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## Canada - North Atlantic Right Whale - Gulf of St Lawrence (Update)



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**The North Atlantic right whale has become one of the most endangered species on the planet, with the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) census indicating that only 400 individuals remain.**

As a result, on the 30 July, 2020, the Canadian Government issued an update regarding areas covered by the speed restriction in the static zone and dynamic sectors in the Gulf of St. Lawrence.

Additional areas have been added in an effort to alleviate pressures on the species: these include measures for seasonal management, further restricted areas and voluntary speed restriction zones. The full details for each of these sectors can be found in **Transport Canada's Ship Safety Bulletin 11/2020- Protecting the North Atlantic right whale: speed restriction measures in the Gulf of St. Lawrence (Modified 30 July 2020)**.

For static zones, all vessels which are 13m or more in length must not proceed at a speed greater than 10 knots over the ground. These restrictions may change due to inclement weather, but if so, mariners will be notified via NAVWARN.



Regarding dynamic shipping zones of which there are presently five sectors, within these sectors vessels may transit at a safe speed if no right whales are sighted in the area (as determined by the Canadian Government). A NAVWARN will be issued if a right whale has been detected, meaning that vessels that are 13m and above will not exceed 10 knots over the ground within that zone. This NAVWARN will take effect 15 days from that date it is issued and may continue past the 15-day period if right whales are still detected in that area.

In the seasonal management areas, between 28 April and 30 June 2020, vessels that are 13m and above in length must not exceed 10 knots over ground. Furthermore, vessels are allowed to proceed at a safe speed from the 1 July to 15 November only if no whales are detected. In the case that a whale is identified, speed restrictions will be put in place for 15 days from the date the NAVWARN is issued.

A new restricted area has been established in and around Shediac Valley as this is a regular area for surfacing and feeding activity for the species. As of the 1 August 2020, vessels above 13m in length will avoid the area unless they are exempted (exemptions are listed in Interim Order). Exempt vessels transiting the area must not exceed 8 knots over the ground.

Finally, the Canadian Government has put in place a trial voluntary speed restriction located in the Cabot Strait from 28 April to 15 June 2020 and 1 October to 15 November 2020. Outside this area vessels are allowed to proceed at safe speed but within the time periods highlighted above, vessels above 13m in length will be asked to reduce their speed (voluntarily) so that they do not exceed 10 knots over the ground.

Vessels must comply with the NAVWARNs broadcasted and Interim Orders issued by the Canadian Government. Failing to comply with these mandatory speed restrictions will lead to penalties including a CAD\$ 250,000 fine and/or penal sanctions.

Vessels will not be granted speed exemptions in advance but may, for safety reasons, deviate from them so long as the following is recorded in the logbook:

- Reason for deviation
- Speed of vessel
- Position coordinates of deviation
- Time and duration of the deviation
- Signature of watch officer and Master

Members requiring further guidance are advised to contact the **Loss Prevention department** .