

ShoalMATE: Shoal Map Assessment Tool for EFH

Deena Hansen

Bureau of Ocean Energy Management

September 12, 2022

Abstract

When authorizing projects including leases for sand and sediment, the Bureau of Ocean Energy Management must analyze impacts to Essential Fish Habitat (EFH). In consultation with the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, this ensures full consideration of the environmental effects and possible mitigation measures so that fish and their habitats are not adversely affected. BOEM partnered with NOAA on a study to concentrate on the attributes of sand dredging that relate directly to fish and EFH: the potential impacts of dredging on fish, a synthesis of known fish habitat associations, and the development of predictive models to identify the location and types of shoals and distribution of fish species. These new data were then incorporated into an interactive mapping tool “ShoalMATE” that generates semi-automated reports for the EFH consultation process.