



Council Habitat Update

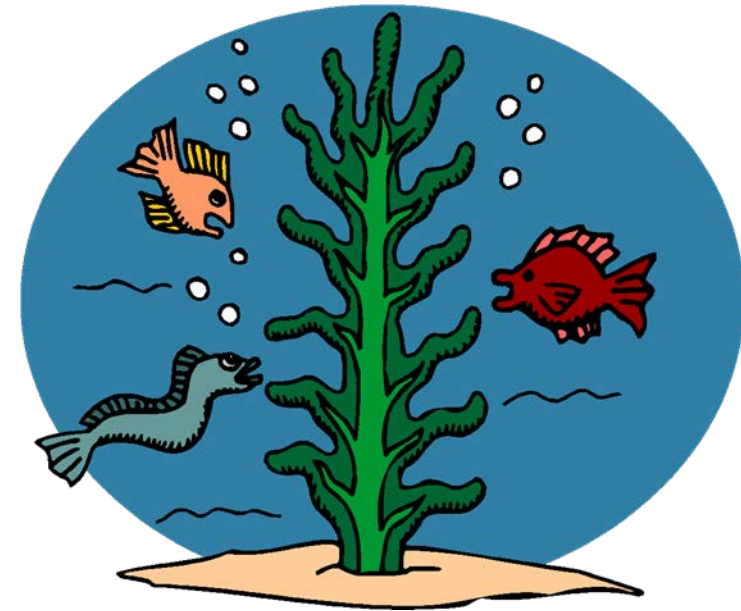
December Council Meeting

December 15, 2020



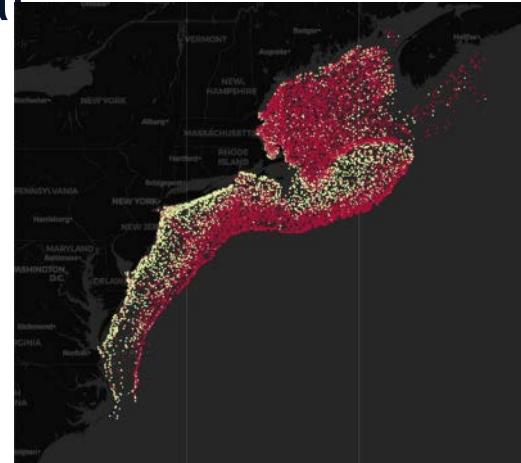
Today

- A few misc Habitat updates.
- Habitat Conservation Division review of regional projects of interest.
- Update on Responsible Offshore Science Alliance (ROSA) and other Council involvement in offshore wind.



Northeast Regional Marine Fish Habitat Assessment

- Objective: To describe and characterize estuarine, coastal, and offshore fish habitat distribution, abundance, and quality in the Northeast using a partnership driven approach.
- Work to be completed by July 2022.
- Includes 65+ state and federally managed species
- Areas of work: habitat type, use, vulnerability, and visualization/decision support



East-Coast Sediment Texture Database 2014 (ECSTDB2014)

Data Source	Data Type	Data Range	Data Resolution	Data available online?
USGS	Sediment Points Grain-size, %GSM	updated 2014	NA	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>

Geographic Range

Overview

The East-Coast Sediment Texture Database contains location, description, and texture of samples taken by marine sampling programs at Woods Hole Coastal and Marine Science Center. It was created out of the need to compile and share existing data from numerous studies and identify gaps for future collections. Most of the 28,000 samples are from the Atlantic Continental Margin of the United States. Approximately 3,800 samples were taken or analyzed by the Atlantic Continental Margin Program, a joint U.S. Geological Survey/Woods Hole Oceanographic Institution project conducted from 1962 to 1970. The rest of the data is made up of 24,000 samples analyzed after 1980 by the Sediment Laboratory of the Coastal Marine Geology Program. Most records contain grain size analyses while a few are text descriptions of rock and boulder locations where samples were unable to be collected. Samples were most often collected by grab sample and occasionally by core sample.

