

# Clam framework

## Alternatives, Enforcement Committee and Advisory Panel feedback

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Habitat Advisory Panel Meeting

Boston, MA

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Note: PDT analysis and input is provided in a memo to the Habitat Committee dated 10/31/18.

This presentation briefly summarizes the alternatives and covers the discussion at the 11/1/18 Enforcement Committee meeting.

# Statement of work (approved fall 2015)

*(This action is trailing to Omnibus Habitat Amendment 2)*

The SC/OQ fishery will be granted a one-year exemption for the Great South Channel Habitat Management Area (HMA) following implementation of OHA2, which will allow NEFMC to consider development of an access program for this fishery. The Council intends through this action to identify areas within the HMA that are currently fished or contain high energy sand and gravel that could be suitable for a hydraulic clam dredging exemption that balances achieving optimum yield for the SC/OQ fishery with the requirement to minimize adverse fishing effects on habitat to the extent practicable and is consistent with the underlying objectives of OHA2.

# Clam dredge fishery in the GSC HMA

- Nantucket Shoals is an important area for the clam fishery
- Represents roughly 20% of annual surfclam landings in recent years
- During 2011-2016, the entire HMA was fished by 11-21 vessels per year during 423-986 trips
- Vessels are from New Bedford, Fairhaven, and Cape Cod ports
- Vessels vary in size and capacity (number of cages) but all use hydraulic-style dredge
- Distinct from the vessels that fish on Georges Bank (Georges Shoal)

# Management Alternatives

Identified by Committee/Council – further developed by PDT

1. Take no action (GSC HMA closes to clam dredges)
2. Designate clam dredge exemption areas (year round and seasonal)
3. Designate clam dredge exemption areas (year round and seasonal) with rotational management component
4. Exempt mussel dredges from any exemption areas defined for clam dredges

*Specific areas, area boundaries, seasons, and monitoring requirements for Alternatives 2-4 to be determined by the Committee. Advisory Panel can offer advice on these issues if desired.*

# Possible exemption areas

## **Year-round**

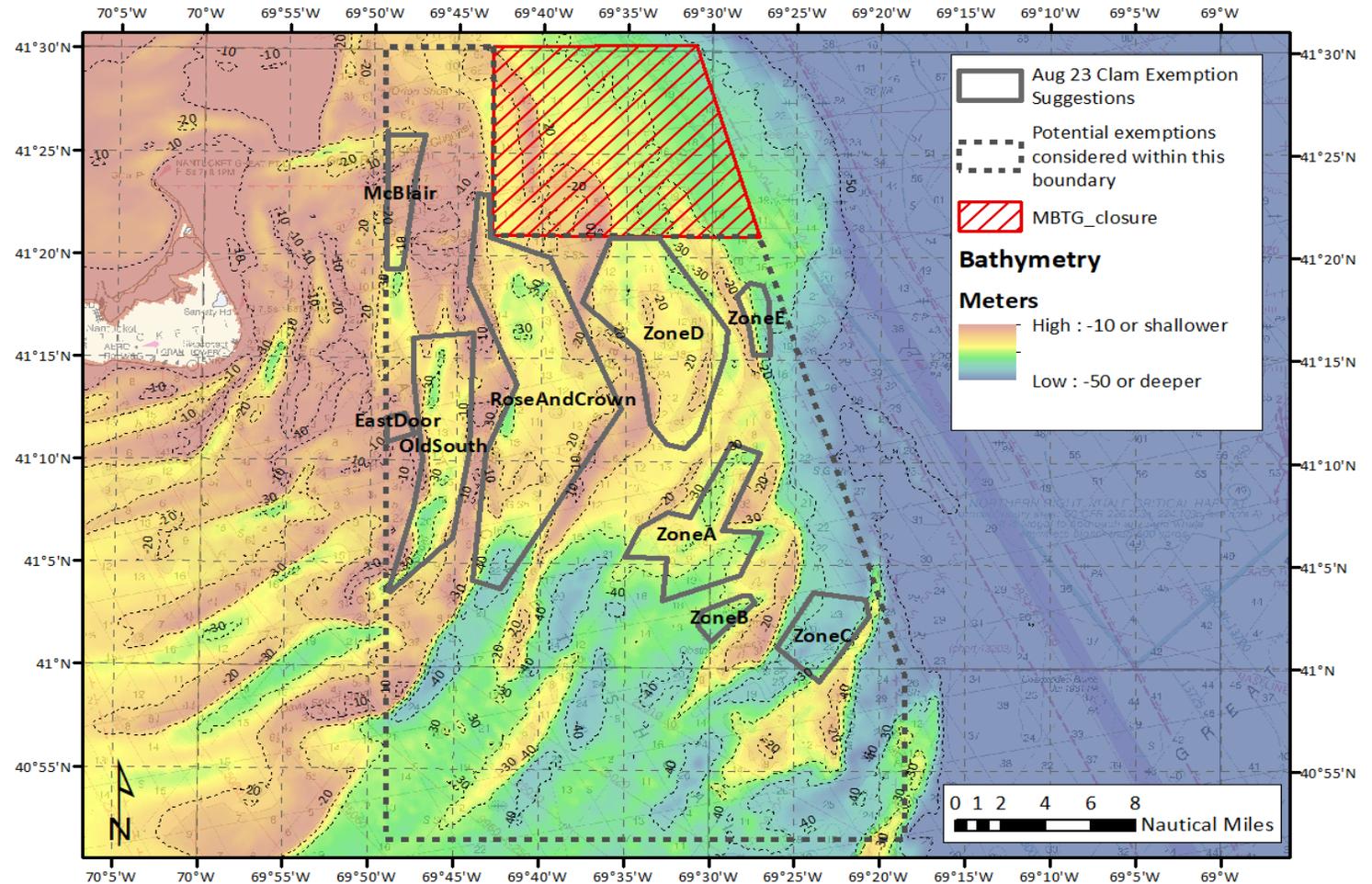
- Rose and Crown, McBlair, Zones A, B, & D
- Habitat Committee recommendation – suggested these as part of a rotational management system with 7+ year rotational interval
- Potential rotational approaches outlined under Alternative 3 PDT memo
- Rose and Crown and Zone D are the largest of the areas proposed, and have generated the most revenue of the year-round areas

## **Seasonal (open Mar-Aug)**

- Old South, East Door, Zones C & E
- Council recommendation; open period March 1 – August 31
- Closed period September 1 – February 28/29
- Old South is by far the most productive of these areas followed by East Door

