



# Status of NOAA Fisheries Proposed Amendments to Right Whale Ship Strike Reduction Rule

Department of Environmental Quality  
Marine Fisheries | Fisheries Management Section | Protected Resources Program

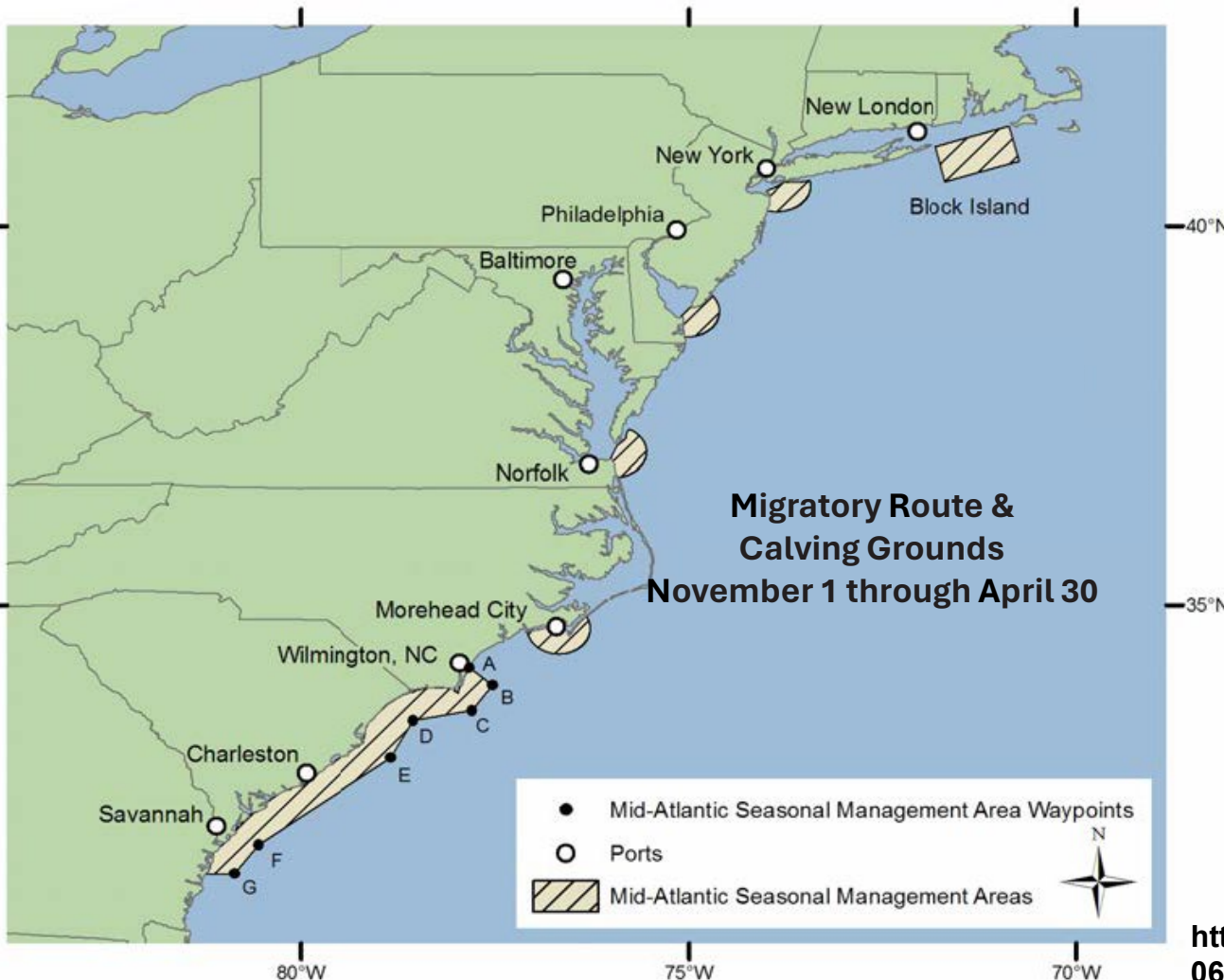
Barbie Byrd | May 2024



# NOAA Fisheries Service

## Current Right Whale Ship Strike Reduction Rule (50 CFR 224.105)

### Mid-Atlantic U.S. Seasonal Management Areas



### Current Vessel Speed Restrictions

- Implemented in 2008.
- Speed restriction (10 knots or less) applies to most vessels  $\geq 65$  feet in certain locations (called Seasonal Management Areas) along the U.S. East Coast at certain times of the year.
- Certain vessel categories are exempt
- Includes safety deviation provision.
- Voluntary requests for slow speeds in Dynamic Management Areas (DMAs).