Methodology

In short samples are examined to identify grain-size and added to a spreadsheet. The spreadsheet is fed into the QSTAT program which classifies the sample. A detailed version of the Grain-Size Analysis Flow Diagram: https://woodhole.er.usgs.gov/openfile/of2005-1001.htm/docs/images/figures/flowdiagram_2014.gif

Samples with grain-size data were assigned a classification based on definitions found in Shepard (1954).

Grain size is the most fundamental property of sediment. This information can be used to study an unlimited number of research questions including trends in surface processes, benthic habitat ecology, permeability, and the movement of subsurface fluids, just to name a few.

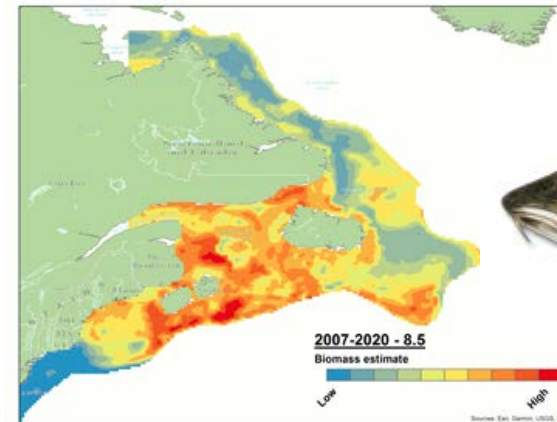
The ECSTDB database is a matrix where rows represent individual samples and columns contain information on the sample including classification, grain size, location, and other parameters.

Data Caveats

1. Data collected before 1971 was navigated with LORAN-A and is based in partly Clarke 1866 and WG564. Data collected 1972-88 was navigated with LORAN-C and is based in WG572. Sampling after 1988 was navigated using GPS and based in WG584. All this to say that care should be taken when assuming geospatial references for textual data because different systems, datums and navigational equipment was used to locate samples.

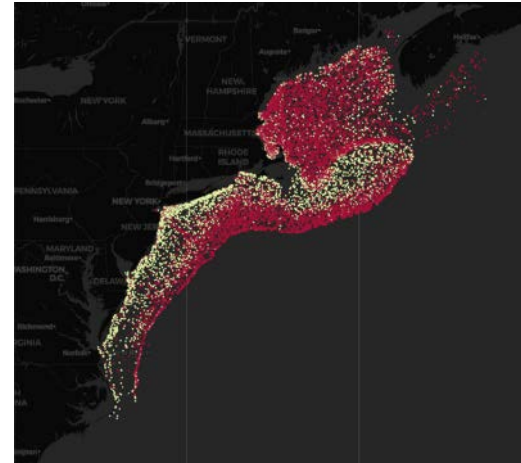
Data Access

Project page: <https://woodhole.er.usgs.gov/project-pages/sediment/>
Data Download: <https://woodhole.er.usgs.gov/project-pages/sediment/gis-data-catalog.html>
Contact List: <https://woodhole.er.usgs.gov/project-pages/sediment/contact.html>



Northeast Regional Marine Fish Habitat Assessment


- First year of data inventory work and initial species distribution model testing complete (GAMs, RT, Joint Species Models, etc.)
- Teams met in December 2020 to chart work path forward for 2021.
- Lots to do...see <https://www.mafmc.org/nrha> for more details and contacts for questions.