# Location and size of nine potential exemption areas as identified by clam industry

Area name	Size, km <sup>2</sup>
Great South Channel HMA	2,566
MBTG closure	332
Total possible exemption area	2,234
Rose and Crown	218
McBlair	26
Area A	69
Area B	9
Area D	124
East Door (seasonal)	4
Old South (seasonal)	88
Area C (seasonal)	34
Area E (seasonal)	12



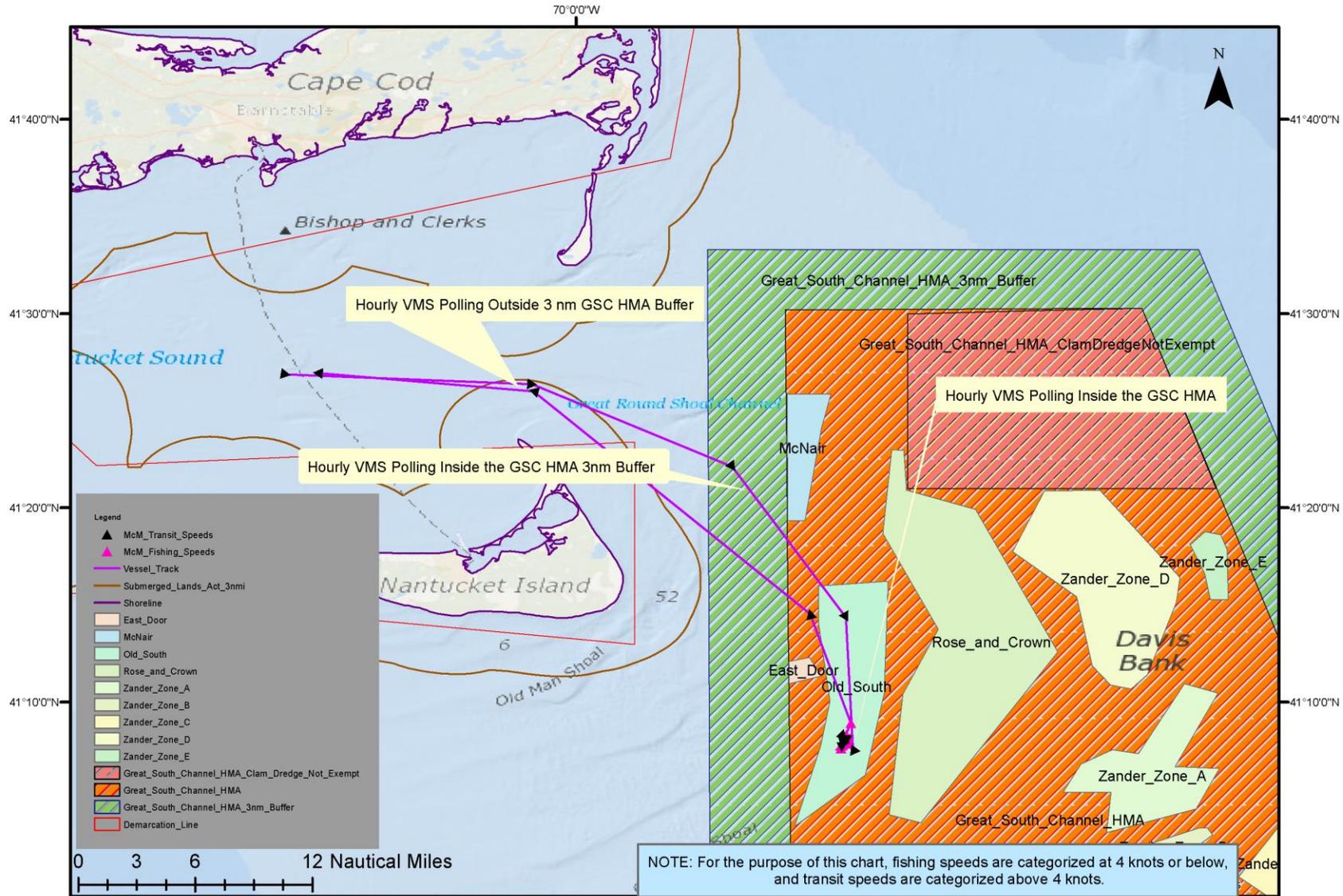
# Clam dredge 'study fleet' description

- Four vessels are participating in a study fleet
- Purpose of the study fleet is to assess if 5-minute reporting (vs. hourly) would be useful for enforcing these nine areas
- During study trips vessels fished exclusively within the boundaries of the 9 areas
- NOAA Office of Law Enforcement (OLE) staff have evaluated the data, comparing the 5- and 60-minute polls obtained from these trips
- Charts indicate that the 5-minute polling much more clearly indicates patterns of fishing
- Vessels have signed releases for data so they can be shared (normally would be confidential)

# Clam dredge 'study fleet' trips

Vessel	VMS	Areas fished	During inbound transit Avg. speed in knots and # positions per trip	During fishing Avg. speeds in knots and # positions per trip
Lori Ann (3 day trips)	McMurdo/Woods Hole Group	Rose and Crown, Old South (6 trips)	7.3-8.6 (6-11)	2.8-3.0 (274-449)
Miss Kara (1-2 day trips)	McMurdo/Woods Hole Group	Zone A (2 trips)	7.7-8.9 (31-36)	2.9-3.5 (77-116)
Tom Slaughter II (2-3 day trips)	SkyMate	Rose and Crown, Zone D, other (5 trips)	6.9-8.2 (11-26)	2.3-2.8 (148-245)
Silver Fox (2-3 day trips)	McMurdo/Woods Hole Group	Old South (2 trips)	4.3-5.0 (8-11)	2.2-2.5 (236-321)

