

Final



**North Atlantic Right Whale Recovery Plan
Southeast U.S. Implementation Team
November 15 and 16, 2017, Meeting**

Guana Tolomato Matanzas National Estuarine Research Reserve
Ponte Vedra, FL

KEY OUTCOMES MEMORANDUM

I. Overview

The North Atlantic Right Whale Recovery Plan Southeast U.S. Implementation Team (SEIT) conducted a two-day meeting on November 15 and 16, 2017 at the Guana Tolomato Matanzas National Estuarine Research Reserve in Ponte Vedra, Florida. The SEIT's Forum was conducted from 9:00 am to 5:00 pm on November 15 and was open to the public. The SEIT deliberated from 8:30 am to 3:30 pm on November 16. The Forum agenda was planned with input from the SEIT in order to facilitate priority information updates and discussion with participants and SEIT members. Agendas from both days are attached. The November 16th SEIT deliberations focused on the following primary items:

- Forum Review
- NMFS NARW 5-Year Review and Implications for SERO/SEIT
- 5-Year Action Plan and SERO Feedback
- Mid-Atlantic Planning Strategy Progress Review

Discussions were intended to identify priority action items, potential partners, and leads for Year 1 of the 5-Year Action Plan; however, time ran out prior to embarking on those discussions.

This Key Outcomes memorandum summarizes the primary results of the SEIT deliberations on November 16. In general, the synthesis integrates the main themes discussed at the meeting and are presented in five main sections: Overview, Participants, Meeting Materials, Key Outcomes, and Next Steps. The Key Outcomes section is further segmented into the following sections:

- Welcome and Meeting Kick Off. This section provides a brief overview of meeting purpose and agenda review.
- SEIT business
- Focused SEIT discussions
- Consensus Actions. This section summarizes consensus recommendations of the SEIT.
- Other. This section summarizes other topics discussed during the meeting.

II. Participants

The SEIT meeting was attended by 10 of the 12 Team members: Brock Durig (Navy replacement for Nancy Allen), Laura Engleby, Lance Garrison, Clay George, Mike Getchell, Hardee Kavanaugh (alternate for Bill Kavanaugh), Amy Knowlton, Bill McLellan, Katie Moore, and Leslie Ward (Team Lead). Barb Zoodsma, SERO, and Mike Asaro and Diane Borggaard, GARFO, represented NOAA Fisheries. Sharon Young and Tom Wright were unable to attend.

Mike Asaro is the new Marine Mammal and Sea Turtle Branch Chief at GARFO. He replaces Dave Gouveia and briefly introduced himself, some of his philosophies, and Diane Borggaard. D. Borggaard is the GARFO North Atlantic Right Whale Recovery Coordinator (new position within GARFO).

III. Meeting Materials

The following materials were provided to SEIT members via email prior to the meeting:

- Draft Agenda
- Updated SEIT Recommended Strategy for Enhancing North Atlantic Right Whale Recovery Efforts in the Mid-Atlantic Region (November 2017)

IV. Key Outcomes

Below is a summary of the main topics and items discussed during the meeting. This summary is not intended to be a meeting transcript and is not necessarily in chronological order of discussions. Rather, it provides an overview of the main topics covered, the primary points and options raised in the discussions, and areas of full or emerging consensus.

A. Welcome and Meeting Kick Off

The meeting kicked off with a brief review of the meeting purpose and agenda.

B. SEIT Business

Update on Becky Shortland's status as an SEIT member: although Becky Shortland is reducing her number of work hours, after further discussions within Grays Reef NMS, she will be continuing in her role as an SEIT member.

The Team agreed to reserve the weeks of May 14 and May 21 as possible weeks to conduct the spring SEIT meeting.

C. Focused Discussions

Forum Review/Emerging Issues

A few process-related items were discussed and included.

