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Recovered Gear Analysis of North Atlantic Right Whale Eg #4545

Photo Credit: DFO Science Aerial Survey Team

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Gear Recovered from North Atlantic Right Whale Eg #4545

Executive summary

The Center for Coastal Studies response team removed approximately 96 m of rope and a single buoy (Fig. 1) from the 8-year-old female in Cape Cod Bay during disentanglement efforts on March 28 and April 4, 2023. Analysis of recovered gear was jointly undertaken by Fisheries and Oceans Canada (DFO) and the U.S. National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) on April 18, 2023. Three occurrences of interlaced segments of orange and yellow twines existed on the same section of rope along the length of the recovered rope. This is consistent with Canadian Snow Crab Fishing Area 12 coloured gear markings for buoy lines and does not match any US gear markings.

Conclusion of gear origin: Canadian Snow Crab Area 12 (southern Gulf of St. Lawrence).

Event details

- **ID and/or Date:** March 28 and April 4, 2023
- **Event type** (stranding, death, disentanglement): Disentanglement in U.S. waters
- **Species:** North Atlantic right whale
- **Last seen gear free:** July 28, 2022 in the Gulf of St. Lawrence and has been observed there annually since 2017.
- **Status:** Partial disentanglement from March 28 – April 4, 2023.
- **Conclusion of gear origin:** Canadian Snow Crab Area 12 (southern Gulf of St. Lawrence)
- **Active or ghost gear:** CFA 12 fishing season spans April to June. The sighting of Eg #4545 gear free on July 28, 2022 implies the entanglement occurred in lost, discarded or abandoned fishing gear that may have been in the water since 2020. The differences in aging of the coloured twine gear marks (Fig. 2) indicates the gear possibly became lost more recently than 2020.
- **Harvester submitted lost gear report:** No identifying information found on gear but lost gear reports have been submitted for CFA 12.

Recovered gear

- **Buoys:** One collapsed pink/orange LD-2 polyform buoy (original size 29 x 61 cm) with handwritten marks of 145 in black (one on the side and one on the end).
- **Traps:** None
- **Buoy line:** 96 m, comprised of both sink (negatively buoyant) and float (positively buoyant) rope with measurements ranging from 5/8- to 11/16-inch diameter. Some sections of the buoy line are twisted and the strands slightly unraveled. Several knotted loops exist through its length, which were made by the disentanglement team to assist with their efforts. The sink rope (36 m) is light green with a black tracer and the float rope (60 m) is light green with a yellow tracer. The transition between sink and float rope is uniform and was made during manufacturing as there was no splice. Three lead beaded filaments exist through the length of the sink rope, one in each of the three strands. The buoy was attached to the sink rope.

- **Line markings:** Three occurrences of interlaced segments of orange and yellow coloured twines on the same section of rope exist along the length of the buoy line (Fig. 2). These range in length from 9 to 14 cm. Two of the gear markings occur on the sink rope and the third on the float rope. Two of the three occurrences show more wear. DFO Eastern Canada Mandatory Colour Scheme has CFA 12 identified as yellow and orange. There was no third colour of twine, which in some other CFAs is required on the section of rope immediately adjacent to the first two colours.

Contact with harvester

No identifying information found on gear but lost gear reports have been submitted for CFA 12.

Related information

- [DFO Eastern Canada Mandatory Colour Scheme for non-tended, fixed gear fisheries](#)
- [NOAA Gear Marking for Northeast Lobster/Jonah Crab Trap Pots](#)
- [NOAA 2023 4545 Gear Analysis Report](#)

Photos of inspected gear



Fig 1. Gear removed from Eg #4545 laid out in the NOAA Gear Warehouse in Narragansett, Rhode Island.



Fig. 2. Three occurrences of interlaced orange and yellow segments of twine in the buoy line.