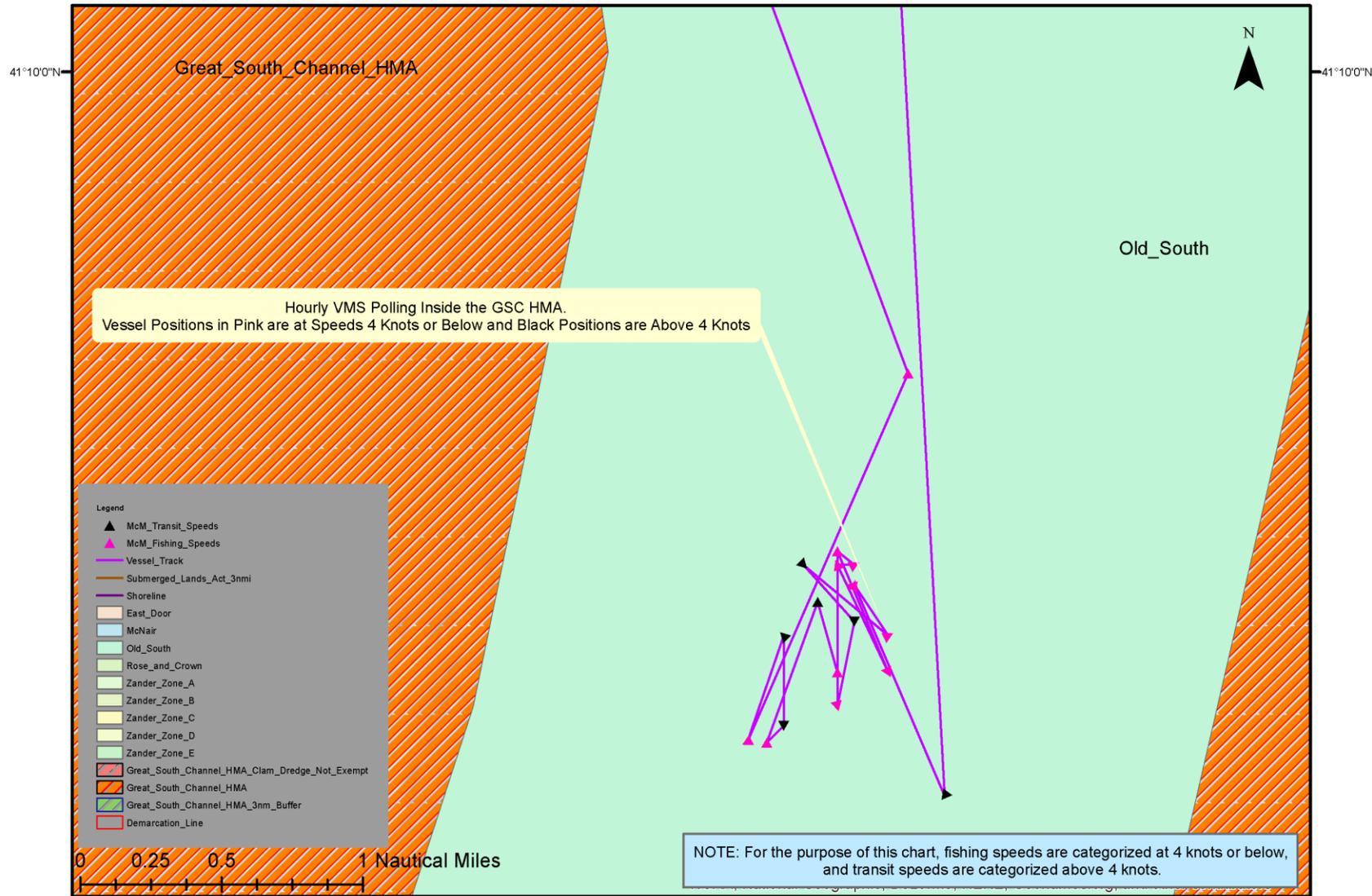
# F/V Lori Ann Trip 3 GSC Study Fleet 60-Minute Polling



Prepared by Carl A. Lemire, VMS Technician, Contractor with Ocean Associates, Inc. In support of NOAA Fisheries OLE Northeast Division, using ArcGIS V10.4 October 19, 2018. Geographical data uses the WGS-84 reference system. VMS position data imported from the NOAA Fisheries Service vTrack database.

This information is considered confidential and shall not be disclosed except to authorized personnel under 16. U.S.C. 1881a, Section 402, Magnuson-Stevens Fishery Conservation and Management Act

