

Habitat Report

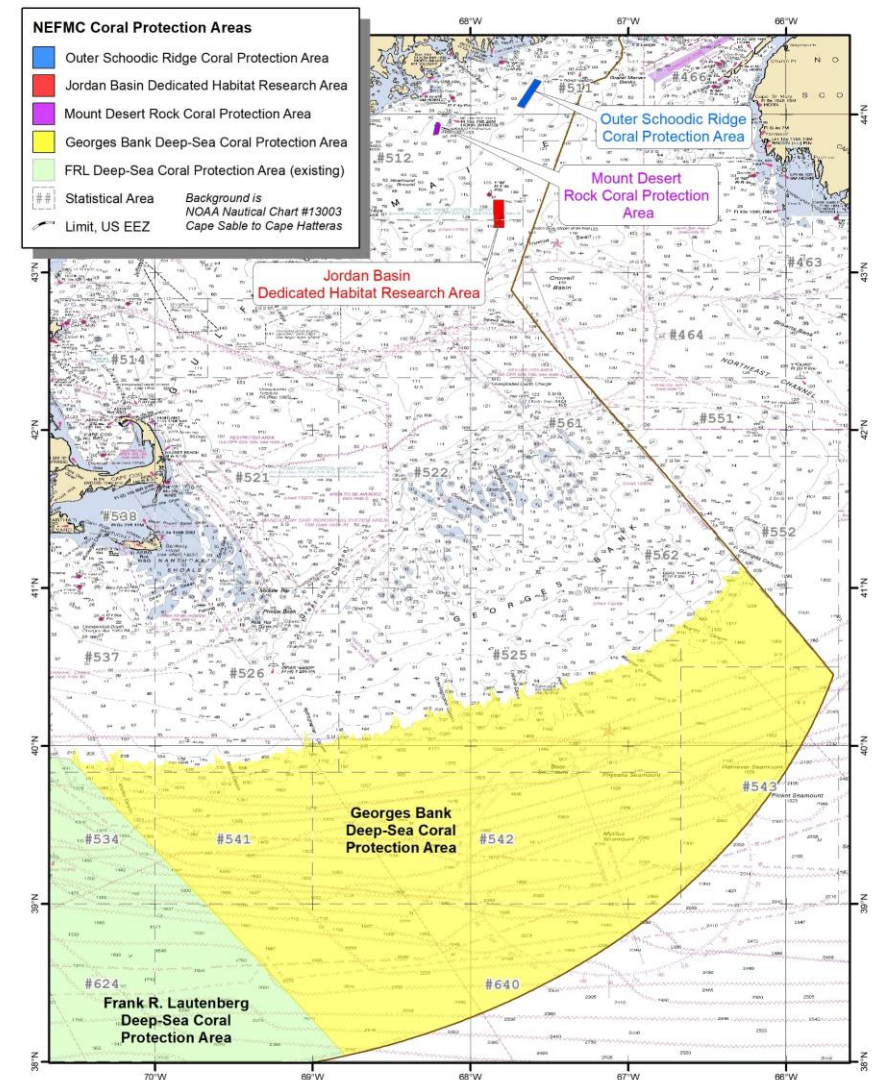
**Michelle Bachman,
NEFMC staff**

**NEFMC
September 30, 2021
Via Webinar**



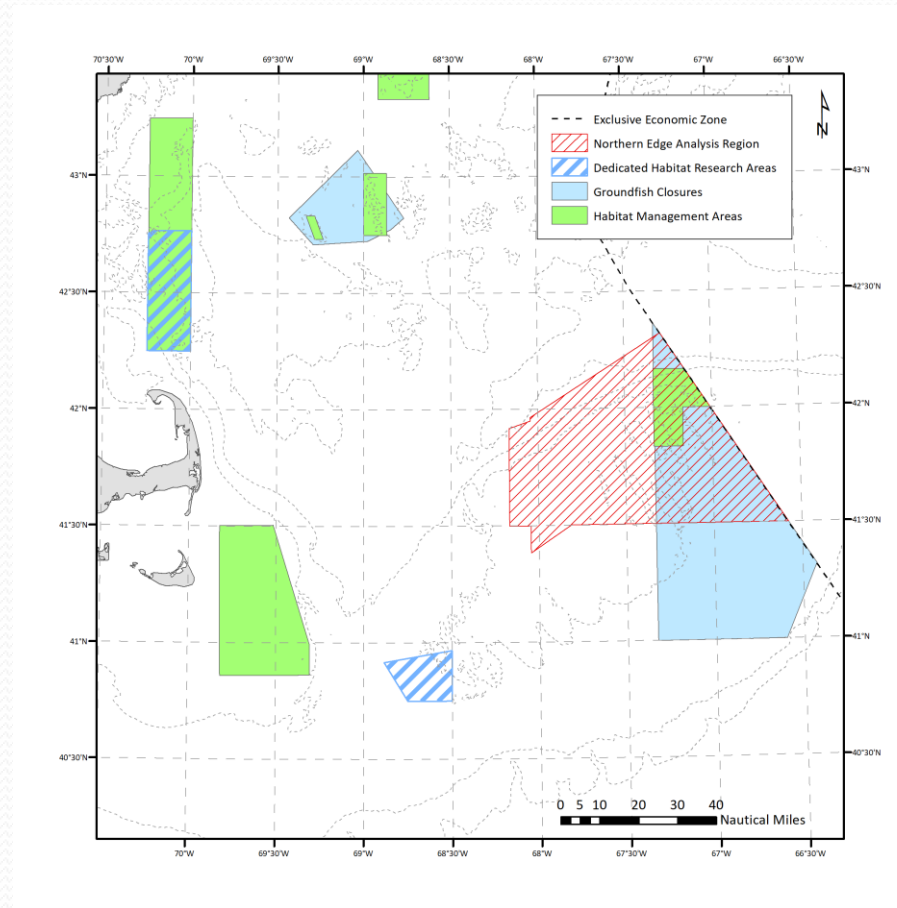
Deep-Sea Coral Amendment

- Implemented July 26, 2021 ([regulations](#))
 - Deep-Sea Coral Protection Areas: Georges Bank, Outer Schoodic Ridge, Mount Desert Rock
 - Transiting and framework adjustment provisions
 - Jordan Basin Dedicated Habitat Research Area
- For more information and maps:
 - <http://www.nefmc.org/library/omnibus-deep-sea-coral-amendment>
 - <https://www.fisheries.noaa.gov/action/omnibus-deep-sea-coral-amendment>
 - <https://www.northeastoceandata.org/qquvzTSA>



Northern Edge Habitat Management

- 2021 Council Priority: “Assess the possibility of and, if possible, develop an action to revise HMAs on the Northern Edge of Georges Bank”
- Habitat PDT drafting white paper
 - Background
 - Habitat, fishery characteristics of area
 - Gear effects studies and relevant findings
 - Considerations for undertaking an action
- October 26: Committee and Advisory Panel update
- Subsequent Committee meeting: recommend whether Council should initiate an action
- **No Council action required today**



Aquaculture Development

- NEFMC and MAFMC commented on two draft strategic plans for aquaculture research and interagency coordination
 - Plans: <https://www.fisheries.noaa.gov/action/agencies-seek-public-input-aquaculture-regulatory-efficiency-and-science-planning-task-force>
- Aquaculture Opportunity Areas
 - Work related to Regions 1 and 2 (Gulf of Mexico and Southern California) is ongoing (i.e., regional atlases)
 - Regions 3 and 4 should be announced in the coming months

Blue Water Fisheries