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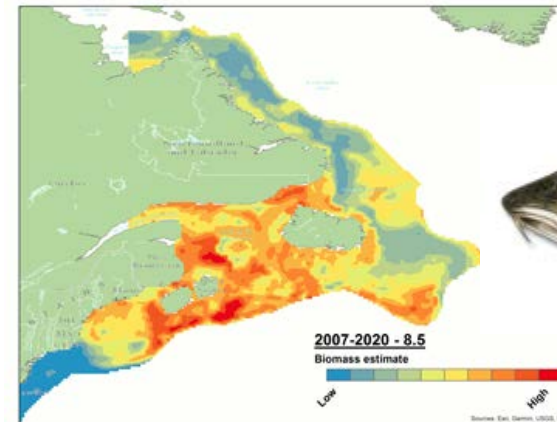
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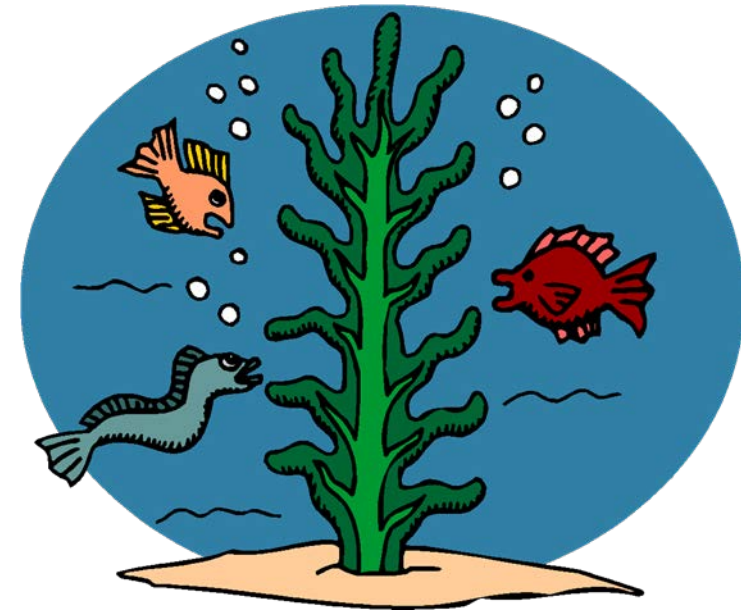


New England Council - New Habitat Policies/Backgrounders

- 2 new habitat policy and background documents:
 - Aquaculture
 - Submarine Cables
 - See <https://www.nefmc.org/library/december2020-habitatcommittee>
- Recall New England “borrowed” the Mid-Atlantic Council energy-related habitat policies.
- Suggest we “borrow” these, adapt them to the Mid, and present for Council consideration (could perhaps take up later in 2021).

Today

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- Habitat Conservation Division review of regional projects of interest.
- Update on Responsible Offshore Science Alliance (ROSA) and other Council involvement in offshore wind.



Why are we getting a Habitat Conservation Division Update?

- Council told GARFO HCD we are most interested in hearing about and potentially engaging on the following:
 - Offshore projects: all projects, including energy development projects, cables and pipelines, mining, etc.
 - Nearshore/Estuarine Projects: focusing on large scale projects, including transportation and port development projects.
- Also interested in regular Council updates (bi-annual)





NOAA Habitat Conservation

Conserving Habitat for Future Generations

Habitat and Ecosystem Services Division Greater Atlantic Region Project Updates



Mid-Atlantic Fishery
Management Council
December 2020

Habitat & Ecosystem Services Division

New England Habitat Conservation Branch

- EFH/FWCA consultations (ME-CT)
- Hydropower/fish passage

Mid-Atlantic Habitat Conservation Branch

- EFH/FWCA consultations (NY-VA)
- National EFH coordination

Ecosystem Management Branch

- Offshore wind
- Aquaculture
- Ecosystem-Based Mgmt.
- Climate Policy Coordination

www.fisheries.noaa.gov/new-england-mid-atlantic/habitat-conservation/habitat-conservation-and-stewardship-greater-atlantic

