



Council Habitat Update

December Council Meeting

Jessica Coakley (Staff) and Keith Hanson (GARFO HCD)

December 10, 2019



Today

- Update on the Northeast Regional Habitat Assessment (NRHA)
- Presentation on Council Coordination Committee (CCC) Habitat Workgroup Workshop (held August 2019)
- Presentation from Greater Atlantic Regional Fisheries Office (GARFO) Habitat Conservation Division (HCD) on "Projects of Interest" occurring in our region

Northeast Regional Habitat Assessment (NRHA)

To describe and characterize estuarine, coastal, and offshore fish habitat distribution, abundance, and quality in the Northeast using a partnership driven approach.





Geographic Scope: Northeast U.S.

- North Carolina/South Carolina boundary to the western end of the Scotian Shelf
- Includes the Mid-Atlantic Bight, Southern New England, Georges Bank, and the Gulf of Maine
- Inshore team focus from NOAA mean high tide/high marsh, to offshore extent of state surveys/state waters; offshore team focus is coastal marine waters to the edge of the continental shelf
- Different products from inshore/offshore teams that will be integrated

Focus Species (65+, important to managers)

- **Mid-Atlantic Council:** Atlantic and chub mackerel, butterfish, longfin and shortfin squid, surfclam, ocean quahog, summer flounder, scup, black sea bass, bluefish, golden and blueline tilefish, spiny dogfish
- **New England Council:** Cod, cusk, haddock, pollock, Acadian redfish, plaice, halibut, winter flounder, witch flounder, yellowtail flounder, wolffish, windowpane, ocean pout, offshore, red, and white hake, monkfish, Atlantic herring, salmon, skates (seven species), red crab, sea scallop
- **Additional Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission (ASMFC):** Eel, lobster, croaker, menhaden, striped bass, Atlantic sturgeon, black drum, cobia, horseshoe crab, Jonah crab, northern shrimp, red drum, shad and river herring, Spanish mackerel, spot, spotted seatrout, tautog, weakfish, coastal sharks
- **Highly migratory with Habitat Areas of Particular Concern (HAPC) designations:** Sandbar shark, dusky shark

4 Actions Being Considered

- Abundance and trends in habitat types in the inshore area
- Spatial descriptions of species habitat use in the offshore area
- Habitat vulnerability
- Habitat data visualization and decision support



Project teams

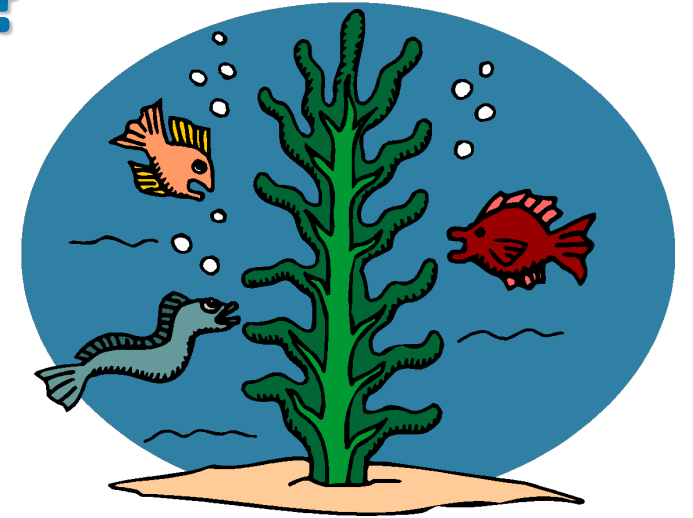
- **Project Coordinator:** Jessica Coakley
- **Team leads:** Jessica Coakley & Michelle Bachman (inshore); Laurel Smith (offshore)
- **Technical leads on GIS and modeling work:** Chris Haak, Tori Kentner
- **Inshore team members:** Bryan DeAngelis, Julie Devers, Stephen Faulkner, AK Leight, Dave Packer, Mark Rousseau, Eric Schneider, Alison Verkade
- **Offshore team members:** Rich Bell, Kevin Friedland, Vince Guida, Donna Johnson, Kathy Mills, Marta Ribera, Vince Saba, David Stevenson, Marek Topolski, Harvey Walsh
- **Habitat Climate Vulnerability Assessment:** Jon Hare, Mike Johnson, Mark Nelson, Emily Farr, others

Joint inshore/offshore products

- **Data inventory:**
 - **Location and extent of habitat types** as maps (Geographic Information System (GIS) framework; to finest scale practical).
 - **Species distribution data** from fisheries-independent surveys
- **Written inventory** of habitats and habitat use for each focus species (focus species profiles)
- **Habitat data visualization and decision support tool**
 - Will begin this work in later stage of assessment
 - Maintain, house, and refresh products that are developed
 - Updates every 5 years

What types of data are we including?