- NMFS is the lead agency on the EIS (with EPA and USACOE)
- Developer wants to include Atlantic Salmon in the project
- NEFMC has an FMP for [Atlantic salmon](#)
 - [§ 648.41 Framework specifications.](#)
 - (a) ***Within season management action.*** The New England Fishery Management Council (NEFMC) may, at any time, initiate action to implement, add to or adjust Atlantic salmon management measures to:
 - (1) Allow for Atlantic salmon aquaculture projects in the EEZ, provided such an action is consistent with the goals and objectives of the Atlantic Salmon FMP
- NMFS will reach out to the Council on this issue soon

Council Policy on Wind Energy

- Adopted June 2018
- PDT recommending specific additions, including:
 - Habitat mapping and characterization
 - Issues to consider in impacts analyses
 - Avoidance of activity during spawning and settlement
 - Coordinating research and monitoring across projects
 - Coordinating layouts across projects
- Committee and Advisory Panel will discuss on October 26
- Anticipate Council approval of updated policy in December
- **No Council action required today**

Council Policy on Wind Energy

On June 14, 2018, the New England Fishery Management Council adopted policies related to offshore wind energy and oil and gas development, as recommended by the Council's Habitat Committee. These policies were originally developed by the Mid-Atlantic Fishery Management Council. The wind energy section of the policy was updated on XX 2021 based on the Council's growing experience with wind energy development combined with the evolution of offshore wind technology which will likely have different environmental effects as compared to fixed offshore wind.

