



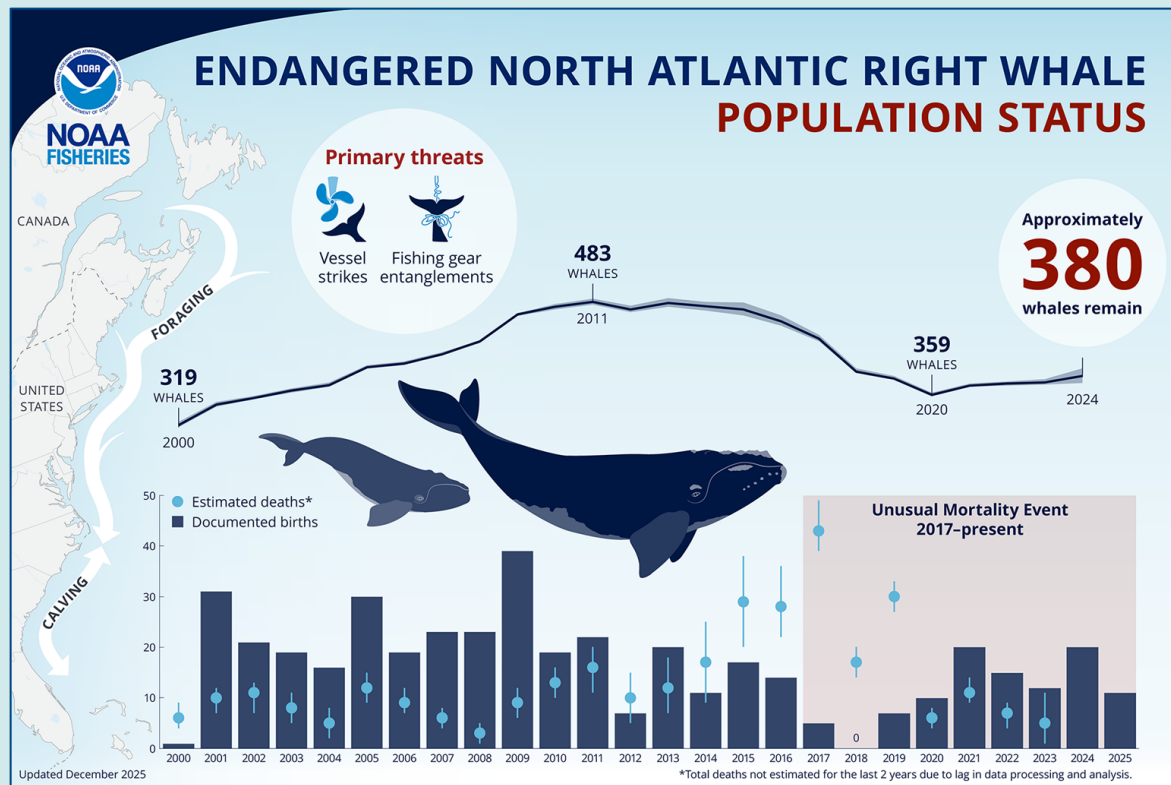
NOAA
FISHERIES

Scoping for Potential Modifications to the Atlantic Large Whale Take Reduction Plan

Presentation for the New England Fishery Management Council September 17, 2026

Corie Grewal, GARFO
Jennifer Goebel, ALWTRT Coordinator, GARFO

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

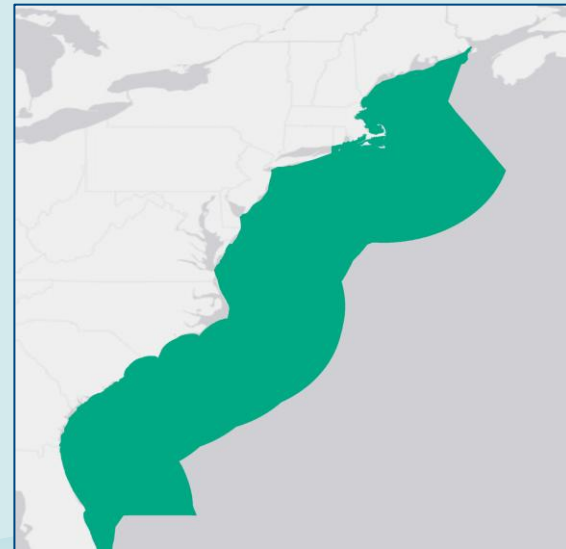
- 2021 Plan amendments were found to be not in compliance with the MMPA, would not get the M/SI below PBR
- Team had voted on a package in Dec 2022
- Plans for Court-ordered amendment to comply with the MMPA by the end of 2024 were put on hold by the 2023 Consolidated Appropriations Act; new rule required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

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.

