

**Mid- and South Atlantic Geological and Geophysical (G&G) Activities
Programmatic Environmental Impact Statement (EIS)**

Time-Area Closure Mitigation Measures

The Record of Decision and Biological Opinion for the Mid- and South Atlantic G&G Programmatic EIS outlines mitigation measures to prevent the disturbance or injury of marine mammals and sea turtles. The purpose of the time-area closures for the North Atlantic Right Whale (NARW) and sea turtles is to decrease exposure to sound source impacts during critical breeding or nesting and migration times.

NORTH ATLANTIC RIGHT WHALE TIME-AREA CLOSURE

Airgun Surveys

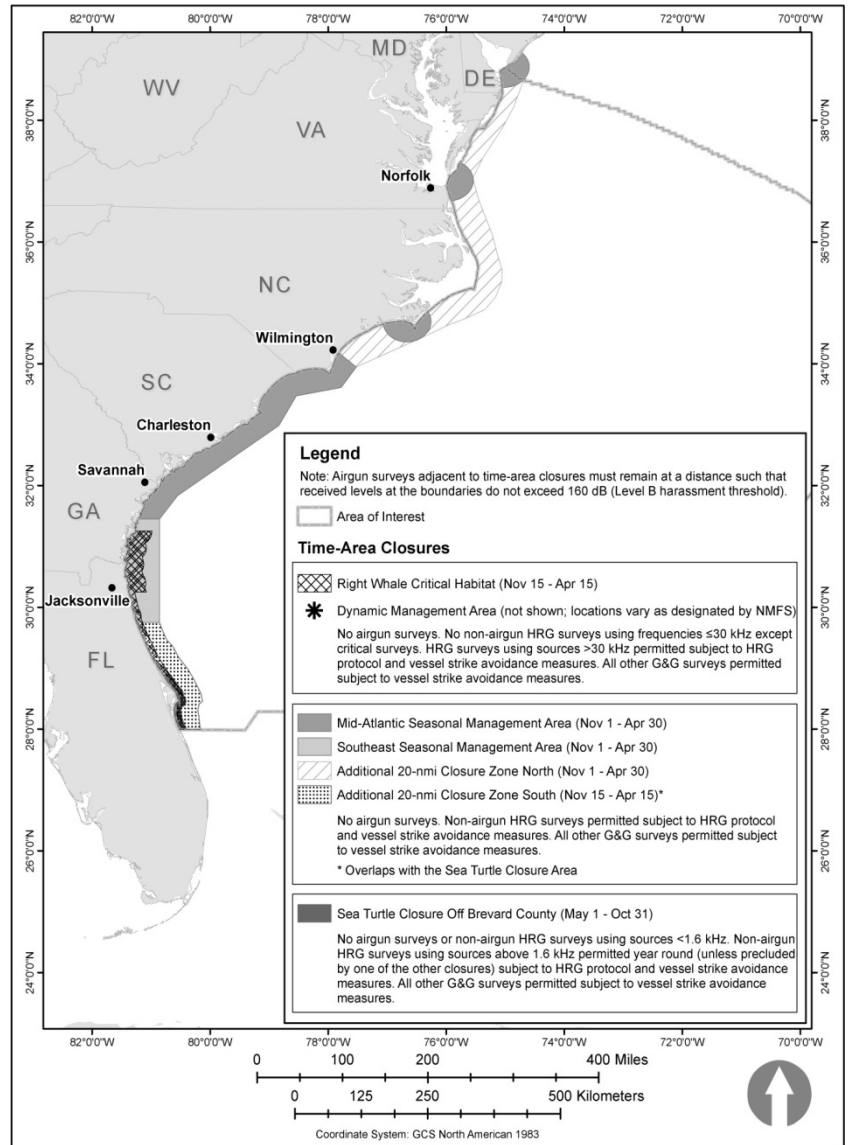
Airgun surveys would not be allowed to occur within a 23-mile (20-nautical mile [nmi]) continuous buffer area extending from Delaware Bay south to just below Palm Bay, Florida. The time-area closures would be implemented during the following times:

- Critical habitat (November 15 to April 15)
- Mid-Atlantic Seasonal Management Area (SMA) (November 1 to April 30)
- Southeast SMA (November 1 to April 30)
- Additional 20-nmi North Closure Area (November 1 to April 30)
- Additional 20-nmi South Closure Area (November 15 to April 15)
- Dynamic Management Area (DMA) (NMFS established temporary closures based on whale presence)

In addition, airgun surveys conducted adjacent to time-area closure areas must maintain a distance from the closure area boundary to prevent sound source levels from exceeding National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) Level B acoustic threshold criteria.*

High-Resolution Geophysical (HRG) Surveys

The HRG surveys operating a sound source at 30 kilohertz (kHz) or lower in NARW critical habitat from November 15 to April 15 would be reviewed on a case-by-case basis and, if determined to be a critical need, would only be allowed



*For more information regarding NMFS's Acoustic Criteria, please visit http://www.westcoast.fisheries.noaa.gov/protected_species/marine_mammals/threshold_guidance.html. NMFS is currently updating acoustic criteria. More information can be found at <http://www.nmfs.noaa.gov/pr/acoustics/guidelines.htm>.

during daylight hours. The NARW functional hearing range is estimated to be below 30 kHz; therefore, NARW are unlikely to hear sounds above 30 kHz. Time-area closure would also apply if a DMA is established.

SEA TURTLE BREVARD COUNTY, FLORIDA, TIME-AREA CLOSURE

No airgun surveys or non-airgun HRG surveys with sound sources less than 1.6 kHz would be allowed to occur from May 1 to October 1. The Brevard County, Florida, sea turtle time-area closure overlaps with critical habitat for the NARW. The HRG surveys using sources above 1.6 kHz would be allowed year-round unless not allowed by NARW critical habitat time-area closure restrictions.

For more detailed information about time-area closure mitigation measures for the NARW and sea turtles, please visit BOEM’s website at <http://www.boem.gov/Atlantic-G-G-PEIS/>.