- Sediment and Benthic
- Bathymetry
- Temperature
- Coastal Habitat Types (i.e., submerged aquatic vegetation, oyster reef, tidal marsh, hard bottom)
- Productivity Data (i.e., chlorophyll, zooplankton, etc.)
- Hydrodynamic Data
- Climate Model Outputs
- Focus Species Distribution and Abundance



Northeast Regional Habitat Assessment

- Quantity and quality of inshore and offshore habitats from Maine to NC/SC border
- Led by MAFMC, NEFMC, NOAA and others including ACFHP
- Workplans are developed, data collection and analysis expected July 2019-2022
- EFH, Habitat Areas of Particular Concern, fisheries management, EAFM

Chesapeake Bay Regional Fish Habitat Assessment

- Data-driven approach using biological, stressor and habitat information at best available spatial resolution
- Led by Sustainable Fisheries GIT
- GIT Supported Contractor Began May 2019
- Guide conservation and restoration including land use planning and BMPs

Atlantic Coast Fish Habitat Partnership Northeast Assessment

- Prioritization of diadromous and estuarine dependent fish from Maine to Virginia
- Led by ACFHP through ASMFC
- Kick off meeting May 2019, final product expected by December 2019
- Identify project priority areas

Habitat Climate Vulnerability Assessment

- Scoring of vulnerability (exposure and sensitivity) of key habitats (rock cobble, salt marsh, riverine water column) to climate stressors from Maine to North Carolina
- Expert opinion process and scoring rubric
- Led by NOAA Fisheries
- Pilot scoring began April 2019

Next Steps

- Continue data inventory and data set assembly in collaboration with state and federal partners and teams working on other projects (through Feb. 2019 or so?)
- Continue to identify similar assessments to consider analytical techniques and reporting approaches we could apply here
- Continue to explore model-based approaches
- Develop focus species habitat use reports
- Update Steering Committee on Jan. 16, 2020



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CCC Habitat Workgroup



- Formed in 2014 (Council staff chair rotates with CCC rotation)
- Cross Council workgroup comprised of habitat staff:
 - All Councils (8)
 - Habitat rep. from each NMFS regional office
 - NMFS HQ rep.
 - NMFS S&T
- Council driven topics and products, with NMFS partner support
- Quarterly webinars unless other activities ongoing (report writing (e.g. 2016 HAPC report), workshop prep (2016, 2019), NEFSC habitat science roundtable)

