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Sources:

- <https://www.fisheries.noaa.gov/species/north-atlantic-right-whale>
- <https://baleinesendirect.org/en/what-is-the-function-of-the-callosities-in-right-whales/>
- <https://www.neaq.org/animal/right-whales/>

North Atlantic Right Whales

This is a chart depicting the populations of calves born in the last 17 years and how these populations have changed over time.

Ecology

- Main diet consists of copepods and zooplankton
- Being a secondary consumer, these whales are crucial for the continuation of the food chain
- Their feces help fertilize the phytoplankton, and in return, the phytoplankton extracts millions of tons of carbon from the atmosphere during their photosynthesis, producing oxygen into the air
- Share a commensalism symbiotic relationships with cyamids, who feed off the whales skin, benefiting themselves while the whale is neither helped nor harmed

Human Impacts and Threats

VESSEL STRIKES

- Biggest threat to these whales and are killing or harming these whales at rapid rates
- Wounds from these strikes are getting infected which results in death
- 20 vessel strikes that have been documented since 2017 have seriously harmed or killed 20 of these whales



ENTANGLEMENT IN FISHING GEAR

- Bringing the whales down, causing them to drown
- Strangled to death and infected wounds from the gear are causing their death



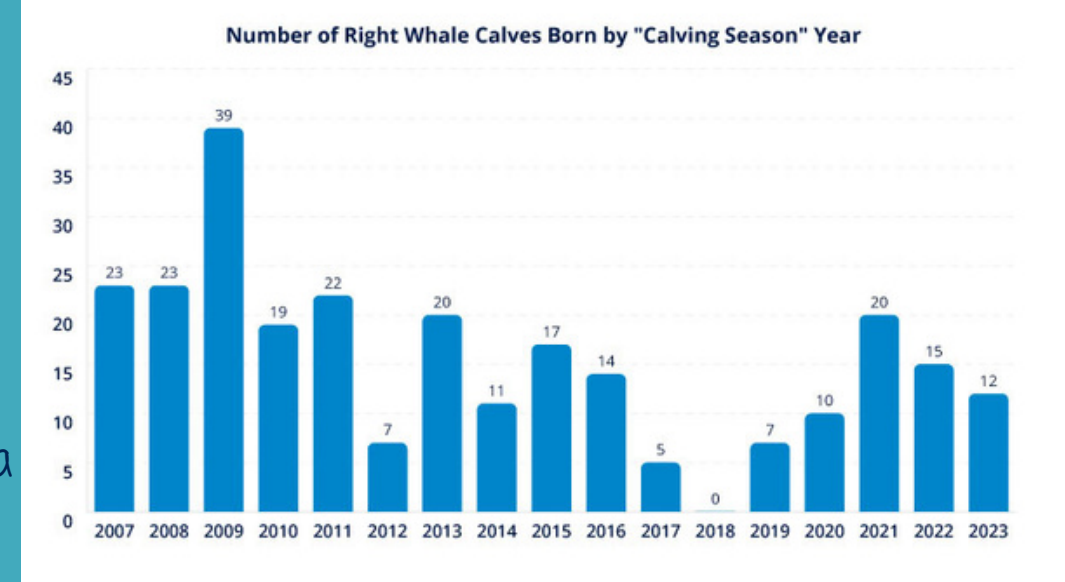
This is a picture of a Juno's calf that has been struck by a vessel in critical condition, and may not survive to adulthood



Eubalena glacialis - Mysticetes, the baleen whales

Population Trends

- The current population size is around 360 whales
- Listed as state and federally endangered
- 70 breeding adult females left
- 76 calves were born in the past 5 years
- As of 02/22/24, 19 calves were born in 2024
- The population of these whales are approaching extinction at a very fast rate and if there are not more efforts being done, these whales could go extinct by 2040



Importance of Georgia's Coast

- Georgia's coast is their active calving ground
- Calving ground lies within 15 miles off the coast of Georgia and North Florida
- They need this coast in order to breed more calves

Proposed Solutions

VESSEL STRIKES

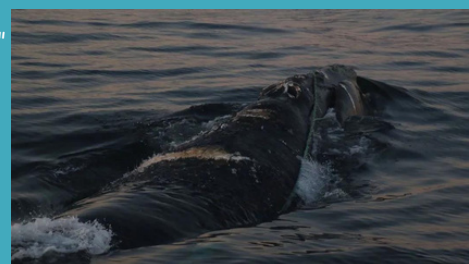
- Implement speed regulations and route changes to include 35 to 65 feet long vessels traveling at 10 knots or less
- Once vessel operators enter a highly populated area with these whales, remind them to be on the lookout for these whales and slow down
- Reach out to the public to raise awareness of vessel strike risk

ENTANGLEMENT IN FISHING GEAR

- Create new innovative fishing gear
- Requiring weak rope or weak inserts
- Fewer vertical buoy lines in trap/ pot fisheries

Picture of a North Atlantic Right Whale named "Ruffian," that was freed from fishing entanglements.

<https://www.fisheries.noaa.gov/feature-story/faces-right-whale-conservation-david-morin-disentanglement-coordinator>



<https://insideclimatenews.org/news/20012024/noaa-expanded-whale-school-zones-could-help-prevent-boat-collisions/>