



# **South Carolina Outer Continental Shelf Planning for Commercial Wind Leasing**

Notice of Intent to Prepare an Environmental Assessment  
and BOEM Environmental Review Process

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# Outline

- What is an NOI?
- What is an Environmental Assessment?
  - Proposed Action
  - Impact Producing Factors and Activities
  - Resources Considered
  - Standard Operating Conditions
  - Consultations
- Environmental Data Incorporated into Call
- Environmental Issues
- Environmental Studies

# What is an NOI?

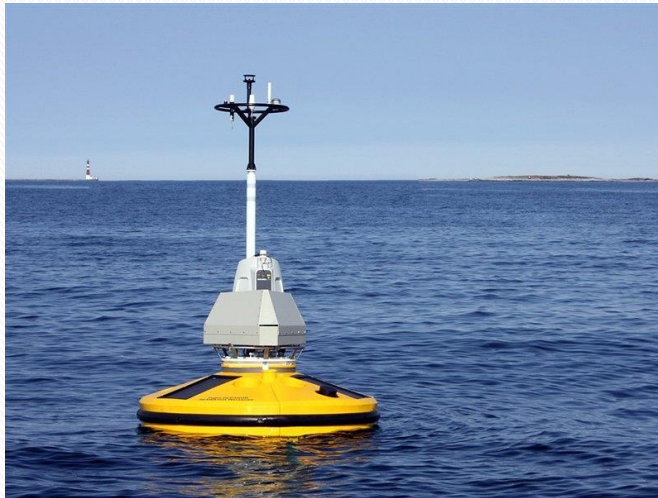
- Begins environmental review process
- Notice of Intent to Prepare an Environmental Assessment
- Published in the Federal Register
- Informs the public and solicits input on:
  - Resources, issues, and data gaps
  - Alternatives
- The NOI will be published with the Call

# What is an Environmental Assessment (EA)?

- An EA is a concise public document which:
  - Briefly provides sufficient evidence and analysis for determining whether to prepare an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS);
  - Aids an agency's compliance with NEPA when no EIS is necessary, (better alternatives and mitigation measures) and;
  - Facilitates preparation of an EIS when one is necessary.

# Proposed Action: What will be considered

- Lease Issuance
- Associated site characterization surveys
- Subsequent site assessment activities



# Proposed Action:

## What will NOT be considered

- Installation, operation, and decommissioning of a commercial wind energy facility
- If an eventual lessee were to submit a construction and operations plan, BOEM would conduct a project specific environmental analysis that would likely take the form of an Environmental Impact Statement

# Examples of Alternatives that May be Analyzed

- Geographic
- Timing/Seasonal Restrictions
- No Action



# Impact Producing Factors

- Vessel Traffic
- Noise (Pile Driving, Surveys)
- Vessel Collisions/Allisions
- Bottom Disturbance
- Emissions and Discharges
- Lighting
- Visual and Aesthetic Interference





# Environmental and Socioeconomic Resources

- Physical
  - Air Quality
  - Water Quality
- Biological
  - Marine Mammals
  - Sea Turtles
  - Fish and Essential Fish Habitat (EFH)
  - Coastal Habitats
  - Benthic Resources
  - Avian and Bat Species
- Socioeconomic
  - Aesthetics and Visual Resources
  - Commercial and Recreational Fishing
  - Cultural Resources
  - Military Uses
  - Environmental Justice
  - Land Use and Coastal Infrastructure
  - Tourism and Recreation
  - Demographics and Employment

# Standard Operating Conditions

- Developed to reduce or eliminate the potential for environmental risks
- Generally have been based on consultations with NOAA NMFS and FWS
- Part of the proposed action or “in place”
- Enforced through lease stipulations and/or terms and conditions of plan approval



