

Consolidated Port Approaches Port Access Route Studies (PARS)

Office of Navigation Systems (CG-NAV)

United States Coast Guard

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Executive Summary

On April 5, 2017, the Coast Guard announced the completion of the Atlantic Coast Port Access Route Study (ACPARS), a preliminary step in the process of establishing a system of interconnecting shipping safety fairways along the eastern seaboard. Recognizing the ACPARS analyzed coastal, longshore, and predominantly north/south vessel transit routes along the Atlantic Coast, the Coast Guard announced new studies focused on port approaches and international entry and departure areas along the Atlantic Coast, on March 15, 2019. While these additional Port Access Route Studies (PARS) were ongoing, the Coast Guard published an Advance Notice of Proposed Rulemaking (ANPRM) on June 19, 2020, to obtain early public comment on the Coast Guard's intent to establish fairways necessary to preserve sea areas for navigation.

This report is not the result of a separate study, but rather summarizes the findings of four Port Access Route Studies along the East Coast, continued dialogue with the maritime industry, and the ANPRM. This report is being published to provide public awareness of fairway adjustments made during the iterative fairway analysis process. In accordance with Coast Guard policy, *Marine Planning to Operate and Maintain the Marine Transportation System (MTS) and Implement National Policy* (COMDTINST 16003.2B), a PARS is conducted at the District level and provides recommendations to the Headquarters Office of Navigation Systems (CG-NAV) for validation and potential rulemaking. The Consolidated Port Approaches Port Access Route Studies (CPAPARS) is not a proposed rule and does not constitute a regulatory action by the U.S. Coast Guard. Any notice of proposed rulemaking resulting from the recommendations provided by the CPAPARS will be made available for public comment as required by the Administrative Procedure Act.

This report provides recommendations for a system of shipping safety fairways and routing measures along the Atlantic Coast and will be included in any subsequent rulemaking proposal. None of the recommendations provided within this consolidated report conflict with any previously leased area on the OCS. Below is a depiction of the recommended fairways and routing measures.