- Remind speakers to summarize presentation key points on their last slide.
- Webinar capabilities. Webinar objectives were discussed and concerns raised about unauthorized reproduction of presentation materials. The original purpose of webinars was to allow invited speakers who were unable to travel to the SEIT meetings to give presentations remotely. However, the capability was expanded, as a courtesy, to allow remoted attendance. Options were discussed for managing the unauthorized reproduction of presentations:
 - Remote attendees would be restricted to invited presenters and RSVPs (note affiliation) only.
 - Allow for remote webinar by SEIT members.
 - No photos, screen grabs of ppt presentations, slides without authorization from presenters.The topic was left largely unresolved and members agreed to resume the conversation during the planned winter call.
- Northeast and Canada Field Season Recaps:
 - It was notable that new individuals were being spotted to the end of the surveys in the Gulf of St. Lawrence.
 - Acoustic detections of right whales were not matching up as closely as expected with visual detections. Possible explanations include different behavior states represented in specific detection types, or maybe PAM is better for coarser, basin-wide scale.
 - The Team discussed data that is generated in Canada. All data up there going to Dalhousie/Taggerts lab. NEAQ receives photo ID data from Canada and U.S.
 - In BOF, plankton sampling resulted in only low densities of *Calanus sp.* and right whales were observed skim feeding (unusual behavior there). Animals departed early.
- Canada Mortality Event:
 - Presentation was very informative. Canadian response to mortalities is encouraging and a well prepared necropsy report is available online. Some Team members wondered if the snow crab fishery was the source of mortalities that went undetected?
 - Drones were very helpful in obtaining overhead images of Canadian carcasses. Overhead images are useful for piecing together visual clues on a carcass. At sea, overhead images may be helpful for same and for shark presence.
 - Should infrared technology be investigated for detecting oil slicks? Tim Cole mentioned that carcasses in Gulf of St. Lawrence were detected those searching for oil spills.
- U.S. Mortalities and Unusual Mortality Event:
 - Carcass tags presented by Tom –support for acquiring a few for trial purposes. If technology proves useful consider for supplying to USCG vessels.
 - Humpback whale MAUS UME –vessel collisions implicated. Has possible implications for right whales. Key factors: is there a change in humpback distribution or vessel traffic? ACTION ITEM: Check with Mendy Garron (NMFS UME Regional coordinator) re: information available on humpback or vessel traffic distribution shifts.

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- Passive Acoustic Monitoring. G. Davis mentioned one of their next steps is to generate an occupancy model combining visual and acoustic data.
- Emerging Lionfish Trap/Pot Fishery. This may be a good opportunity to explore the feasibility and development of ropeless fishing.
- Agency Updates:
 - USCG reported a decline in Mandatory Ship Reporting Compliance. The plan to begin enforcement activities to achieve their compliance target levels.
 - Spaceport Camden is continuing and Team members should continue to monitor for implications relative to airspace and sea closures.
- Public statement. J. Hain noted the NARW 5 Year Review included a recommendation to consider how best to use recovery teams. He suggested the SEIT be reviewed as part of that consideration.

5-Year Action Plan

The SEIT continued discussions focused on further development of the recommended 5-year action plan (team was referencing items in June 2017 draft plan):

Plan Discussion focused on:

Ocean Noise/Cumulative Impacts: action items/leads discussed:

- Follow PCOD progress (new action suggested);
- Identify emerging issues annually in a report card;
- Profile noise of ships (new action suggested), trends in SEUS noise profiles;
- Profile noise generated from wind energy/turbines (new action suggested)
- CETSOUNDS cumulative noise maps focused on > 5m depth to EEZ, GARFO/SERO leads

Vessel-related Impacts: Additional action items:

- River incursion plan development to include conducting a 'table top' exercise that is river specific, prioritize rivers for inclusion planning. Leads included: Navy (Brock), NOAA SERO, Ports, SEIT needs to develop a prioritized list.
- Obtain dredging O&M plans for SE Ports Lead- COE
- Impacts of larger ships port entry/exit at higher speed, ship maneuverability, HK, MG, KM will get more information, potential future Forum presentation on shipping trends
- Regarding evaluation of large yacht data via AIS, FWRI lead, additionally BZ and KM to investigate fishing tournament permitting/RW conditions, tournament schedule and other marine events
- Recreational boat traffic patterns and trends, additionally KM will inquire w/ boat safety staff re: patterns

The Team began to discuss action priorities and updates of the MAUS plan and agreed to continue discussion on the December call. Per plan, a quantitative risk assessment in the MAUS would help inform potential mitigation steps, including helping to evaluate an EWS approach in that region. FWRI lead for risk assessment in SEUS core area, Roberts model has east coast wide potential.

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MAUS Surveys/Sightings Sources were discussed in light of reduced Navy surveys for whales in the area.

