

Dear Editor,

We would like to submit the attached manuscript 'Protecting endangered whales by better fishery management' as a Policy Forum in Science.

This paper concerns legislation affecting the fate of critically endangered whales in U.S. waters, which die at an increasing rate from entanglement in fishing gear. It demonstrates that previous policy efforts towards saving the North Atlantic right whale have been misdirected, and details a simple solution that would benefit right whales and fishermen alike. By contrasting U.S. and Canadian fisheries we show that a >90% reduction in lobster fishing effort in Maine would cut whale entanglement risk to near zero, and increase economic yield, while saving costs. The focus of this paper is on the Northwest Atlantic, but the issue is global, and affects most high-value fisheries, such as lobster, shrimp, or tuna. As this paper concerns policy and management, pressing conservation issues, and the future of the Northwest Atlantic's most valuable fisheries, we believe it will be of broad interest to the Science's readership.

This paper includes 1211 words of text (not including figure legends and references) and one figure and is estimated to fill one page to one and a half pages when printed.

The supplementary material contains three figures. The first details the seasonal distribution of right whale sightings in the Gulf of Maine and is needed to show that a change in the season of the lobster fishery would greatly reduce entanglements of right whales. The second and third figures detail the seasonal distribution of catches in 12 lobster fishing areas in Canada. These plots are needed to demonstrate that the U.S. fishing season can be reduced from 12 months to less than one month.

We look forward to hearing from you soon,

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