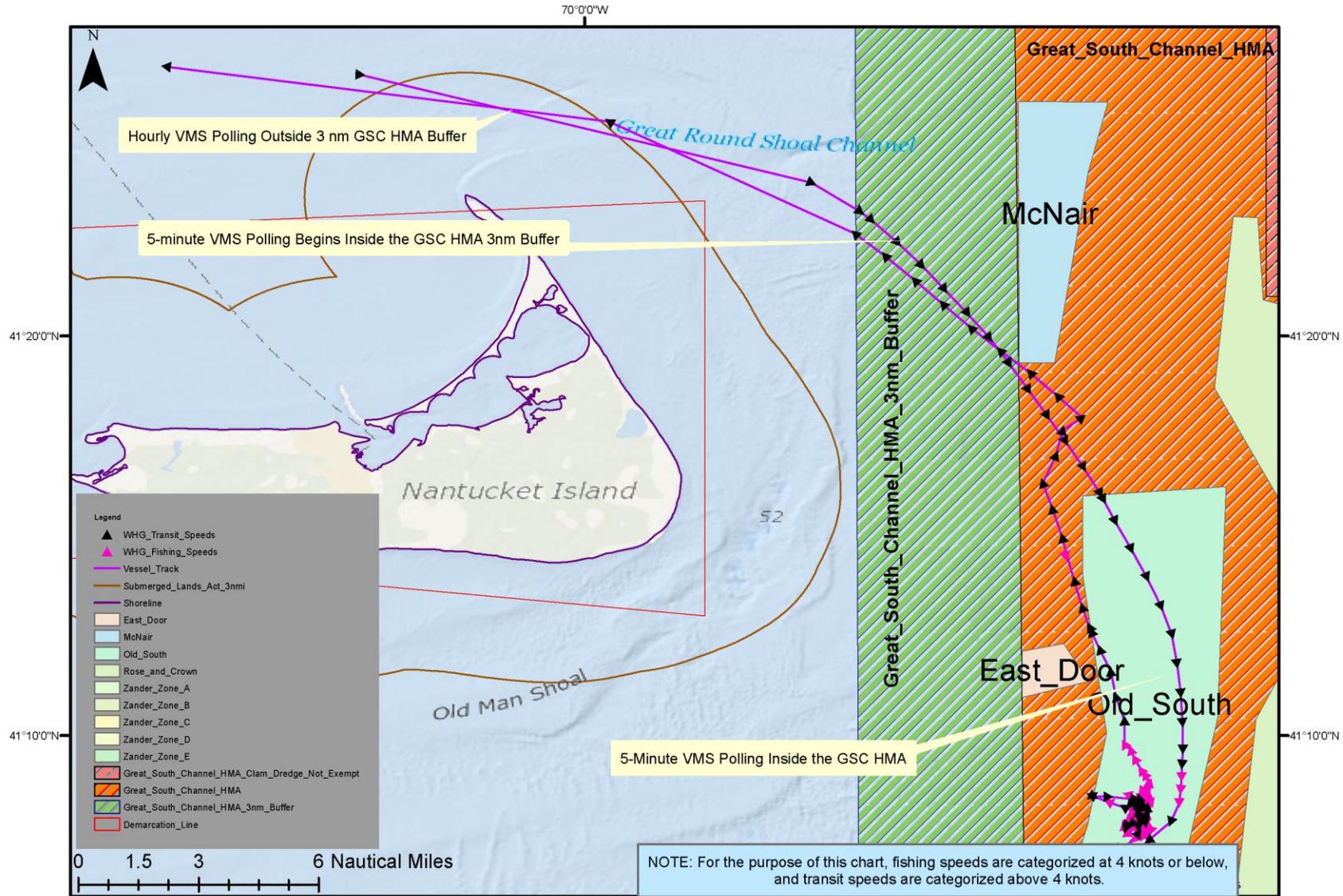
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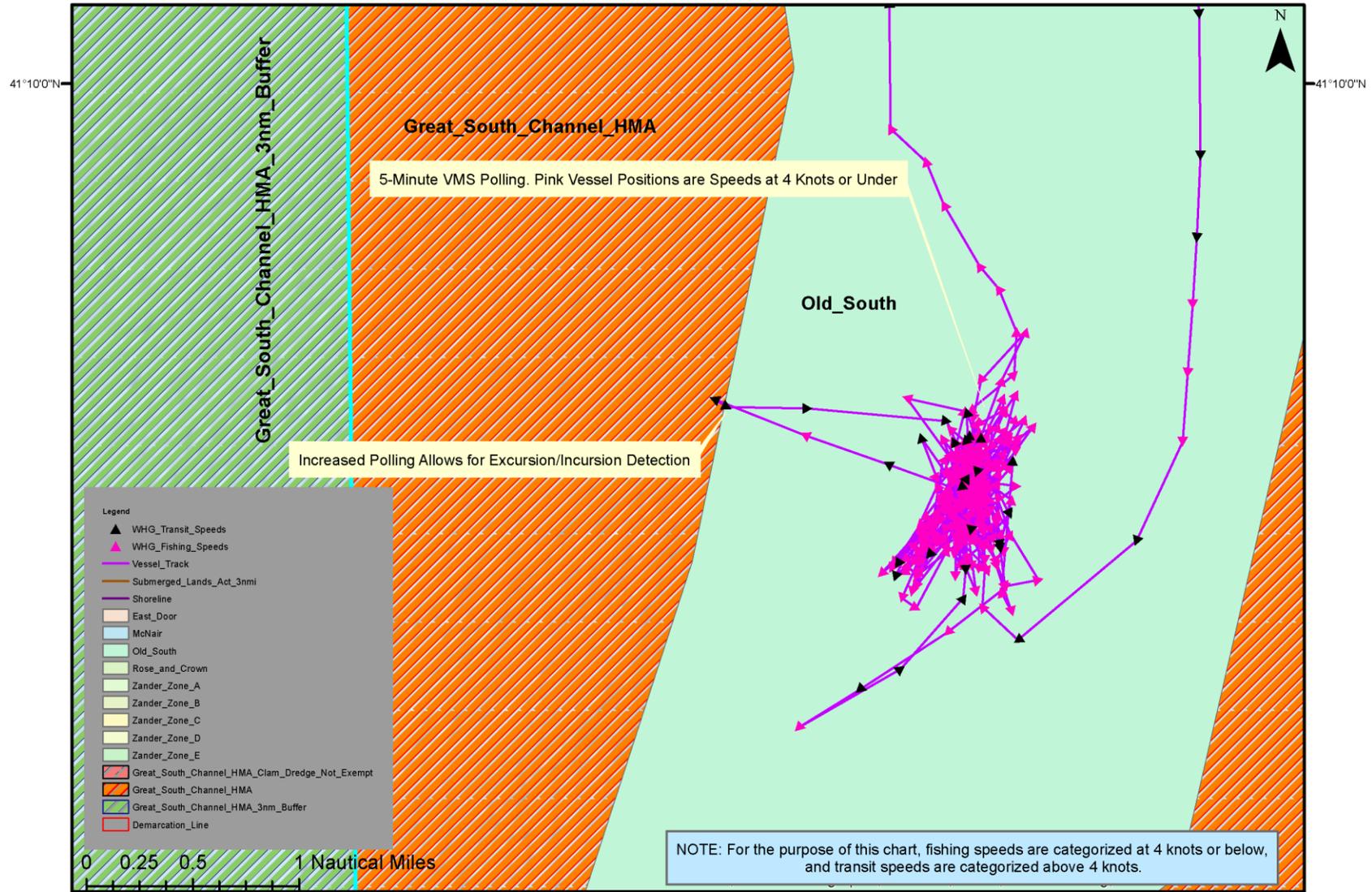
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