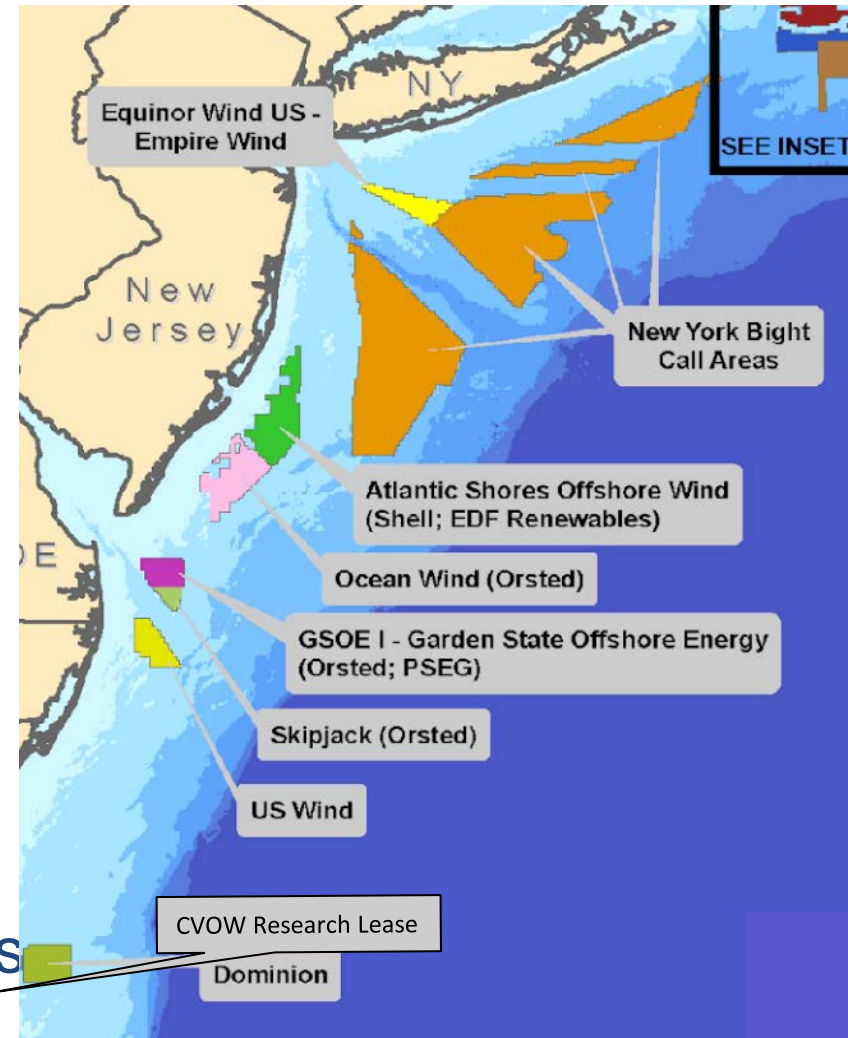
HESD Role in Offshore Wind

- Regional coordination of environmental reviews
- Ongoing coordination with BOEM on consultation timelines and information needs for future projects
- Providing comments on project analyses
- Participating in early coordination meetings with developers
- Developing a BOEM/NOAA Fisheries interagency MOU to facilitate collaboration and information exchange on offshore wind projects



