

**North Atlantic Right Whale Recovery Plan
Northeast US Implementation Team
March 27-28, 2019**

**Thomas P. O'Neill, Jr. Federal Building
Boston, MA**

KEY OUTCOMES MEMORANDUM

I. Overview

The North Atlantic Right Whale Recovery Plan Northeast U.S. Implementation Team (NEIT) conducted a two-day meeting on March 27 and 28, 2019, at the Thomas P. O'Neill, Jr. Federal Building in Boston, MA. The agenda is attached, and the NEIT deliberations focused on the following primary objectives:

- Identify criteria for prioritizing tasks necessary to implement recovery goals
- Identify NEIT top priorities for next 5 years
- Discuss coastwide planning efforts
- Share updates on right whale status and recovery

This Key Outcomes Memorandum summarizes the primary results of the NEIT deliberations from the discussions noted above. 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 the meeting purpose and agenda review.
- NEIT Business. This section includes NEIT process and meeting planning.
- Focused NEIT discussions. This section includes focused discussions, including any resulting in consensus actions and/or recommendations.
- Consensus Actions. This section summarizes any consensus actions to be taken by the Team.
- Consensus Recommendations. This section summarizes any consensus recommendations of the Team.
- Other. This section summarizes other topics discussed during the meeting as applicable.

II. Participants

The NEIT in-person meeting was attended by all 12 Team Members: Katie Moore (Team Lead), Bob Glenn, Erin Summers, Katie Hastings, Mark Baumgartner, Danielle Cholewiak (new member, replacement for Sofie Van Parijs), William McLellan, Cindy Driscoll, Desray Reeb, Joel Bell, Dave Wiley and Meghan Rickard.

Diane Borggaard (NEIT Liaison), Mike Asaro, Sean Hayes, Richard Pace, Barb Zoodsma, Ingrid Biedron represented NOAA Fisheries (NMFS) at the in-person meeting. Mike Runge (USGS) attended March 28th. Leslie Ward (SEIT Chair) listened-in remotely to some of the meeting.

The Key Outcomes Memorandum were distributed to the entire Team for feedback.

III. Meeting Materials

The following materials were provided to NEIT members via e-mail prior to or at the meeting:

- Draft meeting agenda
- Spreadsheet of recovery plan actions (source: NMFS Right Whale Recovery Plan actions (2005), NMFS Five-Year Review recommendations (2017), SEIT Mid-Atlantic priorities (2017), ALWTRP Whale Research priorities (2017), NMFS Right Whale Scenario Planning Exercise (2018 draft priorities), preliminary NEIT action topics (2018), SEIT priorities (2019))
- Process for Determining NEIT Priority Recovery Action Items
- Draft Population Evaluation Tool Subgroup Draft Scope and Objectives
- NEIT Working Group proposal (i.e., to establish dynamic management areas based on near real-time passive acoustic detections)

IV. Key Outcomes

Below is a summary of the main topics and items discussed during the meetings. 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 Introductions

The meeting kicked off with a brief review of the meeting purpose and draft agenda, as well as introductions. The NEIT were provided opportunities before and at the beginning of the meeting to provide input into the agenda.

B. NEIT Business

D. Borggaard noted that K. Moore from the USCG was appointed as the Chair of the NEIT for a two-year term. Katie noted that she was interested in Team input on expectations for both Team Leader and the Team at large. Katie and Diane reiterated NMFS' purpose and objective for the NEIT. For example, the role of the NEIT is to implement and coordinate the implementation of the Recovery Plan for the North Atlantic Right Whale. The NEIT was

asked to add any additional comments to the 2018 draft Key Meeting Outcomes so the document could be finalized by the end of the meeting.

Diane noted that NMFS had made progress on many of the next steps identified by the NEIT in 2018. NMFS also provided various updates to keep the NEIT informed of various activities the Team expressed interest in. This included updates on efforts underway related to impacts such as entanglements and ship strikes, as well as international collaboration (e.g., see NMFS' update for a hearing on North Atlantic Right Whales before the Committee on Natural Resources Subcommittee on Water, Oceans, and Wildlife U.S. House of Representatives¹ related to these topics). Diane also noted that many NMFS staff contributed to the updates and NMFS would continue to keep the NEIT informed of various efforts underway (e.g., NMFS Health Assessment, Humpback Whale Unusual Mortality Event AIS Analysis, North Atlantic Right Whale Health Assessment Workshop, Right Whale Surveillance and Monitoring, Gear Identification/Collection Working Group). M. Asaro and S. Hayes noted that they would continue to keep the NEIT informed of various budget issues related to right whale recovery, and reminded the NEIT of the available \$30K for the NEIT to recommend the best use of. For the future, Mike noted that it would be helpful if the Recovery Team identifies and describes projects and associated costs ("shovel ready") so that information is available should funds be unexpectedly available.

