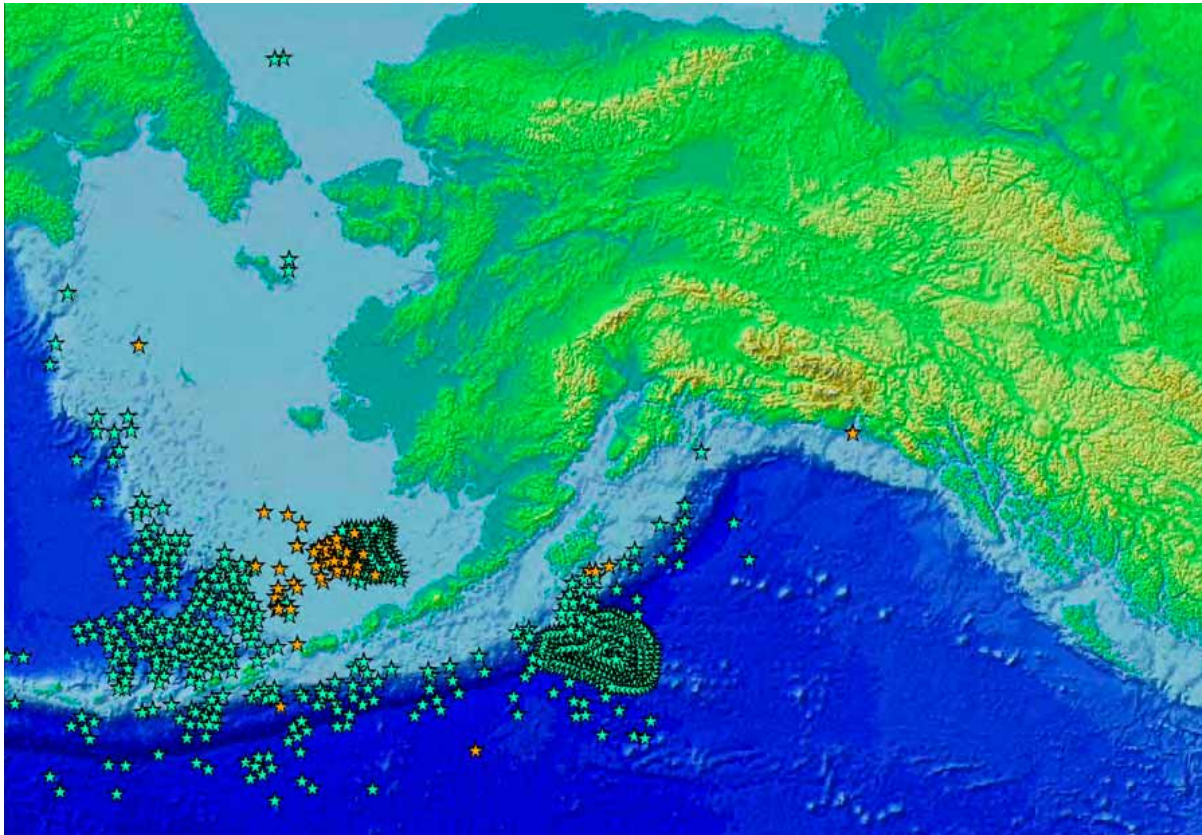


# North Pacific Right Whales

## MARINER ADVISORY

**The right whale population in the eastern North Pacific is the most endangered stock of whales in the world, with fewer than 100 individuals remaining.** Right whales are slow swimmers that sometimes feed at or near the surface. They show little or no instinct to avoid vessels and are vulnerable to ship strikes. They also tend to roll when they meet an obstacle, which may result in gear entanglement. North Pacific right whales have been observed over the central Bering Sea shelf and off Kodiak Island in recent years.



★ sightings from 1979 – 2004

★ sightings from 1941 – 1967

## DO

1. Look out for whales.
2. Log the time and location of right whale sightings.
3. Immediately notify federal fisheries observer of right whale sightings.
4. If no federal fisheries observer, photograph whale for sighting confirmation and send sighting report to address on reverse side.
5. Notify nearby vessels and ask them to stay away.
6. Remain at least 100 yards from whales.
7. If a whale approaches your vessel, take the vessel out of gear (neutral) and allow the whale to pass.
8. Leave the area at a slow, safe speed, ASAP.



## DON'T

1. Set or haul gear of any type close to whales.
2. Approach within 100 yards of any whale.
3. Place your vessel in the path of oncoming whales, forcing them to surface.
4. Remain near a right whale.
5. Operate your vessel at anything greater than a slow, safe speed near whales.



**Marine Conservation Alliance**  
promoting sustainable fisheries to feed the world



## RIGHT WHALE



V-shaped, bushy blow



Callosities on head



No dorsal fin, smooth back



Triangular, all-black tail

## HUMPBACK WHALE



Tall, slender and/or low, bushy



Grooves and knobs on head



Dorsal fin, hump sometimes with knuckles



Scalloped edge on tail

## GRAY WHALE



Bushy, heart shaped



Barnacles all over



No dorsal fin, prominent knuckles



Broad and rounded tail

**Right whales may be confused with humpback and gray whales. Look for these important differences.** Right whales are baleen (filter-feeding) whales. They have bowed lower lips that enfold a narrow arching rostrum, the narrow upper jaw. North Pacific right whales grow to about 60 feet (18.3 meters) in length, and adults average 50 tons. They have robust bodies with large heads that are one fourth of the body length. There are a series of callosities – areas of raised, roughened, white-colored skin – on the chin, above the eyes, on the lower lip, behind the blowholes and on the rostrum. The skin is usually black, with white patches on the belly. Right whales have no dorsal (back) fin, and no throat grooves. They have large paddle-like flippers and very broad triangular tails with straight edges. Their blow is V-shaped and up to 16 feet (5 meters) high. Note: never use blow shape alone to identify whales because this characteristic will change depending on weather conditions and whale behavior.

Take photos if possible! Right whales can be individually identified by the pattern of callosities on their head and by other features, so photographs - especially of the head and any scars - are of great value to researchers. At a minimum: report date, number of animals, location (lat/long).

### REPORT SIGHTINGS AND SEND PHOTOGRAPHS TO:

Director  
National Marine Mammal Lab  
Alaska Fisheries Science Center  
NMFS, NOAA  
7600 Sand Point Way N.E.  
Seattle, WA 98115-6349

(206) 526-4045 voice  
(206) 526-6615 fax

<http://nmml.afsc.noaa.gov/>