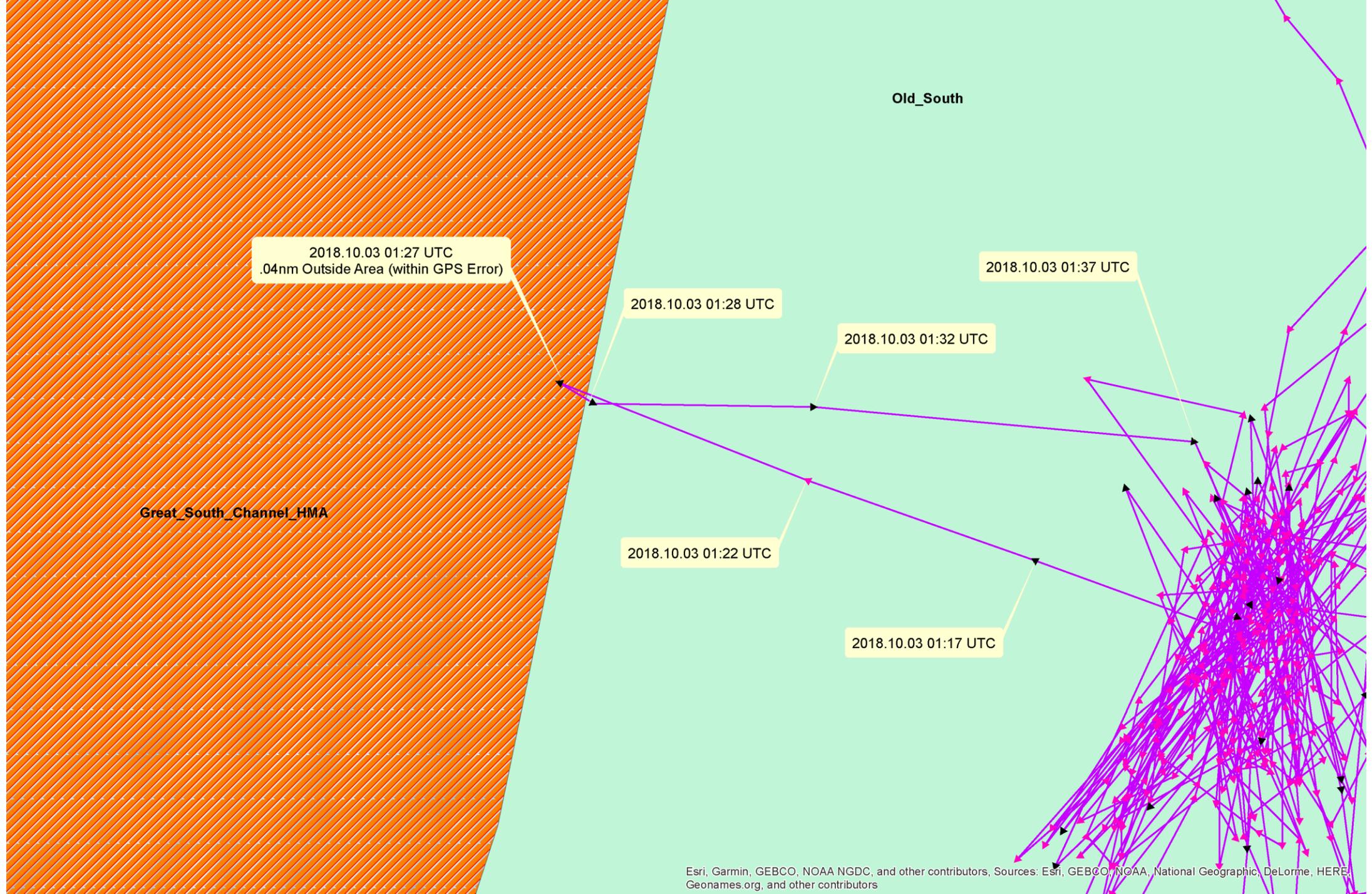
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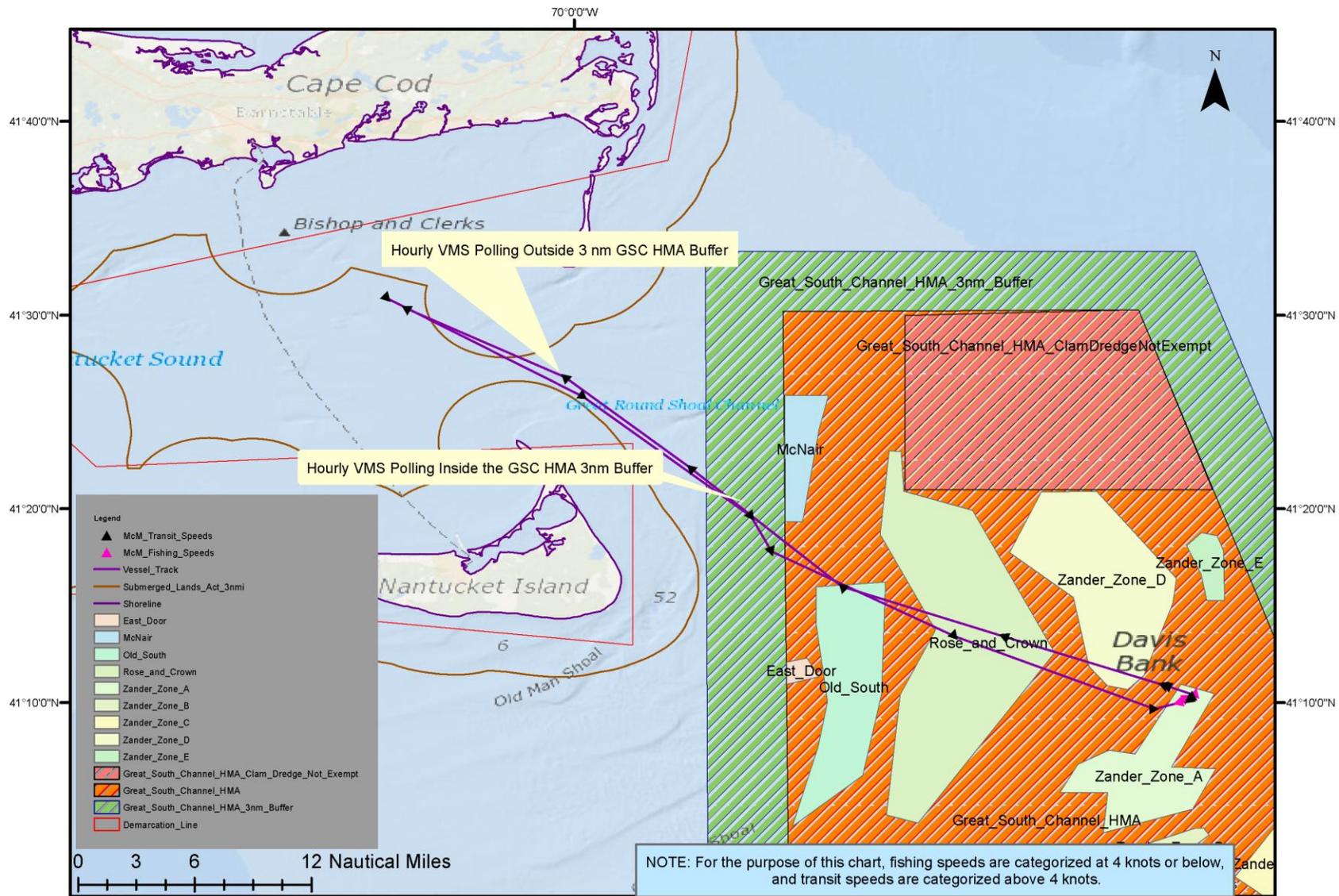


