



# NEWS RELEASE

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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**  
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## **NEW RESEARCH UNDERLINES THREAT TO RIGHT WHALE** **Action Needed Now To Preserve Endangered Species**

**Boston, MA:** A new research report by the Oceans Conservancy outlines the growing dangers to the survival of the North Atlantic Right Whale. According to the report, released July 9, poor management of our oceans continue to push the right whale to the brink of extinction.

The report concludes that "Entanglement in fishing gear poses a ... serious threat to many critically endangered mammals such as North Atlantic right whales ... Many of these deaths could be prevented through fishing gear modifications or through closing areas to fishing at critical times of year." The report also recommends establishing a new federal agency to coordinate conservation efforts.

Fishing line entanglement and ship collisions are the major threats to the North Atlantic right whale, according to the National Marine Fisheries Service. The vulnerability of these mammals was highlighted in Summer 2001 when the right whale Churchill was spotted entangled in fishing gear. Despite international publicity and five separate rescue attempts, the line could not be removed and Churchill was lost and presumed dead.

Many groups are currently doing research on the right whale, but little of that research has translated into regulation or effective gear modification. "The report confirms what we have said all along, that overfishing and poor management of our oceans is not only destroying the fish industry but also effecting non-target species including endangered marine mammals and ocean wildlife," said James McCaffrey, Director of the Massachusetts Sierra Club.

Megan Amundson, chair of the Massachusetts Chapter's Task Force to save the Northern Right Whale confirmed, "Only 300 North Atlantic right whales are known to exist, making the right whale the world's most endangered large whale. Without action now, the whale will soon be extinct."

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