"rule" or "regulation." Once a rule is in place, NMFS proceeds to issue an LOA, which is the actual authorization. Typically, the LOA contains specific detail about actions, species, number of takes, and mitigating measures. For readers of *Right Whale News*, the mitigating measures provide detailed measures regarding North Atlantic right whales.

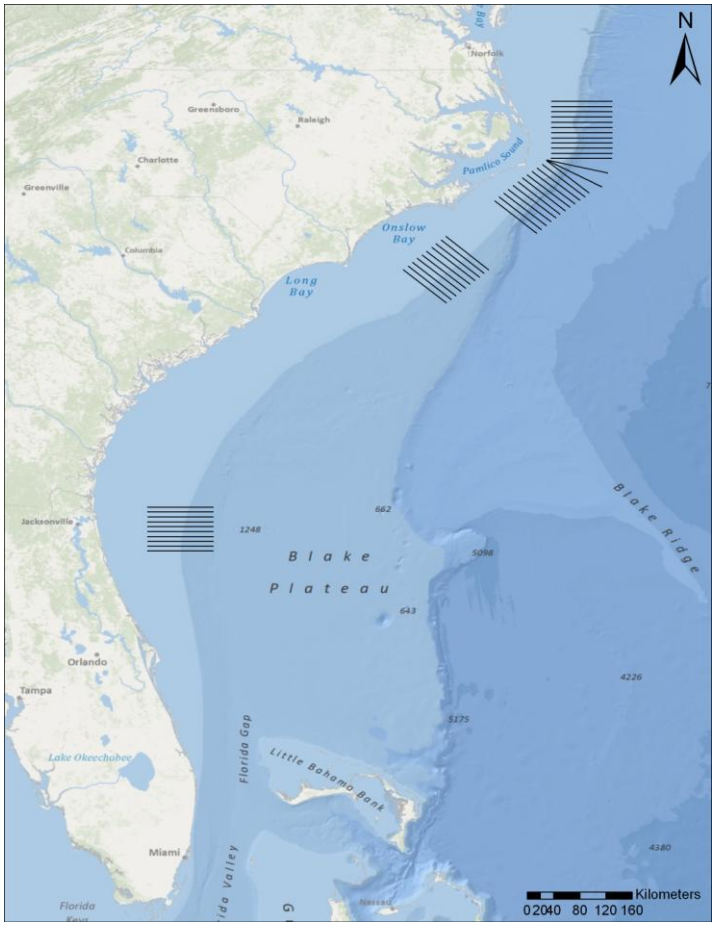
The Atlantic Fleet Training and Testing Draft Environmental Impact Statement is posted at www.AFTTEIS.com. Informational materials, including a Fact Sheet Booklet (look under Documents and References) are provided.

The application for an LOA and the Draft EIS has been prepared by the Naval Facilities Engineering Command, 6506 Hampton Blvd., Norfolk Virginia 23508-1278. Written comments may be submitted to … Attention: Code EV22 (AFTT EIS Project Managers) at the foregoing address, or online at www.AFTTEIS.com prior to 10 July 2012.

Protected Species Monitoring of Naval Exercise Sites

Contributed by William McLellan, University of North Carolina at Wilmington

In response to permit requirements, the Navy has funded a series of surveys to be conducted off the US Atlantic coast to monitor protected species distribution. One of these survey efforts off Jacksonville, Florida, has recently finished three years of effort. The surveys have been conducted on a monthly basis year round since 2009 and include aerial, vessel and acoustic monitoring. Surveys will continue at the JAX site on a regular monthly basis. There have also been protected species monitoring surveys of a site off Onslow Bay, North Carolina, which were expanded in 2011, the protected species monitoring surveys were expanded to include a large region off the Outer Banks of North Carolina. These surveys are designed to assess seasonal distribution of marine mammals, specifically deep diving pilot and beaked whales off the continental shelf break. All visual monitoring sightings have been loaded onto the OBIS SEAMAP website and can be found at http://seamap.env.duke.edu/. Enter a species or location of interest when in the website to see plots of sighting locations. Or, if specifically interested in the Jacksonville surveys, you can go to the "Browse Datasets" tab and draw down to University of North Carolina Wilmington and view the USWTR JAX data sets.



The location of all tracklines currently being surveyed by the Protected Species Monitoring program conducted for the US NAVY by UNC Wilmington and Duke University.

An Assessment of the Ship-Speed Rule

On 9 December 2008, the ship-speed rule promulgated by the National Marine Fisheries Service went into effect. The rule requires that vessels 65 feet and greater in length travel at 10 knots or less near key port entrances and in certain areas of right whale aggregation along the U.S. eastern seaboard, termed "Seasonal Management Areas." The original rule contained a "sunset" clause, whereby the rule was set to expire five years from its effective date, on 9 December 2013. *An Assessment of the Final Rule to Implement Vessel-Speed Restrictions to Reduce the Threat of Vessel Collisions with North Atlantic Right Whales* by G.K. Silber and S. Bettridge has been published. The report's central conclusion is that the findings to date (including various statistical analyses) are inconclusive regarding the effectiveness of the rule in preventing or reducing ship-strike deaths or serious injuries, and a longer time-frame will be required to detect changes. This comprehensive report covers a number of components related to this issue. Availability is provided below in the Scientific Literature and Reports section.

RIGHT WHALE NEWS

An independent forum for right whale conservation and recovery, published four times a year in February, May, August, and November

Volume 20 Number 2 ***June 2012***

Additional Calf and New Mother Discovered

Contributed by Allison Henry and Peter Duley, Northeast Fisheries Science Center, and Philip Hamilton, New England Aquarium

The 2012 calf production was low—with only six calves reported from the calving ground (*Right Whale News*, February 2012). However, a new mother and an additional calf have been sighted—calf # 7 for this year. On the afternoon of 19 May 2012, the R/V *Delaware II* from the Northeast Fisheries Science Center came upon a large aggregation of skim-feeding right and sei whales along the northern edge of Georges Bank. A RHIB was launched to photo-document and collect data. It was a beautiful day and there were right whales echelon feeding practically on top of the sei whales (or vice versa). Who knew it could get better? At one point, the aggregation shifted so that it was pretty much all around the drifting *Delaware II*. A mother-calf pair swam close by the ship, providing an excellent opportunity to get a good look at them. The shipboard team wasn't able to identify the mother in the field, but knew that she wasn't one of the known mothers for the season, and notified the small boat to take photos and collect a biopsy.

After reviewing the photographs, the calf appears to be of a size and have callosity development consistent with it being born in the usual December to March time frame. However, where that birth occurred is unknown as the mother has never been seen south of New England.

The mother was initially thought to be catalog #1622. She looks very much like that whale—especially from the right side—and #1622 was due to give birth this year. But after closer inspection at NEAq, it was discovered that not only is she a new mother for the season, but for the catalog as well. For this female, there were just four known previous sightings—from the Gulf of Maine, in Cape Cod Bay, and in the Great South Channel.

This whale had an intermatch code of BK01GOM2009 and her sex was unknown. Now, she has been added to the catalog as a "new" whale— #3995, a female. It will be very interesting to see what her calf's genetics reveal and what her future sighting history will be like.