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# Biden-Harris Administration announces over \$9 million for partnerships to recover North Atlantic right whales

Inflation Reduction Act enables new grants to conserve and recover endangered whales

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North Atlantic right whale feeding. (Image credit: Christin Khan/NOAA Fisheries)

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Today, NOAA Fisheries announced over \$9 million from [Inflation Reduction Act](#) funds to support strategic partnerships aimed at improving fishing gear and population monitoring that will help the recovery of North Atlantic right whales. These partnerships include collaborations with state agencies, academic institutions, non-profit organizations, and science-based groups.

[North Atlantic right whales](#) are one of the most endangered species on the planet, and are approaching extinction. The primary threats to the species are entanglement in fishing gear and vessel strikes. Climate change is also impacting every aspect of their survival.

An estimated \$6.9 million of this funding will support further development of [on-demand \(or “ropeless”\) fishing gear technology](#) by providing funds to fishing industry partners to assess and provide feedback on technologies that prevent fishing gear entanglements. NOAA Fisheries and its partners estimate that over 85% of right whales have been entangled in fishing gear at least once in their lifetime. Reducing entanglements is necessary to prevent the extinction of — and ultimately recover — the species.

Approximately \$2.8 million will fund partner efforts to improve monitoring and modeling efforts. Long-term population monitoring will provide essential insights into individual health and reproduction, as well as distribution, abundance, and habitat-use patterns.

The collective actions of NOAA Fisheries and its partners are key to conserving North Atlantic right whales and preventing their extinction,” said U.S.

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na Raimondo. “Thanks to the Biden-Harris Administration’s Investing in America agenda and the Inflation Reduction Act, this \$9 million investment will help develop new technologies and strategies to support the recovery of the North Atlantic right whale population.”

The following organizations will receive funds under this announcement:

- [Duke University’s Marine Geospatial Ecology Lab](#)  will receive more than \$1.3 million to build a near real-time modeling system for the North Atlantic right whale, which could help predict right whale distribution along the Eastern Seaboard.
- [Marine Ecology and Telemetry Research](#)  will receive approximately \$796,000 to develop a new generation of robust, miniaturized satellite tags, which can help address questions about right whale distribution and movements.
- [The Flammang Lab at the New Jersey Institute of Technology](#)  will receive nearly \$680,000 to advance tag attachment technology, developing a non-invasive tagging attachment mechanism based on the way other marine life attaches to whales.
- [The Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission](#)  will receive nearly \$7 million to coordinate with fishing industry partners to test the feasibility of removing vertical lines in fixed gear fishing to reduce large whale entanglements.

North Atlantic right whales are approaching extinction with approximately 360 individuals remaining, including fewer than 70 reproductively active females,” said Janet Coit, assistant administrator for NOAA Fisheries. “It’s imperative we advance our collective actions to help recover this species, and these partnerships will help the science and conservation community do just that.”

These efforts support the North Atlantic right whale [Road to Recovery](#) plan, which describes NOAA Fisheries’ efforts to address threats to the species and monitor recovery progress. The species is experiencing an [Unusual Mortality Event](#) (UME), which NOAA Fisheries declared in 2017 following the documentation of elevated right whale mortalities. Entanglement in fishing gear and vessel strikes are the primary cause of death, serious injury and poor health for most right whales in the UME. Human impacts continue to threaten the survival of the species. This event is ongoing and has impacted 142 North Atlantic right whales.

These funds are part of an \$82 million investment in North Atlantic right whale recovery efforts that NOAA Fisheries first [announced](#) in September 2023. These new partnerships build on previously announced Inflation Reduction Act funding focusing on reducing the risk of vessel strikes using new technologies and approaches, including partnerships with [MITRE](#), [NASA](#) and the [National Fi](#)



oundation. All of these efforts are part of the historic [\\$3.3 billion in NOAA Inflation Reduction Act investments](#) focused on helping America's communities, ecosystems and economies improve their climate change resilience.

Visit NOAA's [Inflation Reduction Act](#) website to learn about current and future funding opportunities.

Climate, weather, and water affect all life on our ocean planet. [NOAA's mission](#) is to understand and predict our changing environment, from the deep sea to outer space, and to manage and conserve America's coastal and marine resources.

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