In response to NEIT members' interest in population status updates at each meeting, Diane noted that R. Pace had provided an update at the Team's October 2018 meeting and noted that the information in last year's presentation remains the same (i.e., the population is not likely greater than about 411 at the end of 2017). Diane also noted NMFS is working on talking points on population status in response to NEIT interest. The NEIT also expressed interest in a review of recent NARW mortalities before each meeting as needed. W. McLellan provided the Team an update on 2018 mortalities (and an additional 2016 mortality) and the Right Whale Unusual Mortality Event.

Team members provided various organization updates (e.g., USCG CG1View, MADMF state speed restrictions and CCB surveys, BOEM Offshore wind workshop status, NYS Department of Environmental Conservation Whale Monitoring Program, NEFSC aerial surveys, SBNMS report cards to ships, WHOI glider work, Maine DMR funded a time tension line cutter proposal, UNCW mid-Atlantic surveys). The members' updates were brief so that the NEIT could focus most of the meeting on priority planning and implementation discussions, however, future time would be allocated at future meetings (to include webinars) for more thorough updates and time for questions.

¹ <https://naturalresources.house.gov/imo/media/doc/Oliver%20Testimony%20WOW%20Ov%20Hrg%2003.07.19.pdf>

At this time, a future in-person meeting with the Southeast Implementation Team (SEIT; with pre-webinar(s)) is being proposed in 2019. NMFS was hoping to convene the NEIT in the mid-Atlantic this spring but the furlough impacted that planning. However, Diane noted that NMFS would like to convene the NEIT in the mid-Atlantic given the NEIT's range is Maine through Virginia. Katie and Diane noted that further discussions are needed with the NEIT, as well as with the SEIT for the joint meeting. NMFS was interested in additional input on the scheduling.

Discussion

The NEIT discussed and committed to adding any additional comments to the 2018 draft Key Meeting Outcomes so the document could be finalized by the end of the meeting. The NEIT also reviewed and approved the meeting agenda. The Team discussed a process for developing recommendations so this information could be included in future Key Meeting Outcomes. The Team came to an agreement that the term "consensus" means "I/You can live with it" and where no consensus can be reached, the different viewpoints will be captured as such in the meeting outcomes.

In response to Bill's right whale mortality update, members discussed the importance of having information on the status of enforcement investigations of human-caused interactions such as shipping and fishing (e.g., Bill noted that the May 5, 2016, Chatham, MA, right whale had nine prop cuts and its thoracic cavity crushed whereby the hindcast estimated death 2-days prior which would put the death in the shipping lanes outside of Cape Cod on May 3rd when the SMA closed there on April 30). Members noted that information such as this would be important for the NEIT to know about for its monitoring recovery charge, as well as be a case that should be incorporated into NMFS' ship strike analysis. Members recommended that NEIT meetings include a standing agenda item such that NOAA Office of Law Enforcement (OLE) can provide an update on status of human-interaction investigations.

Katie asked the NEIT to consider and discuss Team expectations. This included a discussion of what NEIT success looks like to each member and to their organization two and five years from now (see Appendix A; members wrote down their ideas and ideas that were similar/overlapped were combined.). This included the NEIT wanting to show progress through a report out in two years. Additionally, the NEIT discussed what they would like from a Team Leader (see Appendix B; process conducted similar to exercise above). Katie will touch base with the NEIT after the next meeting to check-in on progress.

The NEIT asked NMFS to clarify any restrictions regarding the available \$30K. The NEIT also asked to develop a specific review process for funding proposals. The NEIT and NMFS talked about trying to get draft summaries distributed approximately two weeks from the

meeting when possible in an attempt to finalize summaries soon after and make them available on the NEIT's website (e.g., within approximately six weeks after the meeting when possible).

NEIT members were interested in continued updates from NMFS (e.g., working groups, budget, enforcement). Members asked about how the NEIT will evaluate and give input into other efforts toward recovery such as ALWTRT's commercial fishery interaction efforts and NMFS's ship strike reduction efforts. Diane noted that it was important to look at recovery holistically, but it is important not to duplicate those efforts.

