observer: **Organization:**

Platform:

Reporter: **Organization:**

Type or copy/paste information into top left corner. Check any behaviors that apply. Time is in format 15:32:11. Lon is not negative. Cell values can be dragged down. Can use decimal degrees (leave minutes fields blank) or degrees/minutes.

| | Time | Lat | LatMins | Lon (no minus) | LonMins | Group Size | Mom/Calf | SAG | Feeding | Entangled | Dead | Certainty | Action | Notes |
|---|------|-----|---------|----------------|---------|------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|-----------|--------|-------|
| 1 | | | | | | | <input type="checkbox"/> | | | |

Delete Selected Row/Rows **SUBMIT** Edit/View Records Enter a DMA Use old form instead

Instructions for our team to fill out the form:

Enter all reported sightings including duplicates if from another reporting source. Sightings from NARWSS flights are entered automatically during data processing with the Aerial Survey Processing App.

- **Sighting Date** – date of the sighting (not report) in the format 01-May-2022
- **Category** – enter the category of the observer
 1. *Shipboard is used only for dedicated right whale surveys. If the Shearwater is on a humpback cruise and has a right whale sighting, it would be Opportunistic.*
 2. *Aerial is used only for dedicated right whale surveys (NLPSC or AMAPPS surveys should be Opportunistic, and it's helpful to write a comment such as "AMAPPS")*
 3. *Coast Guard use only if they observed the sighting; not if they are passing it along.*
- **Sighting Time** – time format is military HH:MM:SS. Correct to Eastern Time. If the sighting time is unknown enter 12:00:00 and note time is unknown in comments.
- **Latitude and Longitude** – can be entered as degrees minutes or decimal degrees (by leaving the minutes field blank); do not use a minus sign for longitude values.
- **Behavior** – check appropriate boxes for behavior category (i.e., sag, mom/calf, etc.)
- **Species Certainty** – enter certainty of species identification; unknown sightings will not show on the map

Definite

Sightings are considered 'Definite' from experienced sources, such as whale watch naturalists and researchers (NMFS, CCS, NEAq, SBNMS, Riverhead, Mass DMF, CCSN, & other stranding networks). These sources do not require follow-up. For non-experienced sources that require follow-up, ask non-leading questions to determine if the sighting was a right whale. If a sighting is passed via the Coast Guard, obtain the original reporting source if possible and interview the observer directly. Consider Definite if photos confirm species or if interview confirms they saw at least two distinctive right whale field marks: white bumps on the head, paddle-shaped flippers, absence of dorsal fin (if got a good look at the

back), or all dark fluke with smooth edges. **Only definite sightings get displayed on WhaleMap**

Probable

Consider the sighting 'Probable' if the observer's description includes only one distinctive right whale field mark, e.g., white bumps on the head, paddle-shaped flippers, absence of dorsal fin (if got a good look at the back), or all dark fluke with smooth edges.

Unknown (*do not display on Google map*)

If there is no indication that the sighting was a right whale, take no management action. Enter the sighting in the database and make a note that the sighting was unconfirmed.

***Not Right Whale** - If the sighting is NOT a right whale, enter into the database with Certainty unknown and Action none - unconfirmed/not Egs. Put any details of determination in the comments. (If someone calls to report a non-right whale sighting, then no need to enter it into the database; record only those instances where someone initially thought it was a right whale).

- **Group size** – enter the minimum number of animals (i.e., if reported as “2-3”, enter “2”)
- **Observer/reporter** – enter the name, platform, and organization of the observer (and reporter if applicable – i.e., only if someone other than the person who saw the whale is the one calling the hotline) from the drop down list. If it is not listed, choose “Other” and write the information in the “Comments” field; try to get accurate spelling. Make a note in the comments if you need to explain a convoluted chain of reporting. All sightings that come through the Whale Alert App should have “whale alert” selected as the reporter organization.

Observer = the folks who actually saw the whale

Reporter = the folks who relayed the sighting from the observer to the SAS hotline

- **Action** – select the management action taken from the drop down list. If you are not sure, you can always edit your selection later. For example, you may not be sure if a group of whales falls within an existing management zone and initially select “None, within existing protection zone” but then later realize that it triggers a DMA and correct it to “Dynamic Management Area”

- 1 None, only 1 or 2 animals
- 2 None, within existing protection zone
- 3 None, duplicate
- 4 Dynamic Management Area (DMA)
****use for all sightings used in DMA calculation****
- 5 DMA Extended
- 6 None – Canada (*east of -67°00' W*)
- 7 None - unconfirmed/not right whales
- 8 USCG BNM local
- 9 USCG BNM NEFSC
- 1 Dynamic Management Area Not Implemented (if we had 3 whales but did not implement a DMA for any reason such as sighting being reported more than a week late). Add explanation in comments.

- **Notes** – Include the names and contact information of the observer and/or reporter if not on the drop down list; include any other details. Do not use any single quotes (') in the Comments field. Be sure to click in another table cell besides the Comment field so your notes will be recorded into the database.

Once all information is correctly entered, click the “Submit” button.

This is our website outreach:

We are committed to the protection and recovery of the North Atlantic right whale through implementation of various conservation, regulatory, rescue, and enforcement measures. Our work includes:

- Protecting habitat and designating critical habitat
- Rescuing entangled right whales
- Reducing the threat of vessel collisions
- Reducing injury and mortality by fishing gear
- Minimizing the effects of vessel disturbance and noise

[Learn more about our conservation efforts >](#)

We conduct various research activities on the biology, behavior, and ecology of the North Atlantic right whale. The results of this research are used to inform management decisions and enhance recovery efforts for this endangered species that is headed toward extinction. Our work includes:

- Identifying habitat and when it is used by right whales
- Investigating unusual mortality events
- Performing stock assessments to gather population information
- Tracking individuals over time to monitor important population traits

[Learn more about our research >](#)

How You Can Help



Report a Right Whale Sighting

Please report all right whale sightings from Virginia to Maine at (866) 755-6622 and from Florida to North Carolina at 877-WHALE-HELP ((877) 942-5343). Right whale sightings in any location may also be reported to the U.S. Coast Guard via channel 16 or through the [Whale Alert app](#).



Stay 500 Yards Away

To protect right whales, NOAA Fisheries has regulations that prohibit approaching or remaining within 500 yards (1,500 feet) of a right whale—500 yards is the length of about five football fields. These regulations apply to vessels and aircrafts (including drones) and to people using other watercrafts, such as surfboards, kayaks, and jet skis. Any vessel within 500 yards of a right whale must depart immediately at a safe, slow speed.

Call the NOAA Fisheries Enforcement Hotline at **(800) 853-1964** to report a federal marine resource violation. This hotline is available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week for anyone in the United States.

[Learn more about our marine life viewing guidelines >](#)



Report Marine Life in Distress

Report a sick, injured, entangled, stranded, or dead animal to make sure professional responders and scientists know about it and can take appropriate action. Numerous organizations around the country are trained and ready to respond. Never approach or try to save an injured or entangled animal yourself—it can be dangerous to both the animal and you.

[Learn who you should contact when you encounter a stranded or injured marine animal >](#)



Be Informed and Get Involved

Stay updated on right whale take reduction and other conservation measures. For accurate information, check your sources or confirm them by reviewing our news and announcements. Participate in public meetings and share your perspectives with [Take Reduction Team](#) members who represent your constituency.



[Send Us Your Feedback](#)