



Steps Mariners Can Take To Avoid Collisions with Critically Endangered Right Whales

When transiting right whale critical habitat:

- As soon as possible prior to entering right whale critical habitat, check U.S. Coast Guard Broadcast Notice to Mariners, NAVTEX, NOAA Weather Radio, Cape Cod Canal Vessel Traffic Control, the Bay of Fundy Vessel Traffic Control, and other sources for recent right whale sighting reports.
- When entering ports on the U.S. east coast, refer to Coast Pilot and Notice to Mariners, review right whale identification material described in those documents, and maintain a sharp watch with lookouts familiar with spotting whales. Ask port officials, port pilots, and Coast Guard officers for additional information on right whales.
- When planning passage through right whale critical habitat, attempt to avoid night-time transits, and whenever practical, minimize travel distances through the area. Anticipate delays due to whale sightings.
- When the ability to spot whales is reduced (e.g. night, fog, rain, etc.), mariners should bear in mind that reduced speed may minimize the risk of ship strikes.

In all coastal and offshore waters along the east coast of the U.S. and Canada:

- If a right whale sighting is reported within 20 nautical miles of a ship's position, post a lookout familiar with spotting whales.
- If a right whale is sighted from the ship, or reported along the intended track of a large vessel, mariners should exercise caution and proceed at a slow, safe speed when within a few miles of the sighting location, bearing in mind that reduced speed may minimize the risk of ship strikes.
- Do not assume right whales will move out of your way. Right whales, generally slow moving, seldom travel faster than 5-6 knots. Consistent with safe navigation, maneuver around observed right whales or recently reported sighting locations. It is illegal to approach closer than 500 yards of any right whale (see 50 CFR 222.32, Chapter 2).
- Any whale accidentally struck, any dead whale carcass spotted, and any whale observed entangled in fishing gear should be reported immediately to the U.S. or Canadian Coast Guard noting the precise location and time of the accident or sighting.

In the event of a strike or sighting, the following information should be provided to the U.S. Coast Guard:

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| • Location and time of the accident or sighting. | • Wind speed and direction. |
| • Speed of the vessel. | • Description of the impact. |
| • Size of the vessel. | • Fate of the animal, if known. |
| • Water depth. | • Species and size, if known. |

Right whales can occur anywhere along the east coast of the U.S. and Canada. Mariners are urged to exercise prudent seamanship in their efforts to avoid right whales.

For more information, contact:

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