

Science, Service, Stewardship



Draft Amendment 1 to the Consolidated HMS FMP- Essential Fish Habitat

Highly Migratory Species
Management
Division

November 6, 2008

**NOAA
FISHERIES
SERVICE**



Essential Fish Habitat – MSA Requirements

- **Identify and describe EFH**
- **Minimize, to the extent practicable, adverse effects on EFH caused by fishing activities**
- **Identify other actions to encourage the conservation and enhancement of EFH**
- **305(b)(1)(A): the Secretary will set forth the schedule for amendment of FMPs to include the identification of EFH and for review and updating of EFH**



EFH Regulations (published in 2002)

- **Identify EFH for each species and life stage**
- **Identify Habitat Areas of Particular Concern (HAPCs)**
- **Identify fishing and non-fishing activities that may adversely affect EFH**
- **Minimize fishing impacts that are more than minimal and not temporary**
- **Review all EFH information at least once every 5 years**



EFH Amendment Timeline

- **Notice of Intent: Published November 7, 2006 (71 FR 65087)**
- **Scoping: March-October 2007 (AP Meetings)**
- **Predraft: October 2007**
- **Notice of Availability of Draft EIS: September 19, 2008 (73 FR 54384)**
- **60 day comment period ends November 18, 2008 (NMFS is considering extending the comment period)**
- **Final EIS: Summer 2009**



HMS Essential Fish Habitat History

FMP for Atlantic Tunas, Swordfish and Sharks and Amendment 1 to the Billfish FMP (1999)

- **Original EFH descriptions and maps for each species and life stage published using a Geographic Information System (GIS)**
- **Several HAPCs described for sandbar sharks**

Amendment 1 to the HMS FMP (2003)

- **Updated EFH for 5 shark species (sandbar, blacktip, dusky, nurse, and finetooth)**



HMS Essential Fish Habitat History

Consolidated Atlantic HMS FMP (2006)

- **State, Federal, non-governmental data mapped and published**
- **No changes to EFH proposed**
- **Described all fishing gears that may affect EFH**

Draft Amendment 1 to the Consolidated Atlantic HMS FMP (2008)

- **EFH for all Atlantic HMS updated using a GIS to map each species and life stage**
- **HAPC for bluefin tuna spawning proposed**
- **Analyzed fishing and non-fishing impacts on EFH**



Alternatives for Identifying EFH

Alternative 1 – No Action; maintain current boundaries

Alternative 2 – Establish new EFH boundaries based on the highest concentration of a particular species by selecting high count cells

- **Points are merged with a 10' x 10' grid and a scale is created to reflect the number of points within each grid**
- **Select the high count cells to delineate new EFH boundaries**



Alternatives for Identifying EFH

Alternative 3 (Preferred Alternative) – Establish new EFH boundaries based on the 95 percent probability boundary

- Individual data points are mapped and probability boundaries are generated
- The 95 percent probability boundary includes, on average, 95 percent of the data points
- Provides a standardized, reproducible, and predictable method for establishing EFH boundaries



How to Access HMS EFH Data

Hard Copy of the DEIS

Or

<http://www.nmfs.noaa.gov/sfa/hms/EFH>

Or

http://sharpfin.nmfs.noaa.gov/website/EFH_Mapper/HMS/map.aspx

highly migratory species

data evaluation tool

species-lifestage

Yellowfin Tuna

Adult

data layers

2007 species data

- ☒ Preferred Alternative
- ☐ points
- ☐ 70% probability bndry
- ☐ 80% probability bndry
- ☐ 90% probability bndry
- ☐ 95% probability bndry

