



**News from NOAA and the USCG
National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration-
Department of Commerce &
United States Coast Guard-
Department of Homeland Security**



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**NOAA, USCG PROVIDE COMMERCIAL MARINERS WITH FREE INTERACTIVE GUIDE
TO RIGHT WHALE PROTECTION**

NOAA Fisheries Service and the U.S. Coast Guard announce the availability of “A Prudent Mariner’s Guide to Right Whale Protection” – an interactive, multi-media CD program that serves as a guide and voluntary training resource for commercial mariners operating in right whale habitats along the U.S. Atlantic coast.

The CD, distributed free-of-charge upon request, provides a comprehensive collection of right whale information delivered in a compact and user-friendly format. The program includes: crew training information about right whales, recommended navigational actions when operating in right whale habitat, a guide to reporting sightings of dead or injured right whales, an informative video presentation, and a short follow-up quiz. It also provides guidelines for compliance with the Mandatory Ship Reporting Systems, which require ships greater than 300 gross tons to report to a shore-based station upon entering two key right whale habitats – one off the Northeast U.S. and one off the Southeast U.S. The CD also provides an innovative, interactive report generation program, as well as key supplementary information contained in a separate “Media” folder, including video clips, information about the current Mandatory Ship Reporting areas, and diagrams of the recently implemented, recommended traffic lanes in right whale high-use areas.

NOAA Fisheries Service, in collaboration with the Coast Guard and a number of other partners, developed the CD program and is currently targeting shipping companies and vessel operators who plan to ensure the CDs are delivered directly to vessels and included in bridge management training. On May 28, the CD was presented and well received at the annual International Whaling Commission meeting held in Anchorage, Alaska. In addition, after two announcements of availability in the Northeast and Southeast U.S., commercial mariners requested more than 380 copies during the first 24 hours – a tremendous response.

“We hope this innovative approach will raise awareness among the commercial shipping industry, both nationally and internationally,” said NOAA Fisheries Southeast Right Whale Recovery Program Coordinator Barb Zoodsma. “Our ultimate goal is to reduce the number of ship strikes to North Atlantic right whales.”

“Ship strikes pose both a hazard to right whales and to our mariners’ safety,” said CAPT Brad Jacobs, U.S. Coast Guard Atlantic Area’s Response Division Chief. “We hope mariners use this tool as they plan their voyages and when they are operating in right whale habitat. Its compact form is ideal for the bridge.”

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Ship strikes account for more right whale deaths and serious injuries than any other single human impact, and are considered the most significant threat to the recovery of the population. With as few as 300 remaining, North Atlantic right whales are among the most endangered marine mammal populations in the world. This species is protected under the U.S. Endangered Species Act of 1973 and the Marine Mammal Protection Act of 1972.

To obtain a copy of “A Prudent Mariner’s Guide to Right Whale Protection,” submit a request by e-mail that includes contact information and the number of CDs required to meet shipboard needs to any of the following addresses, depending on the recipient’s location:

U.S. Coast Guard Atlantic Command: Katie.S.Moore@uscg.mil

NOAA Fisheries Southeast Regional Office in Florida: Kristin.Thoms@noaa.gov

NOAA Fisheries Northeast Regional Office in Massachusetts: Kristen.Koyama@noaa.gov

NOAA Fisheries Service is dedicated to protecting and preserving our nation’s living marine resources and their habitats through scientific research, management, and enforcement. NOAA Fisheries Service provides effective stewardship of these resources for the benefit of the nation, supporting coastal communities that depend upon them, and helping to provide safe and healthy seafood to consumers and recreational opportunities for the American public.

This year the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, an agency of the U.S. Commerce Department, celebrates 200 years of science and service to the nation. From the establishment of the Survey of the Coast in 1807 by Thomas Jefferson to the formation of the Weather Bureau and the Bureau of Commercial Fisheries in the 1870s, much of America’s scientific heritage is rooted in NOAA.

NOAA is dedicated to enhancing economic security and national safety through the prediction and research of weather and climate-related events and information service delivery for transportation, and by providing environmental stewardship of our nation’s coastal and marine resources. Through the emerging Global Earth Observation System of Systems (GEOSS), NOAA is working with its federal partners, more than 60 countries and the European Commission to develop a global monitoring network that is as integrated as the planet it observes, predicts and protects.

The United States Coast Guard is a multi-mission agency with five fundamental roles: maritime safety, maritime mobility, protection of natural resources, maritime security, and national defense. The agency has a long history of marine environmental protection beginning in the late 1800s with the Fur Seal Act. As demonstrated in its Ocean Steward Strategic Plan, the U.S. Coast Guard serves as a steward of the ocean through enforcing and complying with protected species regulations and working with other agencies and organizations to conserve and recover marine protected species. The Coast Guard cooperates with NOAA Fisheries to manage the Mandatory Ship Reporting System – a system designed to reduce the number of vessel collisions with right whales. The Coast Guard also funds aerial surveys to detect right whales in advance of their entry into shipping lanes, reviews shipping routes in relation to right whale habitat, and disseminates right whale information to the maritime shipping industry.

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On The Web:

General Right Whale Facts

<http://www.nmfs.noaa.gov/pr/species/mammals/cetaceans/rightwhale.htm>

<http://rightwhalessouth.nmfs.noaa.gov>

National Marine Fisheries Service (NOAA Fisheries)

www.nmfs.noaa.gov

National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA)

www.noaa.gov

United States Coast Guard (USCG)

www.uscg.mil

Media Note:

Photos available upon request.