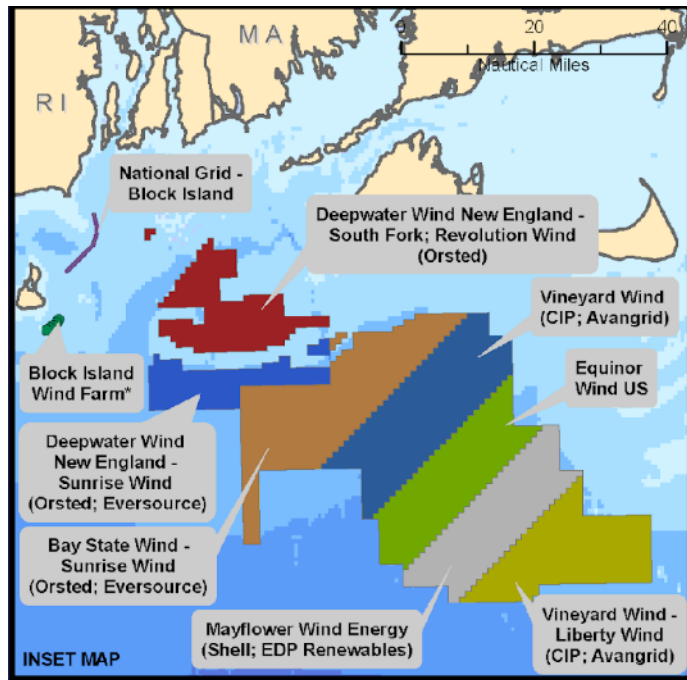
Offshore Wind Energy

- BOEM has 10 Construction and Operation Plans (COPs)
- 4 COPs are Mid-Atlantic projects:
 - Skipjack Wind (DE)
 - Ocean Wind (NJ)
 - Empire Wind (NY)
 - US Wind (MD)
- BOEM anticipates additional 5 COPs in next 12 months
- New York Bight wind energy areas not yet identified



Source: BOEM

Active Offshore Wind Projects



Source: BOEM

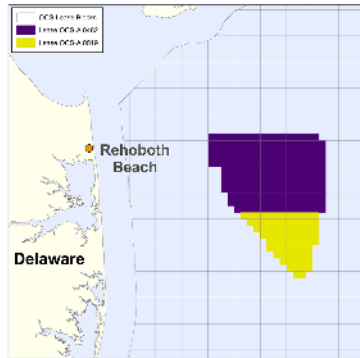
Vineyard Wind

- Conducted cooperating agency review of draft FEIS in early October
- Vineyard Wind temporarily pulled COP to review an advanced turbine design
- Waiting to hear from BOEM on an updated project timeline

South Fork

- Conducted DEIS cooperating agency review in October
- DEIS to be published on January 8
- Reviewed Draft EFH assessment; requesting additional information