The NEIT discussed coastwide implementation team coordination planning. This included a possible combined NEIT and SEIT joint meeting later in the year (e.g., timed such that members could attend both, consider timing of Right Whale Consortium and Marine Mammal Biennial) which could include a public forum. Bill and C. Driscoll volunteered to work with Katie and Diane to participate in a working group for coordinating an NEIT and SEIT joint meeting and report back to the Team. The NEIT briefly discussed an operating protocol similar to SEIT public forum meetings at this time given their experience with these forums.

The NEIT acknowledged the efforts of the NEIT's Passive Acoustics Working Group to consider whether acoustics could be used to establish a dynamic management area. The NEIT will plan to meet via webinar to continue discussions of items not addressed at the in-person meeting (e.g., status of working group).

C. Focused Discussions

Priority Planning and Implementation

The NEIT considered previously identified priority actions (e.g. Five-year review, Recovery Plan, etc.) as a starting point (see "Meeting Materials" above) before the in-person meeting with the goal of making for a productive in-person meeting where the NEIT comes to consensus on top NEIT Priority Recovery Action Items. In response to NEIT feedback, NMFS developed a spreadsheet showing the parallels amongst previously identified priority actions which members reviewed during a March webinar. In order to facilitate priority planning, the members asked for a complete list of all identified priority actions which NMFS also compiled. The NEIT reviewed a list of 300+ actions in advance of the in-person meeting to help inform NEIT's identification of priorities (note: this list included some duplicative actions when a non-Recovery Plan identified action corresponded to more than one Recovery Plan identified actions).

The NEIT recognized that a focused, prioritized list for NEIT action/monitoring is most productive. On a February webinar, in an effort to determine priorities for NEIT

action/monitoring over the next five years (FY19-24), the NEIT discussed some very preliminary draft criteria and the process for moving forward. The Team was looking for a collaborative NEIT process to finalize the criteria and determine priorities of recovery efforts at the in-person meeting. In order to facilitate this, team members (where able) conducted a warm-up exercise. This involved using the preliminary draft criteria and applying them to the full priority action list to determine each NEIT member's individual views on the Top 5 Recovery Action Items. If an NEIT member believed a priority action was not already on the list, the NEIT member added it. However, efforts were made to minimize the addition of duplicate action items. By conducting the exercise individually, NEIT members were better able to assess if the criteria were appropriate and started the meeting with a preliminary list of 5 Top NEIT Recovery Action Items for the group discussion. For each individual action item, NEIT members were also invited to provide information and/or update the status to help share information amongst members.

At the in-person meeting, the NEIT as a group finalized the preliminary draft criteria with one change under "Impact" (changed "reduces" to "minimizes"). All criteria were equally-weighted and the final criteria included:

- (Impact) Whether the action minimizes serious injury/mortality and/or increases calving,
- (Feasibility) Whether the NEIT (or partners) can make progress and/or complete the action over the next five years, and
- (Opportunity) Activities that are NOT yet sufficiently underway or accomplished.

The NEIT also conducted an updated vote at the meeting where members were able to modify their top 5 recovery action items (where voting was able to occur before the meeting) or added their votes (where voting was not able to occur before the meeting). As a group, all voted actions were compiled into a list, binned into categories (i.e., shipping, fishing, habitat and distribution, morbidity and mortality investigations, and other) and then duplicates were removed and/or actions were combined (and not replaced which was emphasized) where appropriate, which resulted in a list of thirty-one Recovery Action Items. Team members continually looked at the resulting lists and added any actions that a member noted should be included as a priority. Team members discussed each action to understand issues such as the source of the action, why member(s) voted for or added the action, who were the partners, and any other identified considerations (e.g., status) when possible. Modifications to the action wording only occurred for NEIT conservation actions (e.g., "existing" was added to the following NEIT preliminary action initially discussed in 2018: "Define existing fixed gear fishing locations with high degree of specificity").

The NEIT then applied the finalized criteria to prioritize the thirty-one Recovery Action Items by voting as a group. This involved each member voting on two categories: the top

10 recovery actions for Right Whale recovery at large, as well as the top 10 recovery actions for the NEIT to coordinate. This involved each member receiving ten votes for each category, and being asked not give any single item more than five votes.

