

# BOEM Wind Energy Area Identification

May 16, 2014

# What is Area Identification?

- \* Area Identification (Area ID) is the process in which BOEM establishes a Wind Energy Area (WEA)
- \* Eliminate major conflicts with resources that would be incompatible with wind energy development
- \* Comments received on Call and NOI, task force input, and stakeholder input ( including Federal, State, local government, and industry groups)
- \* Occurs early in the process, further refinement of WEA can occur later in the process (i.e. EIS, COP)
- \* Establishes the proposed action and alternatives for the Environmental Assessment

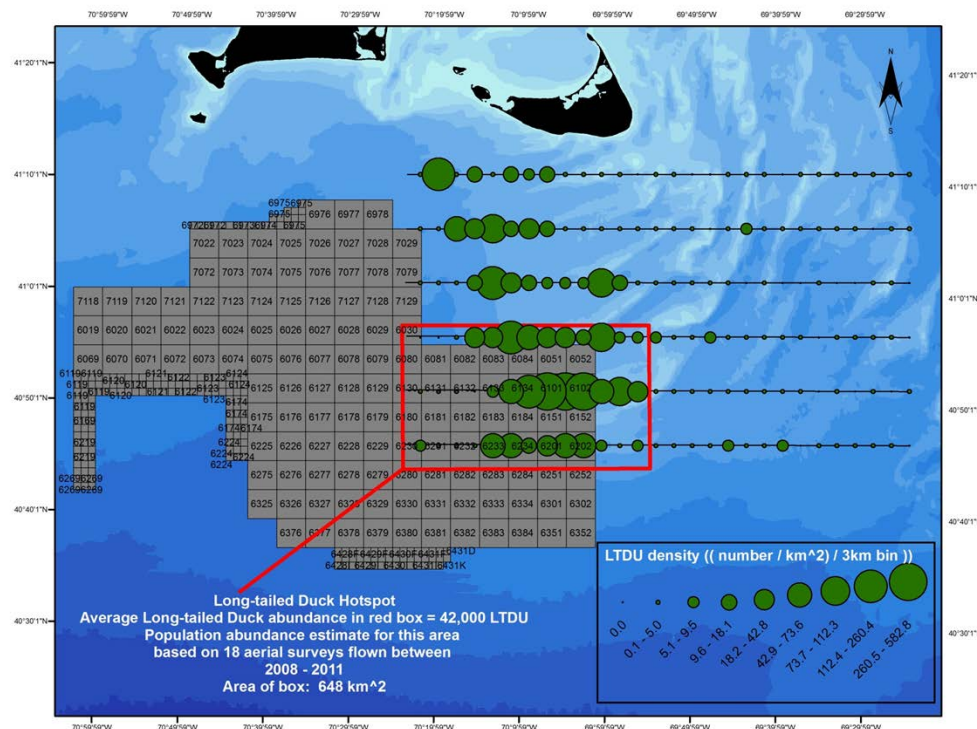
# What factors does BOEM consider?

- \* BOEM considers all potential conflicts in the Area ID process, including:
  - \* Wildlife (including Endangered Species)
  - \* Department of Defense
  - \* Navigational Safety
  - \* Visual Impacts (including Historical/Cultural Sites and National Park Service (NPS) Resources)
  - \* Commercial and Recreational Fishing
  - \* Hard bottom/Unexploded Ordinance
  - \* Diving/Ecotourism