EFH Consultation and Regional Innovations Workshop

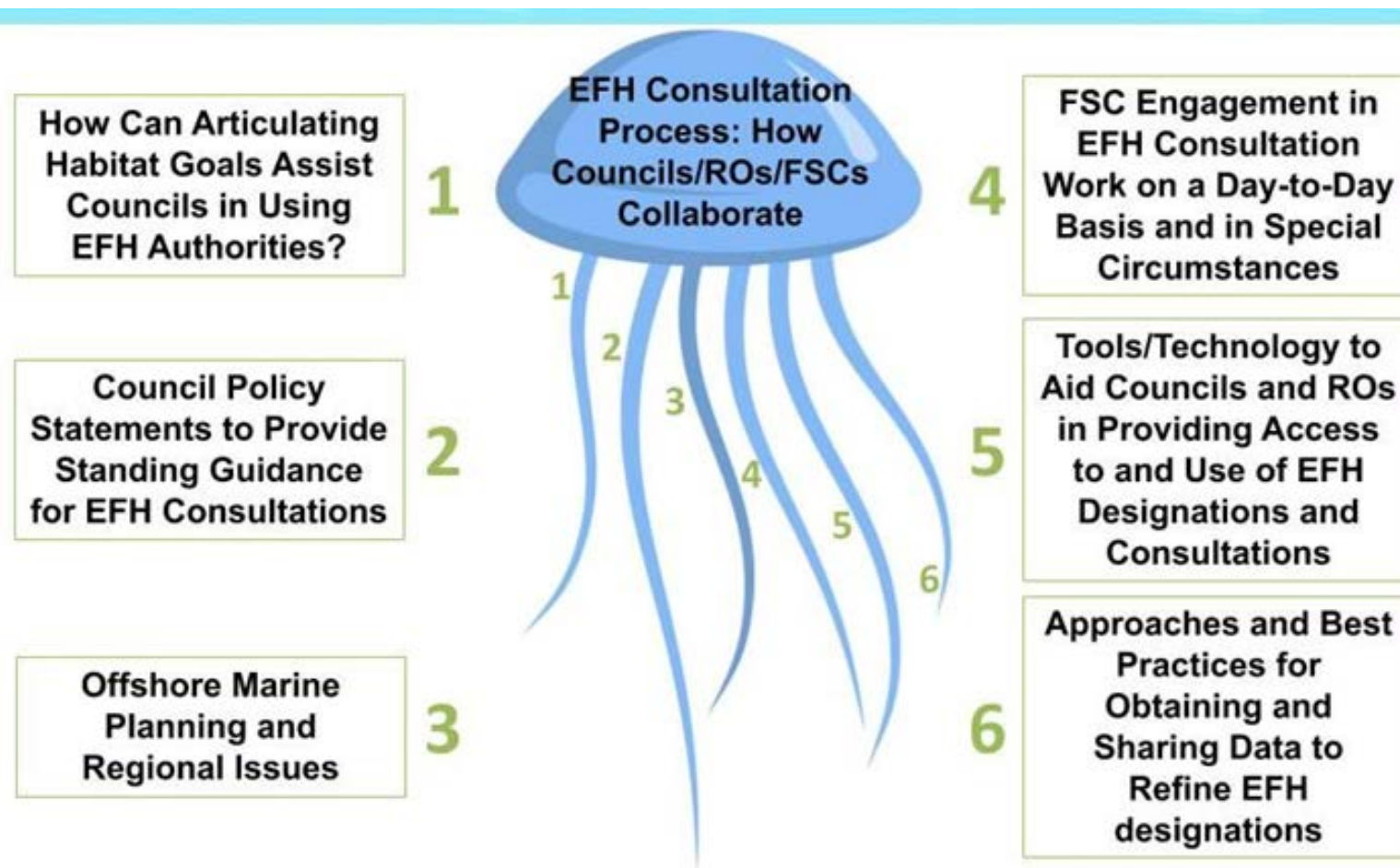


- Participants included:
 - 10 staff from Councils
 - 9 from NMFS Regions
 - 5 from NMFS HQ

Expertise in essential fish habitat (EFH) and are habitat practitioners. All regions represented. Workshop was self organized.

EFH Consultation and Regional Innovations Workshop

Seven related sessions over two days, followed by a third day to discuss major takeaways and start regional action planning.



Outcomes

- Final report in online briefing materials
- Good things happen when we get together with other regions!
 - Connect
 - Learn
 - Walk away with new ideas



COUNCIL COORDINATION COMMITTEE

HABITAT WORK GROUP

**Report from
Council/NOAA Fisheries EFH Consultation and
Regional Innovations Workshop**

August 20-22, 2019

Portland, Oregon

Potential Regional Future Work

- Both Councils and GARFO HCD can better disseminate EFH information on their webpages.
 - Add informational content to sites.
 - Ensure the three websites are accurately linked to each other.
 - Councils - post lists of types of projects we have asked GARFO to communicate on, and related comment letters.
 - GARFO - include information about coordination with Councils on their site.
 - Highlight some successes in terms of conservation outcomes, effective collaboration (Councils, GARFO).

Potential Regional Future Work

- On habitat policies.....
 - MAFMC developed a range of habitat policies in 2016; no major updates are planned.
 - NEFMC is considering new habitat policies, which may expand upon the range of topics addressed by MAFMC
 - NEFMC adopted MAFMC policies focused on energy
 - Maybe MAFMC can “borrow” those?
 - GARFO can make sure staff are aware of and using the policies during EFH consultation work.

Potential Regional Future Work

- Consolidate goals, objectives, policies, and habitat-related research priorities for the region in one place.
 - Consider how to make these searchable/accessible.
 - Identify shared priorities.
 - Crosswalk to identify links between these and national/regional strategic plans.
 - Consider whether this might step us toward a regional strategic plan for habitat activities.
 - Consider forming a workgroup of Council, GARFO, and NEFSC HCD staff for this review and longer-term planning.