Mid-Atlantic Offshore Wind Energy



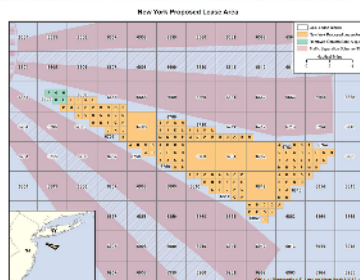
Skipjack (Ørsted) - DE

- 120 MW project proposal,
- COP submitted April 2019, updated Nov 2019



Ocean Wind (Ørsted) - NJ

- 1,100 MW project proposal
- COP submitted Aug 2019

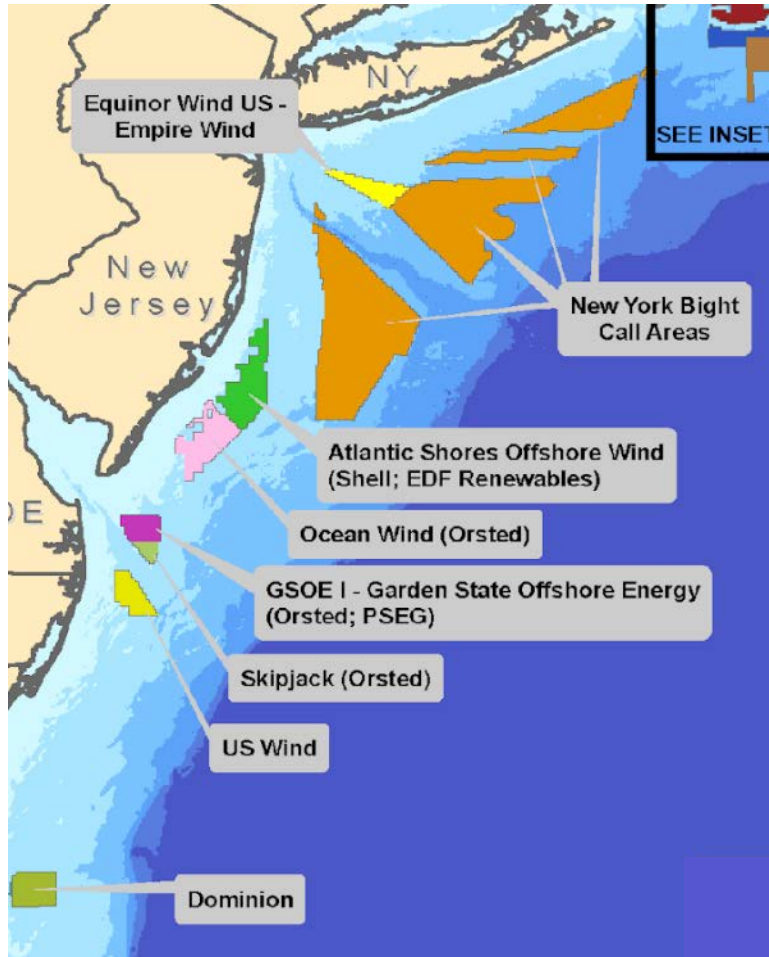


Empire Wind (Equinor) - NY

- NY RFP awarded for 816 MW July 2019
- COP submitted Jan 2020

Source: BOEM

Mid-Atlantic Offshore Wind Energy



Source: BOEM

Atlantic Shores (NJ)

- COP expected early 2021

US Wind (MD)

- COP submitted August 2020

Dominion CVOW Research (VA)

- 2 turbines installed

Dominion Commercial (VA)

- COP expected Dec/or early 2021

Kitty Hawk Wind (NC)

- COP expected early 2021

GARFO Aquaculture Program

- GARFO's Aquaculture Program is part of our new Ecosystem Management Branch in our Habitat Division
- We have 2 Regional Aquaculture Coordinators who are the liaisons between NMFS Office of Aquaculture and GARFO
- Coordinate GARFO strategy for sustainable and responsible aquaculture development the region
- Work internally and with federal and state agencies, industry, and members of the scientific, academic, and NGO communities on a variety of marine aquaculture issues

E. O. Promoting Seafood Competitiveness and Economic Growth

Goal: Expansion of sustainable US seafood production

- Tailors existing regulatory, permitting, and trade framework to provide greater efficiencies and planning for aquaculture/seafood production
- Foster US aquaculture production to complement wild caught fisheries
- Aquaculture Opportunity Area Initiative
 - Establish 10 AOAs by 2025
 - NMFS, in coordination with other federal agencies, states, and Regional Fishery Management Councils
 - identify at least two geographic areas with locations suitable for commercial aquaculture within 1 year
 - complete a programmatic EIS within 2 years of identifying each area

E.O. 13921, Section 7: Aquaculture Opportunity Areas



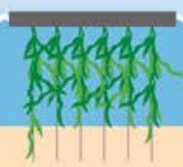
What is an Aquaculture Opportunity Area?

Aquaculture Opportunity Areas show high potential for commercial aquaculture. A science and community-based approach to identifying these areas helps minimize interference with other enterprises, account for current fishing patterns, and protect the ecosystem.

AOAs will expand economic opportunities in coastal and rural areas, and increase our nation's seafood security.

AOAs use the best available science to find appropriate spaces for sustainable aquaculture.

AOAs minimize interactions with other users, such as shipping, fishing, and the military.



Assessment and Use of AOAs

Stakeholder input is essential in the design and location of AOAs and NOAA expects these areas will be shaped through a public process that allows constituents to share their community and stewardship goals, as well as critical insights.

AOA size, exact location, and farm types will be determined through spatial analysis and public input to expand sustainable domestic seafood production while minimizing potential user conflicts. Farms will still need to go through the permitting process and environmental reviews.



Aquaculture Opportunity Areas Year 1 Steps

(repeats annually)

May 7, 2020



May 7, 2021

What:

Executive Order signed

Announced Gulf of Mexico and Southern CA as first two regions to look for AOAs

NCCOS data collection/meeting for siting analysis

Continued outreach – introduce AOA concept to stakeholders

Public Notice: request input on siting in 2 initial areas AND national to begin thinking about where to focus for next 8

NCCOS draft Aquaculture Opportunity Atlas

Combine public input and results of Atlas to identify potential AOAs in regions 1&2

Announce regions 1&2 preliminary AOA alternatives to consider in more detail in PEIS

Aquaculture Opportunity Areas Request for Information (RFI)

