



# Pelagic Almanac

**Center for Coastal Studies E-Newsletter: March/April 2015**

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CCS image, NOAA permit #14603

This amazing photograph of the head of a right whale was taken through the window of the survey plane, flying at an altitude of 750 feet and at a speed of 100 kts. CCS image under NOAA permit #14603, April 2015.

## Right Whale Update

Thus far the aerial survey/population monitoring crew, led by flight coordinator Corey Accardo, has flown 23 surveys of Cape Cod Bay and the area to the east of

the Cape. Corey, along with observers Brigid McKenna, Olga Shpak and Jessica Thompson, have spotted almost 200 right whales; these have all been photographed, and behavioral data (such as whether the whale is feeding, traveling, taking deep dives etc.) recorded for each. When the crew is not flying they are working with online catalogs to identify each individual whale.

For a glimpse behind the scenes, and to see a selection of photographs of the right whales, please check out Corey's [Field Notes on our website](#).

The boat-based right whale habitat crew has had a tough time this season; between the cold temperatures and high winds, the weather was rarely ideal for the collection of zooplankton and phytoplankton samples in the Bay. However, Captain Marc Costa and researchers Christy Hudak and Beth Larson, joined this year by [interns Alison Ogilvie and Carolyn O'Connor](#), battled through the snow, chill winds and choppy seas to retrieve, identify and quantify the right whale's microscopic food resources. We'll share more about their findings in the next issue of Pelagic Almanac - meanwhile, [visit our website to learn more about their work](#).



Carolyn, with a zooplankton net full of phytoplankton. CCS image.

In warmer climes, our colleagues report that 17 new right whale calves have been born in the waters off Florida and Georgia. The new moms and their offspring have already begun to arrive in Cape Cod Bay, and we should be seeing more of them in the next couple of weeks.

At the time of writing the right whales are still a little too far off shore to be seen from our beaches, but as the season progresses we will keep you up to date with the latest sightings via our [website](#), [Facebook](#), [Twitter](#), and here in Pelagic Almanac.

CCS right whale research and response operations are conducted in partnership with MA Division of Marine Fisheries (DMF) and NOAA's Office of Protected Resources under federal permits issued by the National Marine Fisheries Service. Support also comes from the [Massachusetts Environmental Trust](#) and contributions from CCS members. We are grateful to pilot Joe Chronic and his colleagues at New England Specialized Aviation Services for their skill and dedication.

## **Australian Fulbright Scholar At CCS**

The Australian-American Fulbright Commission has

awarded [Simon Jarman, PhD](#) a scholarship to travel to the US to work with Dr. Jooke Robbins, Director of the [Center for Coastal Studies Humpback Whale Studies program](#). Simon is based at the Australian Antarctic Division of the Australian Government's Department of the Environment.



Simon Jarman, PhD

One of Simon's current research interests is the development of genetic methods to study age in animals. You may have read about his collaboration with Jooke when they announced a new method for accurately aging humpback whales.

For more information about this groundbreaking work, take a few minutes to read this Boston Globe article: "[How old is this whale? A new way to tell](#)"

### **CCS hosts Global Whale Entanglement Response Network**

On Tuesday, April 21 representatives from twelve countries arrived at the Center for Coastal Studies in Provincetown to participate first official meeting of the [International Whaling Commission's Global Whale Entanglement Response Network \(GWERN\)](#).



In recent years there has been an increase in the number of reported whale entanglements worldwide. Concern for the welfare of these whales, and for the wellbeing the individuals attempting to release them, prompted the IWC, in collaboration with CCS, to develop an [entanglement response capacity-building program](#) to educate new responders in professional response techniques.

The program, which is managed jointly by CCS and the IWC, provides "in country" training workshops using a curriculum that follows training techniques first developed by CCS and which are now endorsed by the heads of all existing National Entanglement Response Networks, and by the 88 member countries of the IWC.

This week's GWERN meeting and workshop will enable the experts who devised the program to evaluate it with some of the new responders they helped to train.

For more information about the workshop, please [visit our website](#).

## Upcoming Events and Activities

### April 24 - May 3: Appearances Eco-Arts Festival



Once again the Center welcomes the [Appearances Green Arts Festival](#) to the **Hiebert Marine Lab** and to our new education/exhibition venue, **SEA Space**, located at 333R Commercial Street (behind the Squealing Pig), Provincetown.

Among the vast and varied array of installations and shows is [CAPE WHALE](#), an exploration of a Provincetown icon through art, literature and film, curated by renowned British author Philip Hoare. The exhibit, which features work by Ellen Gallagher, Connie Hatch, Elizabeth Bradfield and many more, opens at **SEA Space** on **Saturday April 25 at 5 pm**. Associated events include a [Community Whale Watch](#) on **Monday, April 27 at 10 am**, and an evening of [Film Shorts and Readings](#) on **Friday, May 1 at 7 pm**, also at **SEA Space**.

### Saturday, April 25 at 10 am: Beach Clean-Up at Herring Cove, Provincetown



Come and spend a couple of hours cleaning up one of the Cape's most beautiful beaches. You might even see some right whales! Meet in the northern Herring Cove parking lot (take a right at the entrance kiosk). Dress for the weather and wear waterproof shoes. Bring work gloves if you have them. For details contact [Jesse Mechling](#) at 508-487-3623 x 103. Presented in association with the [Friends of Cape Cod National Seashore](#).

### Wednesday, April 29 at 7 pm: CCS Lecture Series at [Napi's Restaurant](#)



## ***Diamonds in the Marsh***

*Presented by Barbara Brennessel, PhD*

The diamondback terrapin, listed as a threatened species in Massachusetts, is a coast-hugging reptile with a range from Corpus Christi, Texas to Wellfleet. Barbara will describe the natural history and nesting ecology of the terrapin, as well as threats to its survival. She will also summarize recent population genetic studies and mating strategies of Cape Cod terrapins.

### ***SAVE THE DATE!***

Join us for the 2015 [Homeport Banquet](#) on Saturday, May 30 at 6 pm at the Provincetown Inn. All proceeds benefit the Ruth Hiebert Memorial Fellowship, which supports women in science. This year's special guest speaker is Brenda Boleyn, Professor Emerita of Science at Cape Cod Community College. For details and tickets, please contact [Deb Magee](#) at 508-487-3622 x 102.



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