Central Atlantic Draft Call Areas
NOAA Perspective

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NOAA Fisheries & Central Atlantic 2

- **Overlap with 2 NOAA Fisheries Regions**
  - Greater Atlantic Region (ME- NC)
  - Southeast Region (NC -TX & Caribbean)
- **Regularly coordinate** across our regions on offshore wind activities
- **Coordinating with BOEM & NCCOS** to help inform site identification process
- **Focus of the presentation**
  - NMFS role in the process
  - Resources under our jurisdiction/expertise
  - Challenges and recommendations for siting process
  - Lessons learned

Roles and Responsibilities Related to Offshore Wind

Technical Assistance, Comments, Recommendations

- National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA)
- Fish and Wildlife Coordination Act (FWCA)

Section 7 Consultation/Biological Opinion/Incidental Take Statement

- Endangered Species Act (ESA)

Incidental Take Authorization

- Marine Mammal Protection Act (MMPA)

Essential Fish Habitat Conservation Recommendations

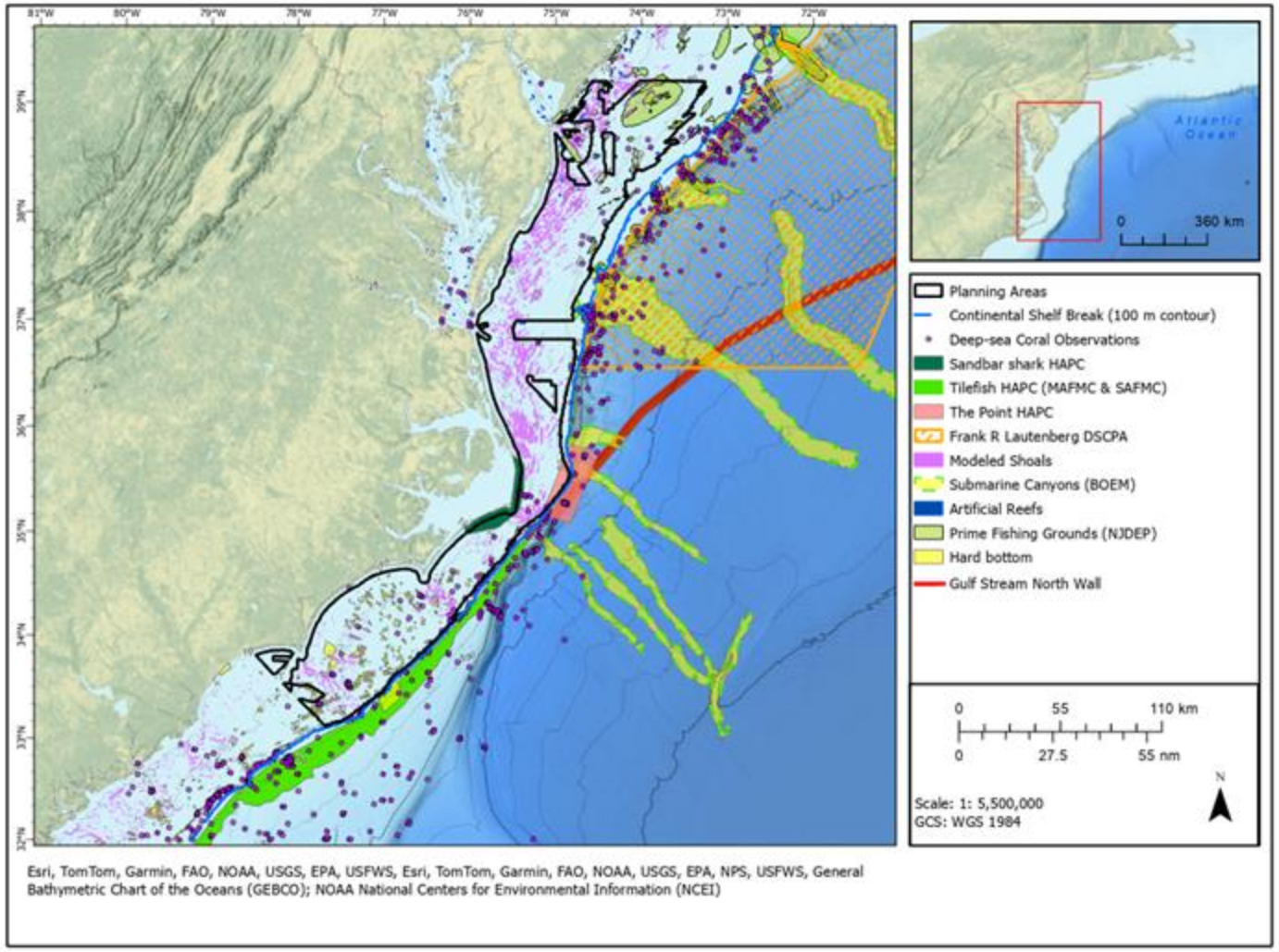
- Magnuson-Stevens Fishery Conservation and Management Act (MSA)