Discussion

Team member comments reiterated feedback at the 2018 in-person meeting such as the importance of right whale recovery focusing on immediate needs for the species (mitigating fishing gear entanglement and ship strikes) while also keeping an eye on long-term needs. The identified members' categories and actions mirrored many of the early 2018 NEIT discussions and brainstorming on recovery priorities. The NEIT did not have time to discuss the final results at the meeting, but the six priority recovery actions for Right Whale recovery at large and for the NEIT to coordinate are included below (see Appendix C for more specifics). (Due to a tie between some Recovery Action Items- the list reflects the Top 6 versus 5 Actions):

Top 6 Actions for Right Whale Recovery

(NOTE: The NEIT acknowledged that ongoing efforts to address commercial fishing interactions are a priority and are being addressed through the ALWTRT)

1. Use necropsies to determine the cause of death, and use such data to reduce mortalities. (see similar actions binned under this action in Appendix C)
 - a. Source: Recovery Plan
2. Identify where the whales are, especially reproductive females. Consider prey modeling studies. (see similar actions binned under this action in Appendix C)
 - a. Source: NEIT Identified Conservation Topics
3. Assess the effectiveness of ship strike measures and adjust, as necessary.
 - a. Source: Recovery Plan
4. Modeling studies (present conditions and projected into the future) on (1) spatial and temporal movement of whales and copepods, (2) whale habitat and distribution, and (3) climate models.
 - a. Source: Scenario Planning Draft Priorities
5. Identify current fixed gear fishing locations with high degree of specificity.
 - a. Source: NEIT Identified Conservation Topics
6. Notify individual ships directly when their course is likely to bring them to or near a location where a whale was sighted by the aircraft.
 - a. Source: Recovery Plan

Top 6 Actions for NEIT to Coordinate

(NOTE: The NEIT acknowledged that ongoing efforts to address commercial fishing interactions are a priority and are being addressed through the ALWTRT)

1. Notify individual ships directly when their course is likely to bring them to or near a location where a whale was sighted by the aircraft.
 - a. Source: Recovery Plan
2. Identify where the whales are, especially reproductive females. Consider prey modeling studies. (see similar actions binned under this action in Appendix C)
 - a. Source: NEIT Identified Conservation Topics
3. NMFS should develop a long-term, cross-regional plan for monitoring right whale population trends and habitat use.
 - a. Source: Five Year Review
4. Reduce or eliminate vessel collisions with right whales. Assess the potential need for modified or additional regulatory mechanisms. Compare recent mortality events with spatial gaps between management areas.
 - a. Source: SEIT Mid-Atlantic U.S. Priorities
5. Reduce or eliminate vessel collisions with right whales. Assess traffic patterns and evaluate compliance with existing regulations.
 - a. Source: SEIT Mid-Atlantic U.S. Priorities
6. Assess the effectiveness of ship strike measures and adjust, as necessary.
 - a. Source: Recovery Plan

The remaining priority actions from the thirty-one originally selected, as well as additional specifics on all identified priorities, are included in Appendix C. Next Steps will include the NEIT continuing to further discuss/suggest how to make progress on identified top priority Recovery Action Items. The NEIT will also continue to monitor and update identified priorities, as well as other activities to ensure all aspects of recovery are being considered and advancing within an 'acceptable' time frame.

Population Evaluation Tool Subgroup Update

M. Runge and Richard provided a presentation on the Population Evaluation Tool (PET) Subgroup's progress. This included an update on the draft scope and objectives, as well as interest in Team questions and feedback. Mike and Richard also answered questions from the NEIT. For example, the Subgroup's Scope and Objective is to address several demographic assessments requested by the Recovery Plan and the Five-year Review, while allowing examination of the possible demographic effects of potential management scenarios. The Subgroup welcomes comments for consideration by May 15th by the NEIT and SEIT, as well as others (e.g., NMFS, DFO) to ensure proper consideration is provided to all future threats to the right whale's recovery prospects.

Discussion

NEIT member comments on the scope of the PET Subgroup's efforts included: seismic information important to include, allow for combinations of scenarios (e.g., fishing and prey; wind turbines and impacts on forage areas based on water circulation and prey), considerations of reproductive females, and carrying capacity.

D. Consensus Actions

- Diane will inquire whether the May 5, 2016, Chatham, MA, right whale will be incorporated into NMFS' ship speed rule analysis.

E. Consensus Recommendations

- As a standing topic in NOAA Updates at NEIT meetings, NOAA OLE should provide updates on the status of mortality investigations.

