

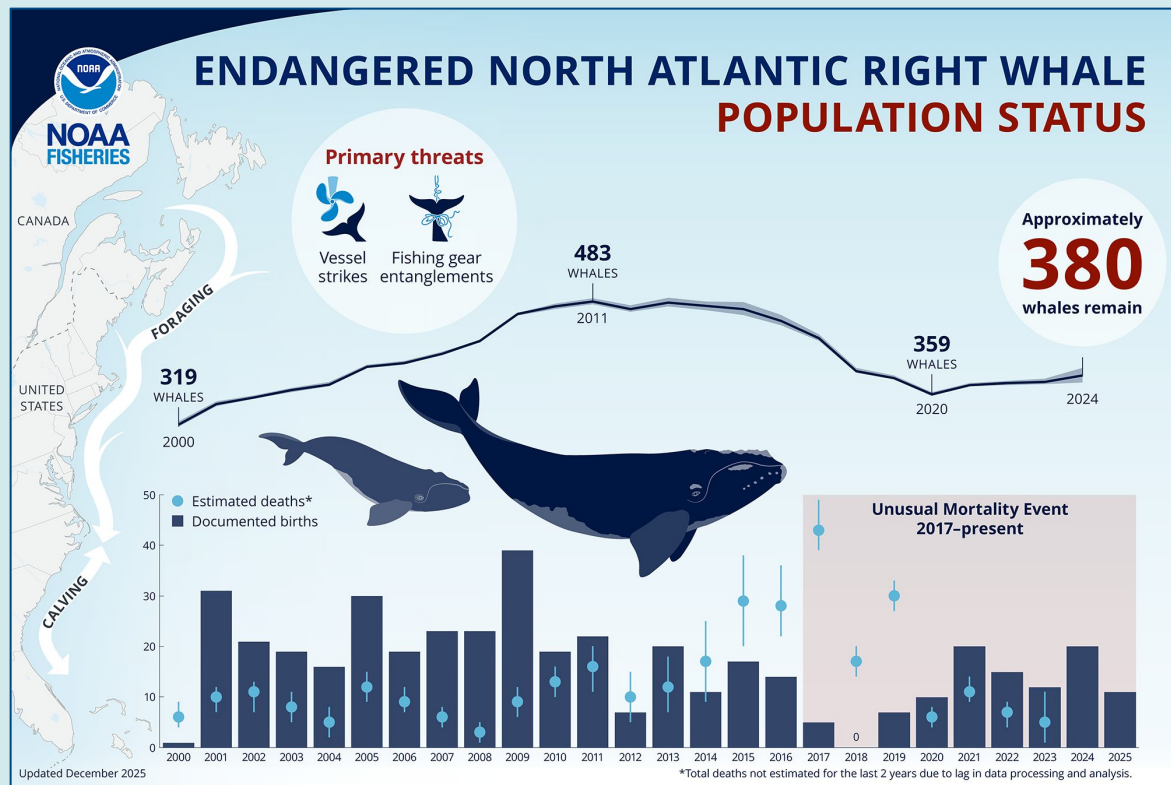


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Scoping for Potential Modifications to the Atlantic Large Whale Take Reduction Plan September 14, 2026

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North Atlantic Right Whale Population Status



**This will be updated later this fall when the new population abundance estimate is released*

Population in decline for a ten year period between 2010 and 2020

- Unusual Mortality Event declared in 2017
- New low of ~359 living whales in 2020
- 147 estimated deaths between 2017-2023 (Linden 2025)

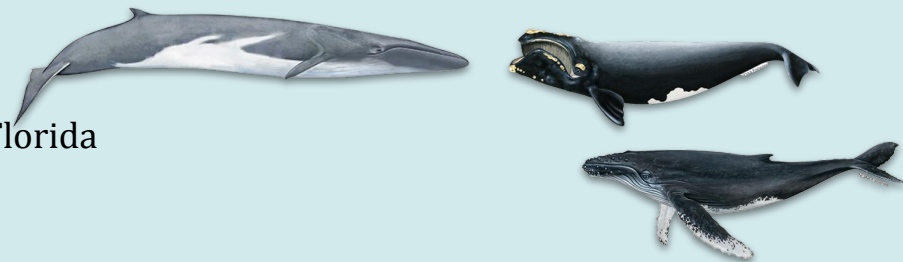
Evidence of slow recovery

- More recent increase to ~380 whales
- Still only ~70 reproductive females remaining

Atlantic Large Whale Take Reduction Plan

Plan Covers

- Right, humpback, and fin whales
- Commercial trap/pot and gillnet fisheries Maine to Florida



