

*Science, Service, Stewardship*



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

Highly Migratory Species  
Management  
Division

August 26, 2009

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## 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 lifestage**
- **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**
- **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

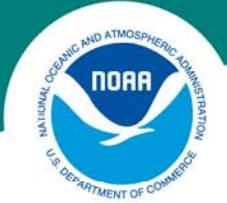


## Alternatives for Identifying EFH

**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

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## 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](http://sharpfin.nmfs.noaa.gov/website/EFH_Mapper/HMS/map.aspx)**



## 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**



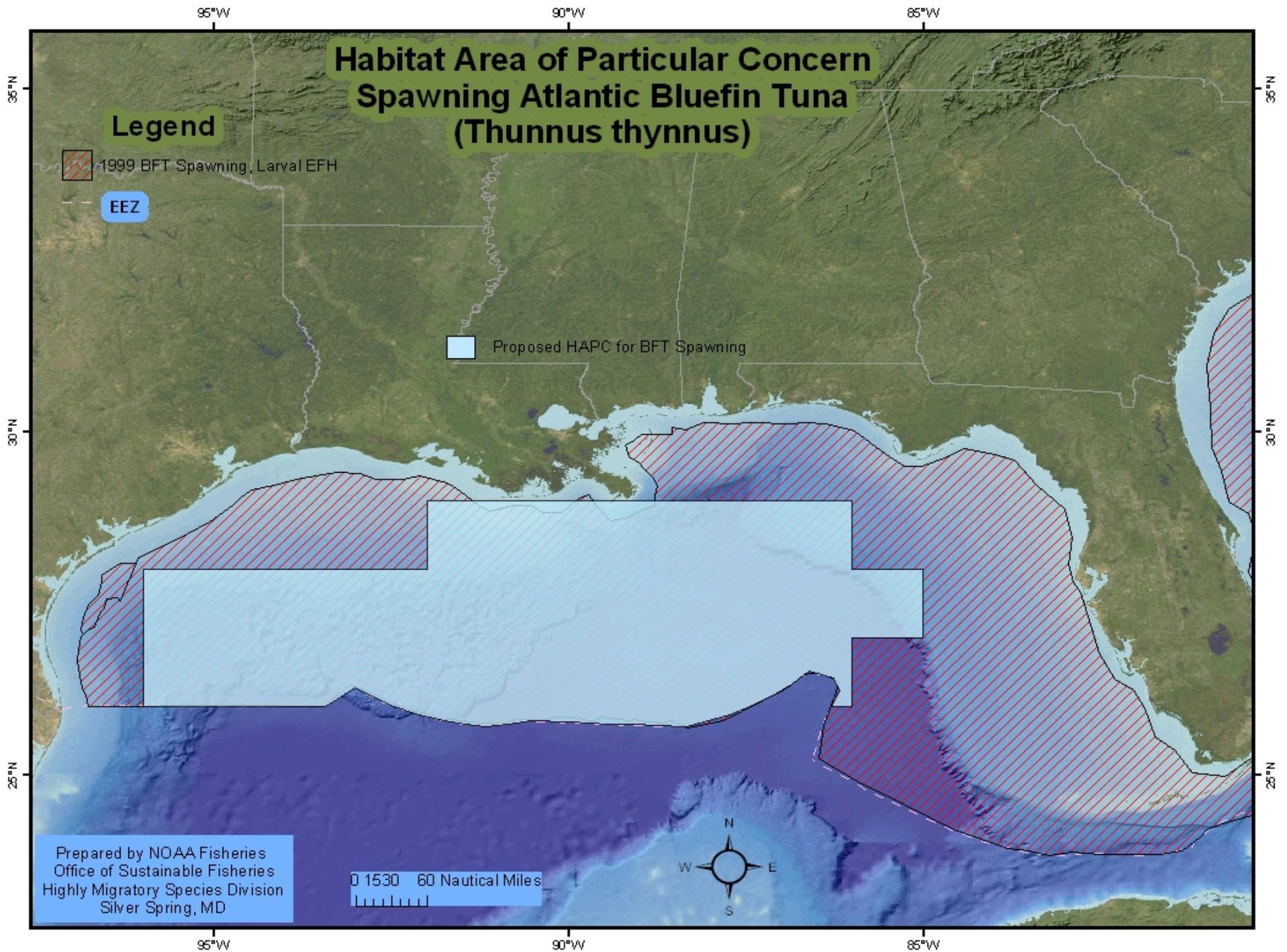
## Alternatives for Identifying HAPCs

**Alternative 1 – No Action; maintain current HAPCs**

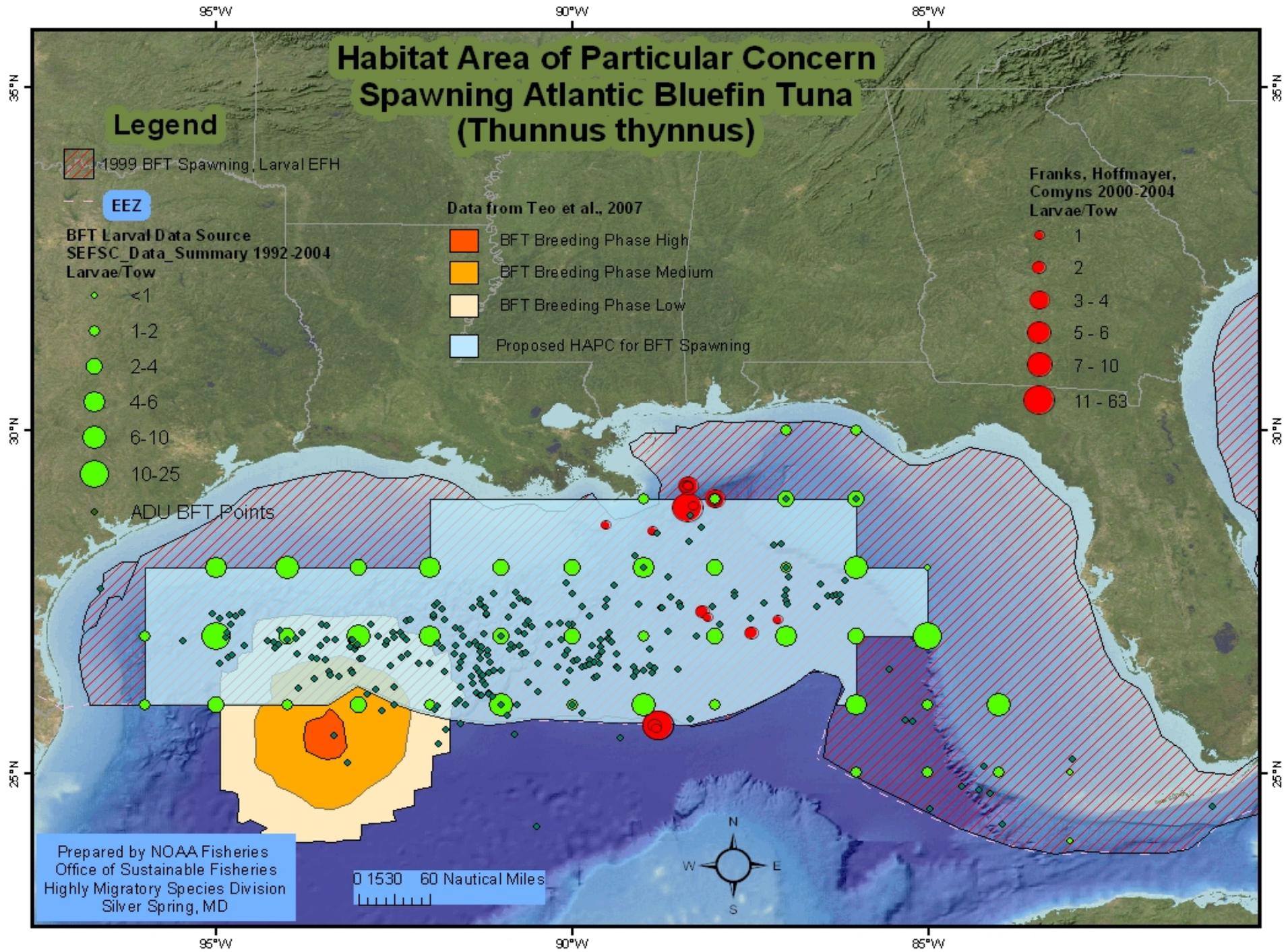
**Alternative 2 (Preferred Alternative) – Designate a HAPC for spawning bluefin tuna in the Gulf of Mexico while maintaining current HAPCs.**