Policy Goal

The Council supports efforts to mitigate the effects of climate change, including the development of renewable energy projects, provided that risks to the health of marine ecosystems, sustainable fisheries, and ocean habitats are minimized.

Best management practices and stakeholder engagement

1. Best management practices¹ should be employed throughout all phases of offshore wind development and operations to avoid adverse impacts on fish and their habitats and to prevent conflicts with other user groups, including recreational and commercial fisheries.
2. The Bureau of Ocean Energy Management and offshore wind developers should engage early and often with the fishing community. Outreach should include individual fishermen and fishing businesses, recreational and commercial fishing organizations, NOAA Fisheries, state resource management agencies, the Responsible Offshore Science Alliance, and the Councils.

Project siting and environmental review

3. Developers should accurately map and characterize all benthic habitat types throughout the entire project area (including cable corridors), especially complex habitats that are sensitive to impact, in accordance with NMFS' Recommendations for Mapping Fish Habitat.
 - a. Complex habitat are defined in [NMFS' Recommendations for Mapping Fish Habitat](#) (March 2021) as: 1) Hard bottom substrates; 2) Hard bottom substrates with epifauna or macroalgae cover; and 3) Vegetated habitats (e.g., submerged aquatic vegetation and tidal wetlands).
 - b. These maps are essential for EFH consultations and to support other management and science needs.

¹ MAFMC Offshore Wind Best Management Practices Workshop (2014); BOEM Final Report on Best Management Practices and Mitigation Measures (2014)

Responsible Offshore Science Alliance

- Advisory Council meeting on September 24. [Agenda](#):
 - Why are we collecting data on fisheries relevant to OSW?
 - How do we achieve regional data sharing?
 - What is the role of ROSA in data standardization, storage, and accessibility?
- Past meeting information is available [here](#)
- **No Council action required today**

New York Bight Leasing

- Three comment periods: EA scoping, proposed sale notice, draft EA ([Joint Council comments](#))
- BOEM working through EA comments; final EA and FONSI expected soon
- Final sale notice expected later this fall; BOEM working on potential lease conditions
- Outreach to fishing industry is planned after sale notice is released
- <https://www.boem.gov/renewable-energy/state-activities/new-york-bight>

Milestone	Action	Target Date
Environmental Assessment	Publish Draft EA	August 2021
	30-Day Comment Period	August - September 2021
	Publish Final EA and FONSI, if applicable	October 2021
Proposed Sale Notice	Publish PSN	June 14, 2021
	60-Day Comment Period	June 14 - August 13, 2021
Final Sale Notice	Publish FSN	Fall 2021
	Minimum 30-Day Waiting Period	
Lease Sale	Sale Date	Late 2021 or Early 2022