Plan History

First Plan: 1997, major amendments in 2000, 2002, 2007, 2014, 2021, 2024

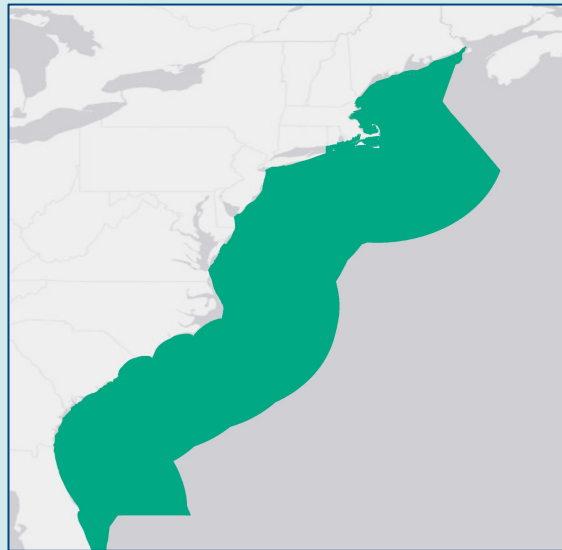
Recent Activity

- 2021 Plan amendments were found to be not in compliance with the MMPA, would not get the M/SI below PBR
- Team had voted on a package in Dec 2022
- Plans for Court-ordered amendment to comply with the MMPA by the end of 2024 were put on hold by the 2023 Consolidated Appropriations Act; new rule required in 2028

Update

- HR 9436 was passed by the House on September 1; would extend CAA through 2035.

ALWTRP Regulated Waters



Current Northeast Fisheries Managed Under the Atlantic Large Whale Take Reduction Plan

01. Northeast Lobster & Jonah Crab Trap/Pot Fishery

02. Northeast Sink Gillnet Fisheries

Managed Species: Atlantic cod, haddock, pollock, yellowtail flounder, winter/witch flounder, American plaice, windowpane flounder, spiny dogfish, monkfish, silver/red/white hake, ocean pout, skate spp, mackerel, redfish, and shad.

03. Northeast Drift Gillnet Fisheries

Managed Species: Shad, herring, mackerel, and menhaden.

04. Northeast Anchored Float Gillnet Fishery

Managed Species: Mackerel, herring (particularly for bait), shad, and menhaden.

01. Mid-Atlantic Gillnet Fisheries

Managed Species:

Monkfish, spiny dogfish, smooth dogfish, bluefish, weakfish, menhaden, spot, croaker, striped bass, large and small coastal sharks, Spanish mackerel, king mackerel, American shad, black drum, skate species, yellow perch, white perch, herring, scup, kingfish, spotted seatrout, and butterfish.

02. Mid-Atlantic Trap/Pot Fisheries

Managed Species:

Lobster and Jonah crab.

03. Atlantic Mixed Species Trap/Pot Fisheries

Managed Species:

Hagfish, shrimp, conch/whelk, red crab, Jonah crab, rock crab, black sea bass, scup, tautog, cod, haddock, Pollock, redfish (ocean perch), white hake, spot, skate, catfish, stone crab, and cunner.

Current Southeast Fisheries Managed Under the Atlantic Large Whale Take Reduction Plan

01. Southeast Atlantic Gillnet Fisheries

Managed Species:

Finfish, including but not limited to: king mackerel, Spanish mackerel, whiting, bluefish, pompano, spot, croaker, little tunny, bonita, jack crevalle, cobia, and striped mullet.

02. Southeast Atlantic Shark Gillnet Fisheries

Managed Species:

Large and small coastal sharks, including but not limited to: blacktip, blacknose, finetooth, bonnethead, and sharpnose sharks.

03. Atlantic Blue Crab Trap/Pot Fishery

Managed Species:

Atlantic blue crab.

04. Atlantic Mixed Species Trap/Pot Fisheries

Managed Species:

Hagfish, shrimp, conch/whelk, red crab, Jonah crab, rock crab, black sea bass, scup, tautog, cod, haddock, Pollock, redfish (ocean perch), white hake, spot, skate, catfish, stone crab, and cunner.