***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*)





## 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**

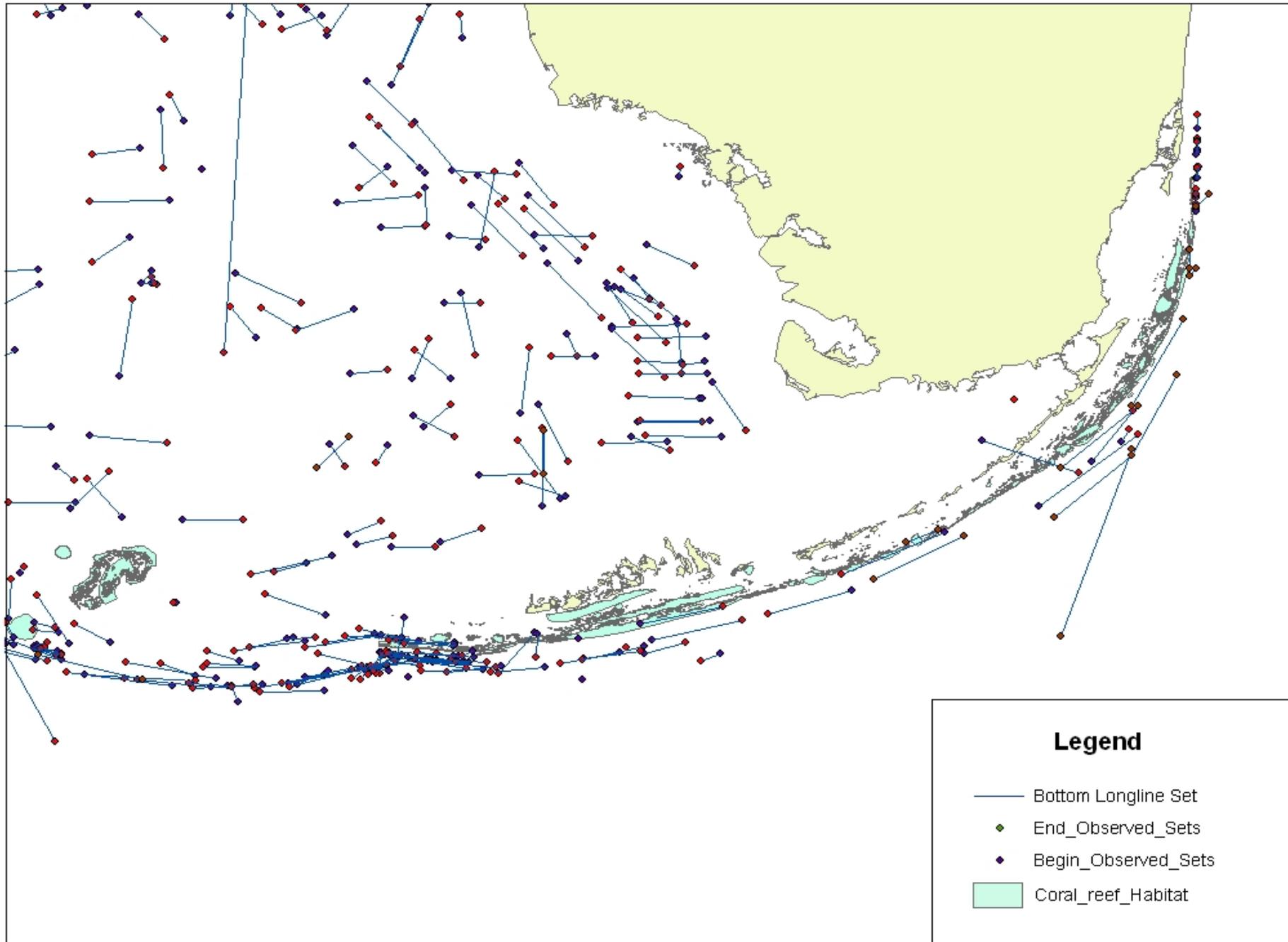
**Alternative 4 – Designate a HAPC for spawning bluefin tuna in the Gulf of Mexico based on the 95 percent probability boundary for adult bluefin tuna in the Gulf of Mexico**