Questions?



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Council engagement in EFH consults

- Council told GARFO HCD we are most interested in hearing about and potentially engaging on the following:
 - Offshore projects: all projects, including energy development projects, cables and pipelines, mining, etc.
 - Nearshore/Estuarine Projects: focusing on large scale projects, including transportation and port development projects.
- Also interested in regular Council updates (bi-annual)





NOAA Habitat Conservation

Conserving Habitat for Future Generations

Habitat Updates Greater Atlantic Region



Photo credits: J. Harris (left) S. Tuxbury (right)

Mid-Atlantic Fisheries Management Council
December 10, 2019

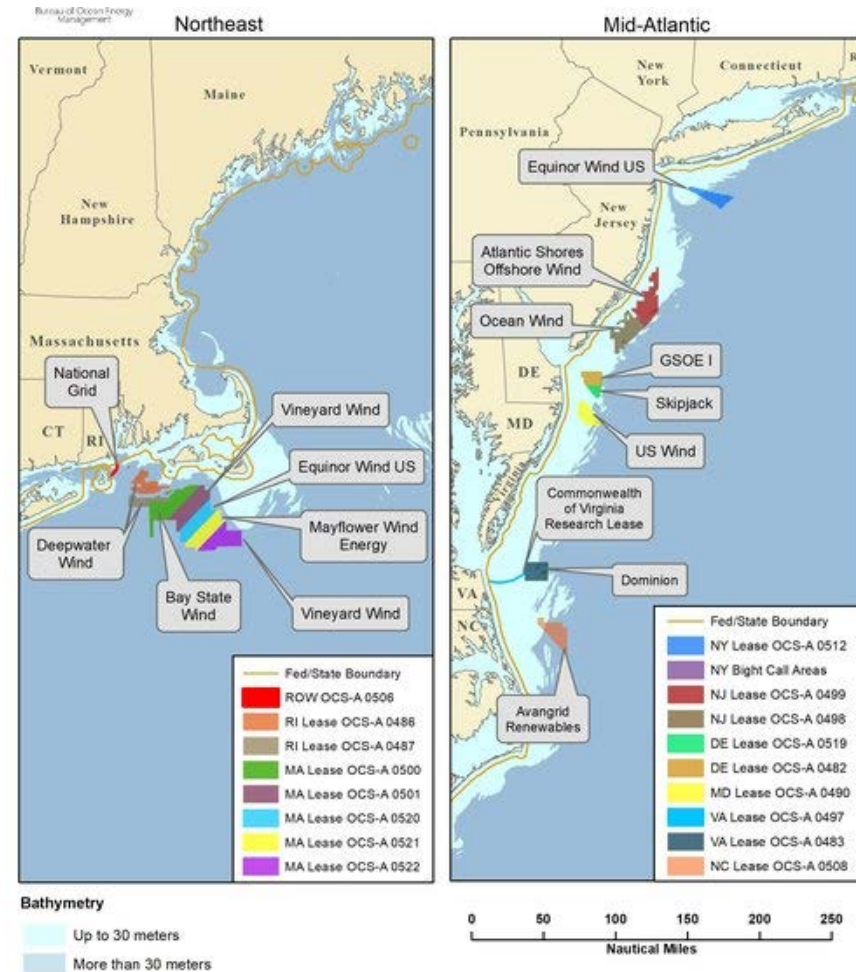
Keith Hanson
GARFO Habitat Conservation Division

Offshore Wind Energy

Mid-Atlantic Updates:

Expect BOEM to publish NOIs for EISs during the first half of 2020 for:

- Empire Wind (NY)
- Ocean Wind (NJ)
- Skipjack Wind (DE)