Scientific Support

- Ensure informed management decisions based on best available science
- Address impacts on scientific surveys and advice
- Research on the interactions with NOAA trust resources and fishing communities

Habitats within the Call Areas

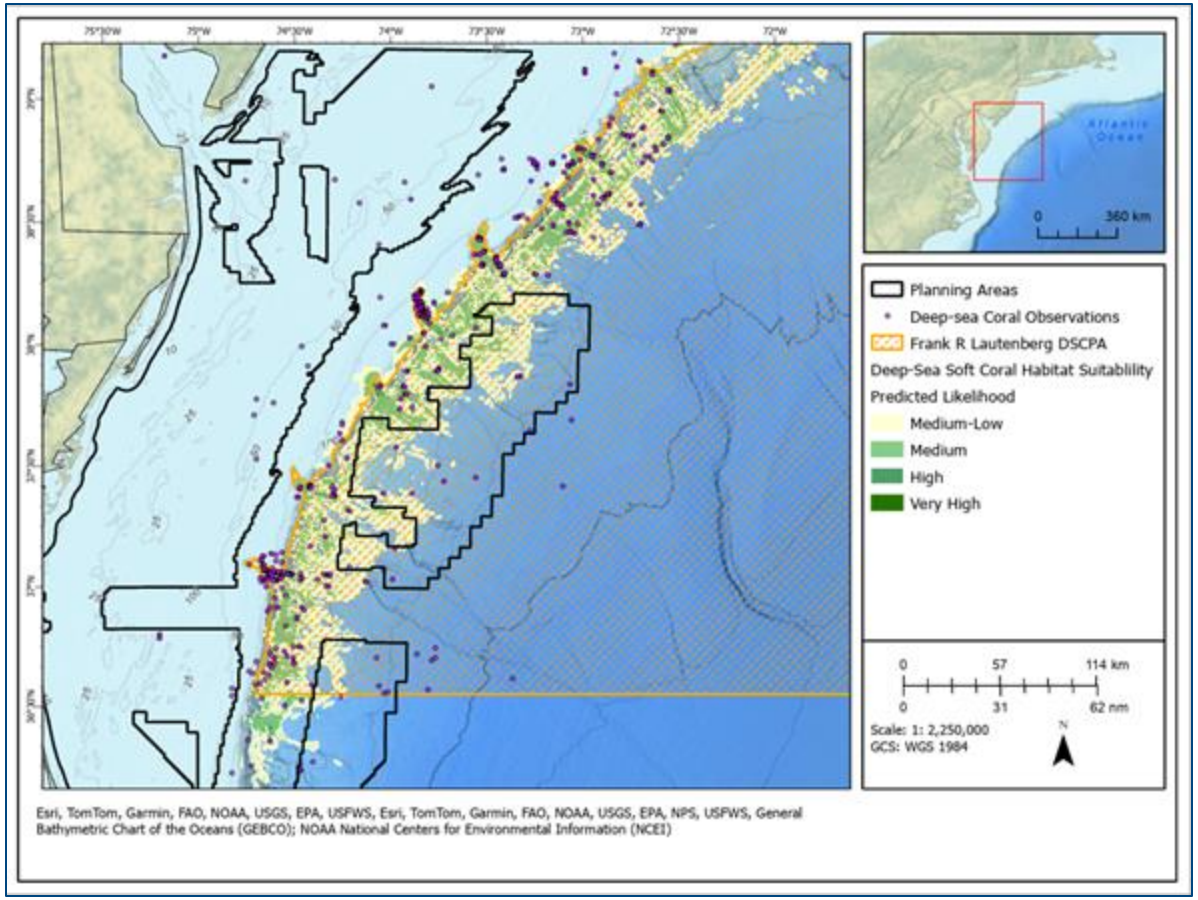
- Hard bottom habitats
- Deep sea corals
- Coral Protection area
- Shelf Break/Canyons
- Habitat Areas of Particular Concern
- The Point offshore North Carolina
- Variation in Gulf Stream overlap
- Sand Ridge/Trough Complexes and Shoals
- Prime fishing areas/grounds
- ESA critical habitat