- Published on 10/23/2020 and open through 12/22/2020
- Questions to inform the identification of first two AOAs
 - Gulf of Mexico
 - Southern California
- Questions to inform locations for future AOAs, nationally
- RFI can be found at www.regulations.gov by searching for NOAA-NMFS-2020-0118

EEZ Regional Aquaculture Projects Status Update

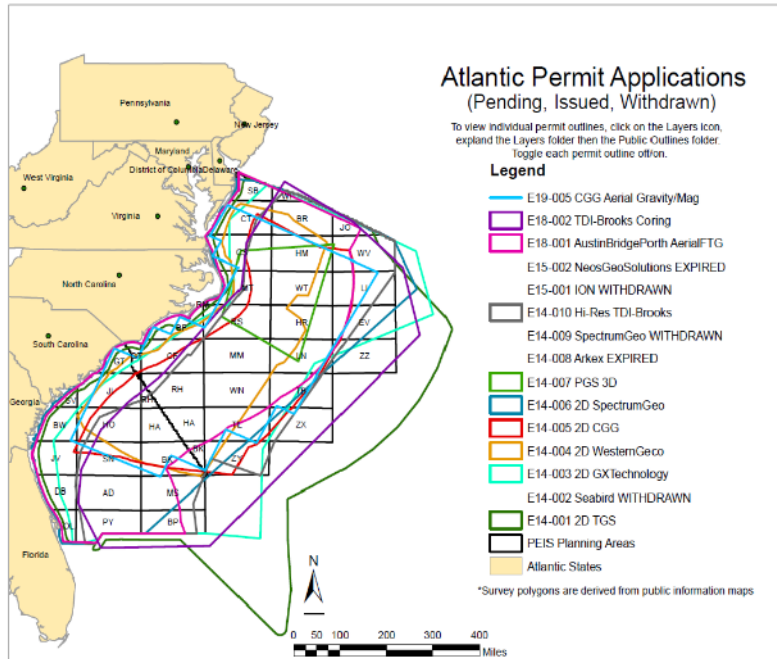
Pre-Application Phase

- Manna Fish Farms- Off Long Island, NY
 - Steelhead Trout/Black Sea Bass
 - Pre-Application meeting held 9/21/2020
 - Comments on site alternatives/BES were due by 12/9/2020
- Blue Water Fisheries LLC.- Off NH/MA
 - Steelhead Trout
 - Pre-Application meeting held on 12/10/2020
 - Comments on site alternatives requested by 12/23/2020

Permit Application/Development Phase

- Salem State University - MA
 - Blue Mussels
 - Submitted application on 12/7/2019 to ACOE to expand from 3 to 20 longlines on site originally permitted
 - ACOE is working with applicant to obtain additional information from proponent to inform consultations

BOEM Oil and Gas Survey Activities



No Activity on Oil and Gas Surveys

The status of the applications can be found on BOEM's website at:

<https://www.boem.gov/submitted-atlantic-ocs-region-permit-requests>

From the BOEM website:
<https://www.boem.gov/regions/atlantic-ocs-region/atlantic-gg-permitting>

Coastal Storm Risk Management

Nassau County Back Bays

- Continuing but scaled back
- Inlet and cross bay gates have been eliminated from consideration
- DEIS expected Feb 2021

Delaware Inland Bays and Delaware Bay Coast Feasibility Study (DIBDBC)

- Early stages of development
- Includes the Delaware Inland Bays



BOEM – Offshore Sand Resources

Frying Pan Shoals (NC):

- BOEM is preparing a report on the resource value of the shoals, expected to be released next year.
- Village of Bald Head Island has an active request to dredge sand for beach nourishment.



Navigation/Infrastructure



Federal:

- The USACE Wilmington District
 - Proposing to removing seasonal protections the Port of Wilmington/Morehead City
 - Dec 1 to April 15 to protect shrimp, snapper, grouper and HAPCs.
- New York and New Jersey Harbor Deepening Channel Improvements (NYNJHDCI) Feasibility Study
 - Includes deepening portions by 4 or 5 feet to -54 or -55 MLLW

Navigation/Infrastructure



Private:

- Diamond State Port Corporation - Edgemoor Port Facility
 - New port on the Delaware River in Wilmington at former Chemours Edgemoor site.