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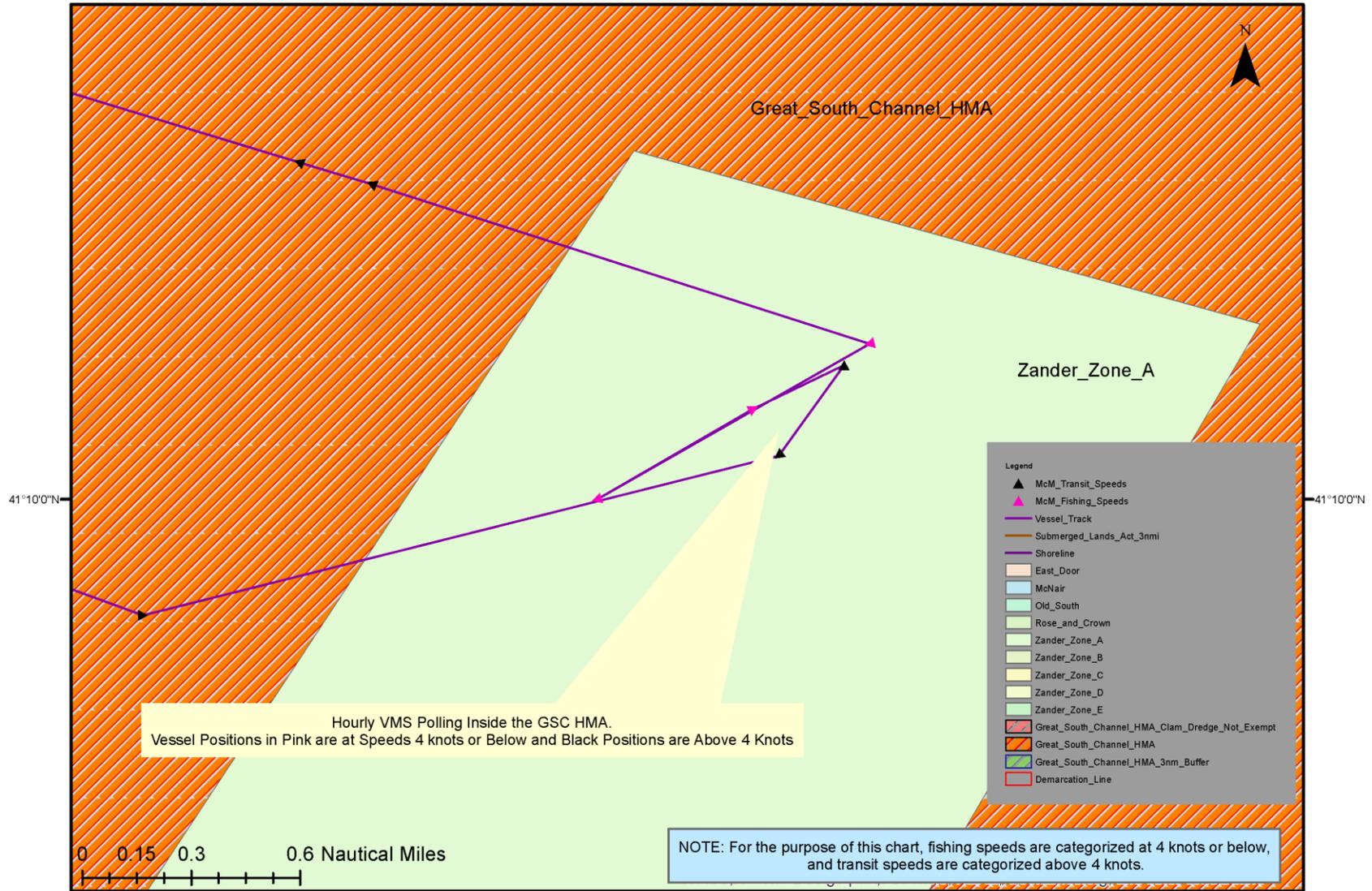
# F/V Miss Kara Trip 1 GSC Study Fleet 60-Minute Polling