# Consultations

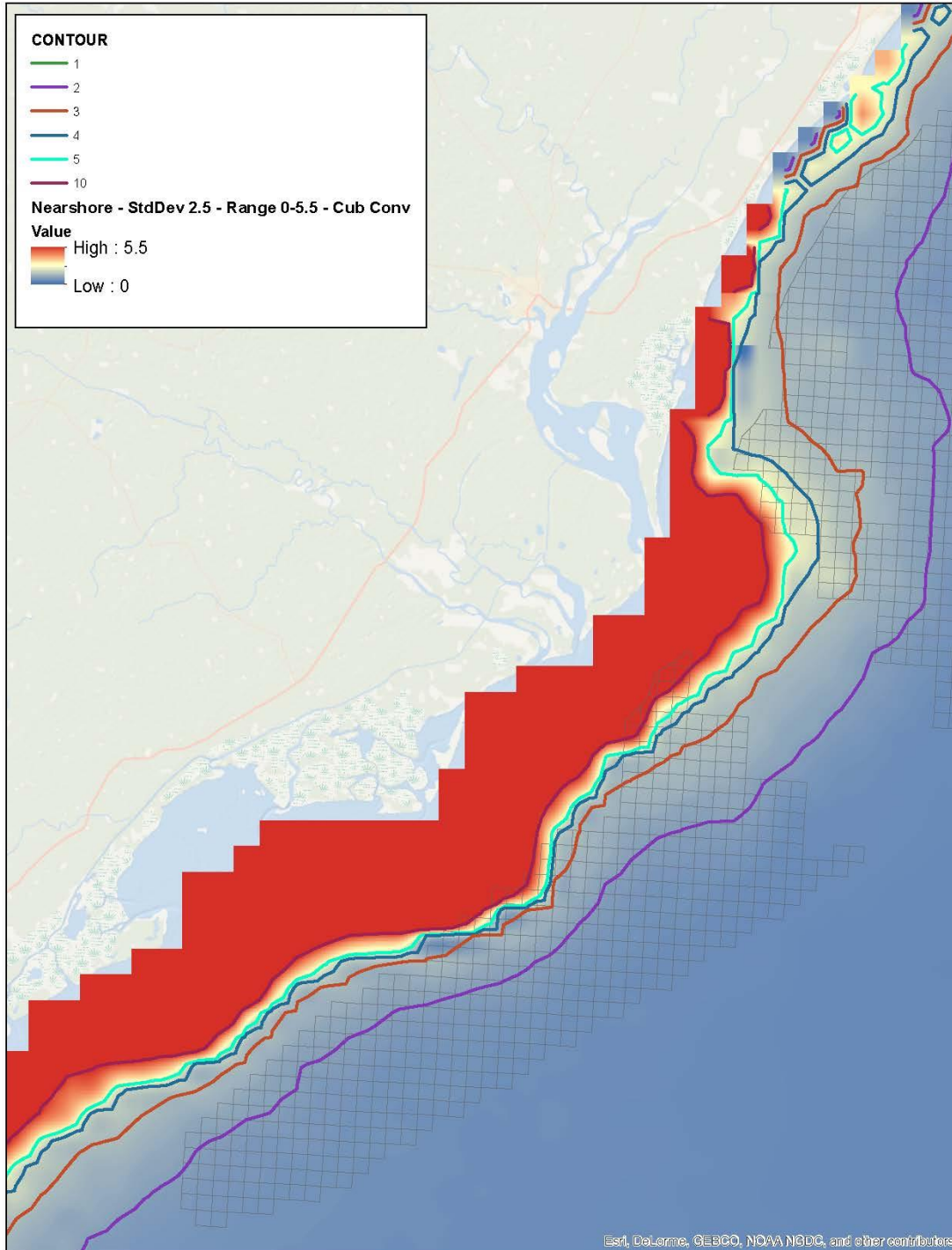
- National Historic Preservation Act (NHPA)
- Coastal Zone Management Act (CZMA)
- Endangered Species Act (ESA)
- Magnuson-Stevens Fishery Conservation and Management Act (Essential Fish Habitat (EFH))