- PSEG Hope Creek Port Facility - proposed wind port
 - Adjacent to the Salem Nuclear Power Plant

<https://www.njeda.com/Press-Room/News-Articles/Press-Releases/N-Offshore-Wind-Port>

Nationwide and General Permits

US Army Corps- Nationwide Permits

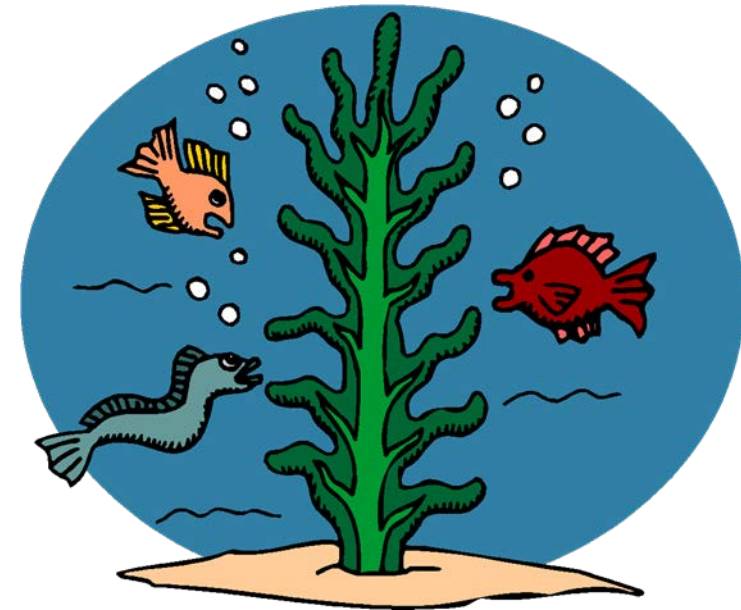
- FRN issued in Sept. 15, Public comments until Nov 16, 2020
- Reissue 52 and add 5 new NWPs
 - New: Finfish mariculture, Seaweed mariculture, Electric Utility Line and Telecommunications Activities, Utility Line Activities for Water and Other Substances, Water Reclamation and Reuse Facilities
 - Various modifications to others to comply with several Executive Orders
- Working closely with the four Districts in the Region to develop Regional Conditions

State Programmatic General Permits - MD, PA

- Like NWPs, but includes State authorizations
- Concerns about MD's modifications to allow impacts to SAV

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Council Involvement in Wind Organizations

- **ROSA (Responsible Offshore Science Alliance)**
- Regional research and monitoring of fisheries and offshore wind in federal waters.
 - MAFMC seat on Advisory Council.
 - 5 other Council members serve on ROSA Board and/or Advisory Council in other roles.
 - ROSA currently seeking applications for Research Advisors (Dec 18 deadline to apply).

Council Involvement in Wind Organizations

- **RODA (Responsible Offshore Development Alliance)**
- Membershipbased coalition of commercial fishing vessels, associations, and companies.
- 5 Council members are RODA members. 3 serve on RODA Board.

Council Involvement in Wind Organizations

- **State -level groups**
 - Council members and staff involvement in various groups.
- **Offshore wind energy developers**
 - Fisheries liaisons.

Council Outreach and Comment Letters

- **Webpages** maintained with NEFMC, GARFO, NEFSC
 - General background information <https://www.mafmc.org/northeast-offshorewind>
 - Notices from developers for fishermen (survey activities, buoy deployments, etc.) <https://www.mafmc.org/offshorewind-notices>
 - Open public comment periods <https://www.mafmc.org/offshorewind-commentopportunities>
- **Email updates:** <https://www.mafmc.org/emailist>
- **Council comment letters** to BOEM, USCG on issues related to wind and fisheries.