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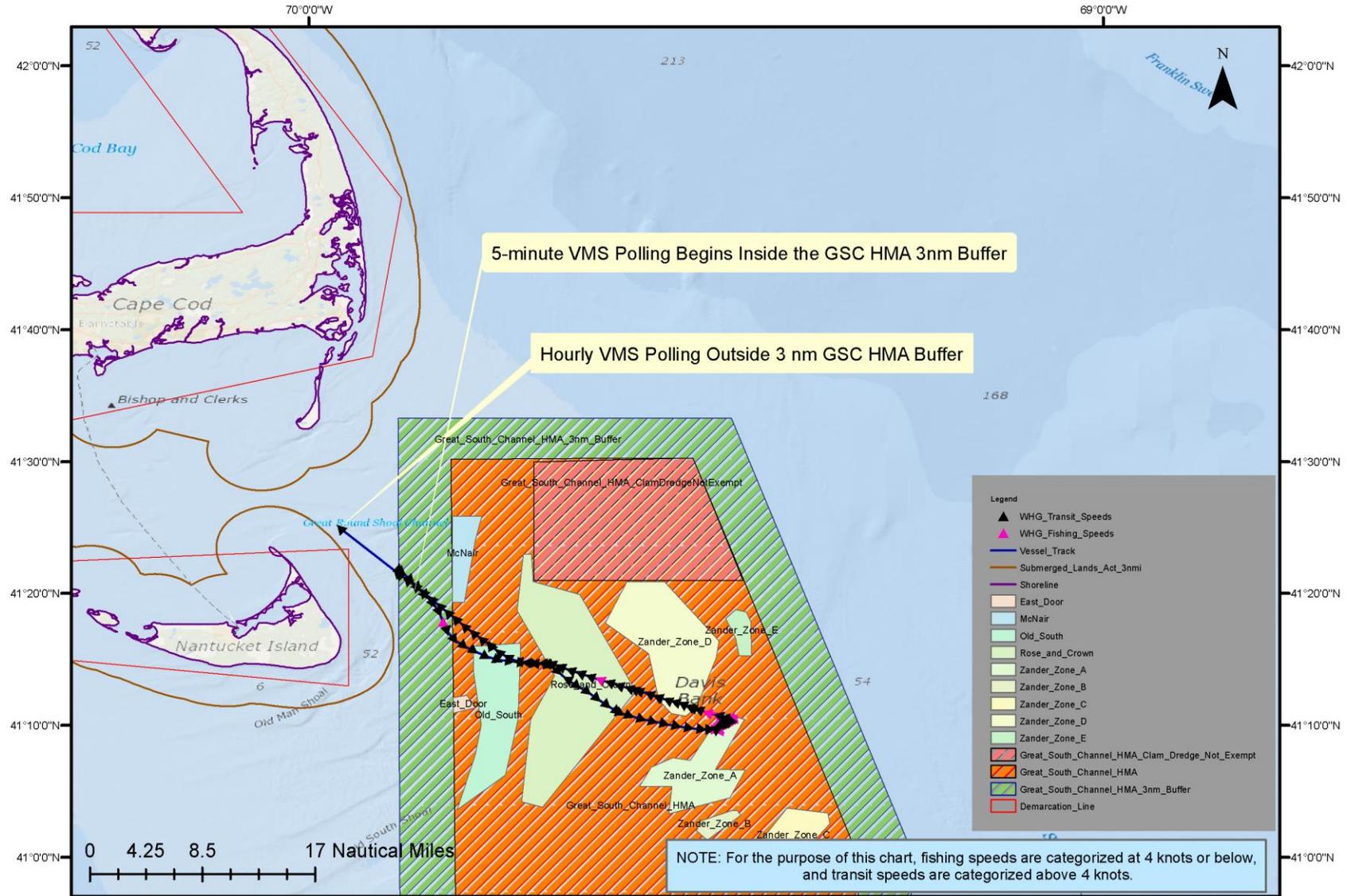
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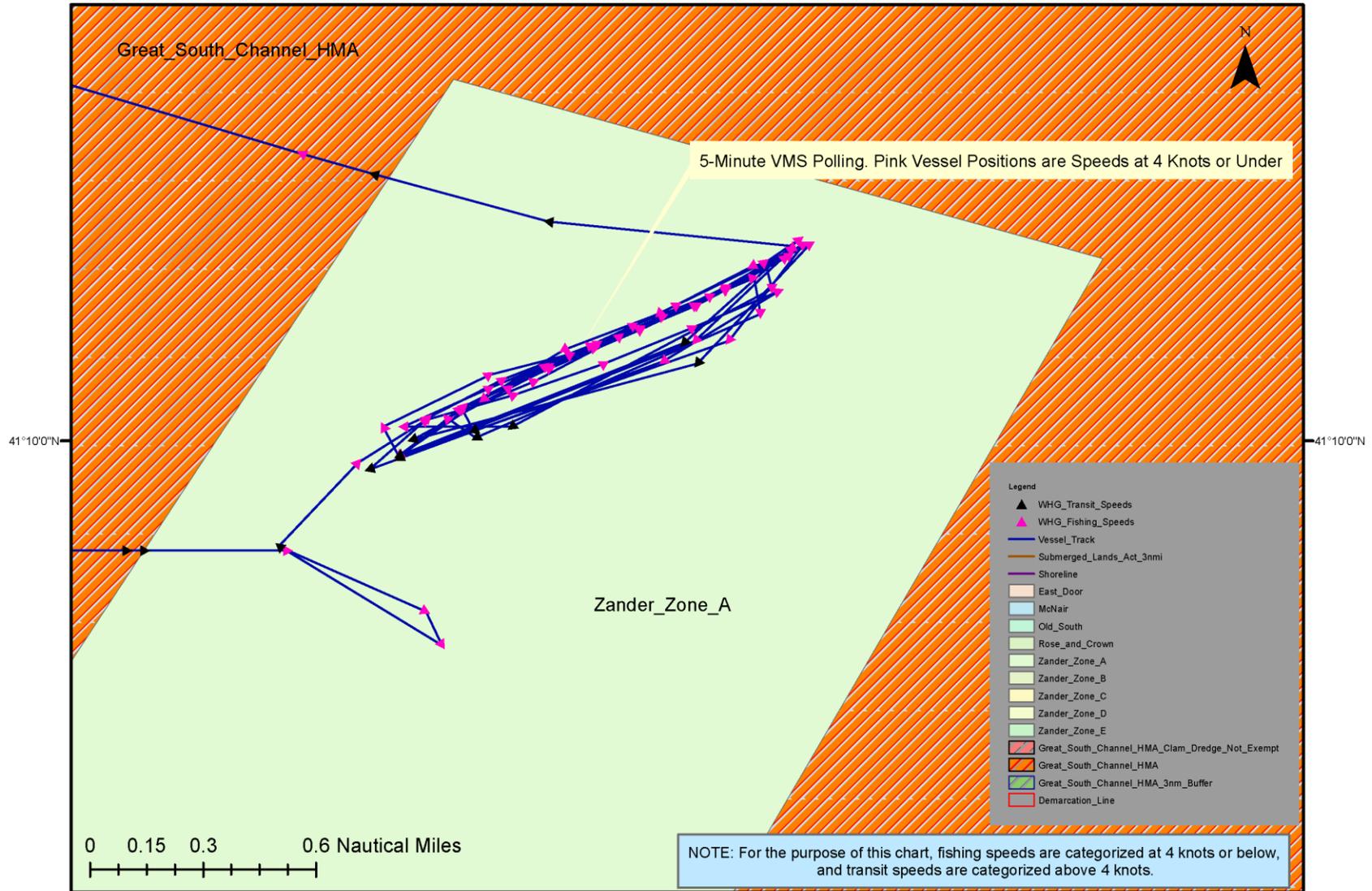
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# Enforcement Cte/AP consensus statements