[https://media.fisheries.noaa.gov/2021-06/compliance\\_guide\\_for\\_right\\_whale\\_ship\\_strike\\_reduction.pdf?null](https://media.fisheries.noaa.gov/2021-06/compliance_guide_for_right_whale_ship_strike_reduction.pdf?null)

# NOAA Fisheries Service

## Proposed Amendments to Right Whale Ship Strike Reduction Rule

NOAA Fisheries proposed four categories of amendments :

1. Changes to spatial and temporal boundaries of Seasonal Management Areas from Massachusetts to Florida (to be renamed Seasonal Speed Zones).
2. Addition of most vessels  $\geq 35$  ft and  $< 65$  ft in length to the size class of vessel subject to regulation.
3. Creation of a mandatory Dynamic Speed Zone framework, to provide temporary speed restrictions in areas where right whales are detected outside Seasonal Speed Zones.
4. Updates to the safety deviation provision.

For more details, visit <https://www.govinfo.gov/content/pkg/FR-2022-08-01/pdf/2022-16211.pdf>





# NOAA Fisheries Service

## Current Right Whale Ship Strike Reduction Rule (50 CFR 224.105)

### Mid-Atlantic U.S. Seasonal Management Areas



### For NC area:

**November 1 through April 30: Vessel speed is restricted in the following areas:**

- Within a 20-nm (37 km) radius of the following (as measured seaward from the COLREGS lines): Ports of Morehead City and Beaufort, NC
- Within a continuous area 20 nm from shore between Wilmington, NC, to Brunswick, GA

[https://media.fisheries.noaa.gov/2021-06/compliance\\_guide\\_for\\_right\\_whale\\_ship\\_strike\\_reduction.pdf?null](https://media.fisheries.noaa.gov/2021-06/compliance_guide_for_right_whale_ship_strike_reduction.pdf?null)



# NOAA Fisheries Service

## Proposed Seasonal Speed Zones

1. Expanded Seasonal Speed Zones
2. Speed restriction (10 knots or less) applies to most vessels > 35 feet or longer



Source [https://media.fisheries.noaa.gov/2022-07/Proposed\\_Seasonal\\_Speed\\_Zone\\_Map\\_508.pdf](https://media.fisheries.noaa.gov/2022-07/Proposed_Seasonal_Speed_Zone_Map_508.pdf)

# *NOAA Fisheries Service*

## *Status Update for Right Whale Ship Strike Reduction Rule*

### Public Comment period closed on October 31, 2022

- ❖ > 90,000 public comments
- ❖ NMFS prepared final rule package and sent to Dept of Commerce last fall
- ❖ Because of scope, rule subject to Executive Order (EO)
  - March 2024 Package went to Office of Management & Budget (OMB-Office of Information & Regulatory Affairs within the White House)
  - Review period is usually 90 days
  - See OMB Public Dashboard for more information:  
<https://www.reginfo.gov/public/do/eAgendaViewRule?pubId=202310&RIN=0648-BI88>
- ❖ There have been several EO meetings and more are scheduled through the end of May 2024  
<https://www.reginfo.gov/public/do/eom12866SearchResults?pubId=202310&rin=0648-BI88&viewRule=true>

# Questions?

Questions should be directed to NOAA

Contact: Caroline Good, [caroline.good@noaa.gov](mailto:caroline.good@noaa.gov), 301-427-8402

[https://media.fisheries.noaa.gov/2022-09/Proposed\\_NARW\\_Speed\\_Rule-Informational\\_Webinar\\_Aug\\_2022\\_508.pdf](https://media.fisheries.noaa.gov/2022-09/Proposed_NARW_Speed_Rule-Informational_Webinar_Aug_2022_508.pdf)