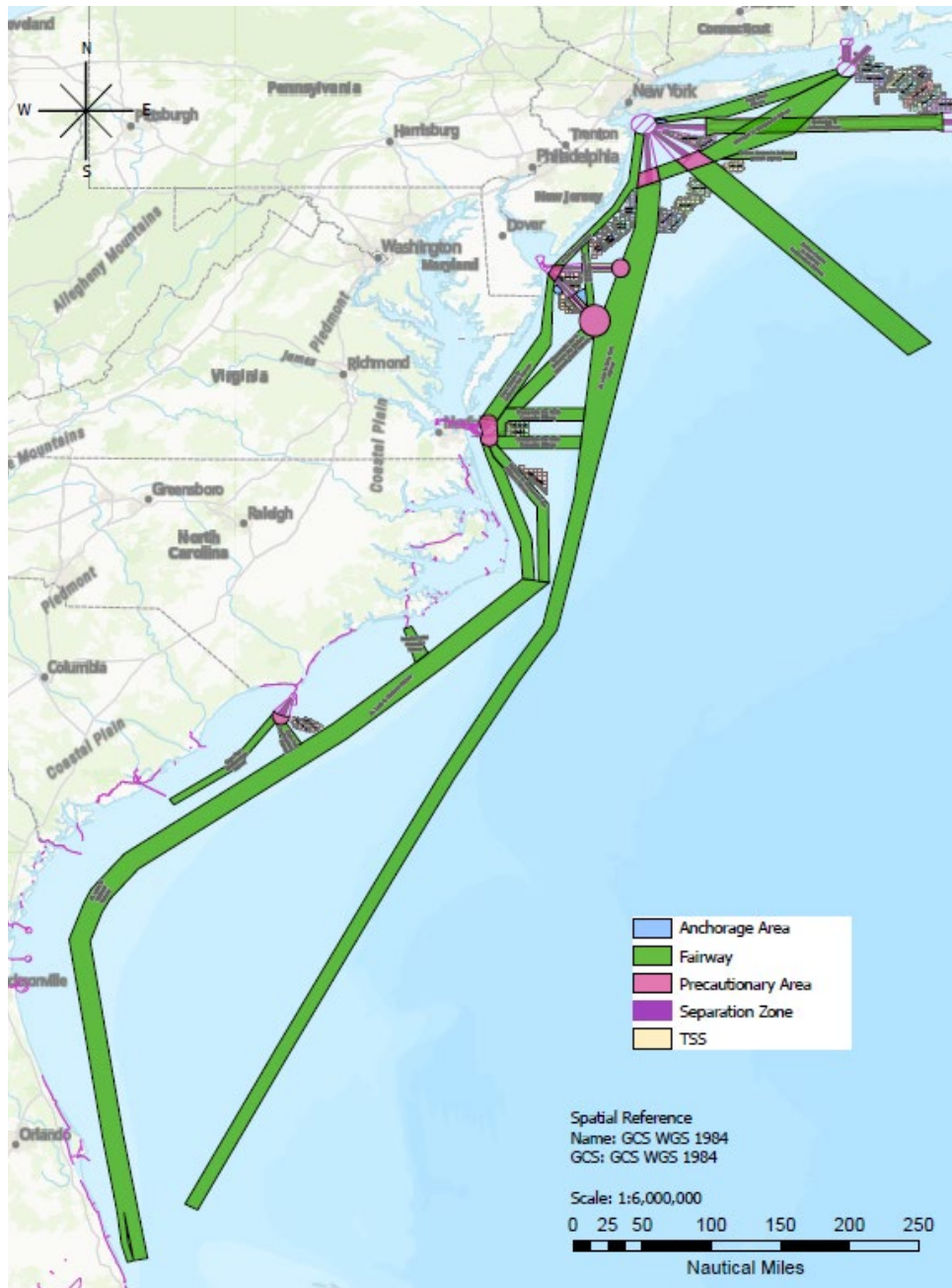


Figure 1: Consolidated Recommended Fairways and Routing Measures

Port Access Route Studies

Atlantic Coast Port Access Route Study

On April 5, 2017, the Coast Guard announced the completion of the Atlantic Coast Port Access Route Study in the **Federal Register** (82 FR 16510), which is available for viewing and download from the Coast Guard Navigation Center's website at

<https://www.navcen.uscg.gov/port-access-route-studies>.

The ACPARS identified navigation safety corridors along the Atlantic Coast based on the predominant two-way vessel traffic and customary routes identified with historical AIS data for offshore deep draft and coastal seagoing tug/tow vessels. The study further recommended developing these corridors into official shipping safety fairways or other appropriate vessel routing measures.

Based on the recommendations provided in the ACPARS, the Coast Guard published an ANPRM in the **Federal Register** (85 FR 37034) on June 19, 2020. This ANPRM, which is available for viewing and download from the **Federal Register** docket USCG-2019-0279 at www.regulations.gov, sought comments regarding the possible establishment of fairways along the Atlantic Coast of the United States identified in the ACPARS. The Coast Guard received 24 comments regarding the ANPRM and will respond to them in a forthcoming NPRM.

Port Approaches and International Entry and Departure Transit Areas

The Coast Guard announced its intention to study port approaches and international entry and departure areas to supplement the ACPARS on March 15, 2019, in the **Federal Register** (84 FR 9541). These PARS considered safe access routes from ports along the Atlantic Coast to the navigation safety corridors identified in the ACPARS. The Coast Guard considered routes that

