



NOAA NATIONAL OCEANIC AND
ATMOSPHERIC ADMINISTRATION
UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE

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MEDIA ADVISORY

NOAA sponsors fifth annual Right Whale Festival *FREE Public Event Marks the Start of Right Whale Migration Season*

NOAA Fisheries, Sea to Shore Alliance and other dedicated partners are hosting the fifth annual Right Whale Festival at the Sea Walk Pavilion on Jacksonville Beach, Fla., Saturday, **November 23**. The festival celebrates the endangered North Atlantic right whale's annual return to the coastal waters of northeast Florida and Georgia. These southern waters are the only known calving area for the species.

The FREE family event begins at 8:30a.m. with a 5K beach run and 2.5K beach walk followed by a beach clean-up at 9:00a.m. Then, meet right whale biologists, visit dozens of educational booths, listen to live music provided by Split Tone and the Saltwater Cowgirls, play games, win prizes and enjoy good food. For an entire schedule of events visit www.rightwhalefestival.org

Each winter right whales migrate south, more than 1,000 miles away from their feeding grounds off Canada and New England to the warm coastal waters of South Carolina, Georgia and northeast Florida. Festival attendees will be able to learn more about this migration pattern and the on-going efforts to protect the species. Marine mammal researchers and conservation group representatives will be available during the event to answer questions.

NOAA's mission is to understand and predict changes in the Earth's environment, from the depths of the ocean to the surface of the sun, and to conserve and manage our coastal and marine resources.

On the web:

More information on the North Atlantic right whale: <http://sero.nmfs.noaa.gov/pr/mm/rightwhales/rwconservation.htm>

NOAA Fisheries Service, Southeast Regional Office: <http://sero.nmfs.noaa.gov/>

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