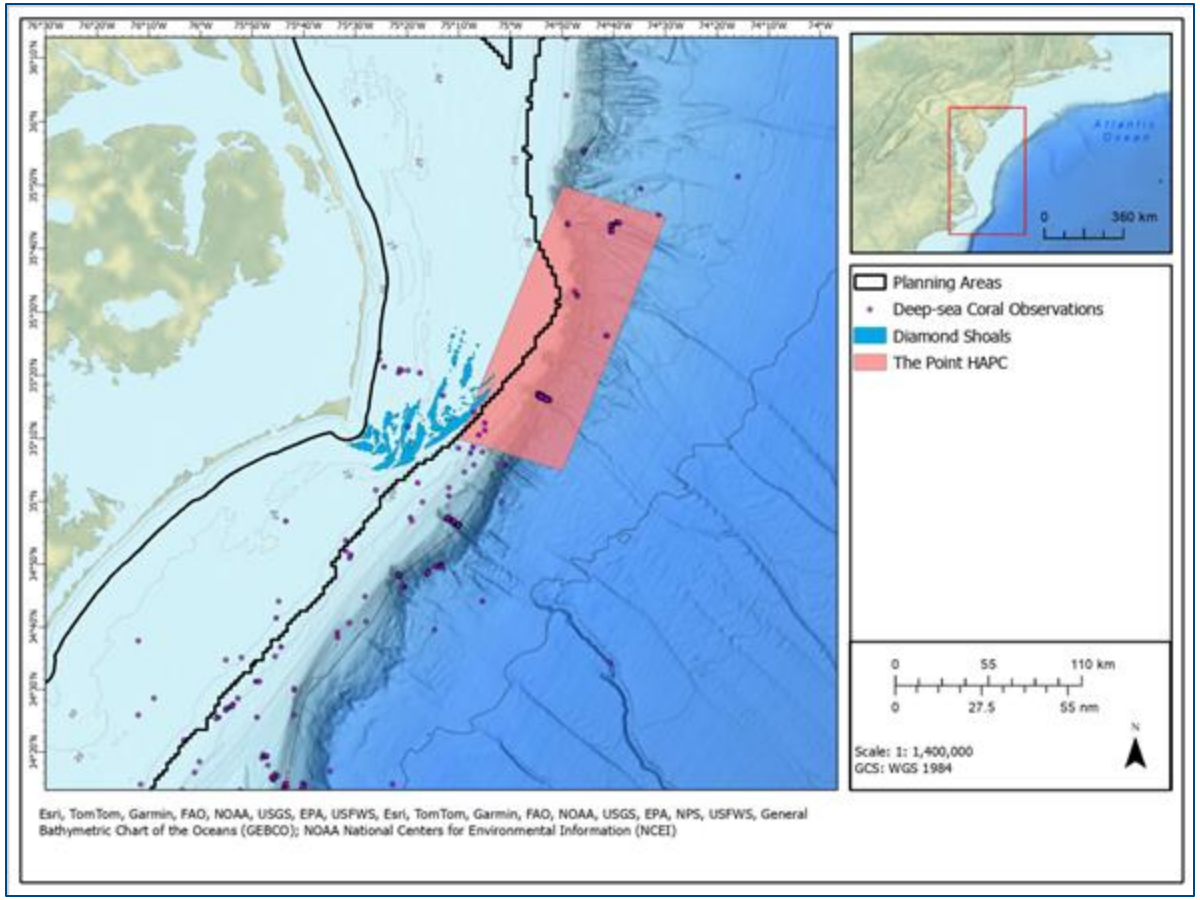
This map is a DRAFT and only an example of habitat considerations overlapping with the Central Atlantic 2 Call Area and Deepwater Call Areas E and F.

