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ROSEWAY BASIN "AREA TO BE AVOIDED" FOR PROTECTION OF RIGHT WHALES NOW IN EFFECT

HALIFAX — The Honourable Peter MacKay, Minister of National Defence and Minister of the Atlantic Canada Opportunities Agency, on behalf of the Honourable Lawrence Cannon, Minister of Transport, Infrastructure and Communities, wishes to remind mariners that the recommended seasonal "Area to be Avoided" (ATBA) is now in effect in the Roseway Basin, off Nova Scotia's Cape Sable Island.

"Mariners following the ATBA, which took effect on June 1, will avoid the Roseway Basin to help protect the Right Whales population," said Minister MacKay. "These conservation efforts are another example of the action our Government has taken to protect our natural environment and its inhabitants."

"The Government of Canada wishes to express the appreciation of all Canadians toward mariners who share our concern for the protection of the natural environment," said Minister Cannon. "The ATBA will be in place each year from June 1 to December 31 and we encourage all mariners to comply with it and help in the recovery of this endangered species. Right Whale recovery depends on governments and industry working together to protect these vulnerable creatures. The Roseway Basin ATBA is a terrific example of that cooperation."

"The North Atlantic Right Whale is one of the world's most endangered great whales, with only about 350 currently known to exist," said the Honourable Loyola Hearn, Minister of Fisheries and Oceans Canada, and Minister responsible for the recovery of aquatic species at risk. "This is a significant step in the recovery of Right Whales."

"Canadians should be proud and encouraged by the implementation of the Area to Be Avoided for Right Whales on the Roseway Basin Right Whale conservation area" said Dr. Moira Brown, senior scientist with the Canadian Whale Institute (CWI) and New England Aquarium (NEAq). "This internationally sanctioned, science based conservation initiative, in concert with the 2003 amendment to the Bay of Fundy shipping lanes, means that Canada has taken significant measures to promote the recovery of Right Whales by reducing the threat of lethal ship strikes."

For more information on the North Atlantic Right Whale, visit the Canadian Whale Institute's website at: <http://www.rightwhale.ca>

A [backgrounder](#) on Protecting the North Atlantic Right Whale Through International Designation of Roseway Basin is attached.

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BACKGROUNDER

PROTECTING THE NORTH ATLANTIC RIGHT WHALE THROUGH INTERNATIONAL DESIGNATION OF ROSEWAY BASIN

North Atlantic Right Whale Habitat

The Roseway Basin, located approximately 20 nautical miles south of Cape Sable Island Nova Scotia, is one of only two known areas where large numbers of North Atlantic Right Whales gather on a seasonal basis in Canadian waters. In fact, Roseway Basin, along with the lower Bay of Fundy, and three critical habitat areas in United States waters are the only areas in the western North Atlantic where Right Whales are known to repeatedly gather on a seasonal basis for several months at a time. Each of these important habitats is intersected by or located near major shipping routes. The Roseway Basin is an important feeding and socializing habitat for this critically endangered species, which scientists estimate number only about 350 individuals today.

Right Whale Protection History

The recommended seasonal "Area to be Avoided" (ATBA) designation is the most recent of several measures Canada has taken to protect North Atlantic Right Whales. In recognition of its importance to the very survival of the Right Whale population, a portion of Roseway Basin was designated by Canada in 1993 as a Right Whale Conservation Area. In 2002, the International Maritime Organization (IMO) unanimously adopted the Canadian proposal to amend the Bay of Fundy Traffic Separation Scheme (TSS) reducing the relative probability of a ship strike in this area by approximately 80%.

Canada's Proposal to the IMO

Canada proposed the establishment of a recommended seasonal ATBA for ships of 300 gross tonnage and upwards during the seven-month period from June 1 to December 31 when the largest percentage of Right Whales is known to be in the area and when the risk of ship strikes is greatest. Overall, the impact of the ATBA to transiting ships is expected to be minimal.

Implementation

The IMO Maritime Safety Committee adopted Canada's proposal at its 83rd session in Copenhagen Denmark October 3-12, 2007. The newly designated recommended seasonal ATBA took effect in April 2008 prior to the seasonal return of the Right Whales to the Roseway Basin. The ATBA will be in effect from June 1 until December 31 each year. Many groups with varied interests have come together to take the action required to put in place this new, safe and efficient designation that will make the Roseway Basin a much safer place for the North Atlantic Right Whale.

Informing Mariners

A Notice to Mariners has been issued to advise mariners of the new ATBA. The Canadian Notices to Mariners annual edition and the Sailing Directions for the Atlantic Region provide detailed information about Right Whales in the Roseway Basin and Grand Manan Basin Conservation Areas with precautionary measures for reducing the risk of an interaction. The 2008 Notice to Mariners annual edition has been updated to include the Roseway Basin as an ATBA. Information on the ATBA is now included on the Canadian Hydrographic Service Charts for the area of the Roseway Basin.

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