

Public Notice Concerning Access to Offshore Areas ATTN: Commercial, Recreational, and Charter Fishermen

Comments Requested on *Four Pending Applications to Conduct Seismic Surveys Off the N.C. Coast*

Spring 2016

What is Being Proposed?

There are four of eight applications pending with the National Marine Fisheries Service to conduct seismic surveys off the N.C. coast. See the following website for details:

<http://www.nmfs.noaa.gov/pr/permits/incidental/oilgas.htm#atlgeo2015>

In a nutshell, these projects could:

- Potentially start as early as May 2016.
- Involve at least two 200-300 foot long seismic ships for each of the surveys.
- Tow 6.5-mile long “streamers” at a speed of four-to-five knots.
- Survey the ocean that is from three-to-400 nautical miles off the N.C. coast.
- Take place 24-hours every day, seven days a week.
- Track along precise grids as follows:
 - Detailed grid – 2.2 x 2.2 nautical miles.
 - Regional grid – 13.5 x 17.3 nautical miles.
- Possibly disturb commercial gear (especially at night) including pots, traps, gillnets and long lines.
- Disrupt recreational fishing activities and tournaments.
- Impose “vessel exclusion zones” estimated to be 10.8 miles in length to protect towed air guns and steamers from boats and fishing activities.

How Can You Express Your Opinion About These Proposals?

The National Marine Fisheries Service plans to release its draft opinions on these applications around mid-March. There will then be **30-days** to make written comments and/or attend a public hearing if you wish to express your views about these applications.

All fishermen should contact the N.C. Division of Coastal Management to voice your concerns about these proposals anytime:

Braxton Davis, Director
252-808-2808 ext. 202 or braxton.davis@ncdenr.gov

What Questions Need Answers?

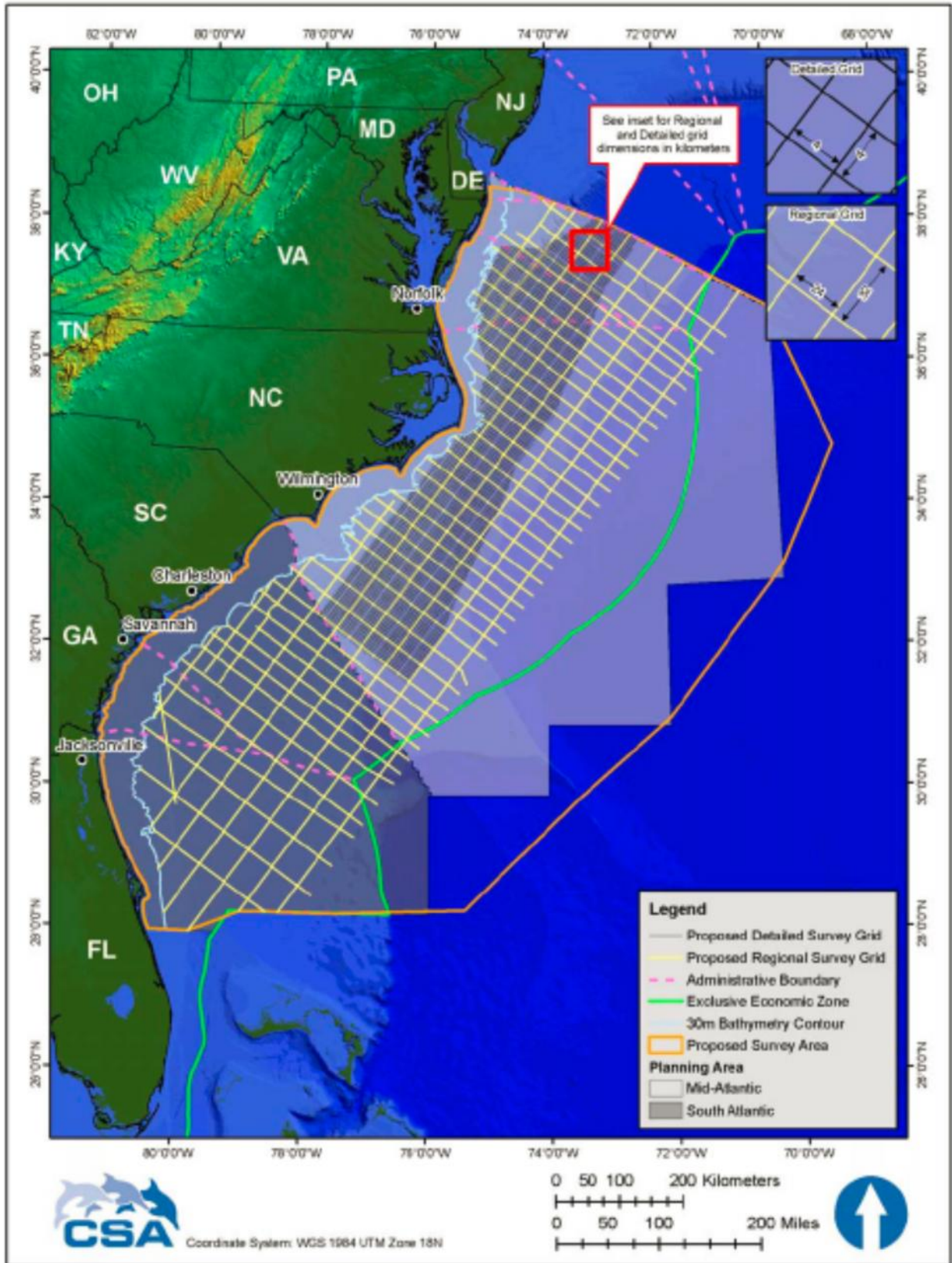
The following questions need to be addressed to fully understand and evaluate the potential economic, social and environmental implications of these applications:

- Will fishing (commercial and recreational) be allowed in areas being surveyed?
- Will private corporations conducting these surveys be required to avoid fishing operations?
- Why did the N.C. Division of Coastal Management not seek equal protection for commercial fishing activities when it commented on applications to conduct seismic surveys off our coast? (The State asked that survey boats not be allowed to interfere with “recreational fishing areas, seasonally focused fishing efforts, and saltwater fishing tournaments” but did not seek equal protection for on-going commercial fishing operations.)
- What will be the short and long-term effects on marine life and seafood catches?
- Why allow eight completely independent seismic surveys to overlap each other and repeatedly affect the exact same areas of the ocean?

Need More Information?

Frequently check the website listed above for updates on these applications and for official information on how to make public comments. If you need guidance, please contact Ladd Bayliss at the North Carolina Coastal Federation at 252-473-1607 or laddb@nccoast.org.

1. Spectrum Geo, Inc. - one year duration



2. TGS – NOPEC Geophysical Company - one year duration

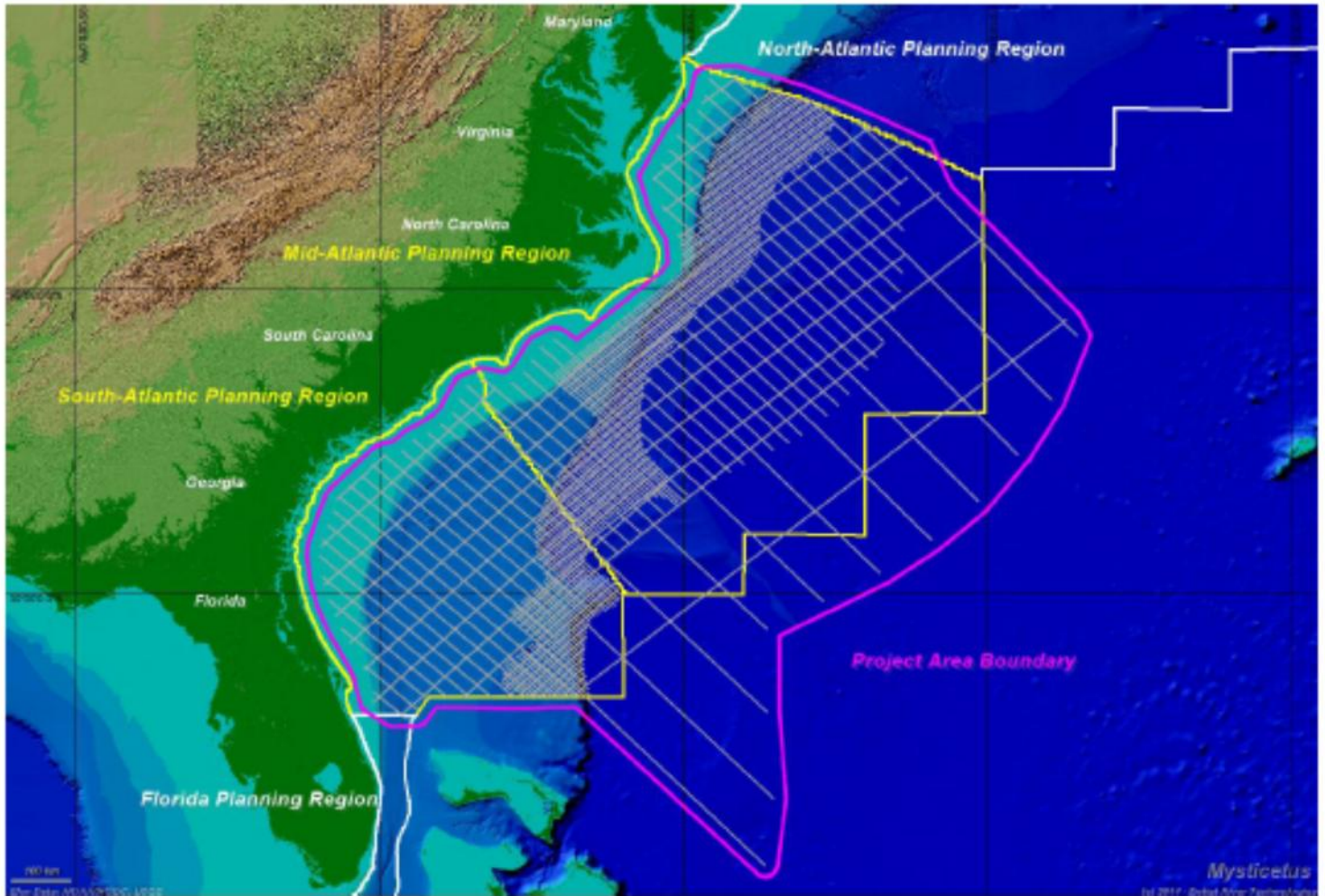


Figure 1-1. Proposed seismic survey lines for TGS' 2D seismic survey area in the Mid- and South Planning Areas in the Atlantic Ocean. Purple line = TGS project area boundary. Yellow line = BOEM Planning Areas.

