

Lobstering gear could be reduced, changed to save whales

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In this March 28, 2018, file photo, a North Atlantic right whale breaches the surface of Cape Cod bay off the coast of Plymouth, Mass. A group organized by the federal government is expected to release recommendations about how to better protect a vanishing species of whale in the Atlantic Ocean. The National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration created the Atlantic Large Whale Take Reduction Team to help reduce the injuries and deaths the North Atlantic right whales suffer due to entanglement in fishing gear. The group's recommendations are expected on Friday. (AP Photo/Michael Dwyer, File)

A group organized by the federal government is recommending reductions and changes for lobster gear off the East Coast to try to protect a rare species of whale.

The North Atlantic right whale population counts only about 411 individuals, and its numbers have fallen by dozens in this decade. The National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration created the Atlantic Large Whale Take Reduction Team to help reduce injuries and deaths caused when whales are entangled in fishing gear.

The team says Friday that it's recommending a reduction in the amount of trap lines, which can ensnare whales. The team is also recommending gear that would allow whales to more easily escape.

Lobster fishing groups are closely monitoring the team's discussions. Lobstermen have said rule changes need to also protect the fishery.



In this March 28, 2018 file photo, a North Atlantic right whale feeds on the surface of Cape Cod bay off the coast of Plymouth, Mass. A group organized by the federal government is expected to release recommendations about how to better protect a vanishing species of whale in the Atlantic Ocean. The National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration created the Atlantic Large Whale Take Reduction Team to help reduce the injuries and deaths the North Atlantic right whales suffer due to entanglement in fishing gear. The group's recommendations are expected on Friday. (AP Photo/Michael Dwyer, File)

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