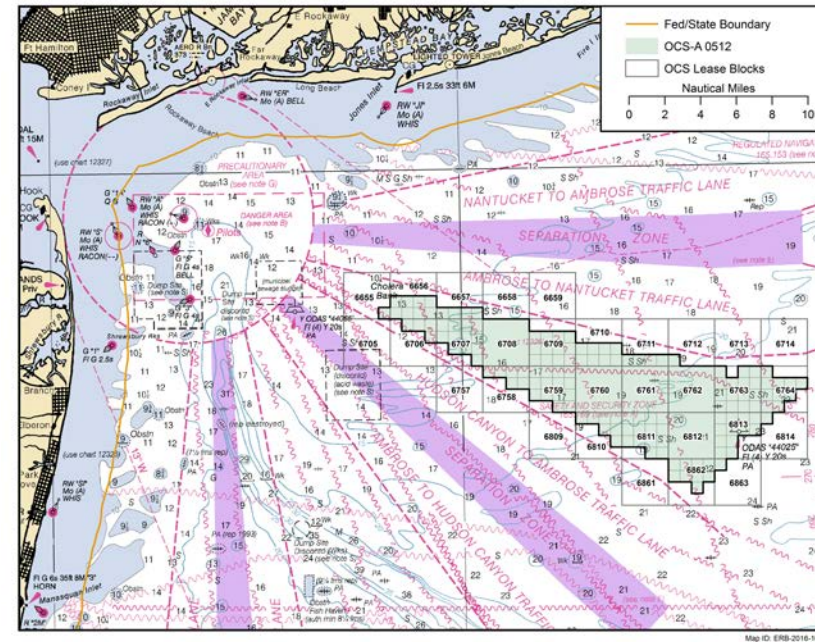


Renewable Energy Areas as of 8/28/2019. Source: BOEM/MAFMC/NEFSC wind webpage

Offshore Wind Energy

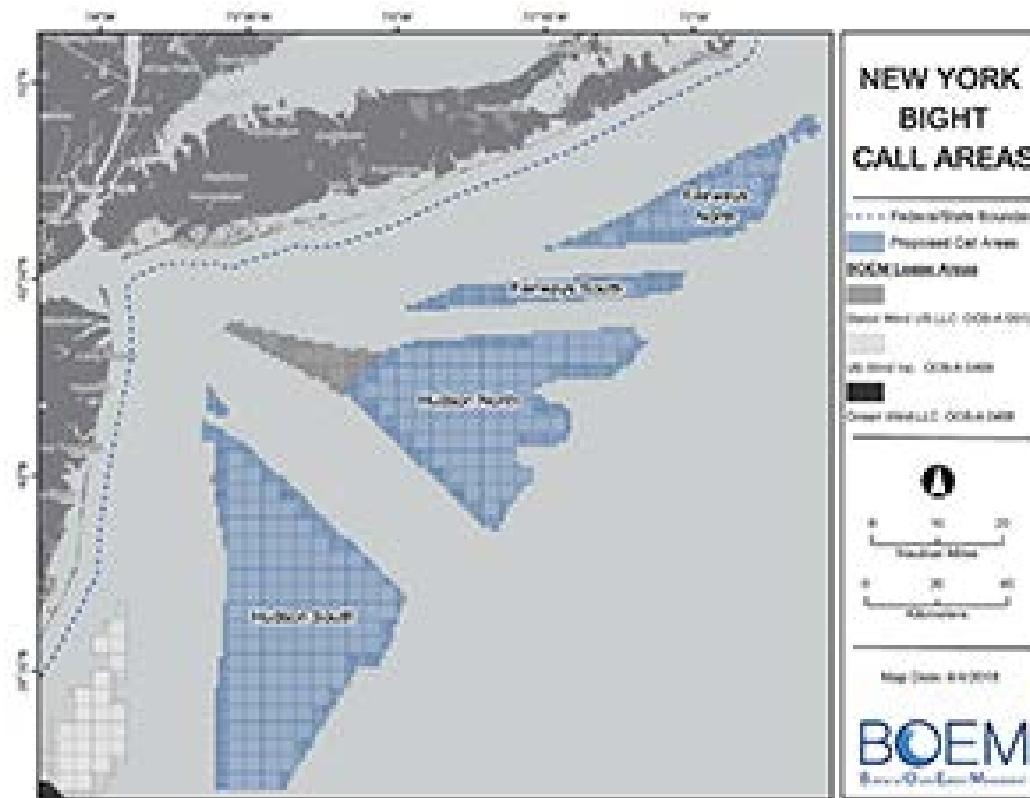
Empire Wind (Equinor) - NY

- BOEM expects COP will be submitted to them by the end of this year.
- Additional survey work is expected to occur this spring.
- Interagency meetings held this fall, focused on possible cable alignments to connect to shore.

