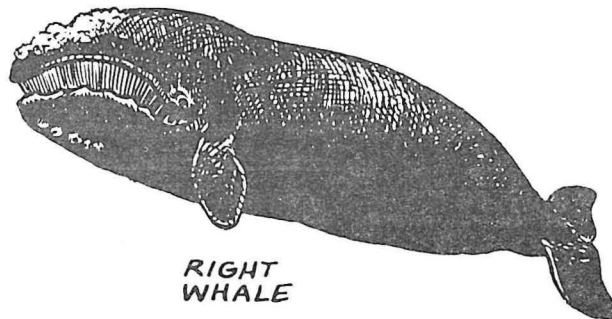


Right Whales

Two whales sighted off Middleton Beach on August 29, 1969, were identified as the very rare species of Southern Right Whale. The mammals sighted were apparently a cow of more than 40 feet in length and her calf of about 16 feet in length. This species of whale is very rare and is protected under international agreement.



In the early days of whaling this species was heavily hunted as it proved to be easy prey for the open whale-boats. Whalers regarded them as slow swimmers. Right Whales not only yielded a high percentage of whale-oil and whale-bone but they were buoyant and could be more easily towed into port than other whales. Because of these factors, they were regarded as the "right" whale to catch - hence their name.

By the end of the 19th century the Right Whale was so scarce that it was feared it would soon become extinct. Since 1937, by international agreement, the Right Whale has been protected from hunting and it is contemplated that its numbers will slowly increase.