V. Next Steps

- Key outcomes will be drafted and distributed for review and finalization by NEIT.
- Diane and Dani will let the NEIT know if there are any constraints related to the \$30K (e.g., contracts only, deadline).
- Katie will continue to check-in with the NEIT on Team expectations (see above).
- Diane will continue work with other NMFS staff to create and share talking points related to right whale population estimates, etc. for recovery team member use/outreach. This will include coordination with B. Zoodsma as the SEIT has made a similar recommendation. The talking points could be shared with both teams.
- The Team will provide any additional feedback on the draft Scope and Objectives by May 15th for transmission to the PET Subgroup for consideration.
- Diane will distribute a new draft Terms of Reference for the NEIT to consider for finalization and posting on the NEIT website.
- The NEIT will convene by webinar to continue discussions (e.g., member updates, working group proposal to NEIT on whether acoustics could be used to establish a dynamic management area, whale alert systems in the US and Canada, emerging risks such as aquaculture, NEIT external website, NEIT Terms of Reference, MA State Speed Restrictions). This will also include discussions of NEIT recommendations on how NMFS should use the available \$30K to support priority need(s) (e.g., consider an internal process).
- Discuss and finalize 2019 meeting timeline (e.g., public forum ideas) in coordination with the NEIT Meeting Working Group (Katie, Diane, Bill, Cindy). Plans for a joint meeting will be done in coordination with the SEIT (e.g., L. Ward and Barb). Future agenda items include continued NMFS updates (e.g., status update, budget, management, updates on enforcement cases).

- Diane will continue to work with other NMFS staff to share information on other right whales efforts to the NEIT (e.g., ALWTRT, NMFS ship speed analysis), as well as follow-up on consensus actions and/or recommendations.
- Continue other next steps from 2018 meeting summary as needed.
- Diane will share the St. Lawrence Beluga and manatee PVA analyses with the NEIT.

Appendix A.

The NEIT discussed “What Does NEIT Success Look Like to Me and My Organization 2 Years From Now? 5 Years?” and the summary of these are included below. Note, common items for two and five years are noted in parentheses.

2 Years

- Advance Recovery Plan Measures (2, 5)
- Advance implementation of Canadian recovery documents (i.e. Species at Risk Act recovery strategy, action plan) (2, 5)
- Clear alternative Coast-Wide Plan
- Policies, rules and regulations that directly aid recovery (plan) → Reg. Actions
- Make sure/Measure success
- Dynamic and flexible management (adaptive) (2, 5)
- No North Atlantic Right Whale Unusual Mortality Events
- Gets traction (i.e., recommendations) (2, 5)
- 0 mortalities
- Fishermen Education and Buy-in
- Larger SMA areas
- Information available on prey/distribution
- Understand where the threats are *
- Tangible progress
- Enhanced communication between U.S. and Canada (Coast Wide) Network
- Gear marked
- Where the whales are

5 Years

- Full fishermen compliance
- 5 year report on gear marked/mortalities
- Buoyless fishing
- North Atlantic Right Whale recovery with fisheries intact ± recovery trend
- Meeting ZMRG and PBR =0

Appendix B.

The NEIT discussed what they would like from an NEIT Team Leader. The summary of Team feedback is included below.

Qualities of Leader

- Assist team with technology
- Organize conference calls (more?) of them
- Organized
- Facilitate meetings
- Organize group folder/documents
- Decisive
- Clear guidance
- Spokesperson
- Receptive to Ideas
- Committed
- Impartial, unbiased and open
- Listener

Communication and Coordination with Other Groups

- Coordinator and liaison with other groups
- Good communicator
- Communication with NOAA
- Get updates from NOAA to NEIT (mortalities, etc.)
- Ensures recommendations are heard by NOAA
- Assure priority comes with NMFS

Actions and Progress

- Assign Action Items (deadlines)
- Provide structure for member accountability
- Help turn discussion into action items
- Email “to-do” lists
- Action-oriented
- Help make tangible progress
- Report to SEIT
- Provide timely meeting summary
- Assist with coordinating SEIT and NEIT Priorities

Consensus Building and Facilitator

- Recognize important points in discussion
- Facilitator
- Focused
- Cat herder
- Maintain focus and direction
- Keep topics to specific goals
- Focus discussions
- Keep NEIT laser focused on RW conservation

Appendix C.

Right Whale Recovery Action Priorities (High → Low)

Note: Bold actions include top six identified as important to right whale recovery. The NEIT acknowledged that ongoing efforts to address commercial fishing interactions are a priority and are being addressed through the ALWTRT. “Source” indicates which document the action item came from, followed by the Recovery Plan Action Number (or associated number from SEIT summaries and for non Recovery Plan actions). Italicized items indicate actions that were similar to the priority action. Categories (i.e., shipping, fishing, habitat and distribution, morbidity and mortality investigations, and other). Note that some actions received similar priority scoring.