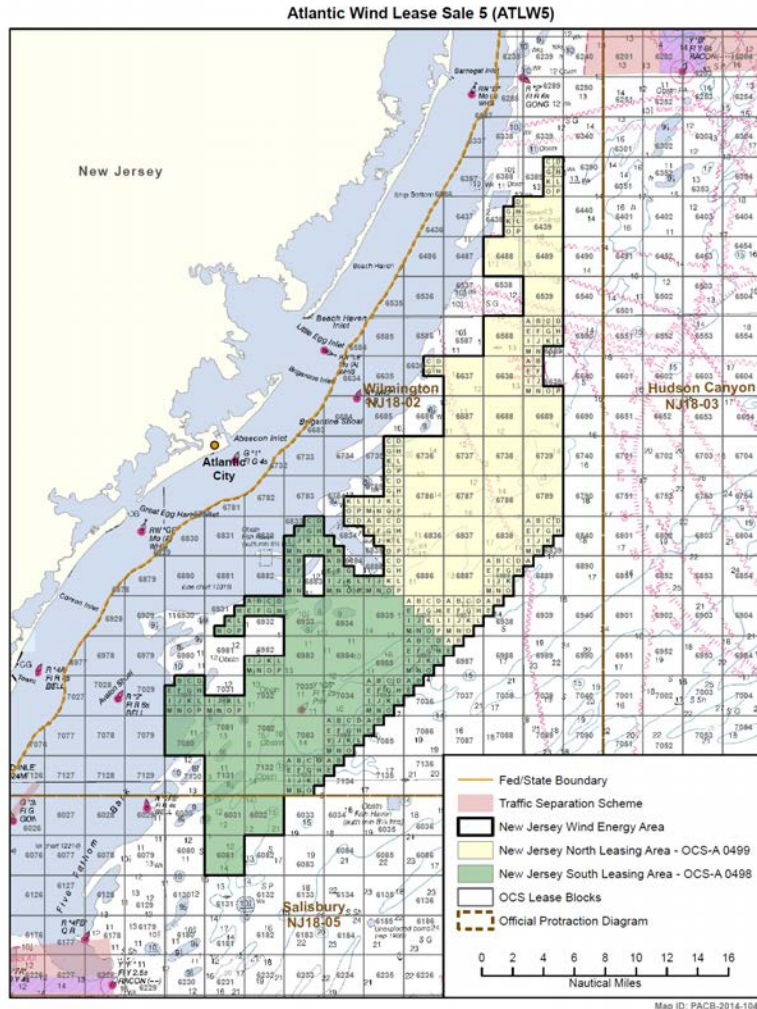


Offshore Wind Energy

BOEM has not made any decision yet on identifying additional wind energy areas in the New York Bight.