1999 EFH

- ☒ 1999 EFH designation

Isobaths

select isobaths >>

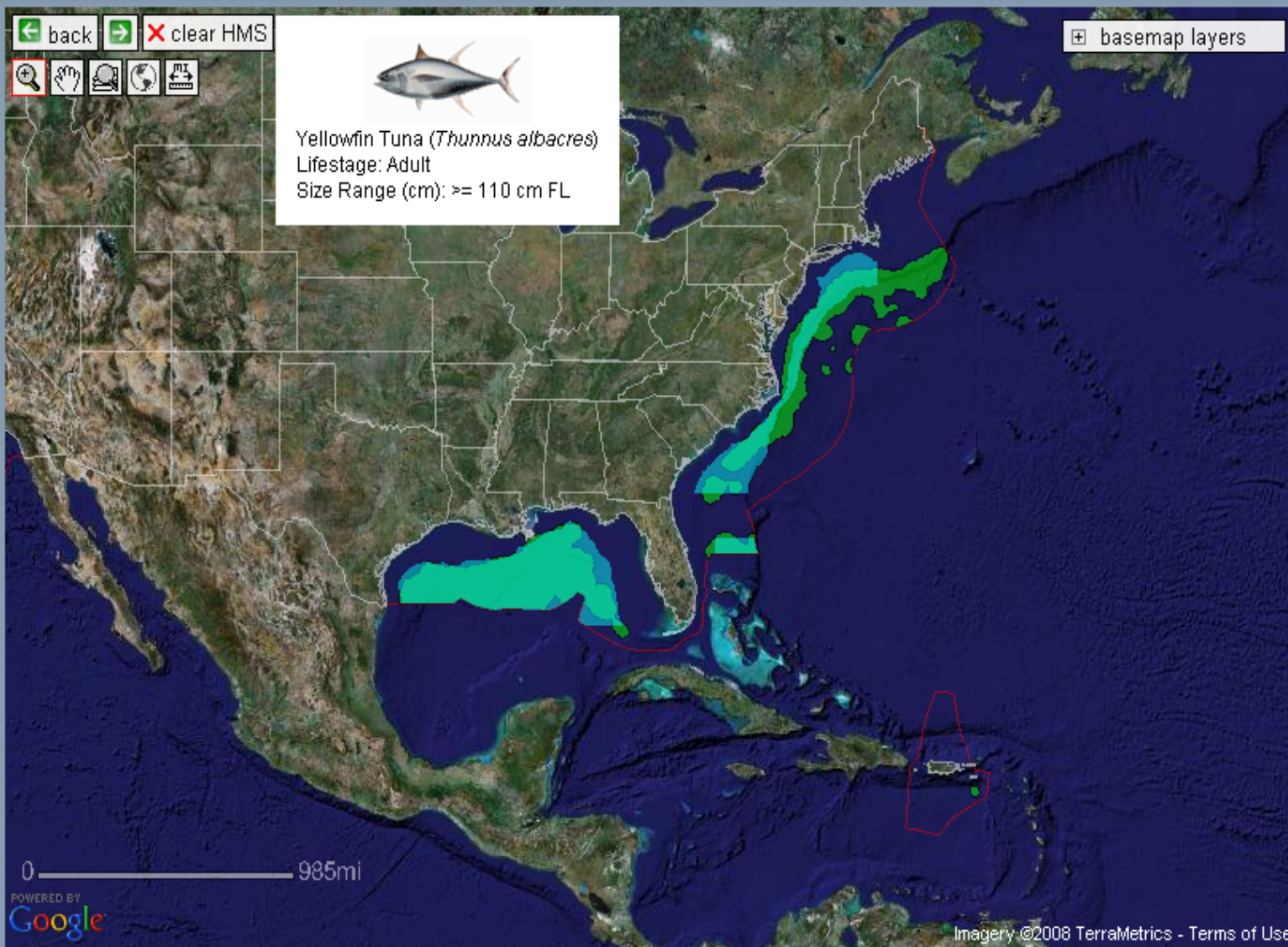
☐ show/hide isobaths

back clear HMS



Yellowfin Tuna (*Thunnus albacres*)
Lifestage: Adult
Size Range (cm): ≥ 110 cm FL

basemap layers



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Alternatives for Identifying EFH

Alternative 4 – Establish new EFH boundaries using all points or cells where species are present

Alternative 5 - Establish new EFH boundaries using the entire range of distribution for each species and life stage



Habitat Areas of Particular Concern

HAPCs are based on one or more of the following considerations:

- **The importance of the ecological function provided by the habitat**
- **The extent to which the habitat is sensitive to human-induced environmental degradation**
- **Whether and to what extent, development activities are, or will be, stressing the habitat type**
- **The rarity of the habitat type**



