



North Atlantic Right Whale Tagging in the Southeast U.S.

Management Needs and Lessons Learned to Date

Clay George, NOAA Fisheries Southeast Region

Cooperators:

NOAA Fisheries Southeast Fisheries Science Center
Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission
Georgia Department of Natural Resources
Marine Ecology and Telemetry Research
Clearwater Marine Aquarium

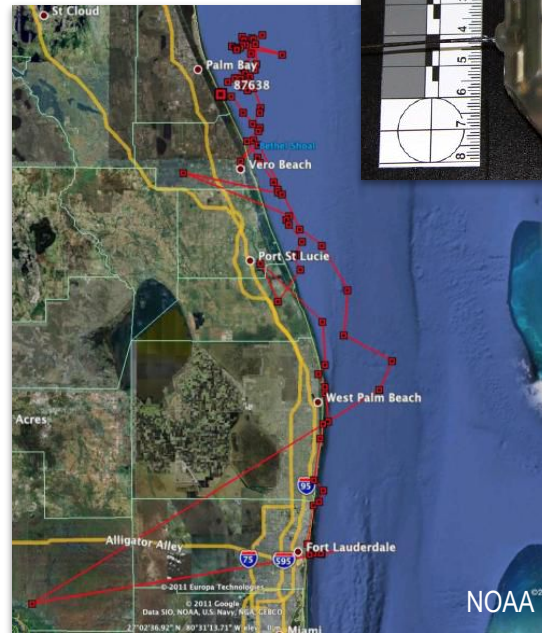
Activities and photography
conducted under NOAA Fisheries

Permits #14450 and #932-1905-00/MA-009526

Entangled NARW #3911 “Bayla”

LIMPET Tag Deployed to Assess
Effects of Sedatives on Entangled
Whale

FL FWC



Satellite Fixes,
6-Days After
Sedation

Threats to Right Whales on Calving Grounds

Commercial Vessel Traffic

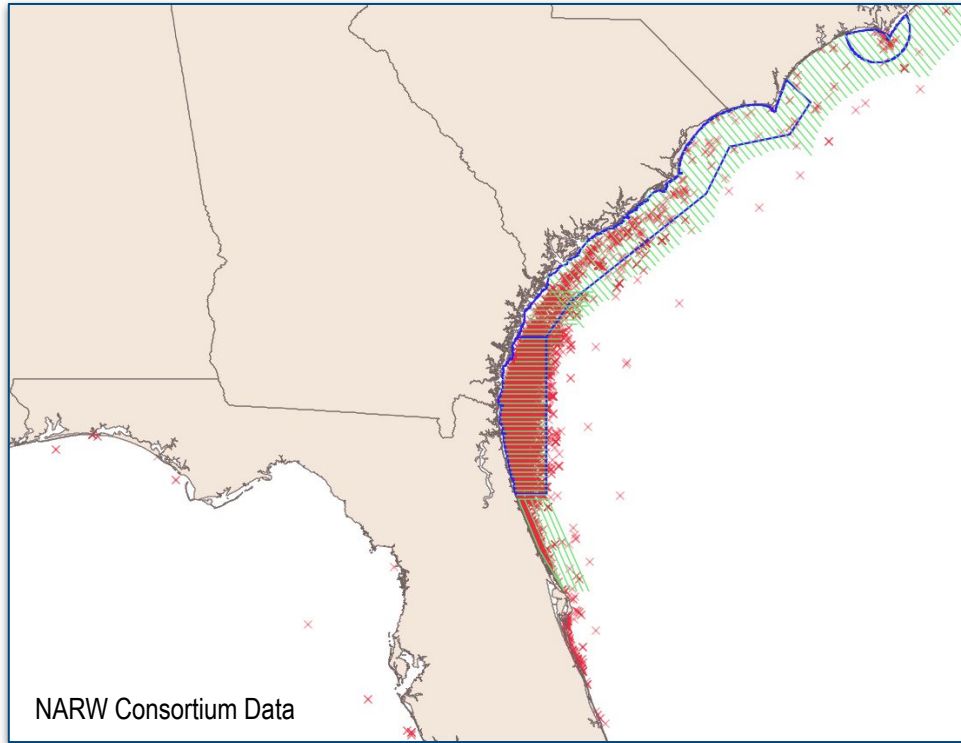


Military Training



**Recreational Vessels
and Other Activities**

Where Do the Whales Go?



- Our understanding of whale distribution is heavily influenced by where we survey
- We know whales leave our survey and management areas, but how often, and where do they go?
- More confidence in whale movements is needed to manage risk