- USCG relays sightings
- Social media trolls -FWC, Allison Henry
- Reach out to state researchers/law enforcement
- Brock will talk to Norfolk maritime re: Navy flights

D. Action Items:

- Katie Moore will look into USCG methods for detecting oil slick and follow up with Tim Cole's statement of detecting oil slicks in Canada.
- K. Moore will check with recreational boating safety officer in SE re: rec. boating trends – anticipated changes for future.
- B. Zoodsma will check with Mendy Garron (NMFS UME Regional coordinator) re: information available on MAUS humpback or vessel traffic distribution shifts.
- Leslie Ward will schedule a December call to review MAUS strategy as part of Action Plan and to consider webinar attendance and purpose. Send draft plan to MA, DB

E. Recommendations:

- The SEIT recommended SER obtain a few fish attractant device trackers to determine if they will suitably track right whale carcasses.

**NORTH ATLANTIC RIGHT WHALE SOUTHEAST IMPLEMENTATION TEAM MEETING
NOVEMBER 15-16 2017
GTM NERR**

DRAFT AGENDA DAY 1 - FORUM

Meeting Goal: Review the status of ongoing SE recovery activities and identify emerging issues

Meeting Objectives:

1. Review recent studies and upcoming monitoring activities
2. Review recovery activities implemented since last meeting
3. Obtain updates from recovery partners
4. Develop and provide input for SEIT consideration

Time	Topic	Speaker
9:00-9:15	Welcome and Introductions <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Welcome • Review purpose and objectives of meeting • Housekeeping • Review Agenda • Round-robin Introductions 	T. Pitchford
9:15-9:30	SEIT Update	L. Ward
9:30-11:15	Field Season Updates and Events <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Northeast and Canada Field Season Recaps • Canada Event • Canada Management • Mortalities in the U.S. and the Unusual Mortality Event (UME) process <p>Discussion</p>	T. Cole & A. Knowlton T. Wimmer* C. Merriman* B. McLellan
11:15-11:30	BREAK – 15 minutes	
11:30-12:15	Research/Monitoring <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • State-space mark-recapture estimates reveal a recent decline in abundance of NARW • Current and long-term passive acoustic monitoring for NARWs: an update • Emerging Lionfish Trap/Pot Fishery <p>Discussion</p>	P. Corkeron* G. Davis R. DeVactor*
12:15-1:15	LUNCH	Provided

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DRAFT AGENDA DAY 1 – FORUM

Time	Topic	Speaker
1:15-2:30	SEUS Updates <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 2016-2017 Aerial Survey Effort • 2017-2018 Field Season Plans • Carcass Tracking Buoy Technology • Changes at the Marineland Right Whale Project • Camden Spaceport Discussion	K. Jackson C. George T. Pitchford J. Hain S. Zee
2:30-2:45	BREAK- 15 minutes	
2:45-4:15	Agency Updates <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • NARWC & Biennial Meeting Updates and Next Steps • USACE • NOAA OLE • USCG • USN • SEFSC • SERO 	A. Knowlton TBD B. Boots K. Moore B. Durig L. Garrison* B. Zoodsma
4:15-4:45	Group Discussion	
4:45-5:00	Closing Remarks and Adjourn	L. Ward/T. Pitchford

**NORTH ATLANTIC RIGHT WHALE SOUTHEAST IMPLEMENTATION TEAM MEETING
NOVEMBER 2017**

DRAFT AGENDA DAY 2 – FORUM

Time	Items
08:30 – 8:45	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Next Meeting Date• Overview today’s agenda• SEIT Business
8:45 – 9:45	Forum review/Emerging issues
9:45 – 10:00	Break
10:00 – 10:30	Review NMFS NARW 5-Year Review relative to implications for SERO/SEIT
10:30 – 12:00	Review SEIT-Recommended 5-year action plan and feedback from SERO
12:00-12:20	Working Lunch (quick break)
12:20- 1:30	Review progress on Mid-Atlantic Planning Strategy, update as needed (Ear-marked for detailed discussion today as G&G and alternative E were moved from cumulative impacts into this part of the 5-year plan)
1:30-1:40	Break
1:40- 3:00	Discuss/identify priority action items, potential partners, leads for Year 1 or 5-year plan
3:00 – 3:15	Open agenda time to assess next steps, review recommendations, schedule winter update/emerging issues call
3:15 – 3:30	Wrap up