

North Atlantic Right Whale Tagging Workshop

OVERVIEW

Hosted by the Marine Mammal Commission, NOAA Fisheries, and the Office of Naval Research in coordination with Fisheries and Oceans Canada
September 12– 14, 2023 in Herndon, VA and virtually

The goals of this expert workshop are to:

1. review key knowledge gaps and data needs regarding the movements, life history, and ecology of North Atlantic right whales (NARWs);
2. review the history of satellite telemetry and evaluate progress in tag attachment technologies and follow-up studies; and
3. generate knowledge to inform planning and permitting decisions regarding potential tagging of NARWs, as well as other endangered baleen whales.

The workshop will occur over 2 ½ days and will include:

- Day 1 Open session: Presentations to the assembled experts and virtual attendees, on research needs for NARWs, the history of telemetry tag development and use for large whales, the permitting environment in the United States and Canada, and tagging best practices.
- Day 2 Closed session: Invited experts will engage in-depth on key information that can be gained from tagging, on their experience with different tag types applied to large whales with a particular focus on Type C consolidated tags, review follow-up studies to examine the effects of tagging on baleen whales, and discuss the utility of different tag types with respect to identified research questions.
- Day 3 Closed session: During this half-day concluding session, invited experts will consider data management and sharing, the evolution of tag technology and design, and potential future NARW tagging, and follow-up monitoring to address important data deficiencies.

Expected outputs/deliverables:

- Workshop report highlighting issues and information discussed at the workshop
- Verbally presented technical information, opinions, and feedback from all participants during the workshop is welcomed, but a consensus is not expected nor will any be solicited.

Select reading materials from previous relevant tagging workshops:

- [A workshop on effects of tagging NARW](#) and [related report](#) (Kraus et al. 2000)
- [Report of the Large Whale Tagging Workshop](#) (Weller 2008)
- [Report of the Joint ONR IWC NOAA Workshop on Cetacean Tag Development, Tag Follow-up and Tagging Best Practices](#) (ONR/NOAA/IWC 2020) and [Workshop Proceedings](#) (ONR 2009)
- [Best practice guidelines for cetacean tagging](#) (Andrews et al. 2019)

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AGENDA

Day 1: Tuesday September 12, 2023

- 9:00 – 9:15** Welcome and introduction
Frances Gulland (MMC) and Mike Weise (ONR)
- 9:15 – 9:45** Introductory talk: Telemetry data and the conservation and management of North Atlantic right whales (NARW)
Greg Donovan (IWC retired)
- 9:45 – 10:30** Facilitated panel discussion on gaps in knowledge of NARW ecology and movements pertinent to management needs, with emphasis on information that could be provided by telemetry data
Erin Meyer-Gutbrod (University of South Carolina), Colleen Coogan (NMFS-GARFO), Clay George (NMFS-SERO), Sean Hayes (NMFS-NEFSC), Veronique Lesage (DFO), Amy Knowlton (New England Aquarium)
- 10:30 – 10:45** **BREAK**
- 10:45 – 11:30** Permitting Environment: Government officials will summarize the U.S. and Canadian regulatory context when contemplating tagging endangered large whales
Amy Sloan (NMFS-OPR), Laurence Denault-Tremblay (DFO)
- 11:30 – 11:45** Brief Overview of Best Practice Guidelines for Cetacean Tagging
Mike Weise (ONR)
- 11:45 – 12:15** History of NARW tagging
Dave Weller (NMFS - SWFSC)
- 12:15 – 1:15** **LUNCH**
- 1:15 – 2:30** Review of types of tags used to date on baleen whales: Experts in tagging and tag development will provide an overview of different telemetry tag types and on which species they have been deployed, deployment durations, anchor design, target locations on animals, any known and/or

suspected effects based on follow-up studies, potential data to be gathered from the tags, overall challenges and opportunities.

Suction cup: Alex Shorter (University of Michigan) and Susan Parks (Syracuse University)

Type A Anchored: Russ Andrews (MarEcoTel)

Type C Consolidated: Alex Zerbini (CICOES-UW) and Daniel Palacios (Oregon State University)

2:30 – 3:15

Discussion and Q&A session

Peter Thomas (MMC)

3:15 – 3:30

Wrap-up