**To facilitate enforcement, the Enforcement Committee and Advisors recommend that the McBlair area should be extended to form a rectangle by shifting the southeastern corner to the east by about  $\frac{3}{4}$  mile.**

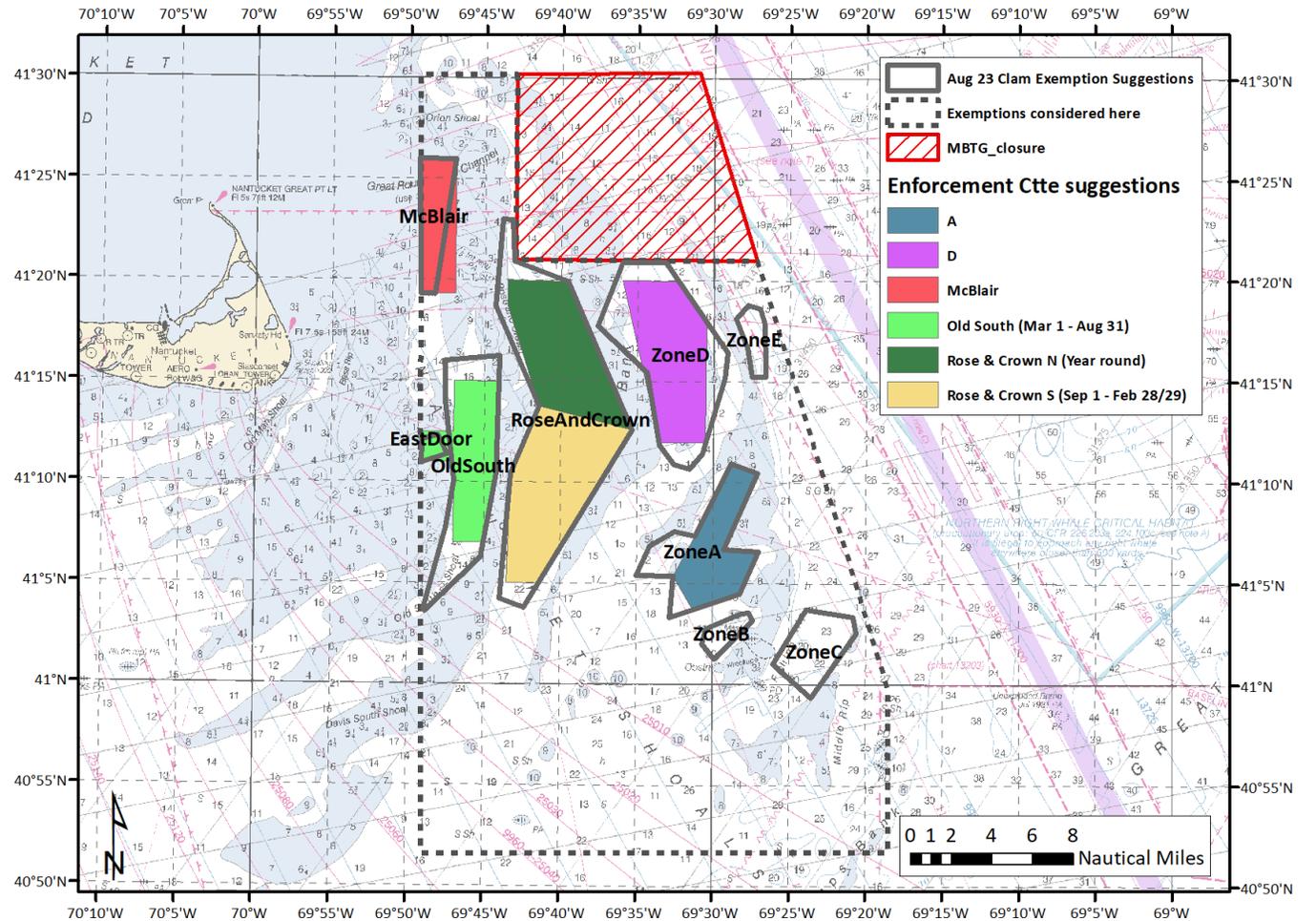
- As recommended by industry, the southern boundary of the McBlair area is less than one mile wide, while the northern boundary is over a mile and a half wide.
- The Committee agreed that area dimensions or spacing between adjacent sub-areas should be at least one mile, and suggested a distance of 1.5 miles was preferred where possible.
- Industry members indicated that since it is closest to port, the McBlair area is a good one to have access to when the weather is poor.

# Enforcement Cte/AP consensus statements

**To facilitate enforcement, the Enforcement Committee and Advisors recommend modifying the potential exemption areas as follows: (1) square off McBlair as noted above; (2) simplify and reduce the size of Old South, East Door, Rose and Crown, Zone D, and Zone A, combining Old South and East Door into a single area; (3) drop Zones B, D, and E from consideration; (4) close the southern part of Rose and Crown during the season in which the East Door/Old South area is open by drawing a line between  $69^{\circ}41'26.16''\text{W}$ ,  $41^{\circ}13'46.38''\text{N}$  and  $69^{\circ}35'19.44''\text{W}$ ,  $41^{\circ}12'36.06''\text{N}$  (i.e. a diagonal line between two vertices of the zone as originally proposed).**

# Modifications recommended by Enforcement Committee/Advisory Panel (colored areas)

Area name	Size, km <sup>2</sup>
Great South Channel HMA	2,566
MBTG closure	332
Total possible exemption area	2,234
Rose and Crown N	87
Rose and Crown S (Sep-Feb)	105
McBlair	38
Area A	52
Area D	84
Old South (Mar-Aug)	64



# Enforcement Cte/AP consensus statements

**To facilitate enforcement, the Enforcement Committee and Advisors recommend that the following elements be required as part of the clam exemption program: (1) 5-minute VMS polling required of all clam vessels fishing in the GSC HMA, (2) vessels should request an annual letter of authorization to participate in the GSC HMA fishery, (3) vessels should declare into the fishery with each trip, (4) 5-minute polling should be triggered when a vessel declared into the fishery crosses into a 3 nm buffer zone around the GSC HMA.**

# Enforcement Cte/AP consensus statements

**The Committee and Advisors agreed that during transit between exemption areas vessels should have the dredge on board the vessel, but that it was not necessary to bring the hoses aboard and stow them.**

- Transit between exemption areas would not constitute a violation, but fishing in between the areas would be in violation of the management program.
- The hoses are quite heavy especially when full of water, and retrieval presents a safety issue under normal conditions.
- The group discussed whether it would be necessary to bring the hoses on board the vessel when transiting between exemption areas during a single trip to facilitate overflight enforcement.
- The Coast Guard agreed that it would be sufficient for the dredge to be on deck during transit between areas, and that the hoses could remain in the water when moving between exemption areas.
- This is important to the fleet as their preference (and current practice) is to fish within more than one of these areas per trip.

# Enforcement Cte/AP consensus statements

**The Committee and Advisors agreed that similar monitoring approaches should be used for mussel dredge vessels if they are authorized to fish in the HMA, including trip declaration requirements.**