Action Item	Category
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Use necropsies to determine the cause of death, and use such data to reduce mortalities. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Source: Recovery Plan (4.6.4) ○ <i>Fully investigate ALL blunt trauma mortality designations (past and future) to determine if the event occurred outside of a SMA. If outside enlarge size and/or duration of SMA. Every Single Mortality Exceeds PBR.</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ <i>Source: NEIT Addition</i> 	Morbidity and Mortality Investigations
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Identify where the whales are, especially reproductive females. Consider prey modeling studies. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Source: NEIT Identified Conservation Topics ○ <i>NMFS should continue to prioritize and fund a combination of acoustic, aerial, and shipboard surveys for right whale surveillance.</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ <i>Source: Five Year Review</i> ○ <i>Use acoustic detection technology, surveys, and other technologies to monitor right whale occurrence and distribution in the mid-Atlantic United States.</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ <i>Source: Recovery Plan (1.1.8)</i> 	Habitat and Distribution
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Assess the effectiveness of ship strike measures and adjust, as necessary. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Source: Recovery Plan (1.1.16) 	Shipping

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Modeling studies (present conditions and projected into the future) on (1) spatial and temporal movement of whales and copepods, (2) whale habitat and distribution, and (3) climate models. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Source: Scenario Planning Draft Priorities 	Habitat and Distribution
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Define existing fixed gear fishing locations with high degree of specificity. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Source: NEIT Identified Conservation Topics 	Fishing
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Notify individual ships directly when their course is likely to bring them to or near a location where a whale was sighted by the aircraft. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Source: Recovery Plan (1.1.4) 	Shipping
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • NMFS should conduct research to improve gear modifications and gear marking to inform management for the development of more finely scaled commercial fisheries regulations. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Source: Five Year Review ○ <i>Fully support alternative gear practices, gear marking and other strategies developed by the ALWTRT</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ <i>Source: NEIT Addition</i> 	Fishing
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop and implement strategies to modify fishing operations and gear to reduce the likelihood of entanglement, mitigate the effects of entanglements, and enhance the possibility of disentanglement, and assess the effectiveness of such strategies. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Source: Recovery Plan (1.2.1) 	Fishing
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Assess the effectiveness and efficiency of the survey programs in attaining the primary goal of reducing ship strikes. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Source: Recovery Plan (1.1.5) 	Habitat and Distribution
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reduce or eliminate vessel collisions with right whales. Assess the potential need for modified or additional regulatory mechanisms. Compare recent mortality events with spatial gaps between management areas. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Source: SEIT Mid-Atlantic U.S. Priorities (1.1) (1.7.a) 	Shipping
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reduce amount of line in water column through ropeless fishing including gear research, development, and testing. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Source: Scenario Planning Draft Priorities 	Fishing

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Conduct radio and satellite tagging studies to increase knowledge of right whale habitat use, distribution, and habits. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◦ Source: Recovery Plan (4.7.1) 	Habitat and Distribution
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Renewable industries including (1) aquaculture (be proactive and whale safe), (2) blue economy (e.g., wind farms). <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◦ Source: Scenario Planning Draft Priorities 	Other
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Long-term monitoring data on plankton. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◦ Source: Scenario Planning Draft Priorities 	Habitat and Distribution
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • NMFS should continue to fund right whale mortality investigations. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◦ Source: NEIT Identified Conservation Topics 	Morbidity and Mortality Investigations
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Investigate infectious diseases. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◦ Source: NEIT Conservation Topics 	Morbidity and Mortality Investigations
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Proactive management rulemaking for ropeless fishing so ready when gear is ready. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◦ Source: Scenario Planning Draft Priorities 	Fishing
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reduce or eliminate vessel collisions with right whales. Assess traffic patterns and evaluate compliance with existing regulations. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◦ Source: SEIT Mid-Atlantic U.S. Priorities (1.1) (1.4) 	Shipping
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Promote bi-lateral cooperative efforts with Canada to maximize protection for right whales. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◦ Source: Recovery Plan (5.5) 	Other
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Analyze tissue collected from stranded right whales to determine and monitor contaminant levels. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◦ Source: Recovery Plan (4.6.5) 	Morbidity and Mortality Investigations
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • When possible and practicable in terms of safety, disentangle whales caught in fishing gear. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◦ Source: Recovery Plan (1.2.12) 	Fishing
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identify emerging risks. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◦ Source: NEIT Identified Conservation Topics 	Other
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • NMFS should develop a long-term, cross-regional plan for monitoring right whale population trends and habitat use. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◦ Source: Five Year Review 	Other

