DRAFT
ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT STATEMENT
FOR
AMENDING THE
ATLANTIC LARGE WHALE
TAKE REDUCTION PLAN:

VERTICAL LINE RULE

Photo Courtesy of David Wiley

National Marine Fisheries Service
National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration
DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE

Prepared by: Industrial Economics, Incorporated, and
NOAA's National Marine Fisheries Service

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Final EIS:

RESPONSIBLE AGENCY:

Assistant Administrator for Fisheries
National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration
U.S. Department of Commerce
Washington, DC 20235

PROPOSED ACTION:

Implementation of amendments to the Atlantic Large Whale Take Reduction Plan to reduce the risk of serious injury and mortality to Atlantic large whales due to incidental interactions with commercial fishing gear from Maine to Florida's east coast.

ABSTRACT:

The Atlantic Large Whale Take Reduction Plan (ALWTRP) was developed pursuant to Section 118 of the Marine Mammal Protection Act to reduce the serious injury and mortality of right, humpback, and fin whales due to incidental interactions with commercial fisheries. NMFS is preparing a Draft Environmental Impact Statement for the proposed amendments to the ALWTRP regulations (50 CFR 229.32). The proposed gear set modifications are designed to further reduce the risk of serious injury and mortality to Atlantic large whales due to incidental interactions with commercial fishing gear.

TYPE OF STATEMENT:

(**X**) DRAFT ( ) FINAL

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GUIDANCE FOR SUBMITTING COMMENTS:

Comments on the DEIS may be submitted by mail to the above address. Please add the line:

ATTN: Large Whale Rule

Comments on the DEIS may be submitted by e-mail to:
NMFS.NER.largewhalerule@noaa.gov or by fax to: 978-281-9394. Please include the phrase "Large Whale Rule" in the subject line of the fax or e-mail.

Comments on the DEIS must be received within 60 days of the publication of the Notice of Availability.

Comments may also be submitted orally at the DEIS public hearings.

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