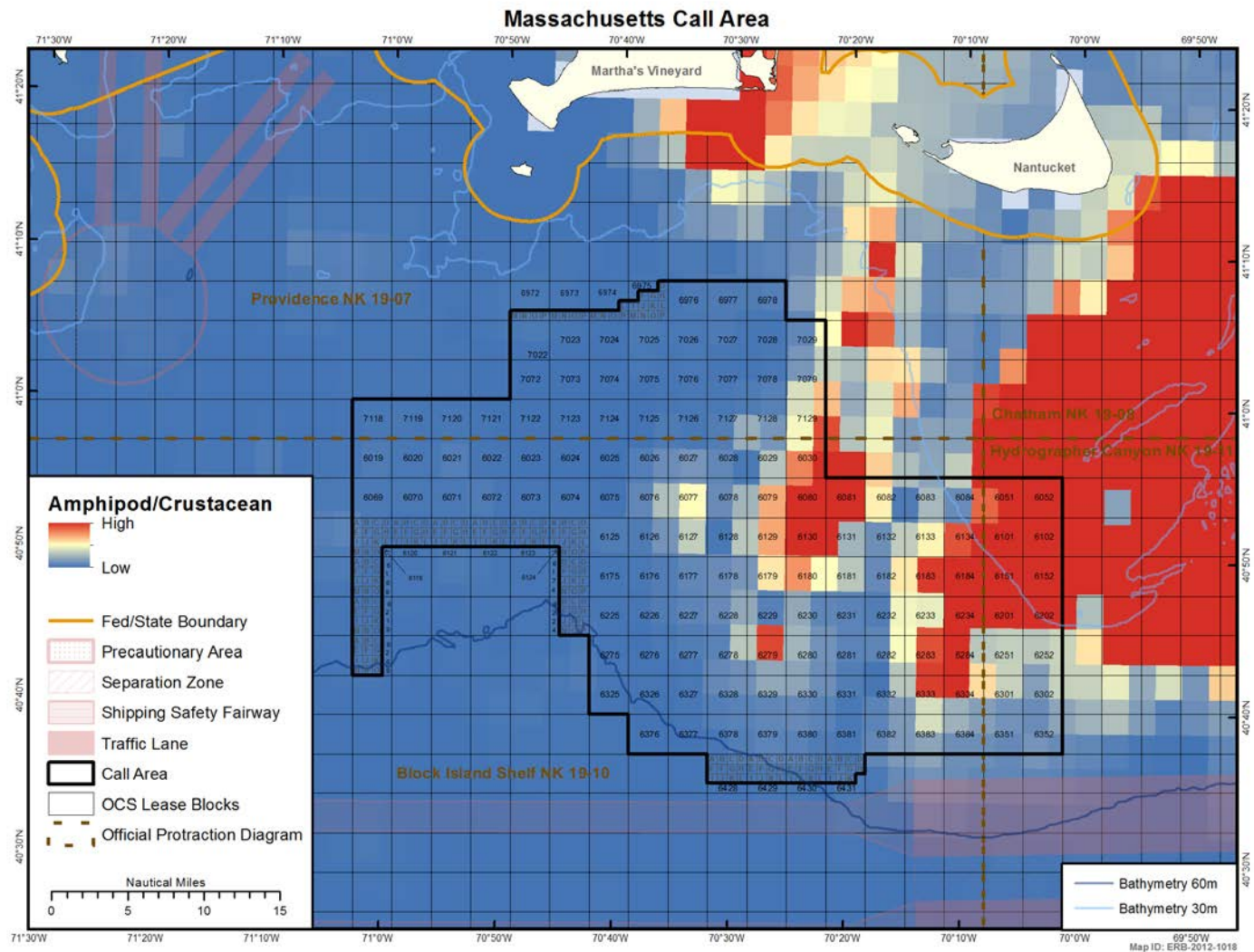


# Area ID Case Study: Massachusetts

- \* Comment letter identified an area within the MA Call Area that contained a significant sea duck habitat
- \* Studies (including a BOEM study) confirmed that this area was an important sea duck habitat