Offshore Wind Energy



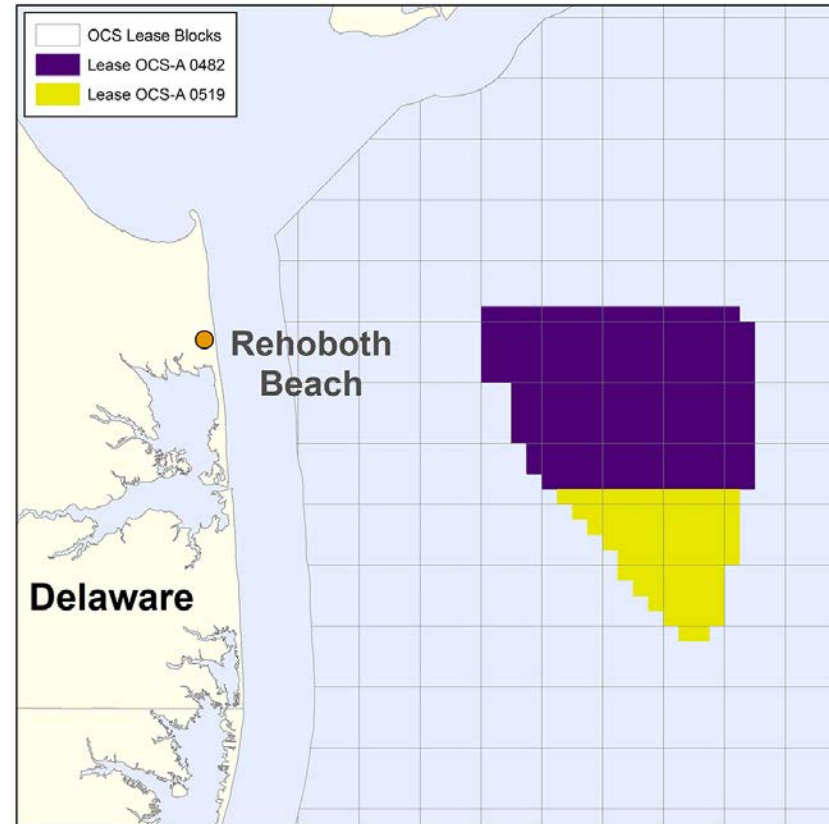
Ocean Wind (Ørsted) - NJ

- BOEM completed the first round of sufficiency review of the COP.
- The NOI is expected in 2020
- Interagency meeting held to discuss onshore office/maintenance facility

Offshore Wind Energy

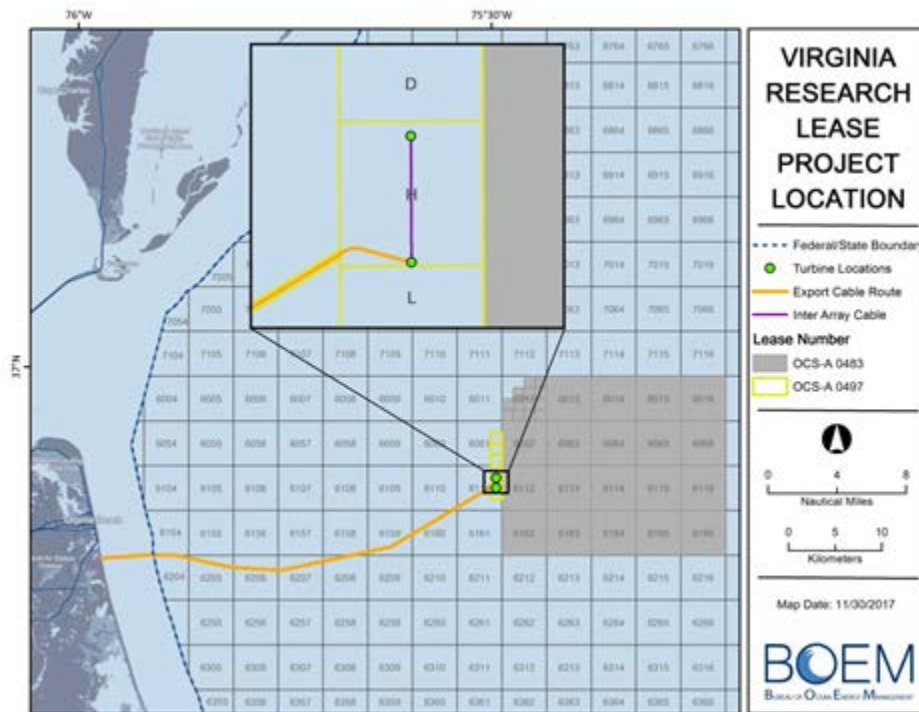
Skipjack (Ørsted) - DE

- Ørsted submitted a revised COP to BOEM, review expected to be completed in mid-Dec.
- Currently conducting geophysical surveys.



Offshore Wind Energy

Coastal Virginia Offshore Wind



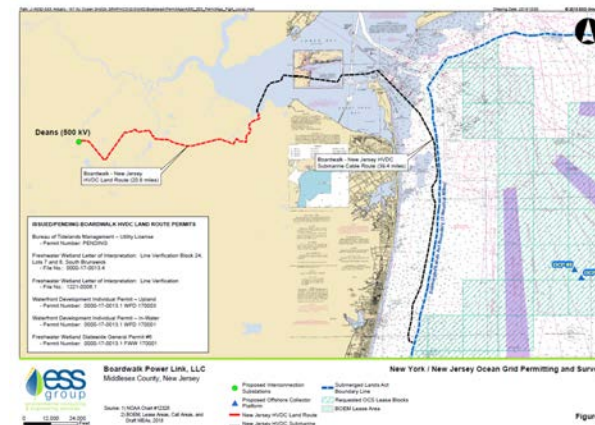
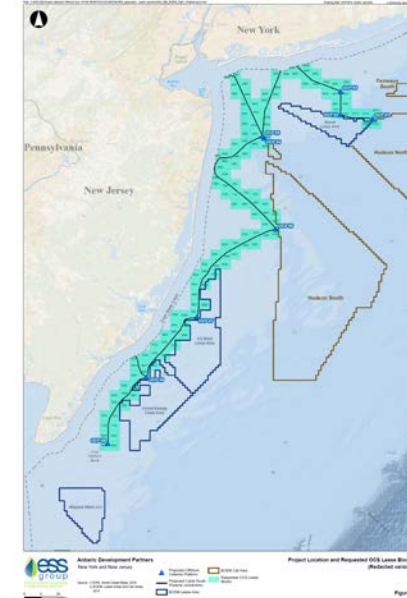
- onshore construction expected to be completed before the end of 2019
- offshore construction is expected to be completed by Q3 (July-Sept) 2020.