Areas of Concern in Call Areas

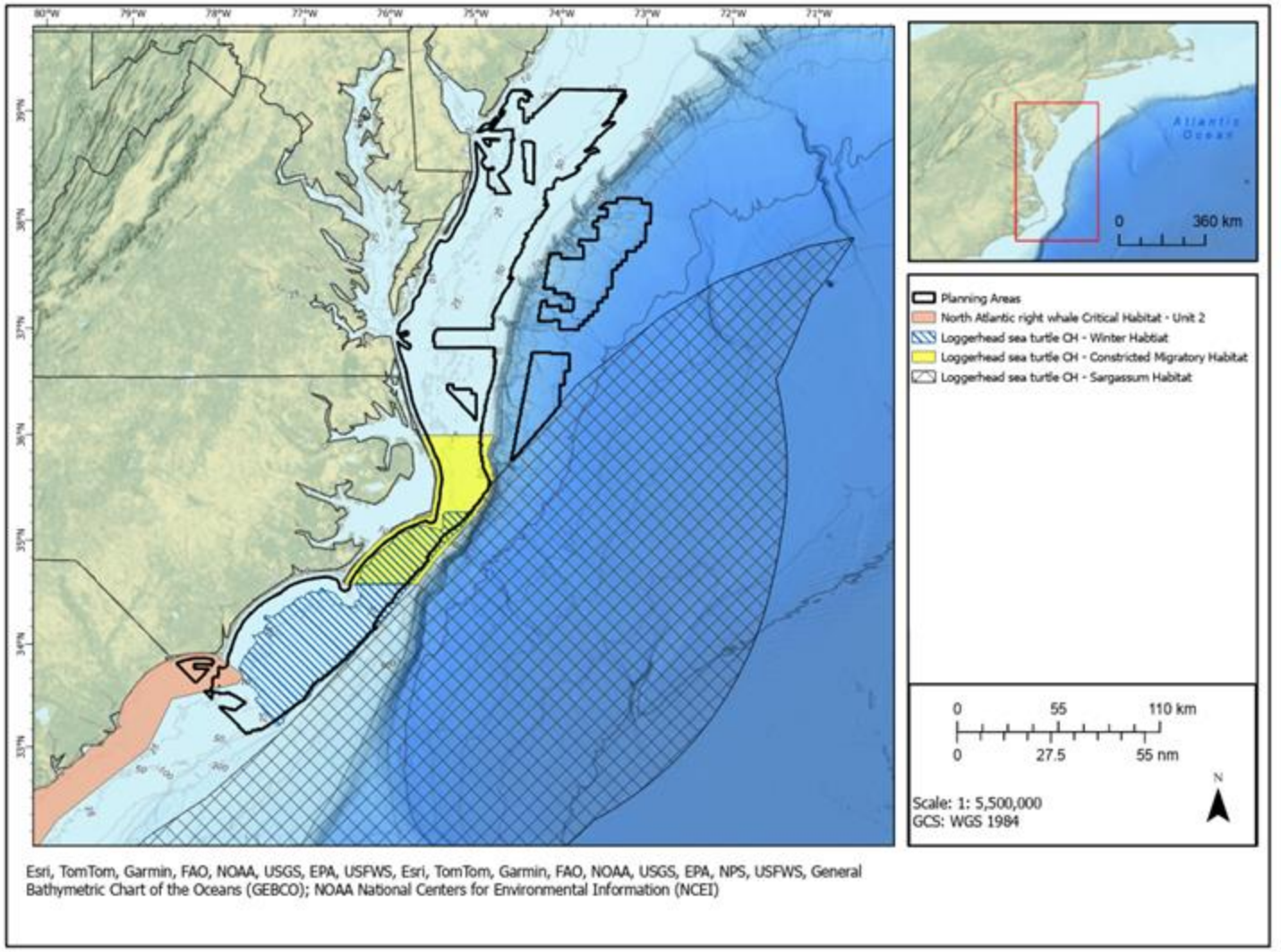
Frank R. Lautenberg Deep-Sea Coral Protection Area



The Point/Diamond Shoal



Critical Habitat overlap with Call Area
North Atlantic right whale and Loggerhead sea turtle



Protected Resources occurrence within Call Areas

Endangered Species

- 5 species of whales, including North Atlantic right whales
- 6 species of sea turtles
- Atlantic sturgeon, Giant manta ray, Oceanic whitetip shark
- Partial overlap with loggerhead sea turtle critical habitat and North Atlantic right whale critical habitat

Marine Mammals

- Approximately 20 protected marine mammal species, including the 5 ESA listed whale species