Timeline for Rule Completion

Step 1:
Information
Sharing

**Team
Webinars:**

Spring-
Summer
2026

7 months

Step 2:
Gathering Input

Scoping:

Aug-Sept
2026

2 months +
1 for review

Step 3:
Team
Deliberations

**Team
Meetings:**

Dec 2026
and
Mar 2027

4 months

Step 4:
Proposal

**Proposed
Rule:**

Fall 2027

4 months
for writing,
4 months
for review

Step 5:
Feedback

**Public
Comment
Period:**

30-60 days
after
publication

2 months

Step 6:
Finalization

Final Rule:

Nov 30,
2028

5 months
for writing,
4 months
for review

Step 7:
Implementation

**Effective
Date:**

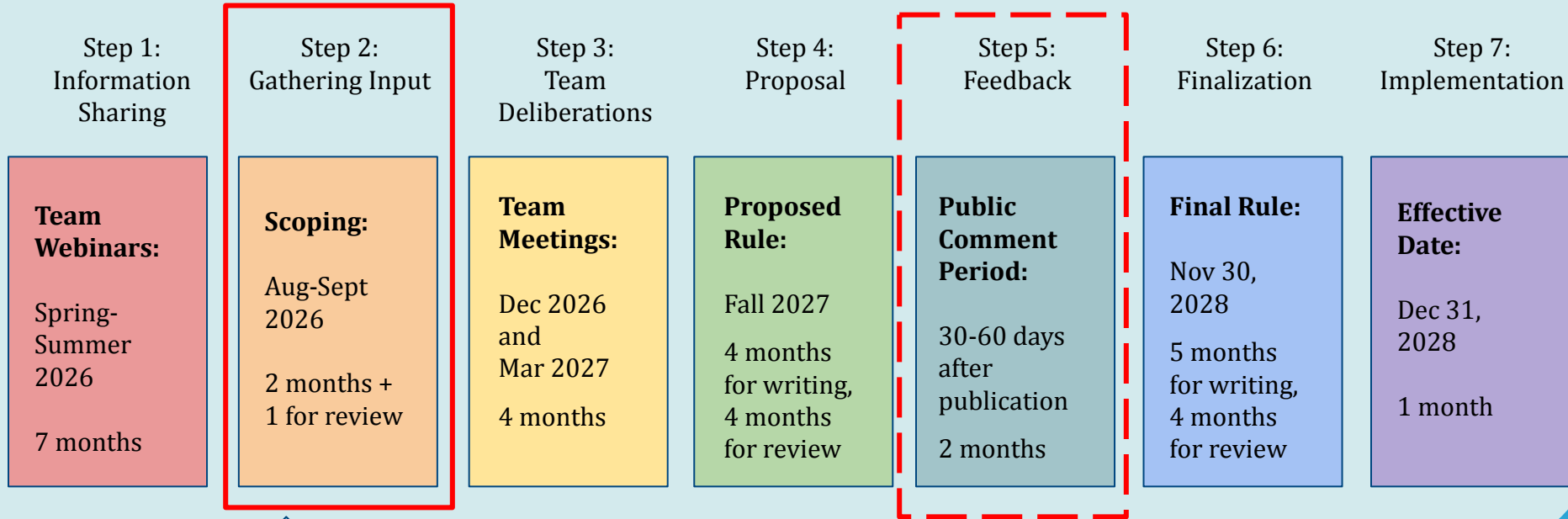
Dec 31,
2028

1 month



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Timeline for Rule Completion



We are here

Why We Are Scoping

- To meet the mandate in the Consolidated Appropriations Act 2023, which requires the National Marine Fisheries Service to have new regulations in place for the American lobster and Jonah crab trap/pot fisheries that are consistent with the MMPA and ESA by December 31, 2028, we are beginning the rulemaking process.
 - The first step in the process is to open the Scoping Period to gather input on potential amendments to the ALWTRP.
- Comment Period: August 17– October 16, 2026 (60 days)
 - Comments accepted either in writing or at a public scoping webinar
 - Submit comments through [Regulations.gov using Docket #NOAA-NMFS-2025-0041](#)
 - See the [ALWTRP Website for public hearing webinar registration information](#)

Requested Input on the Following Topics

- Line Reduction
 - Gillnet line reduction and modifications in fishing operations
 - Trap/pot effort reduction
 - Reducing rope on the surface and in the water column
- Seasonal Restricted Areas
 - Static closed areas
 - Southeast Black Sea Bass seasonal trap/pot closures
- Dynamic Management
 - Temporary area closures
 - Alternative gear marking requirements, like trawls with one vertical buoy line
- Weak Rope/Weak Links and other modifications
- Gear Marking
- Wet Storage
- Whale Conservation
- Ropeless/On-demand Gear
- Any Other Relevant Topics

How To Participate

Comments Accepted: August 17– October 16, 2026 (60 days)

Submit a written comment during the public comment period

- [Regulations.gov](https://www.regulations.gov) using Docket #NOAA-NMFS-2025-0041



Attend the public hearing to submit a verbal comment

- September 24th from 5-7 pm EST
- See the [ALWTRP Website for public hearing webinar registration information](#)



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Thank you

Comment Period: August 17 – October 16, 2026

Public Hearing: September 24th, 5-7 PM EST

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[Atlantic Large Whale Take Reduction Plan Website](#)