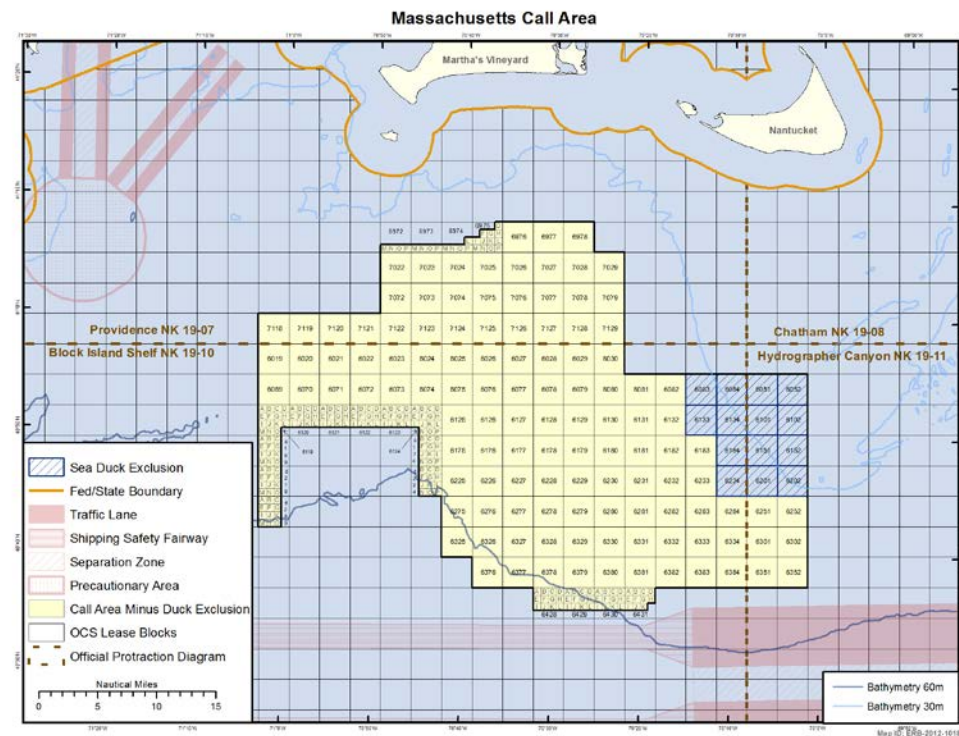


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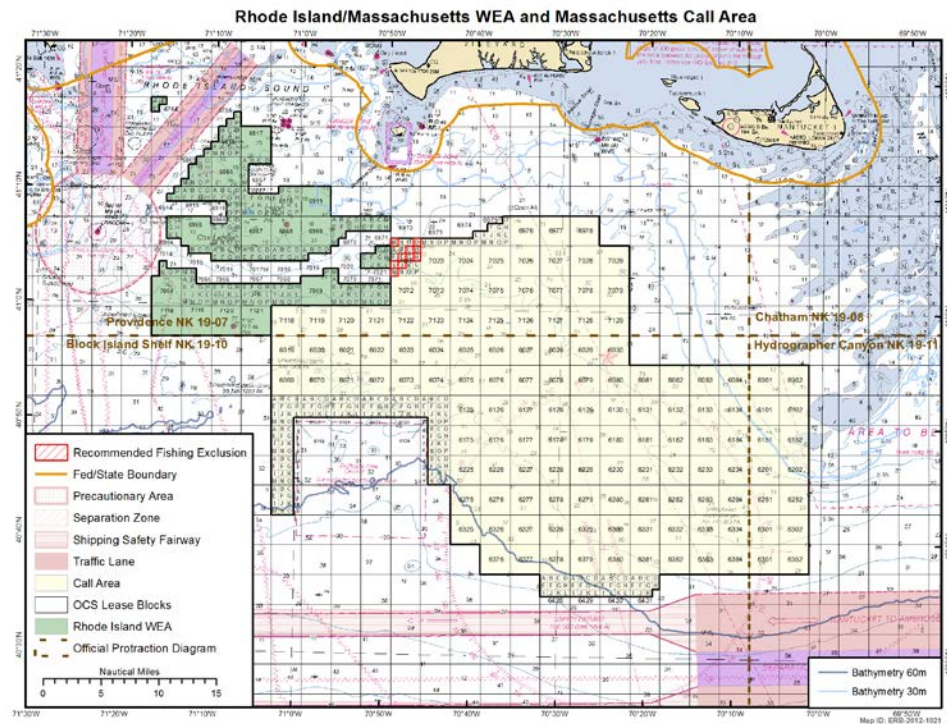
# Area ID Case Study: Massachusetts