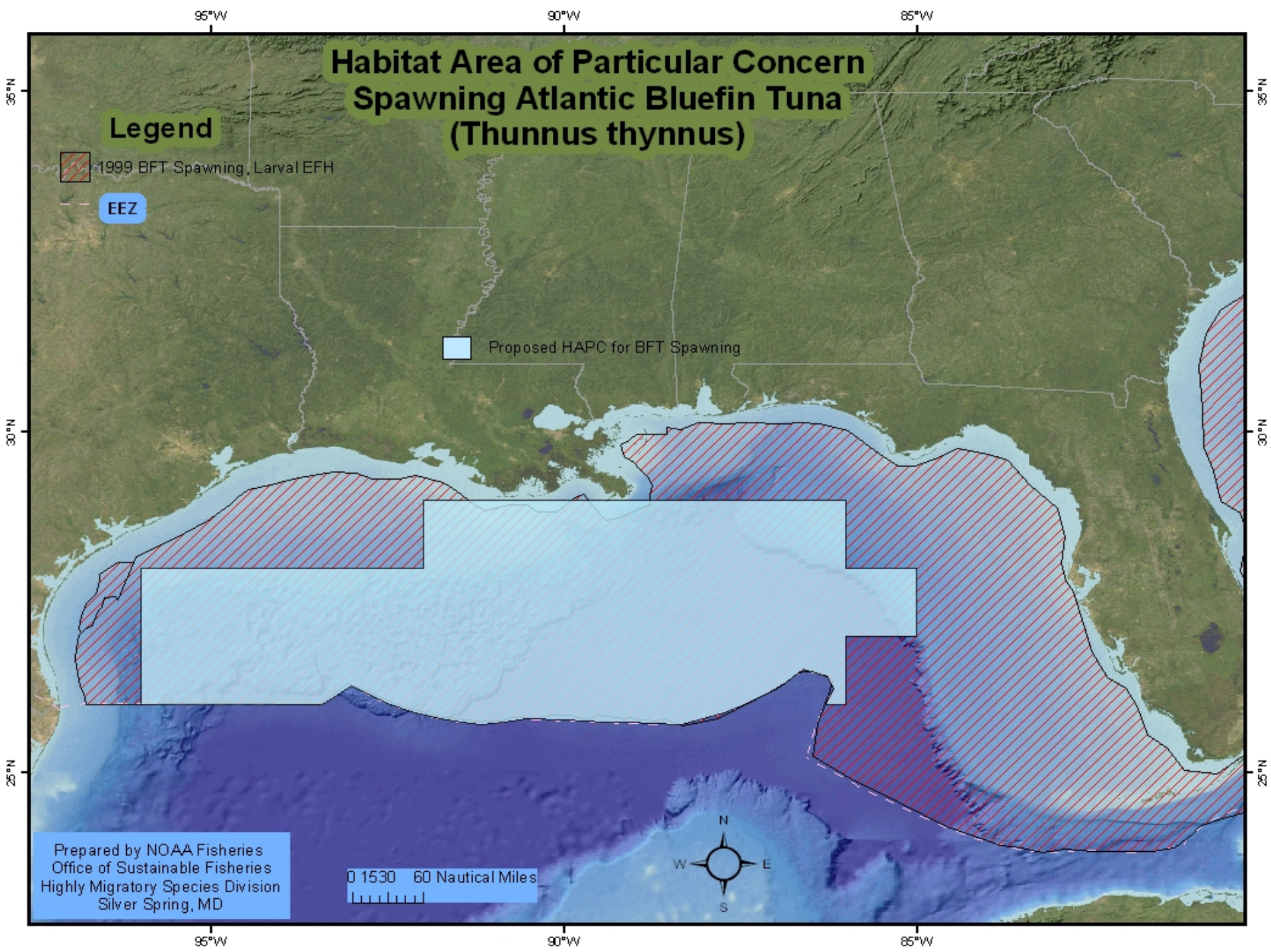
Alternatives for Identifying HAPCs

Alternative 1 – No Action; maintain current HAPCs

Alternative 2 (Preferred Alternative) – Designate a HAPC for spawning bluefin tuna in the Gulf of Mexico while maintaining current HAPCs.

