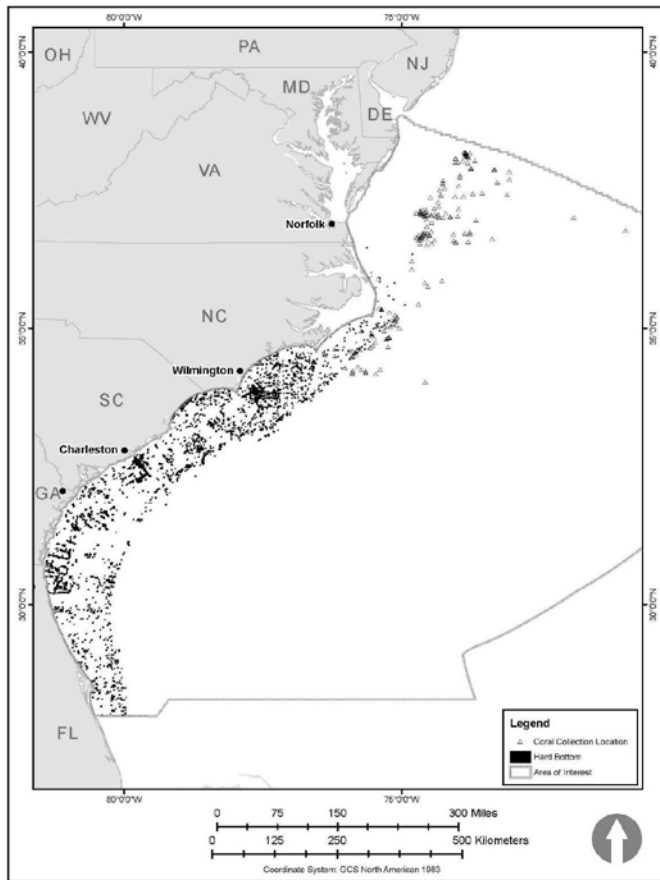


Mid- and South Atlantic Geological and Geophysical (G&G) Activities

Mitigation Measures for Benthic Communities

The Record of Decision for the Mid- and South Atlantic G&G Programmatic EIS outlines mitigation measures to prevent the disturbance of special areas, including sensitive underwater features and areas, and would apply to all G&G activities for which authorization is required. BOEM required mitigations avoid impacts where possible, and minimize or reduce impacts generally. Biologically sensitive underwater features include hard/live bottom areas, deepwater coral communities, and chemosynthetic communities.

Authorizations for seafloor-disturbing activities include requirements to detect the biologically sensitive features by mapping, photography, or other methods and to avoid conducting bottom work at those sites. Although specific guidance has not been finalized, site-specific review for activities including coring, grab sampling, or placement of bottom cables or nodes would occur prior to authorizing work. Possible additional requirements on a case by case basis could include the following:



(1) Designating specific avoidance areas (i.e., known hard/live bottom areas, known coral sites, National Marine Sanctuaries, Charleston Bump Area, and walls of submarine canyons).

(2) Developing buffer zones around known or newly identified biologically sensitive underwater features.

(3) Asking for site specific surveys for areas that potentially have benthic communities.

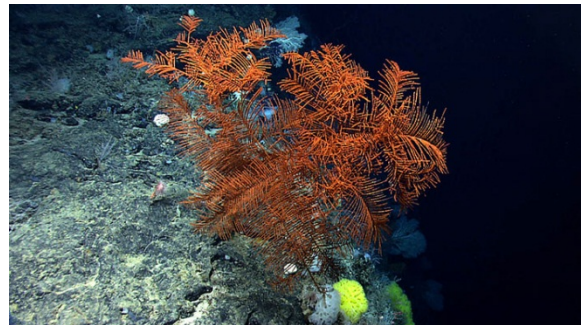


Photo Credit: NOAA Marine Life in the Atlantic Canyon.

For more information about mitigation measures for biologically sensitive underwater features for Atlantic G&G surveys, please visit BOEM's website at www.boem.gov/Atlantic-G-G-PEIS/#ROD.