- \* A European study showed that wind development led to the displacement of sea ducks
- \* Area removed from leasing consideration during Area ID process



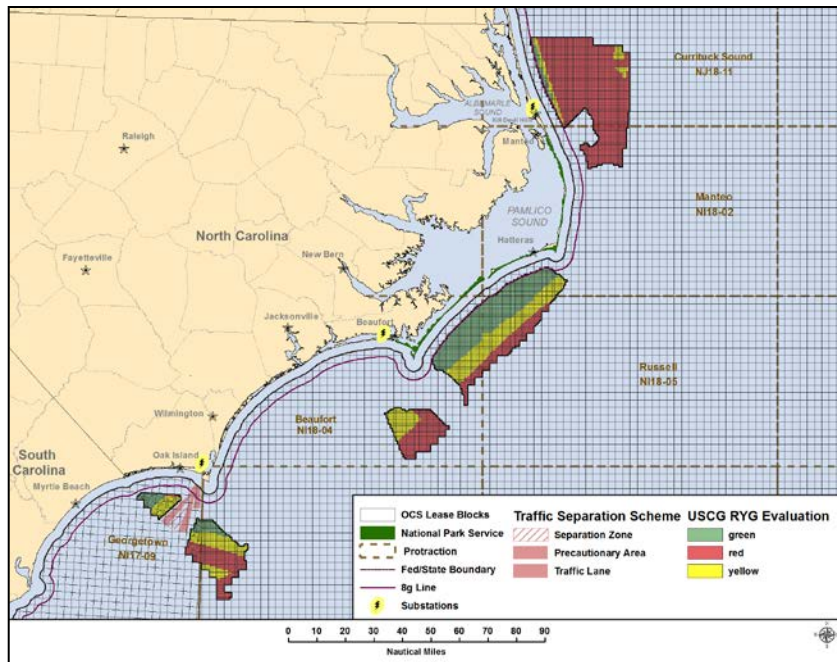
# Area ID Case Study: Massachusetts

- \* Important commercial fishing area identified by RI/MA fisheries working group
- \* Area (Cox's Ledge) removed during RI/MA Area ID
- \* Area continued into MA Call Area and was removed during MA Area ID