3. ION Geo Ventures – 100 day duration

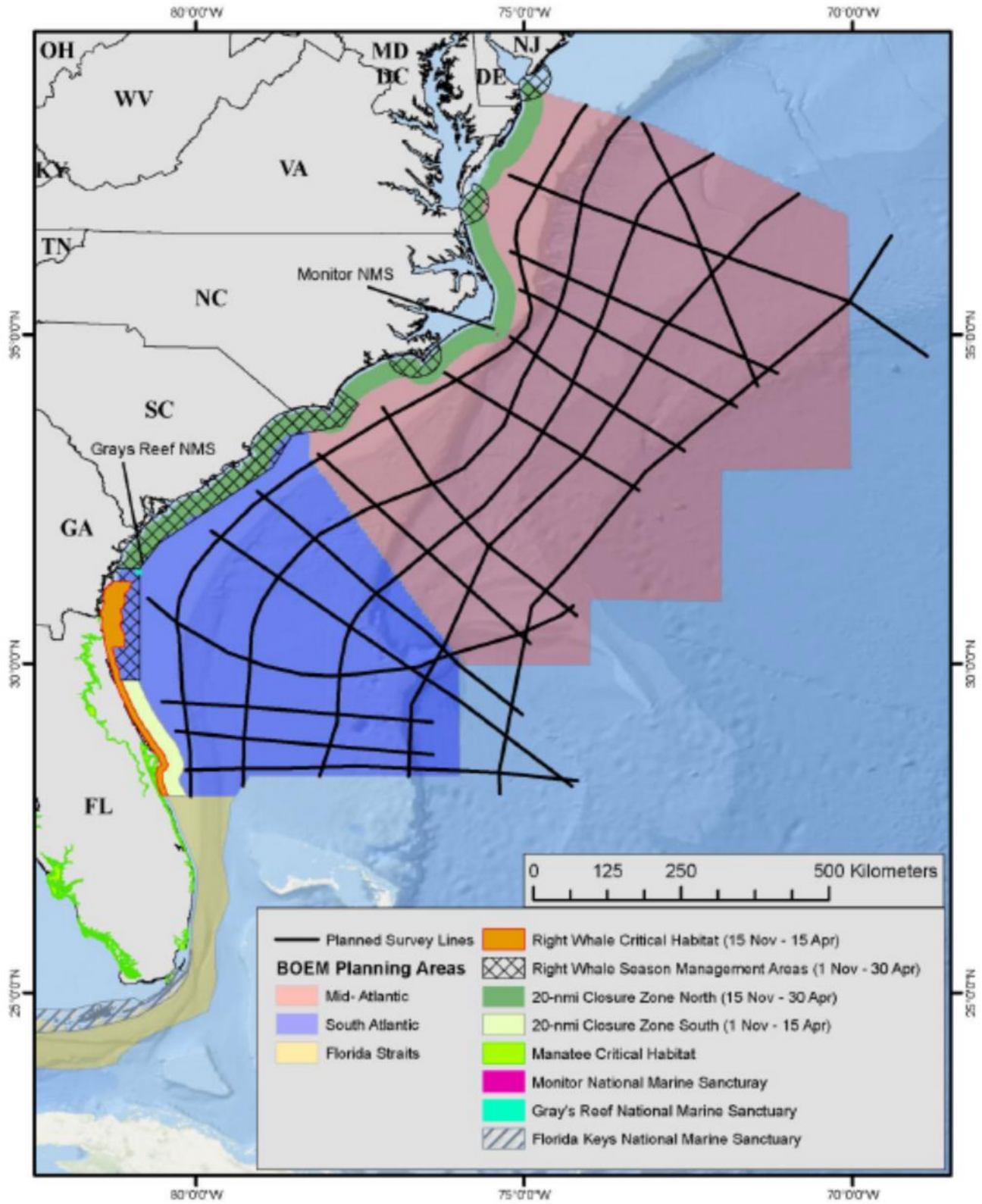
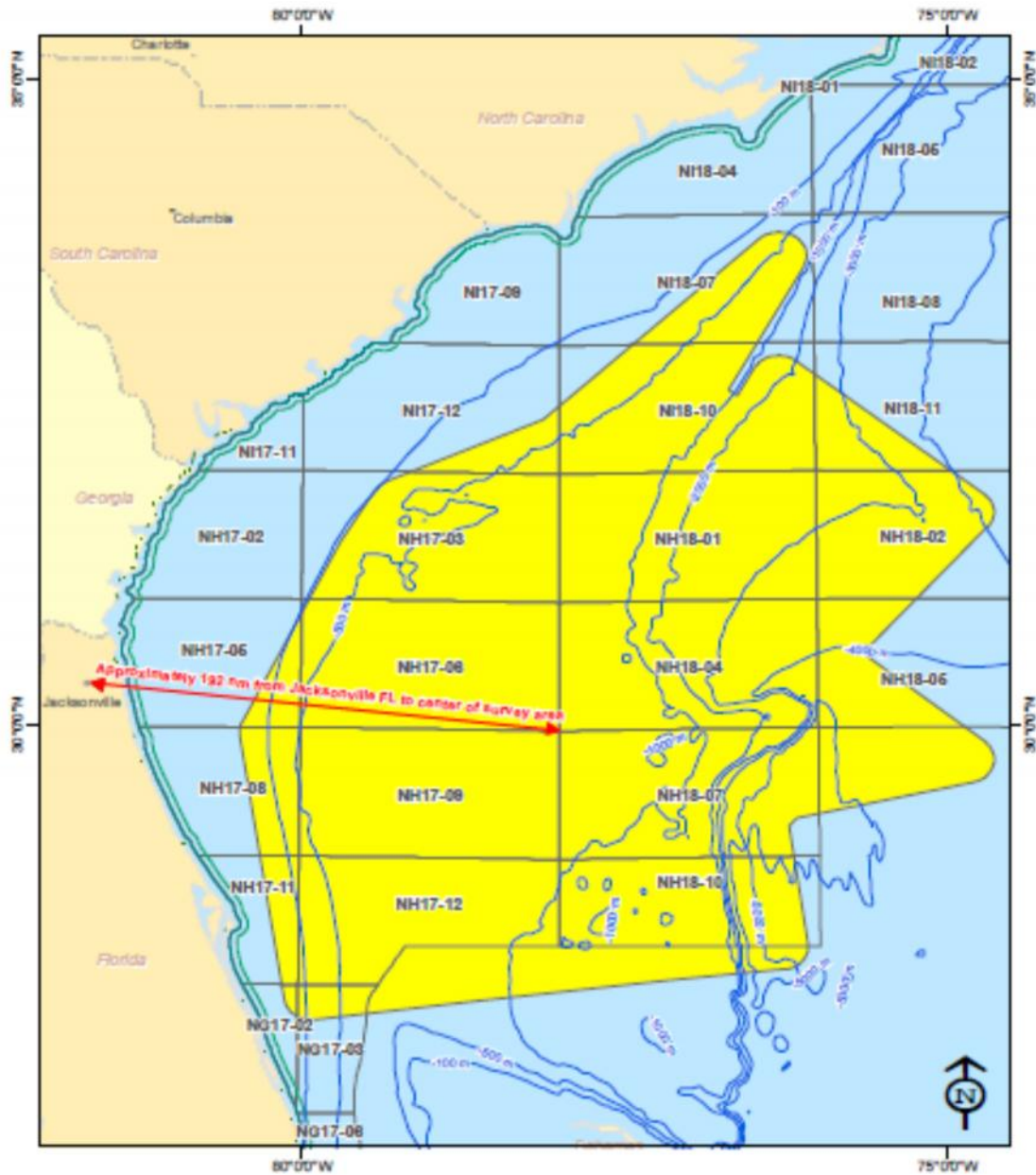


FIGURE 1. Planned seismic survey lines (in black) for ION's proposed seismic survey off the U.S. east coast in 2016.

4. TDI – Brooks International



TDI-Brooks International, Inc.
ONE East Coast MBES
Blake Plateau
Public Information Copy
BOEM-0327

0 50 100 200 Nautical Miles

Figure 1 - Proposed MBES survey areas