Based on:

- ***NMFS SEFSC larval surveys***
- ***Univ. of Southern MS larval surveys***
- ***POP, CTC, and TBF data***
- ***Written request from NCMC and TAG***



Habitat Area of Particular Concern Spawning Atlantic Bluefin Tuna (*Thunnus thynnus*)

Legend

1999 BFT Spawning, Larval EFH

EEZ

BFT Larval Data Source
SEFSC_Data_Summary 1992-2004
Larvae/Tow

- <1
- 1-2
- 2-4
- 4-6
- 6-10
- 10-25

ADU BFT Points

Data from Teo et al., 2007

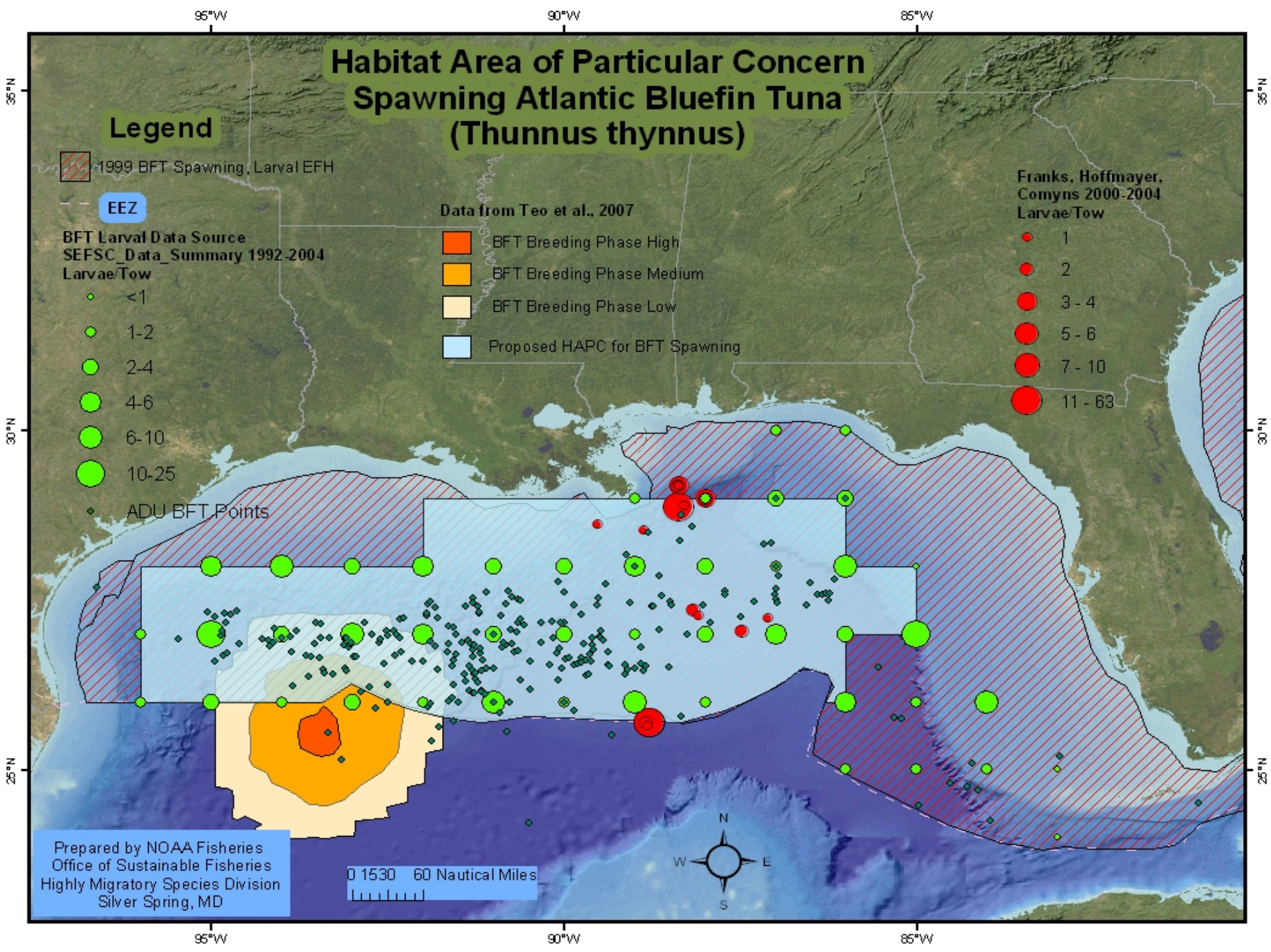
- BFT Breeding Phase High
- BFT Breeding Phase Medium
- BFT Breeding Phase Low
- Proposed HAPC for BFT Spawning