were economically important, support military operations, or deemed strategically critical to national defense.

The First and the Fifth Coast Guard Districts collectively completed four PARS in support of this announcement. The Office of Navigation Systems' recommendations herein are based on a combination of the recommendations provided by these studies, comments from the ANPRM, and additional comments from maritime stakeholders.

Port Access Route Study: Northern New York Bight

On January 3, 2022, the First Coast Guard District announced the completion of the Northern New York Bight PARS (NNYBPARS) in the **Federal Register** (87 FR 107), which is available for viewing and download from the **Federal Register** docket at www.regulations.gov or the Coast Guard Navigation Center's website at <https://www.navcen.uscg.gov/port-access-route-study-reports>. The First Coast Guard District analyzed relevant data, including existing and potential traffic patterns, existing regulations, and public comments made in response to the draft NNYBPARS. The Coast Guard considered these factors when determining whether to designate new or revise existing fairways and routing measures to improve navigation safety in the NNYBPARS due to vessel traffic density, vessel traffic patterns, weather conditions, or navigation challenges in the study area. The study made the following recommendations:

- Widen the Long Island Fairway proposed in the ANPRM.
- Establish a New Jersey to New York Connector Fairway.
- Modify the portion of the ANPRM proposed Cape Charles to Montauk Point Fairway that crosses the NY Bight by renaming it the Barnegat to Narragansett Fairway and adjusting coordinates to reconcile conflicts with lease areas OCS-A 0544 (Vineyard Mid-Atlantic) and OCS-A 0549 (Atlantic Shores North).