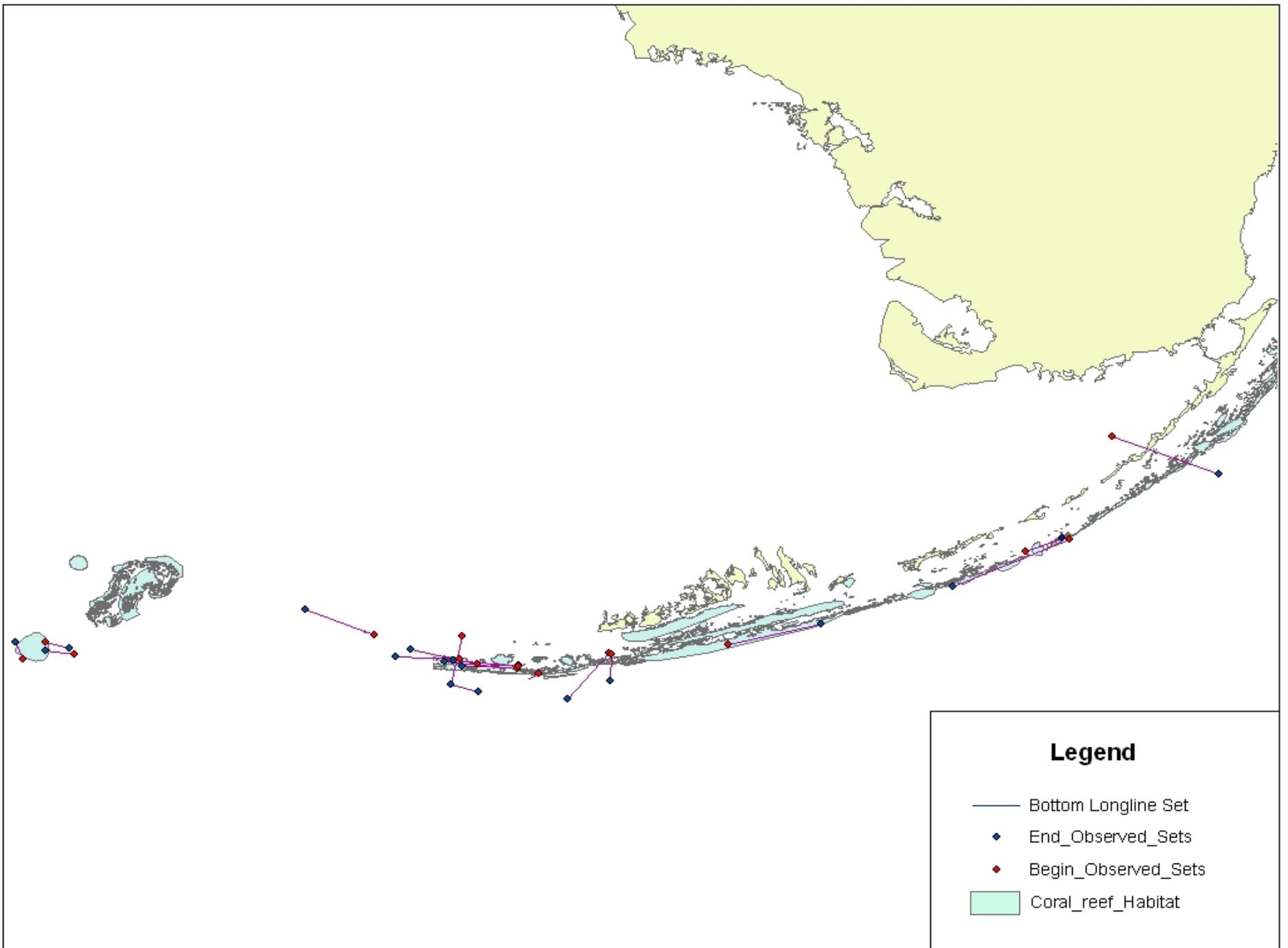


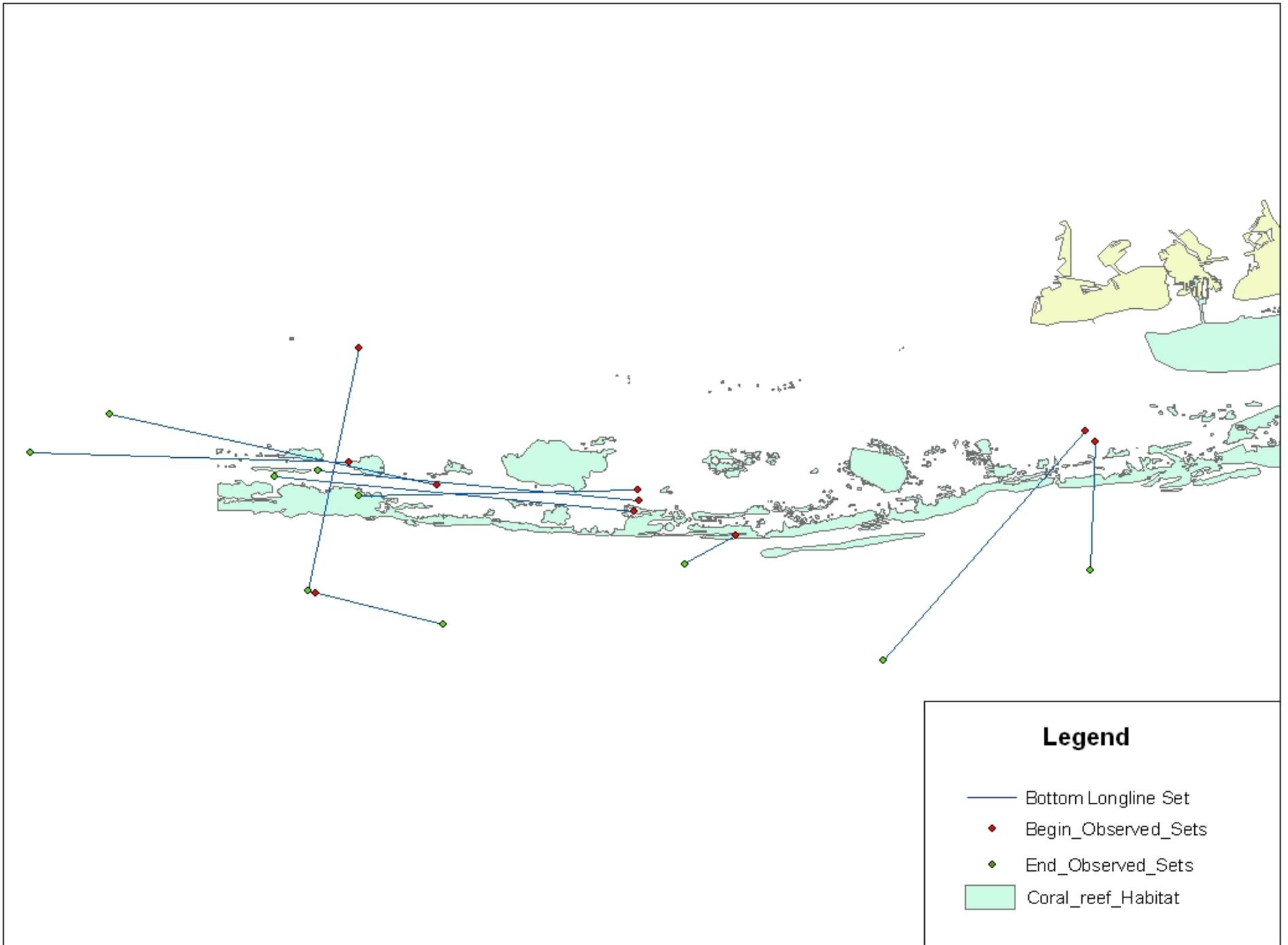
## Fishing Impacts on EFH

### 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**



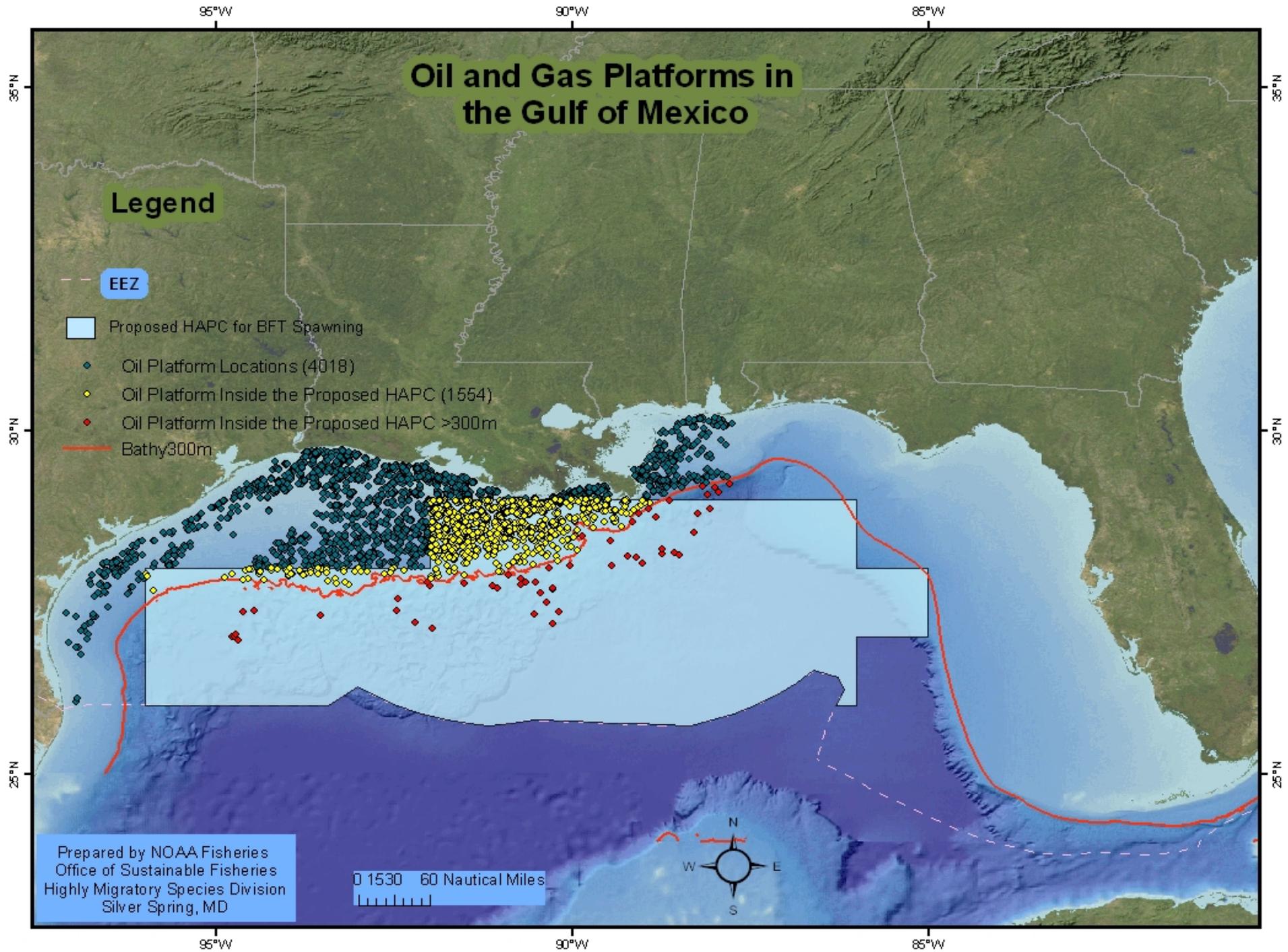
## Non-Fishing Impacts on EFH

- **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  
Office of Sustainable Fisheries  
Highly Migratory Species Division  
Silver Spring, MD

0 15 30 45 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>
<b>Western Planning Area</b>	5,240	28,576,583	1,824	10,213,248
<b>Central Planning Area</b>	12,370	66,452,086	5,416	28,875,454
<b>Eastern Planning Area</b>	11,486	64,556,650	128	720,217
<b>Totals</b>	<b>29,096*</b>	<b>159,585,319</b>	<b>7,368</b>	<b>39,808,919</b>

\* 7 blocks are split between the CPA and EPA.



## Public Hearings

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

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**Public Comment Period – Closes  
November 18, 2008**

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