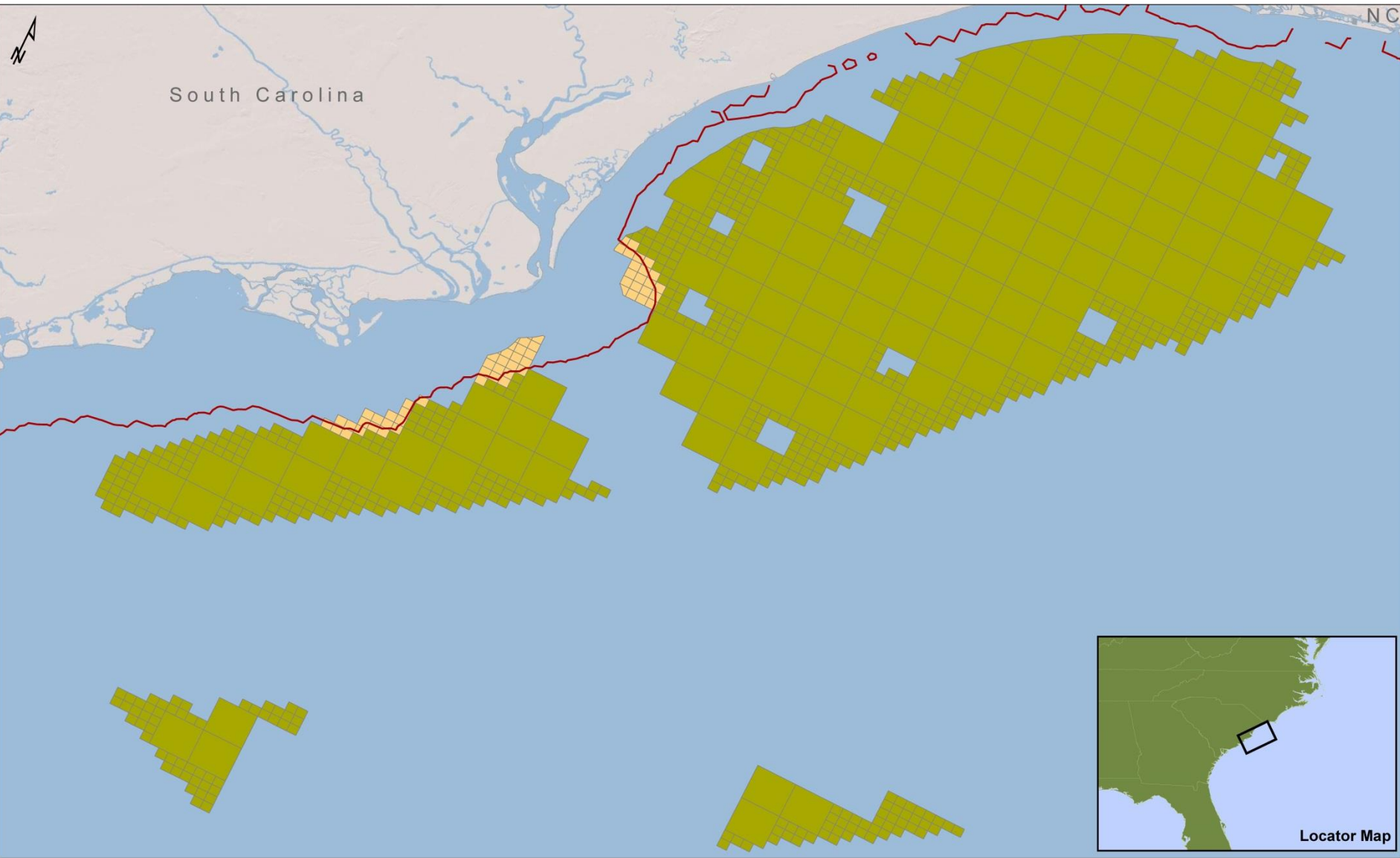


# Call Area Environmental Exclusions

- Previous studies showed that bird densities dropped dramatically at approximately 6nm offshore (Removed areas within 6nm offshore NC and NJ)
- BOEM/NOAA study “Integrative Statistical Modeling and Predictive Mapping of Seabird Distribution and Abundance on the Atlantic Outer Continental Shelf”



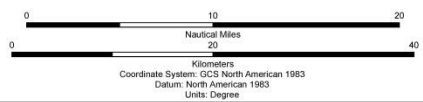




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### Marine Bird Nearshore Species

- Nearshore Species Annual Average Abundance > 4
- Remaining OCS Blocks
- Nearshore Species Blocks Excluded

