



Notice to Fish Harvesters

August 3, 2017

INFORMATION AND UPDATE ON THE PRESENCE OF NORTH ATLANTIC RIGHT WHALES IN THE GULF OF ST. LAWRENCE

Moncton - Fisheries and Oceans Canada (DFO) wishes to provide information to licence holders in the Gulf Region on the high number of North Atlantic Right Whales (NARWs) observed in the Gulf of St. Lawrence.

A shift in the distribution of NARWs in recent years has resulted in an increasing number of sightings in the Gulf of St. Lawrence. Unfortunately, this has resulted in a number of incidents since early June.

The NARW is listed as an endangered species under the *Species at Risk Act* (SARA). It is believed that the entire NARW population consists of approximately 500 individuals.

The NARW is a large, relatively round whale, with a square chin and no dorsal fin. It is generally black with occasional white patches on the belly and chin. It can grow to about 17 m in length. Grey or black thickened patches of skin, called callosities, are found on the beak, behind the blowhole, over the eyes, on the corners of the chin, and variably along the lower lip and jaw. The blow produced when the whale exhales is distinctively V-shaped when seen along the length of the body, and can reach 7m in height.

The links listed below provide more information on the NARW:

- For the latest sightings information available: <https://www.nefsc.noaa.gov/psb/surveys/>
- For more information on the recent incidents with NARWs and to learn more about what DFO is doing: <http://www.dfo-mpo.gc.ca/science/environmental-environnement/narightwhale-baleinenoirean/index-eng.html>
- Species at Risk Public Registry: https://www.registrelep-sararegistry.gc.ca/species/speciesDetails_e.cfm?sid=780

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DFO would like to remind everyone to refrain from attempting to untangle any whales due to the safety risks associated to this task. Fish harvesters are also asked to report any sighting of NARWs by using one of the following methods:

- By telephone:
 - Entangled, injured or dead whales should be reported to the Marine Animal Response Society (MARS) at 1-866-567-6277
 - Sightings of live and healthy whales should be reported at 1-844-800-8568.
- Whale Alert App: <http://www.whalealert.org/>

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Illustration and description of the North Atlantic right whale:



Description

- 1- Whitish or pink skin callosities on their heads
- 2- Short, spatula-shaped front fins
- 3- Long, thin, black baleen plates
 - Black or dark grey; white patches on throat and belly
 - Broad and smooth back with no dorsal fin
 - Wide V-shaped blow or spout, up to 7 m high

Where you might see it

Found in the temperate and sub-Arctic waters of the Atlantic. The whale can be seen in the Bay of Fundy, off the coast of Nova Scotia, the Gulf of St. Lawrence and also found off the coasts of Newfoundland and Labrador.

For an update on the status of this species under the *Species at Risk Act (SARA)*, visit: www.aquaticspeciesatrisk.gc.ca



Fisheries and Oceans Canada Pêches et Océans Canada

Description

- 1- Excroissances de peau rose ou blanchâtres sur la tête
- 2- Nageoires avant courtes et en forme de spatule
- 3- Fanons noirs, minces et longs
 - Noir ou gris foncé; taches blanches sur le ventre et la gorge
 - Dos large et lisse, sans nageoire dorsale
 - Souffle en forme de V, jusqu'à 7 m de haut

Lieux d'observation

Habitent les eaux tempérées subpolaires de l'Atlantique. On les aperçoit dans la baie de Fundy, au large des côtes de la Nouvelle-Écosse, du golfe du Saint-Laurent et également présent dans les eaux au large de Terre-Neuve et Labrador.

Pour une mise à jour du statut de cette espèce en vertu de la *Loi sur les espèces en péril (LEP)*, consultez notre site web. www.especesaquatiquesenperil.gc.ca

Gulf Region Région du Golfe