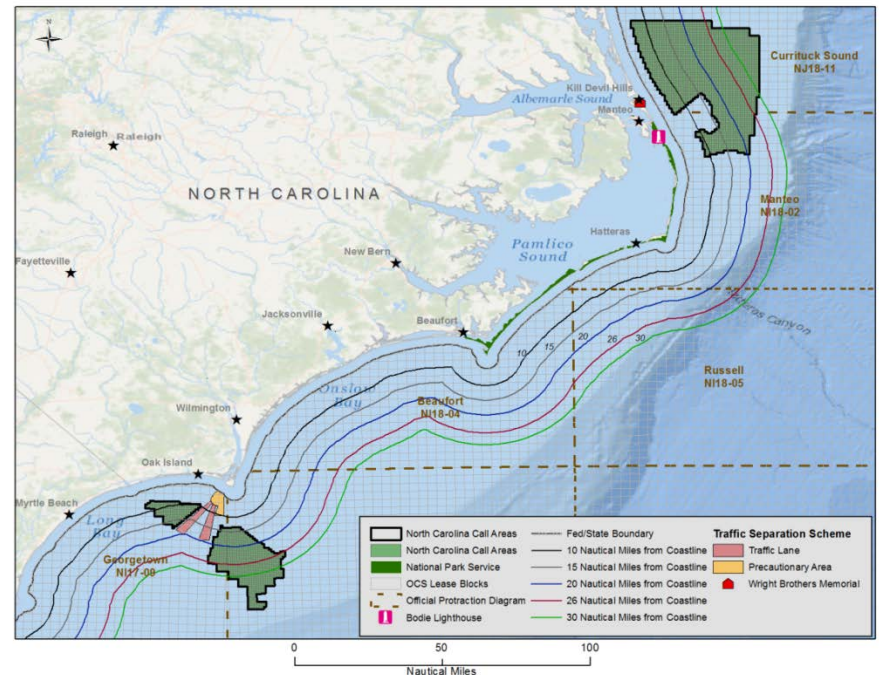


# Recent Efforts North Carolina

## Navigational Safety



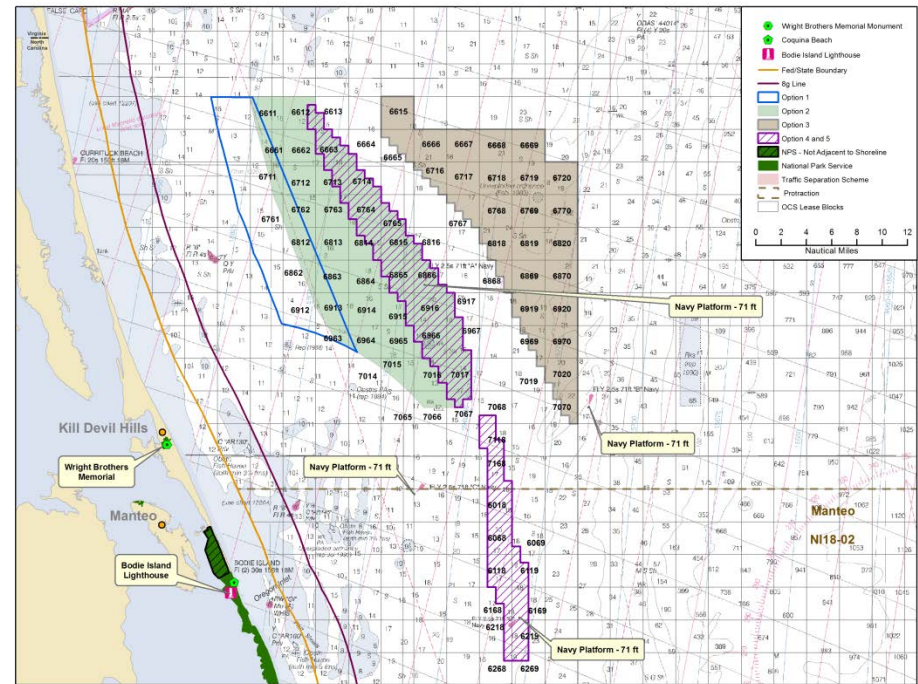
## Visual Impacts from NPS lands





# Recent Efforts North Carolina: Navigational Safety

- \* Analyzed Automatic Identification System (AIS) data (including location and ship type) to characterize offshore traffic
- \* Maritime Community outreach efforts (i.e. Port Authorities, Industry Groups)
- \* Coast Guard outreach efforts



# Recent Efforts North Carolina: Visual Impacts to NPS lands

- \* Visual simulation study for offshore North Carolina in cooperation with NPS
  - \* Worked with NPS to develop SOW for study and had NPS input and review throughout the study
  - \* Effort created mutually agreeable visual simulations from 18 locations on the NC coast
  - \* Study results can be accessed here:  
<http://www.boem.gov/Renewable-Energy-Program/State-Activities/NC/Offshore-North-Carolina-Visualization-Study.aspx>
- \* Joint briefings and meetings with NPS
- \* Visual simulation open houses to inform stakeholders

# Recent Efforts North Carolina

- \* Area Identification process ongoing
- \* The majority of the major conflicts have been resolved
- \* Additional analysis and opportunities for refinement of the area will occur throughout the process (even after a WEA is announced)
  - \* EA for lease issuance and approval of Site Assessment Plans
  - \* Review of Construction and Operation Plan
  - \* Environmental Impact Statement

# Filling Data Gaps: Studies and Cooperative Agreements

- \* BOEM's Environmental Studies Program
  - \* Develops and oversees research to facilitate an understanding of potential impacts of energy development actions
  - \* Contracts, coops, and inter-agency agreements
  - \* Study findings inform planning and environmental review (NEPA) documents
- \* Cooperative Agreements
  - \* Directly with states (generally involve a state funded university)
  - \* Require a 1:1 funds match (in kind contributions are accepted)
  - \* Cooperative agreements with Massachusetts, Virginia, North Carolina, and Rhode Island