- Establish a Hudson Canyon to Ambrose Southeastern fairway, a Hudson Canyon to Ambrose Eastern fairway, and a single Nantucket to Ambrose fairway.
- Establish an Ambrose Anchorage and adjust the Long Island fairway to mitigate location conflict between the anchorage and fairway.

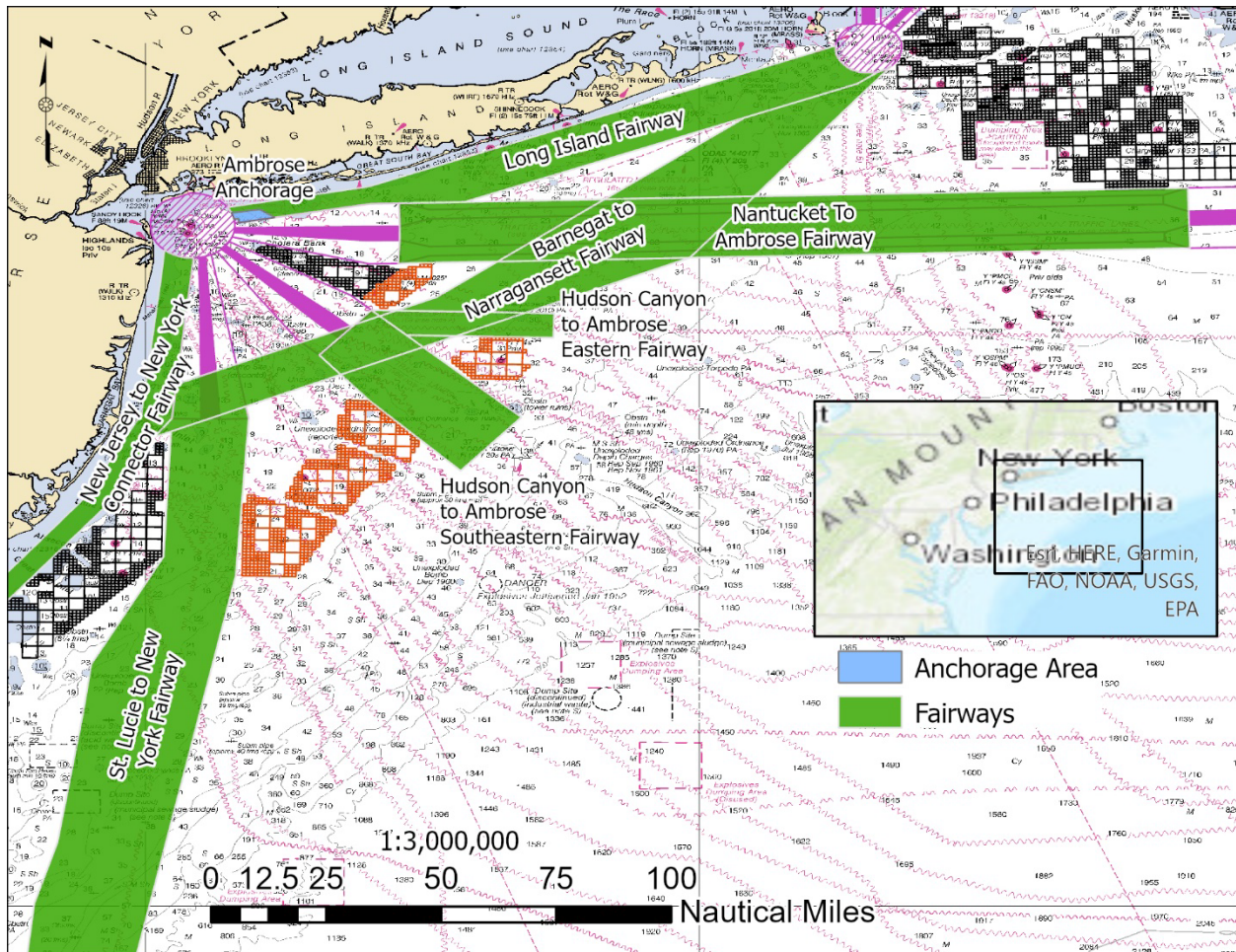


Figure 2: Northern New York Bight PARS Recommended Actions

The Office of Navigation Systems considered these recommendations and concurs, with the following exceptions:

- Reduce the width of the single Nantucket to Ambrose fairway as recommended in the NNYBPARS to the northern border of the existing Nantucket to Ambrose Fairway and the southern border of the Ambrose to Nantucket Fairways as defined in 33 CFR

166.500. This will ensure there is sufficient room for safe navigation and the resulting fairways do not conflict with BOEM lease area OCS-A 0522.

