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MARINE SAFETY INFORMATION BULLETIN

[MSIB # 31-11]

December 1, 2011

**SPEED RESTRICTION IMPOSED TO PROTECT
NORTH ATLANTIC RIGHT WHALES**

The Captain of the Port Sector Delaware Bay advises all vessels transiting the Mid-Atlantic Ocean that the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) has established regulations to implement a 10-knot speed restriction for all vessels 65 ft (19.8 m) or longer in certain locations along the east coast of the U.S. Atlantic seaboard at certain times of the year. The purpose of the regulations is to reduce the likelihood of deaths and serious injuries to endangered North Atlantic right whales that result from collisions with ships.

The 10-knot speed restriction will extend out to 20 nautical miles around major mid-Atlantic ports. According to NOAA researchers, about 83 percent of right whale sightings in the mid-Atlantic region occur within 20 nautical miles of shore. The speed restriction also applies in waters off New England and the southeastern U.S., where whales gather seasonally.

The speed restrictions apply in the following approximate locations at the following times; they are based on times whales are known to be in these areas:

- Southeastern U.S. from St. Augustine, FL. to Brunswick, GA from Nov. 15 to April 15
- Mid-Atlantic U.S. areas from Brunswick, GA to Rhode Island from Nov. 1 to April 30
- Cape Cod Bay from Jan. 1 to May 15
- Off Race Point at northern end of Cape Cod from March 1 to April 30
- Great South Channel of New England from April 1 to July 31

Specifically for vessels entering the Delaware Bay the restriction applies in the following location: Within a 20-nm (37 km) radius (as measured seaward from COLREGS delineated coast lines and the center point of the port entrance) at the Delaware Bay (Ports of Philadelphia and Wilmington): 38°52'27.4" N-075°01'32.1" W.

For more information about the speed restriction please visit the NOAA website <http://www.nero.noaa.gov/shipstrike/> or call Sector Delaware Bay Waterways Management Branch at (215) 271-4889.



T. C. Wiemers
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Alternate Captain of the Port, Delaware Bay