June 2021

Hudson
North

Central
Bight

Hudson
South

544

537

543/A

538/B

540/D

539/C

541/E

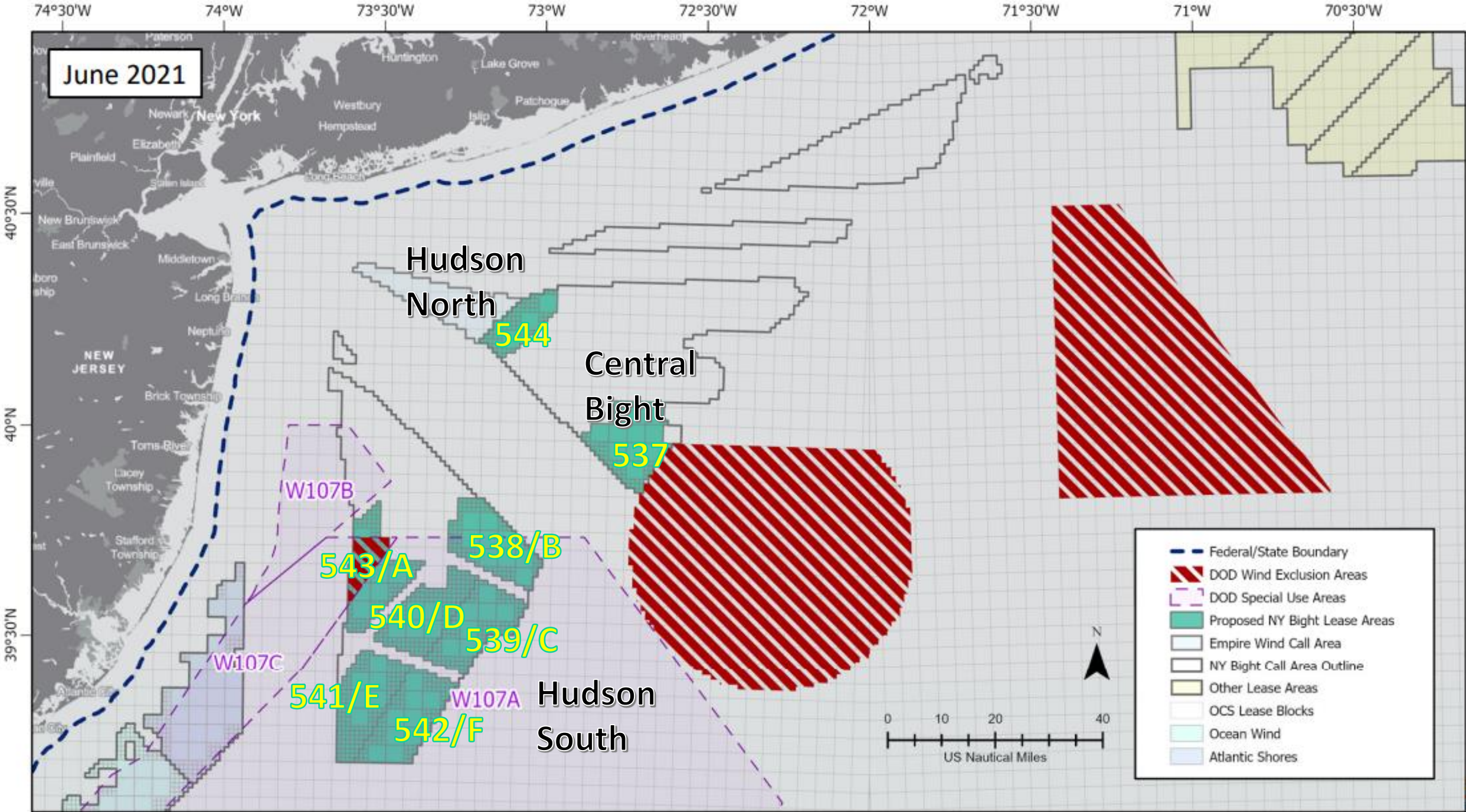
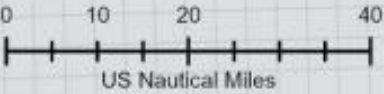
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W107B

W107C

W107A

- Federal/State Boundary
- DOD Wind Exclusion Areas
- DOD Special Use Areas
- Proposed NY Bight Lease Areas
- Empire Wind Call Area
- NY Bight Call Area Outline
- Other Lease Areas
- OCS Lease Blocks
- Ocean Wind
- Atlantic Shores



Regional coordination on transmission

- BOEM and Department of Energy conducted informational meetings with fishing industry, Councils in August
 - Purpose “to solicit input on transmission planning needs” and to
 - “Lay groundwork for subsequent analysis and stakeholder engagement”
- BOEM/DOE processing feedback and developing recommendations
- Plans to continue dialog around this issue