- The recommended Hudson Canyon to Ambrose Southeastern Fairway should be extended out to the end of the EEZ (200 NM) to ensure that safe access remains if expansion of offshore energy development continues to the east.

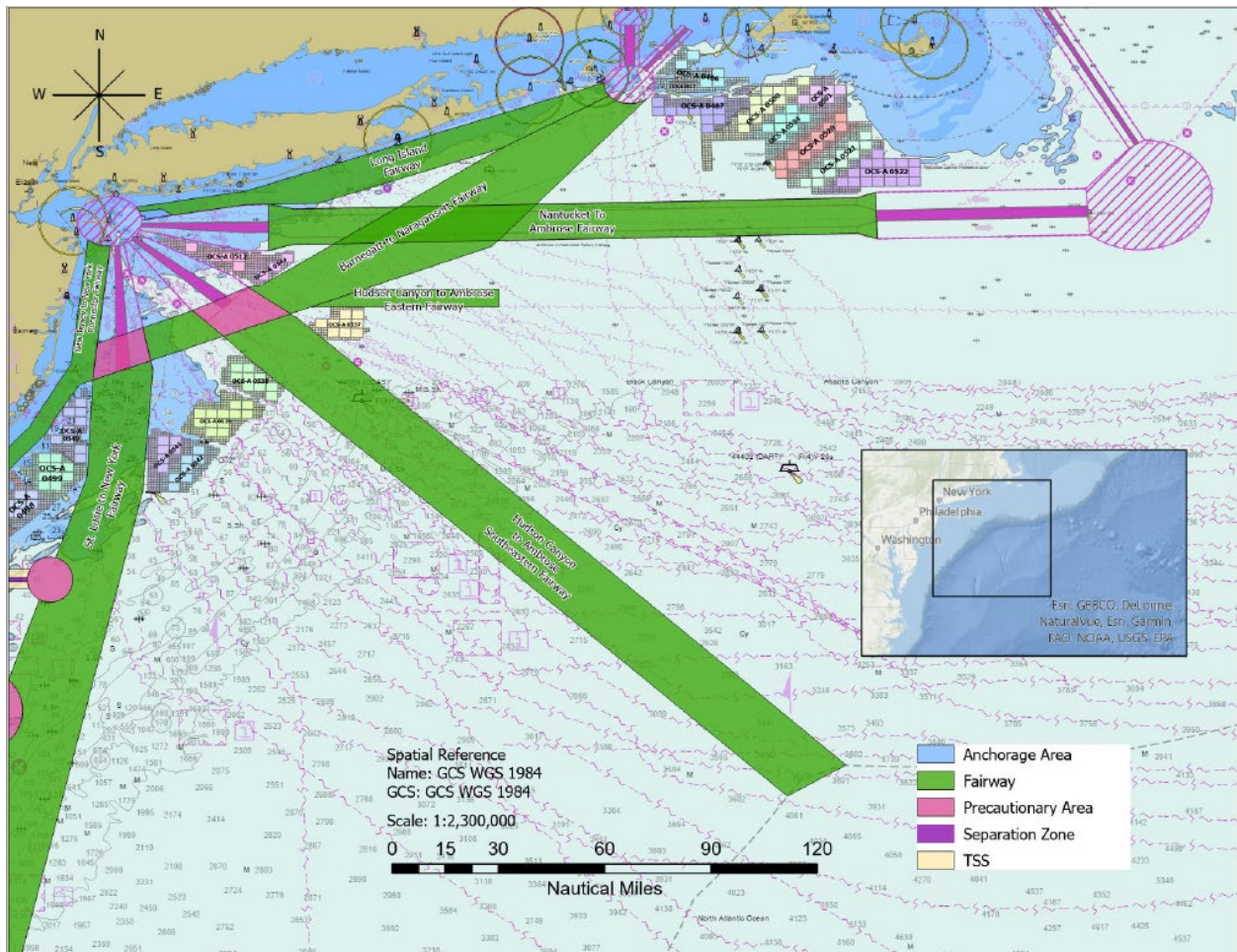


Figure 3: Northern New York Bight Recommended Fairways and Routing Measures

- Designate two precautionary areas where the recommended Barnegat to Narragansett Fairway intersects with the Southern and Southeastern approaches to New York. The traffic analysis suggests a considerable number of vessels will continue to cross perpendicular to each other at the intersection of the fairway with the South-eastern and Southern TSS approaches off New York. The *Barnegat to Ambrose* and *Hudson Canyon*

to Ambrose Precautionary areas will alert mariners that they are transiting through an area where ships must navigate with particular caution.

Port Access Route Study: Seacoast of New Jersey Including Offshore Approaches to the Delaware Bay, Delaware

On March 24, 2022, the Fifth Coast Guard District announced the completion of the Seacoast of New Jersey including offshore approaches to the Delaware Bay, Delaware PARS in the **Federal Register** (87 FR 16759). The Fifth Coast Guard District analyzed relevant data, including existing and potential traffic patterns, existing regulations, and public comments made in response to the Seacoast of New Jersey PARS. The Coast Guard considered these factors when determining whether to designate new or revise existing fairways and routing measures to improve navigation safety off the coast of New Jersey and in the approaches to Delaware Bay due to vessel traffic density, vessel traffic patterns, weather conditions, or navigation challenges in the study area. The results from this study led to the following recommendations:

- Establish modified versions of the fairways proposed in the ANPRM.
- Extend the Off Delaware Bay: Eastern and Southeastern approaches to the Traffic Separation Scheme (TSS) past the designated wind energy lease areas in the region, in lieu of establishing the Off Delaware Bay Eastern Approach Cutoff Fairway and Off Delaware Bay Southeastern Approach Cutoff Fairway as proposed in the ANPRM.
- Establish additional precautionary areas where a wide variety of vessel traffic converges east of the proposed Offshore Renewable Energy Installations (OREIs).
- Establish a new two-way route along the Delaware seacoast for safe transits into and across the mouth of the Delaware Bay by coastwise vessels. Separate the Cape Charles to Montauk Fairway into two distinct fairways and rename them to clarify endpoints.

Rename the southern portion Cape Charles to Delaware Bay and the northern portion Barnegat to Narragansett, to clarify the divergence of the route as it transits the mouth of the Delaware Bay and across the New York Bight.

- Establish the New Jersey to New York Connector Fairway along the New Jersey coast and into New York–New Jersey Harbor.
- Establish an offshore fairway anchorage in the area to the east of the Off Delaware Bay: Southeastern approach to meet the needs for safe anchorage areas around OREIs.
- Ensure coordination of fairways and TSSs crossing District boundaries, and widen fairways to 9 NM, where practicable.¹