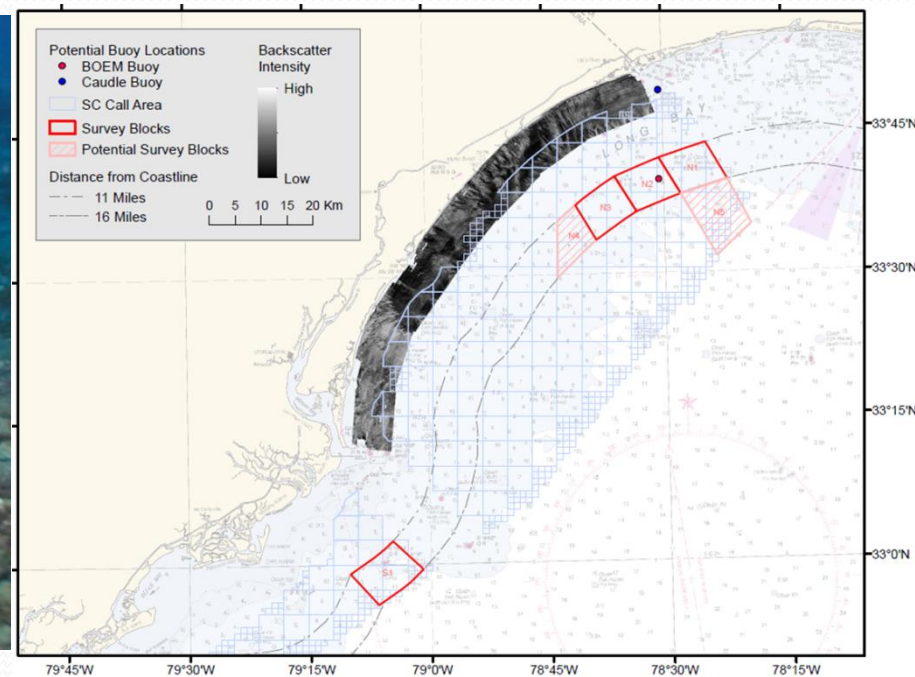
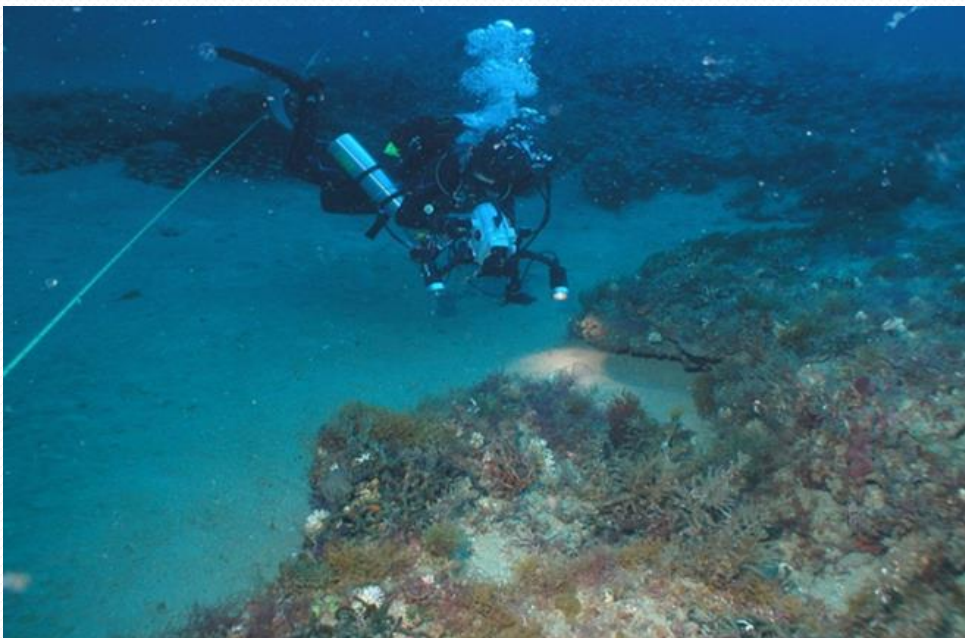


# Environmental Issues: Area Identification

- Comments on Call will feed into Area Identification
- Looking for more information on:
  - Proposed North Atlantic Right Whale Critical Habitat
  - Visual Impacts
  - Gullah Geechee Cultural Heritage Corridor
  - Biological Resources

# Environmental Studies

- Robust environmental studies program
- Several cooperative agreements with state agencies and universities (MA, RI, VA, NC, SC)





# South Carolina Cooperative Agreement

- Atlantic Offshore Wind Energy Development: Geophysical Mapping, and Identification of Paleolandscapes and Historic Shipwrecks Offshore South Carolina
- BOEM coop with South Carolina Sea Grant Consortium
- Survey efforts to identify:
  - Hard bottom habitat
  - Pre-contact and historic period archeological sites
  - Historic shipwrecks and
  - Unexploded ordnance

# Questions?

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