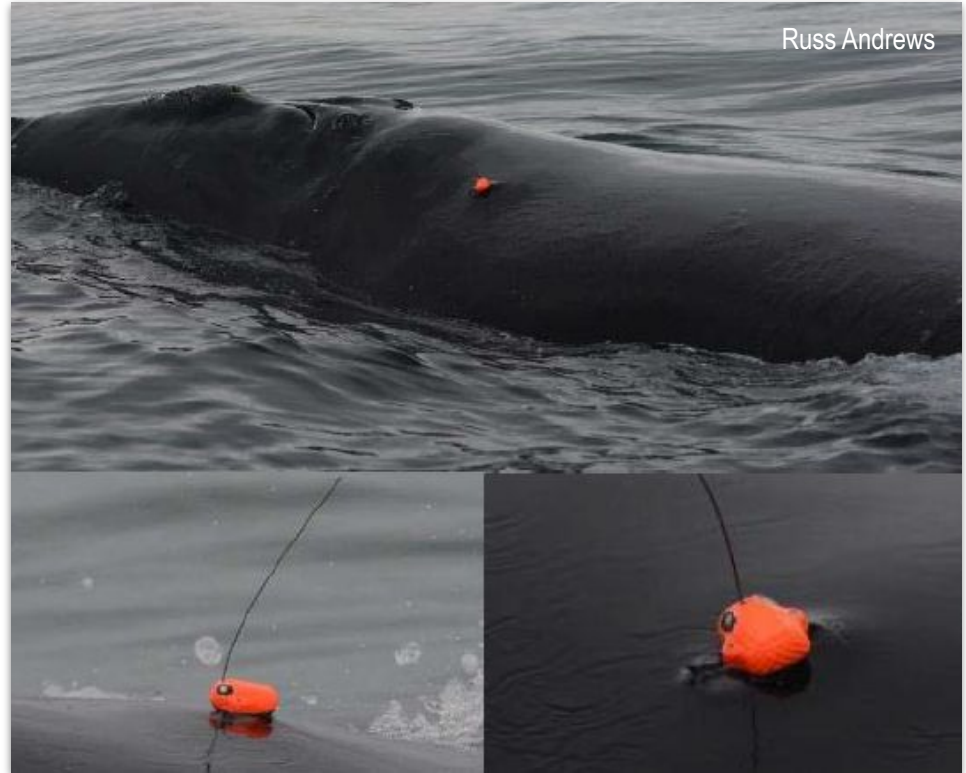
2015-2016 Southeast LIMPET Tagging Study

Goals:

- Develop a method to track NARWs remotely using minimally invasive subcutaneous tags
- Assess health impacts of tags
- Investigate movements of NARWs along the U.S. Mid-Atlantic Coast

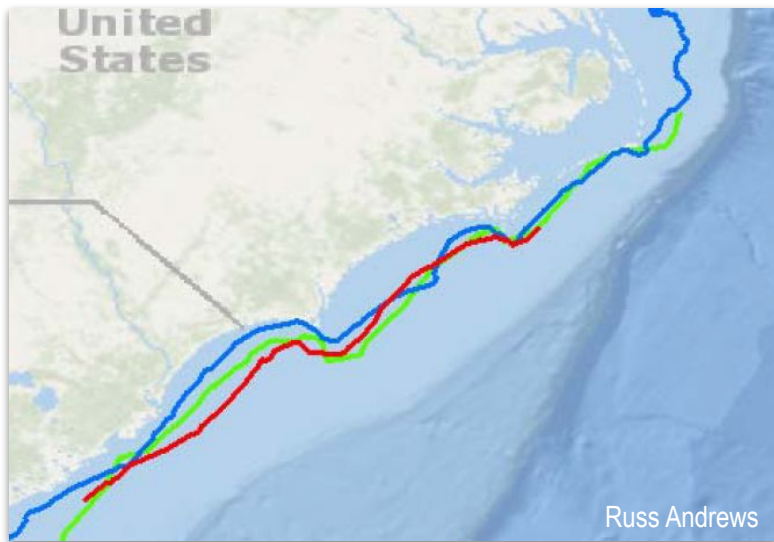
Animals targeted (in order):

- Males
- Juveniles
- Non-Calving Females

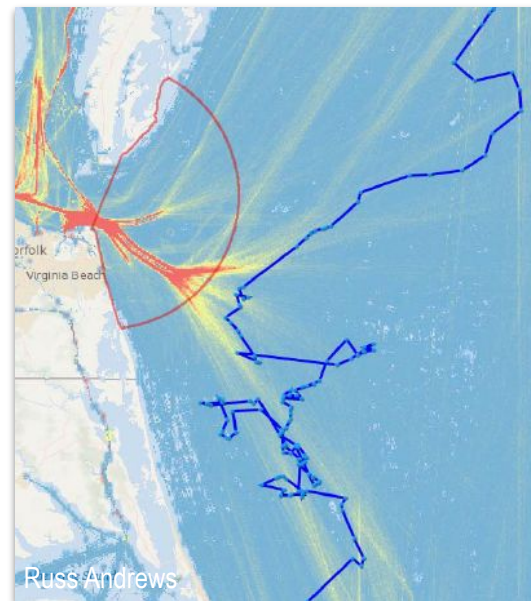


2015-2016 Southeast LIMPET Tagging Study

Similar movements along Carolina coast:



6-day restricted movement in area of high vessel traffic off Norfolk, VA:



Parting Thoughts

- Accurate identification of target whales and photo-ID images
- Pre-tagging health assessment is critical
- Submit all images to NARW Consortium Photo-ID Catalog promptly to facilitate post-tagging monitoring
- Improved tag methods are needed for research AND enhancement purposes



First images of Eg4445's tag site, 61 days after last transmission (NEFSC photo)