



# OLD DOMINION UNIVERSITY

Center for Coastal Physical Oceanography

## Fall 2023 Virtual Seminar Series

**Title** "Right Whale Conservation, Ecology, and Technology"  
**Speaker** Erin Meyer-Gutbrod, University of South Carolina  
**Date** Monday, September 18, 2023  
**Time** 3:30 PM EST

**Zoom Info** [Link](#)  
Meeting ID: 915 1580 7790  
Passcode: 001464

**Abstract** North Atlantic right whales are critically endangered, with fewer than 350 animals remaining in the species. The primary barriers to the recovery of this baleen whale are ship strikes, fishing gear entanglements and climate-driven redistribution of its prey. Right whales are the focus of significant conservation effort, but insufficient monitoring and modeling has led to policy gaps which contributed to the current NOAA-designated Unexpected Mortality Event. I will summarize some of my recent research that shows how oceanographic shifts in the previous decade impacted right whale reproduction rates and led to seasonal changes in habitat use, reducing the efficacy of historic protective policies. The future survival of the species will be best supported with modern technologies, including increased use of passive acoustic monitoring, and expansion of real-time alert systems to monitor and communicate right whale presence.

**Biography** Dr. Erin Meyer-Gutbrod is an Assistant Professor in the School of the Earth, Ocean and Environment at the University of South Carolina. She earned a BS in Physics at the University of Notre Dame and a PhD in Earth and Atmospheric Science at Cornell University. She is a quantitative marine ecologist that uses statistical, demographic and spatial models to understand how marine species respond to environmental processes. Erin also serves on the Justice, Equity, Diversity & Inclusion (JEDI) committee for The Oceanography Society and edits a quarterly JEDI column in Oceanography magazine.