



Photo: © Nick Hawkins

Fishing ropes wrap around the head and mouth of male #3960, damaging the baleen of this severely entangled North Atlantic right whale (*Eubalaena glacialis*) in the Gulf of Saint Lawrence, Canada.

North Atlantic right whales

This iconic species migrates every year from calving grounds in Georgia and Florida to its feeding grounds in New England and Canada. Migrating through a maze of fishing grounds, they face a significant risk of entanglement in fishing lines.

90%

of right whales show signs of previous entanglement

<340

critically endangered North Atlantic right whales remain

70

reproductive females in the population

Every problem has a **solution**; every solution needs **support**

Join us with our innovative, lasting solutions to create a world where animals and people can thrive together. Help us today.

- ▶ Contact your representative and urge them to support right whale conservation and on-demand gear funding.
- ▶ Spread the word: Many people have never heard of the North Atlantic right whale. Even more don't know about the solution offered by on-demand technology. Help us build public awareness to increase acceptance and adoption.
- ▶ Take part in citizen science and download our whale alert app.



Visit rightwhales.org to stay involved and get the latest news on North Atlantic right whales.

▶ see how at ifaw.org

On-demand fishing: preventing entanglements



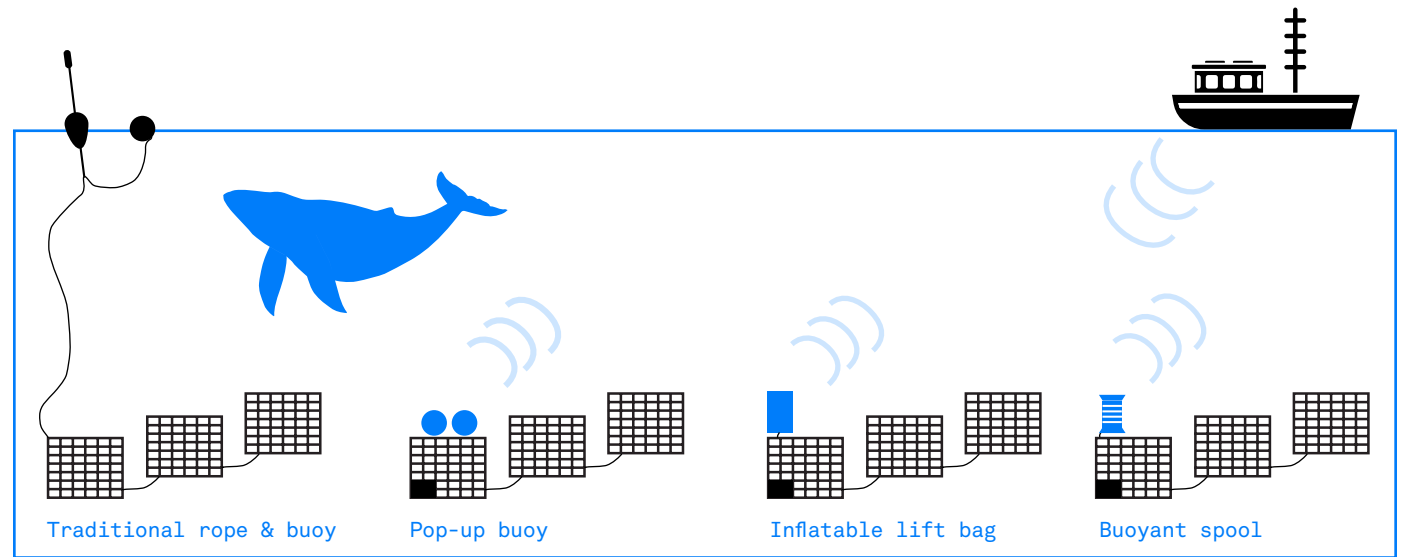
Cover photo: Biologists with Duke University and UNC Wilmington spot a 4-year old male right whale, Catalog #4057, entangled in heavy fishing rope while conducting research for the U.S. Navy 40 miles east of Jacksonville, FL. Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission, taken under NOAA research permit #15488

Protecting North Atlantic right whales



Cover photo: Christin Khan / © NOAA/NEFSC, taken under MMPA research permit #17335

Four-year-old male North Atlantic right whale entangled in heavy fishing rope 40 miles east of Jacksonville, Florida.



Trap/pot fishing industry

Trap/pot fishing is mostly used by the lobster and crab industry. Gear consists of traps placed on the sea floor, connected to a vertical line that attaches to a buoy at the water's surface. It is estimated that over one million vertical lines are deployed in right whale migrating, calving, and feeding areas off the US and Canadian East Coast.

Entanglements

The vertical line used in trap/pot fisheries poses an entanglement threat to marine mammals. Entangled whales can become laden with hundreds of pounds of fishing lines, preventing them from swimming or feeding normally, often leading to a slow and agonizing death. Entanglement also causes severe sub-lethal injuries, negatively impacting long-term physical and reproductive health.

What is on-demand gear?

On-demand fishing gear, whether trap/pot systems or gillnets, is gear without a fixed vertical buoy line in the water column. This reduces entanglement risk for whales while allowing fishermen to continue their livelihoods. This gear can be used to access fishing grounds located in seasonal closure areas when part of a formal trial. As on-demand methods represent a significant cost to fishermen, IFAW advocates for the strong financial support of local and federal agencies to reduce the financial burden of the adoption of this gear.

How does it work?

There are several different types of on-demand gear, but they accomplish the same goal: removing vertical lines from the water. Systems store a vertical line and buoy, lift bag, or buoyant spool at the ocean floor with the trap or gill net. To retrieve the gear, fishermen use an acoustic signal that triggers the release of the line, buoy, and spool, or inflates the lift bag, enabling location and retrieval.



The Northeast Fisheries Science Center's Gear Research group works with fishermen to design, test, and modify fishing gear.

How is IFAW helping?

To support adoption of on-demand gear, we:

- ▶ collaborate with fishermen, gear manufacturers, scientists, and regulatory agencies to help test and improve gear
- ▶ advocate for private, federal, and state funding for gear purchase, fishermen training, and research
- ▶ contribute to the Northeast Fisheries Science Center gear library, which enables fishermen to trial gear while reducing the initial financial investment