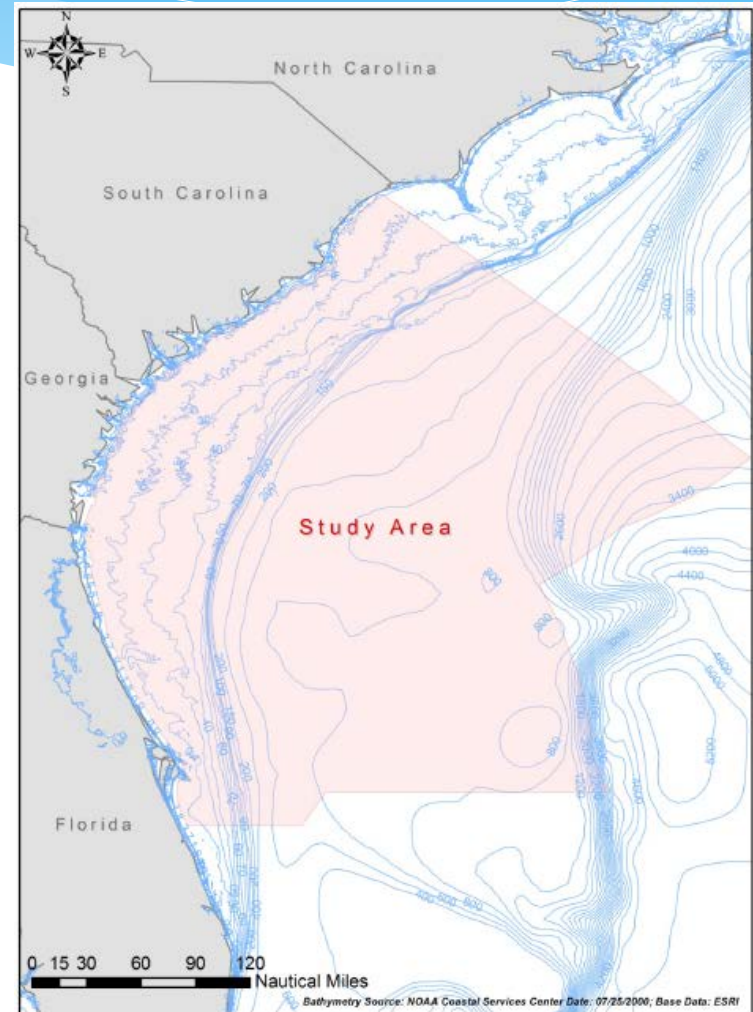
# Coop: Stakeholder Use and Essential Fish Habitat Offshore North Carolina

- \* Cooperative agreement between BOEM and UNC-Chapel Hill
- \* Interagency Agreement between BOEM and NOAA
- \* Meetings held with commercial and recreational fishermen, dive community, and ecotourism industry
- \* Hard bottom habitat identification cruises in Call Area Wilmington East
- \* Results will be used to inform BOEM planning efforts and environmental documents



# Opportunities for South Carolina

- \* Identify data gaps related to wind energy development in South Carolina
  - \* South Atlantic Information Resources: Data Search and Literature Synthesis study identified data gaps for South Atlantic including offshore SC
- \* Environmental Studies Program
- \* Cooperative Agreement potential



# Relevant Planned Environmental Studies

*FY 2015:*

- \* Describing Marine Wildlife Distribution and Movement Patterns on the South Atlantic OCS

*FY 2016:*

- \* Acoustic Mapping and Characterization of Sensitive Hardground and Live Bottom Habitat on the Southeastern US Shelf
- \* Spatial Ecology, Movement Patterns, and at-Sea Habitat Use of Two Nearshore Seabirds: Brown Pelican and Royal Tern



# Questions?

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