Northeast Drift Gillnet Fisheries

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

Northeast Anchored Float Gillnet Fishery

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

Northeast Lobster & Jonah Crab Trap/Pot Fishery



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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

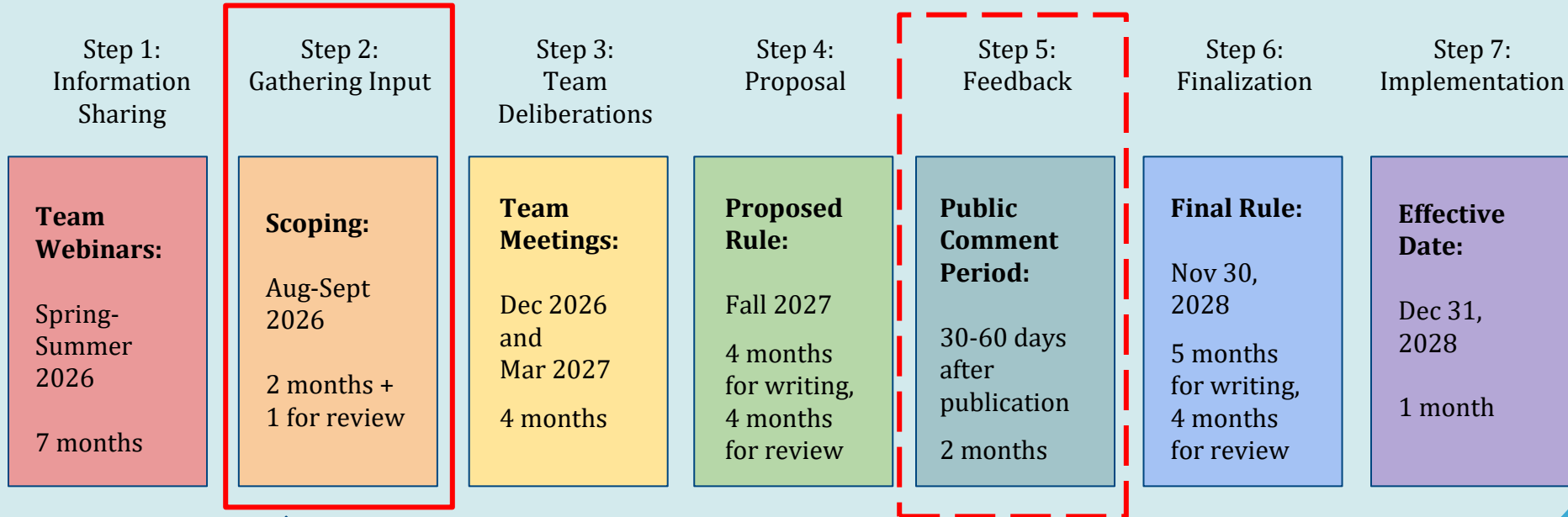
Step 7:
Implementation

**Effective
Date:**

Dec 31,
2028

1 month

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 or modifications to the ALWTRP.
- Comment Period: August 17– to 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 [NOI Web page 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

Ground Rules for Speaking

- Please be respectful and direct comments at the presenters.
- You may get in line for questions/comments at any time.

Questions

- We will have a ~10 min period for clarifying questions. We may take additional questions as time allows. We do not have a risk reduction target yet.
- Please include the slide number or topic of your question so we can refer to it if needed.

Public Comment

- We will be documenting comments from Council members from this session as part of our scoping process with the time remaining after questions.
- Please limit your comments to 3 minutes so that everyone can have a chance to speak.
- If you have already provided public comment but wish to give another, you may rejoin the queue.

Questions?

Comment Period: August 17 to October 16, 2026

Public Hearing: September 24, 5-7 PM EST

Submit comments through Regulations.gov using Docket #NOAA-NMFS-2025-0041



[Atlantic Large Whale Take Reduction Plan
NOI Web page](#)