Franks, Hoffmayer,
Comyns 2000-2004
Larvae/Tow

- 1
- 2
- 3 - 4
- 5 - 6
- 7 - 10
- 11 - 63

Prepared by NOAA Fisheries
Office of Sustainable Fisheries
Highly Migratory Species Division
Silver Spring, MD

0 1530 60 Nautical Miles





Alternatives for Identifying HAPCs

Alternative 3 – Designate a HAPC for spawning bluefin tuna in the Gulf of Mexico based on the 95 percent probability boundary from bluefin tuna larval data collections

Alternative 4 – Designate a HAPC for spawning bluefin tuna in the Gulf of Mexico based on the 95 percent probability boundary for adult bluefin tuna in the Gulf of Mexico



Fishing Impacts on EFH

Process

- **Evaluate the potential adverse effect of fishing activities on HMS and non-HMS EFH**
- **Minimize adverse effects from fishing on EFH, to the extent practicable**



Fishing Impacts on EFH

- **HMS fishing gears do not have a negative impact on EFH**
- **Other fishing gears do not have a negative impact on HMS EFH**
- **Effects of bottom longline and other bottom tending gears on EFH are considered minimal and temporary, therefore NMFS is not proposing any new management measures at this time**



Non-Fishing Impacts on EFH

- **Coastal Development**
- **Agriculture**
- **Dredging**
- **Marinas and Navigation**
- **Oil and Gas Exploration and Development**
- **Renewable Energy Projects (72 FR 62673 November 6, 2007)**

Oil and Gas Platforms in the Gulf of Mexico

Legend

EEZ

Proposed HAPC for BFT Spawning

Oil Platform Locations (4018)