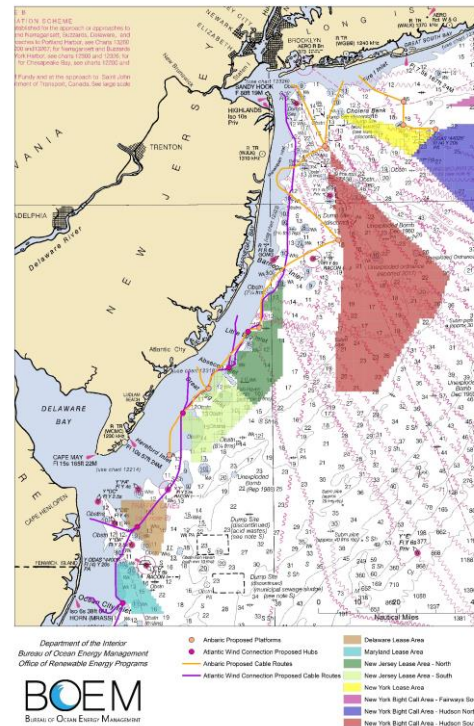


Image: BOEM

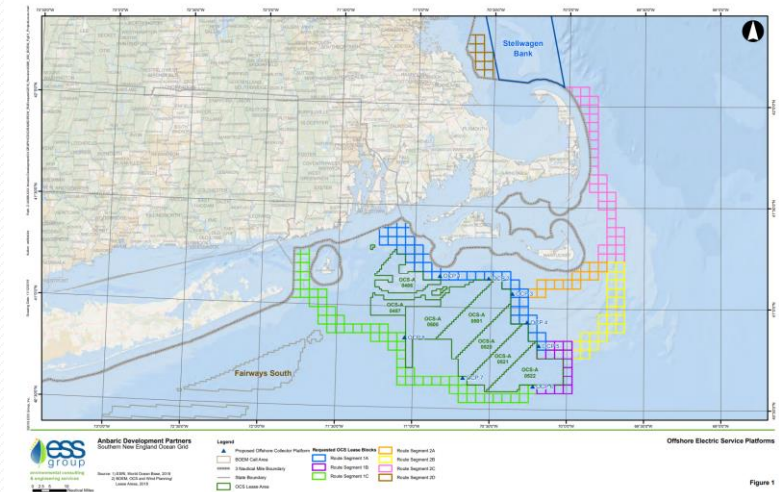


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Individual project development

- July/August scoping/NOIs
 - [Empire Wind](#)
 - [Vineyard Wind South](#)
 - [Coastal Virginia Offshore Wind](#)
- Current scoping/NOI
 - [Sunrise Wind](#)
- Upcoming scoping/NOIs
 - Atlantic Shores (expected September 30)
 - Mayflower Wind (expected November 1)
- [South Fork](#) FEIS available as of August 16; EFH consultation responses this month; ROD expected in October
- All our letters are posted [here](#)

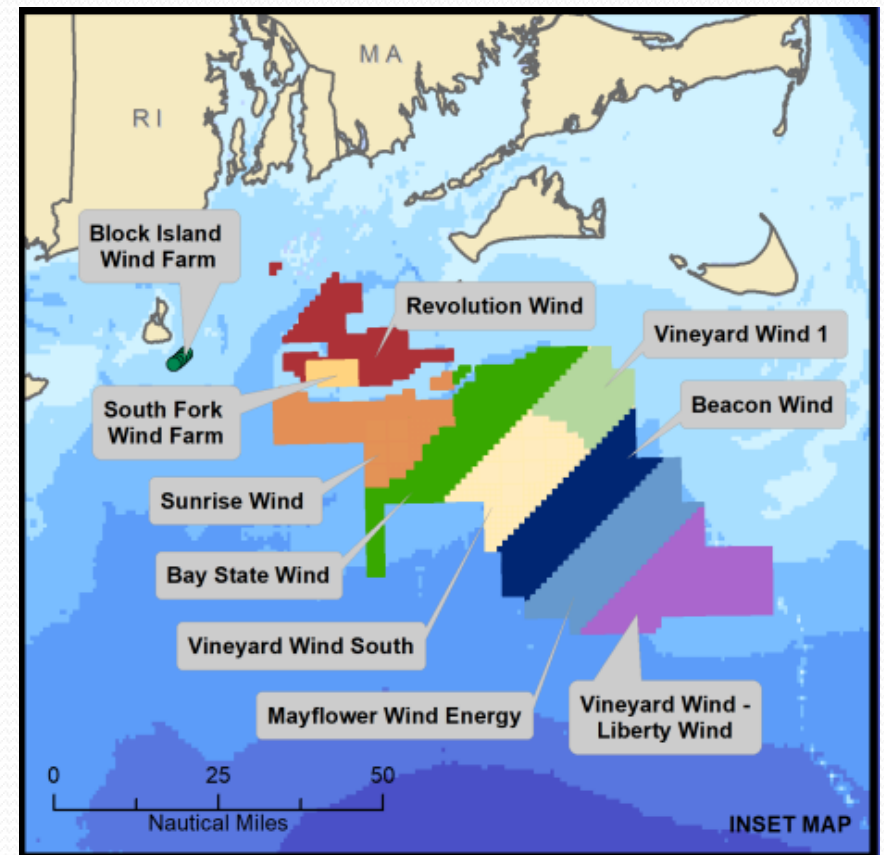


Image: BOEM

Gulf of Maine Offshore Wind

- Maine
 - <https://www.maineoffshorewind.org/>
 - Floating lease request to BOEM soon
 - Began work on an Offshore Wind Roadmap this summer; Advisory Committee and working groups meeting regularly ([calendar](#); next fisheries meeting on September 28 and public is invited)
- New Hampshire
 - <https://www.offshorewindnh.com/>
 - Commission and working groups meeting regularly
- Federal activities
 - Taskforce meeting TBD; within next 6 months