Fisheries and Socioeconomics

- **Substantial overlap with important commercial and recreational fisheries**
  - Sea scallop, menhaden, surfclam, fluke, croaker, black sea bass, and *Illex*/longfin squid
  - Snapper-grouper complex (e.g., porgies, snappers, groupers)
  - Tunas, swordfish, sharks

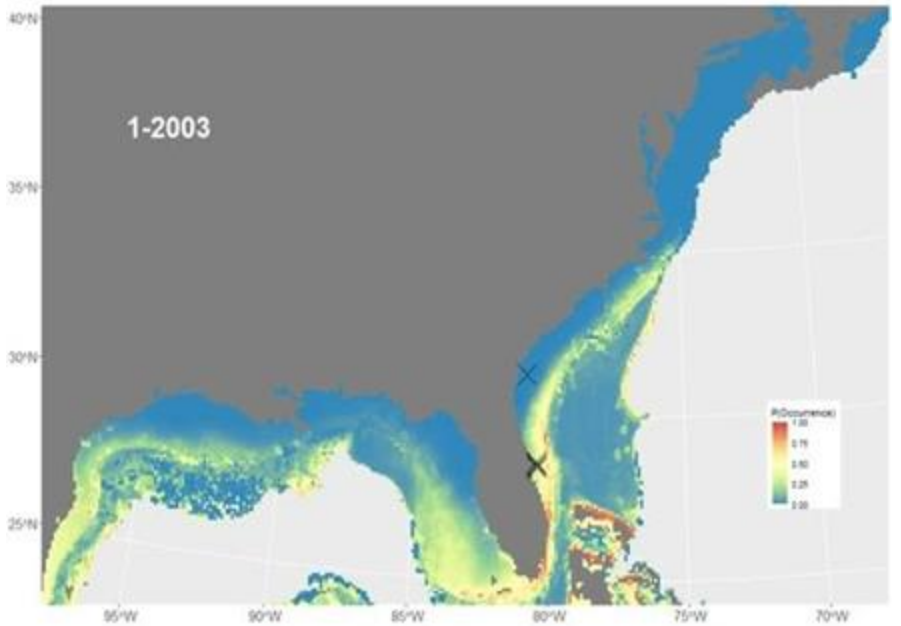
- **Inshore area has the greatest overlap with important fisheries**
- **Areas affect a substantial portion of annual landings/revenue**
  - Many individual vessels are dependent on fishing within these areas
- **Fishing communities from MA to SC are affected by these areas**
- **Consider cumulative regional socioeconomic impacts and cables**

NOAA Scientific Surveys & Data Collections

- Scientific Surveys will be impacted by offshore wind development
- Impacts on surveys may not be avoided and will need to be mitigated due to:
  - Preclusion,
  - Statistical design,
  - Habitat alteration, and
  - Loss of sampling efficiency
- **Work through existing NOAA/BOEM collaboration- Recommend regional survey mitigation program requirements be stipulated earlier in process**

Challenges for Site Identification

- Identification of WEAs absent comprehensive baseline data
- Scientific unknowns related to operational effects to ecosystem and floating technology
- Limited understanding of cumulative impacts
- The ocean is not a static environment
  - species distribution shifts complicate understanding future fish/fishery and protected species impacts



https://www.nature.com/articles/s41598-022-10482-8#MOESM2

Recommendations to Address Challenges

- Region-wide baseline/ecosystem monitoring/assessment and federal survey mitigation
- Pre-construction, construction, & post-construction fisheries and wildlife monitoring requirements
- Gain better understanding of floating technology/transmission prior to leasing
- Ecosystem-based scientific approach to evaluating cumulative effects of OSW development across the OCS considering ecosystem changes/trends
- Apply precautionary principle to siting

GOAL of understanding effects before leasing: **reduce risk on resources and fishing communities and increase certainty in our ability to address state, regional, and national climate change mitigation goals.**

Lessons Learned in Siting Process

- Critical to remove areas of high conflict at early planning stage
- Modelling is only one tool to help inform decision making and should be supplemented with additional qualitative/quantitative assessments and input from affected stakeholders
- Transmission route and associated efforts are important to consider at the early planning stages
- Scientific uncertainties do not equal no impact and need to be considered in siting process
- Additional avoidance/minimization and mitigation will be necessary beyond siting process

THANK YOU!

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