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Dynamic/flexible management and enforcement. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◦ Source: Scenario Planning Draft Priorities 	Other
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Conduct ESA Section 7 consultations for Federal activities with the potential to affect right whales. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◦ Source: Recovery Plan (3.3.17) 	Other
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reduce human impact to habitat and NARWs from Ocean Energy Activities. Track BOEM and agency actions regarding permitting and development of plans (BMP)/next steps. Review monitoring plans and develop high priority questions/information gaps/data need to detect potential displacement and/or other impacts. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◦ Source: SEIT Mid-Atlantic U.S. Priorities (3.3) (4) 	Other
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review and evaluate stranding and photo-identification data to monitor interactions with fishing gear and effectiveness of mitigation measures. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◦ Source: Recovery Plan (1.2.21) 	Fishing

Right Whale Recovery Action Priorities for NEIT to Coordinate (High → Low)

Note: Bold actions include top six identified as important to right whale recovery for the NEIT to coordinate. The NEIT acknowledged that ongoing efforts to address commercial fishing interactions are a priority and are being addressed through the ALWTRT. “Source” indicates which document the action item came from, followed by the Recovery Plan Action Number (or associated number from SEIT summaries and for non Recovery Plan actions). Italicized items indicate actions that were similar to the priority action. Categories (i.e., shipping, fishing, habitat and distribution, morbidity and mortality investigations, and other). Note that some actions received similar priority scoring.

Action Item	Category
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Notify individual ships directly when their course is likely to bring them to or near a location where a whale was sighted by the aircraft. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◦ Source: Recovery Plan (1.1.4) 	Shipping

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identify where the whales are, especially reproductive females. Consider prey modeling studies. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Source: NEIT Identified Conservation Topics ○ NMFS should continue to prioritize and fund a combination of acoustic, aerial, and shipboard surveys for right whale surveillance. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Source: Five Year Review ○ Use acoustic detection technology, surveys, and other technologies to monitor right whale occurrence and distribution in the mid-Atlantic United States. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Source: Recovery Plan (1.1.8) 	Habitat and Distribution
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • NMFS should develop a long-term, cross-regional plan for monitoring right whale population trends and habitat use. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Source: Five Year Review 	Other
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reduce or eliminate vessel collisions with right whales. Assess the potential need for modified or additional regulatory mechanisms. Compare recent mortality events with spatial gaps between management areas. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Source: SEIT Mid-Atlantic U.S. Priorities (1.1) (1.7.a) 	Shipping
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reduce or eliminate vessel collisions with right whales. Assess traffic patterns and evaluate compliance with existing regulations. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Source: SEIT Mid-Atlantic U.S. Priorities (1.1) (1.4) 	Shipping
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Assess the effectiveness of ship strike measures and adjust, as necessary. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Source: Recovery Plan (1.1.16) 	Shipping
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Assess the effectiveness and efficiency of the survey programs in attaining the primary goal of reducing ship strikes. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Source: Recovery Plan (1.1.5) 	Habitat and Distribution
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Renewable industries including (1) aquaculture (be proactive and whale safe), (2) blue economy (e.g., wind farms). <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Source: Scenario Planning Draft Priorities 	Other
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reduce human impact to habitat and NARWs from Ocean Energy Activities. Track BOEM and agency actions regarding permitting and development of plans (BMP)/next steps. Review monitoring plans and develop high priority questions/information gaps/data need to detect potential displacement and/or other impacts. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Source: SEIT Mid-Atlantic U.S. Priorities (3.3) (4) 	Other