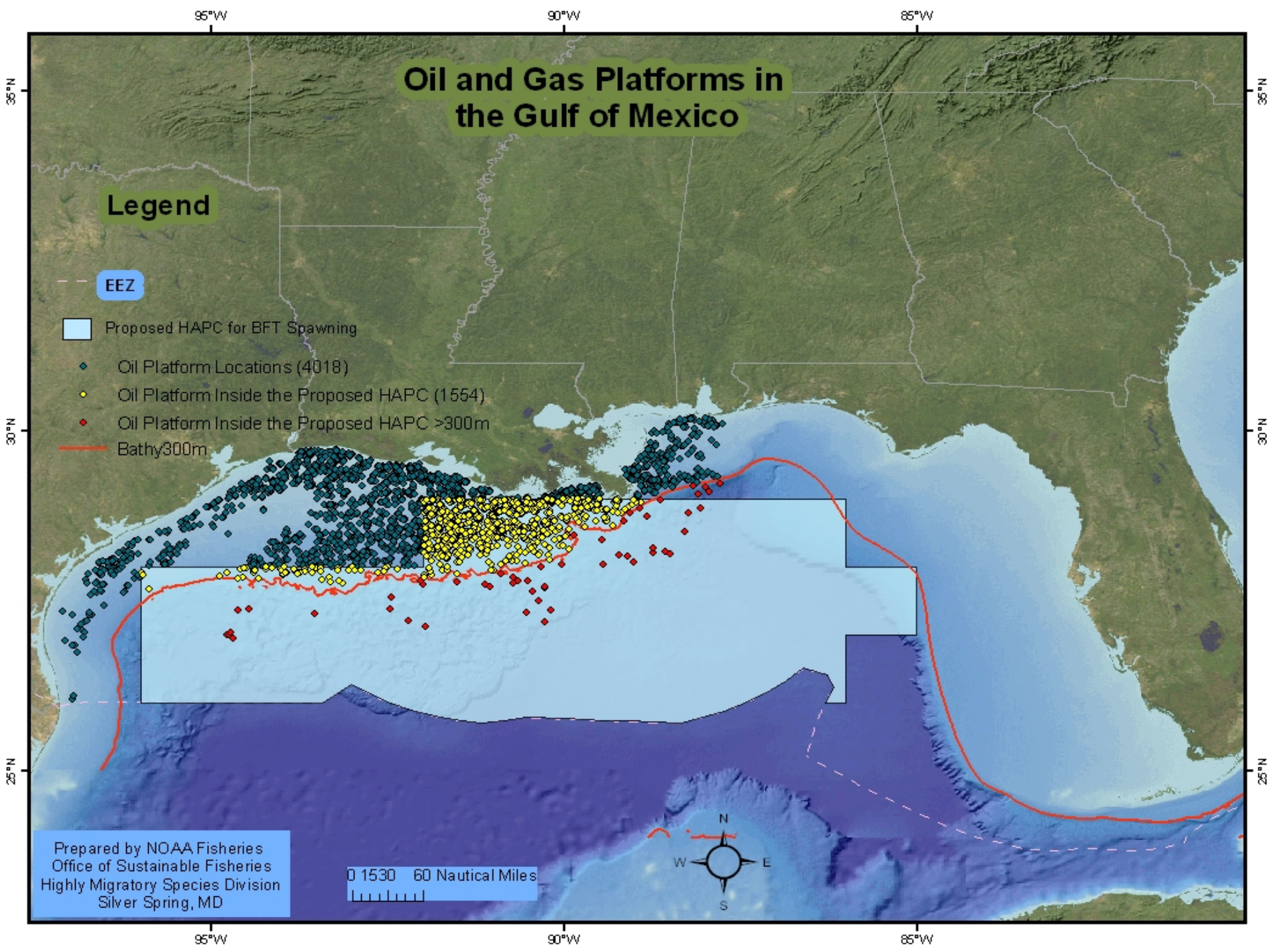
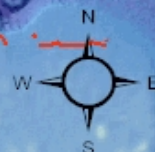
Oil Platform Inside the Proposed HAPC (1554)

Oil Platform Inside the Proposed HAPC >300m

Bathy300m

Prepared by NOAA Fisheries
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Silver Spring, MD

0 1530 60 Nautical Miles





MMS Gulf of Mexico Region Planning Areas and Active Leases July 1, 2008

	<u>Total Blocks</u>	<u>Total Acres</u>	<u>Blocks Leased</u>	<u>Acres Leased</u>
Western Planning Area	5,240	28,576,583	1,824	10,213,248
Central Planning Area	12,370	66,452,086	5,416	28,875,454
Eastern Planning Area	11,486	64,556,650	128	720,217
Totals	29,096*	159,585,319	7,368	39,808,919

* 7 blocks are split between the CPA and EPA



Public Hearings

Date	Meeting	Location/Address	Public Hearing
Oct 13-16, 2008	Gulf States Marine Fisheries Commission	Key Largo Grand Resort & Beach Club, 97000 South Overseas Highway, Key Largo, FL 33037	Oct 14, 2008 7:00-9:00 pm
Oct 14-16, 2008	Mid-Atlantic Fishery Management Council	Ramada Inn 1701 S. Virginia Dare Trail, Kill Devil Hills, NC 27948	Oct 15, 2008 7:00-9:00 pm
Oct 19-23, 2008	Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission	Rehoboth, DE	None
Oct 27-31, 2008	Gulf of Mexico Fishery Management Council	Renaissance Riverview Plaza Hotel, 64 South Water St., Mobile, AL 36602	Oct 28, 2008 7:00-9:00 pm
Nov 18-20, 2008	New England Fishery Management Council	Sheraton Ferncroft Resort, 50 Ferncroft Rd., Danvers, MA 01923	Nov 18, 2008 7:00-9:00 pm
Nov 30-Dec 5, 2008	South Atlantic Fishery Management Council	Hilton Wilmington Riverside, 301 N. Water Street, Wilmington, NC	Dec 3, 2008 7:00-9:00 pm



Public Comment Period – Closes
November 18, 2008 (NMFS is considering
extending the comment period)

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