Offshore Wind Energy

Offshore Energy Transmission

Boardwalk Power Link, LLC

- Component of Anbaric's proposed New York and New Jersey, Ocean Grid
- Connect to PSE&G's facility in Middlesex Co, NJ
- Received an endangered species information request in October 2019



BOEM Oil and Gas Survey Activities

EFH consultations remain on hold for pending oil and gas survey applications

From the BOEM website:

<https://www.boem.gov/regions/atlantic-ocs-region/atlantic-gg-permitting>

Pending

CGG Services (US)

TDI Brooks International, Inc.

ABI Holdings Limited (Austin Exploration)

TGS

Ion Geophysical Corp.

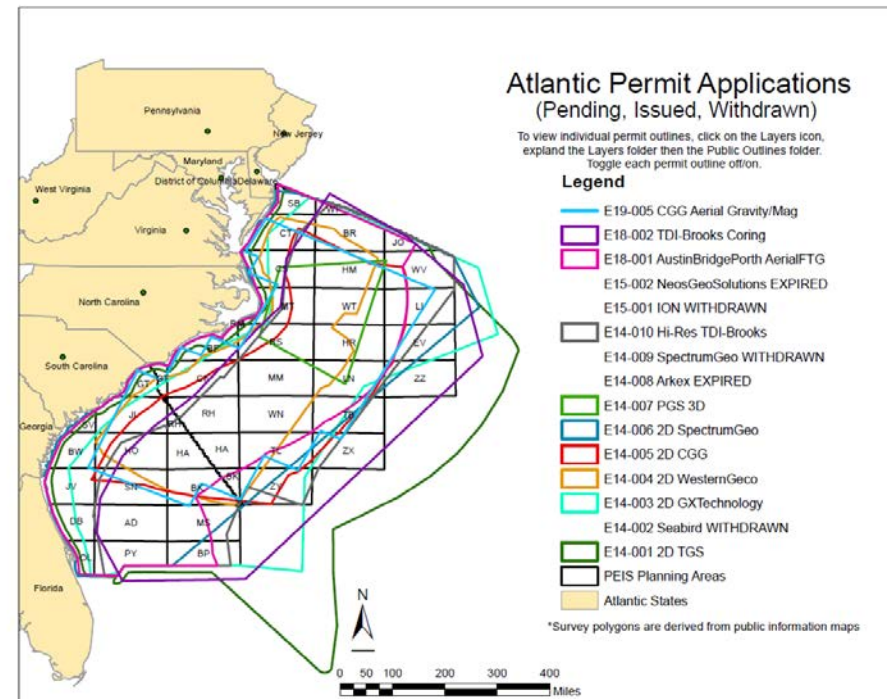
WesternGeco, LLC

CGG Services (US) Inc.

Spectrum Geo Inc.

PGS

TDI-Brooks International, Inc.



BOEM Oil and Gas Survey Activities

Expired Permits

- NEOS GeoSolutions Inc.
- ARKeX Limited

Withdrawn Permits

- Spectrum Geo Inc.
- SeaBird Exploration Americas, Inc.
- GX Technology Corporation

Nothing new on the issuance of incidental harassment authorizations by NOAA

ACOE Coastal Storm Risk Management Studies

U.S Army Corps has a number of CRMS underway:

- Nassau County Back Bays
- NY/NJ Harbor and Tributaries Study (NY/NJ HATS)
- New Jersey Back Bay Study
- Baltimore Metro
- Northern Virginia
- City of Norfolk – Chief’s report complete

Options under consideration include storm gates across inlets, levees, floodwalls, non-structural measures, EWN

NOIs are expected for NJBB and NY/NJHATs in the coming weeks.