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identify emerging risks. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Source: NEIT Identified Conservation Topics 	Other
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use necropsies to determine the cause of death, and use such data to reduce mortalities. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Source: Recovery Plan (4.6.4) ○ <i>Fully investigate ALL blunt trauma mortality designations (past and future) to determine if the event occurred outside of a SMA. If outside enlarge size and/or duration of SMA. Every Single Mortality Exceeds PBR.</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Source: NEIT Additions 	Mortality Investigations
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Promote bi-lateral cooperative efforts with Canada to maximize protection for right whales. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Source: Recovery Plan (5.5) 	Other
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Modeling studies (present conditions and projected into the future) on (1) spatial and temporal movement of whales and copepods, (2) whale habitat and distribution, and (3) climate models. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Source: Scenario Planning Draft Priorities 	Habitat and Distribution
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Engage with industry to: (1) help solve problems, (2) develop incentives, (3) gain buy-in for solutions. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Source: Scenario Planning Draft Priorities 	Other
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • NMFS should continue to fund right whale mortality investigations. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Source: NEIT Identified Conservation Topics 	Mortality Investigations
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Proactive management rulemaking for ropeless fishing so ready when gear is ready. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Source: Scenario Planning Draft Priorities 	Fishing
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Conduct ESA Section 7 consultations for Federal activities with the potential to affect right whales. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Source: Recovery Plan (3.3.17) 	Other
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Dynamic/flexible management and enforcement. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Source: Scenario Planning Draft Priorities 	Other
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Analyze tissue collected from stranded right whales to determine and monitor contaminant levels. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Source: Recovery Plan (4.6.5) 	Mortality Investigations

Additional Note: Additional recovery actions that were initially chosen but did not receive specific votes.

- Large whale behavioral research (e.g., Research on the distribution of large whales throughout their range in US waters (including behavior on the migratory corridor (large whale whales) and breeding grounds (for right whales).
 - Source: ALWTRT Whale Research Activities and Select Priorities (2015) (see document for specific actions)
- Other-Evaluate pollutants and their biological effects on large whales.
 - Source: ALWTRT Whale Research Priorities
- Assess the effectiveness of existing ship reporting systems and reporting areas.
 - Source: Recovery Plan (1.1.23)

Attachment

North Atlantic Right Whale Recovery Plan
Northeast U.S. Implementation Team Meeting
27-28MAR2019; Thomas P. O'Neill, Jr. Federal Building
10 Causeway Street Boston, MA

Draft Agenda

Meeting Goals:

- Identify criteria for prioritizing tasks necessary to implement recovery goals
- Identify NEIT top priorities for next 5 years
- Discuss coastwide planning efforts
- Share updates on right whale status and recovery

DAY 1			
Time	Topic	Lead	Length
0830	Room is open; Participants should plan adequate time through Security; Finalize lunch orders	--	
0900	Welcome, Introduction and Getting Organized <ul style="list-style-type: none">● Introductions● Review NEIT Purpose● Review agenda● Review/approval of prior meeting Key Outcomes● Opening comments	Diane, Katie M.	30 mins
0930	NMFS Updates	NMFS	60 mins
1030	RW Mortality Update	WAM	15 mins
1045	Break		15 mins

1100	Team Expectations- <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What do I want from an NEIT Team Leader? • What does NEIT success look like to me and my organization 2 years from now? 5 years from now? 	All	45 mins
1145	Break/Pick-up Lunch Orders	--	15 mins
1200	Working Lunch: NEIT Priority Planning and Implementation- Criteria	All	60 mins
1300	Break	--	15 mins
1345	NEIT Priority Planning and Implementation- Review of Individual Members' Top 5's	All	60 mins
1445	Break	--	15 mins
1500	NEIT Priority Planning and Implementation- Coalescing of Group's Top 5's	All	90 mins
1630	Wrap up/Plan for Day 2	Katie M, Diane	20 mins
1700	Adjourn for the day	--	--
1830	<i>No host evening social; Location- TBD; Leaving from Hotel Lobby</i>	---	

	DAY 2; Room Opens at 0730		
0800	Welcome, Re-refresh of Day 1	Diane, Katie M.	15 mins

0815	NEIT Priority Planning cont'd		75 mins
0930	Break	--	15 mins
0945	Population Evaluation Tool Subgroup Update	Richard Pace, Mike Runge	60 mins
1045	Coastwide Implementation Team Coordination Planning**	Diane, Barb	15 mins
1100	Break	--	15 mins
1115	Team Member Updates* - USCG- CG1View - MA- State Speed Restriction *Will be used to complete NEIT Priority Planning if Day 1 requires more time	(Round Robin)	45 mins
1200	Break	---	15 mins
1215	Working Lunch- MISC Business ● NEIT DMA and Acoustic Working Group update (Mark) ● Feedback from RW Consortium Meeting ● NEIT external website ● Terms of Reference ● Meeting Planning (leadtime, agendas, etc.)		60 mins
1315	Wrap Up/Next Steps (Webinar); Discussion Topics	Diane, Katie M.	45 mins
1400	Adjourn		

NOTE: The times listed are approximate; the order in which these items will be taken is subject to change; other items may be added as necessary. ** Agenda items may be adjusted to allow more time for NEIT Priority Planning, if necessary.