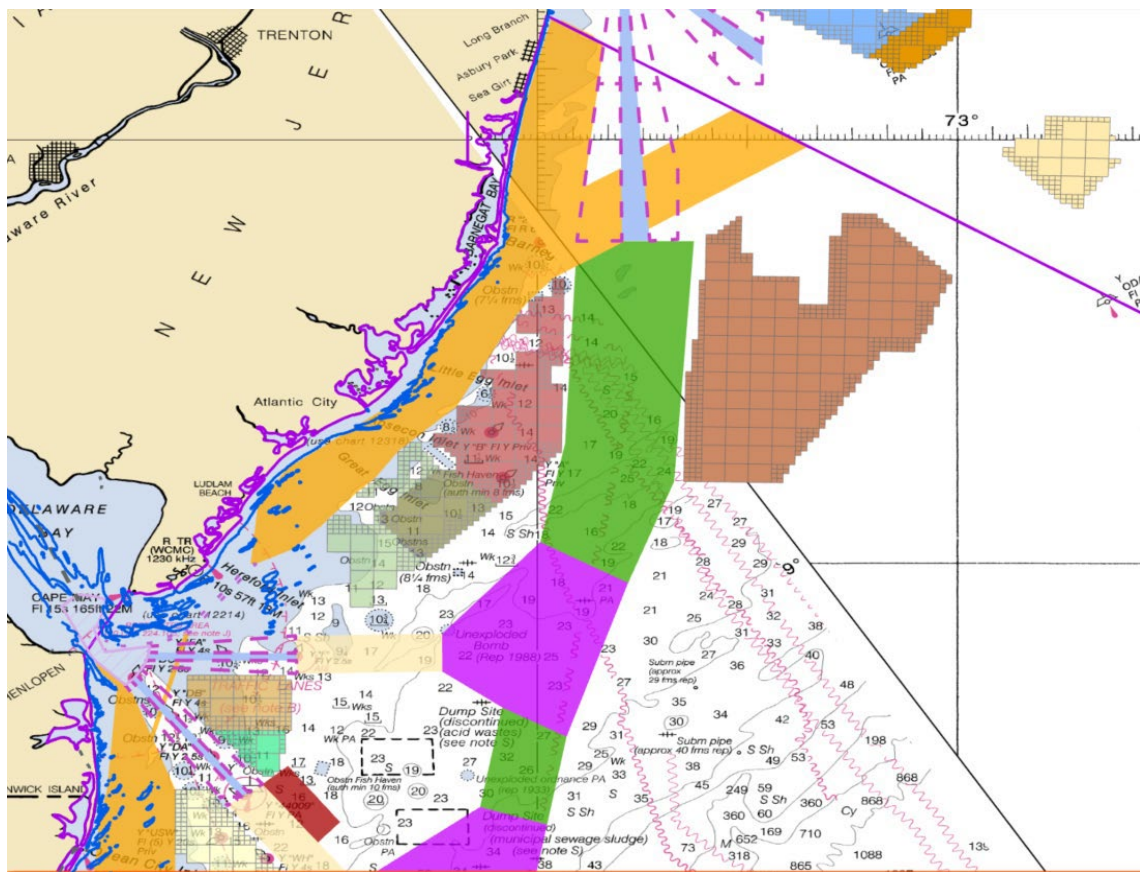


Figure 4: Seacoast of New Jersey PARS Recommended Actions

¹ The CPAPARS dated August 31, 2022 was published with the graphic from the Draft New Jersey PARS. Figure 4 has been updated with the graphic published in NJ PARS Final Report published March 18, 2022.

The Office of Navigation Systems considered these recommendations and concurs, with the following exceptions:

- The recommended reorientation of the St. Lucie to New York: Delaware Bay Connector Fairway (figure 6), combined with the location of the St. Lucie to New York Fairway, and the recommended offshore Precautionary Area adjacent to the offshore terminus of the Southeastern approach leaves very little open sea space between the connector fairway and the proposed St. Lucie to New York Fairway. The Connector Fairway should instead be combined with the St. Lucie to New York Fairway and widened in the general vicinity of the approaches to Delaware Bay. This will allow for the additional sea space needed for vessels maneuvering in the area and provide for a more natural transition to the Southeastern approach, as supported by customary traffic patterns. This would also provide a larger contiguous area for further offshore wind development opportunities.
- The ACPARS recommended, and the subsequent ANPRM proposed, a fairway that conflicted with BOEM lease area OCS-A 0490 (U.S. Wind). As a result of continued consultations with BOEM, the Coast Guard sought to reconcile these conflicting uses of the waterway. In the NJ PARS, the Fifth Coast Guard District recommended redirecting this fairway closer to shore at the mouth of the Delaware Bay. The American Waterways Operators (AWO) requested the Fifth District consider an alternative which would establish a designated offshore route east of the southeastern approach to Delaware Bay for towing vessel traffic, similar to the potential Cape Charles to Montauk fairway published in the ANPRM. This alternative was dismissed based on the maneuverability of articulated tug barge (ATB) and integrated tug barge (ITB) units. In a letter to the Coast Guard in response to the draft Seacoast of New Jersey PARS, AWO urged the

Coast Guard to consider the data showing traditional transit lanes for all towing vessels. Upon review of the Seacoast of New Jersey PARS, the Office of Navigation Systems concurred with the recommendation to designate a fairway that provides safe access to Delaware Bay for coastwise traffic. The office determined the assessment did not, however, consider traditional topline tugboats with barges towing astern. The recommendation in the CPAPARS is a compromise to reconcile the conflicted use of sea space between offshore wind and tug/tow communities, which minimizes the impact to both industries. An offshore route east of the southeastern approach to Delaware Bay, as published in the ANPRM and requested by AWO in the NJ PARS, could still be achieved if moved approximately 5 NM further offshore. By relocating this fairway further

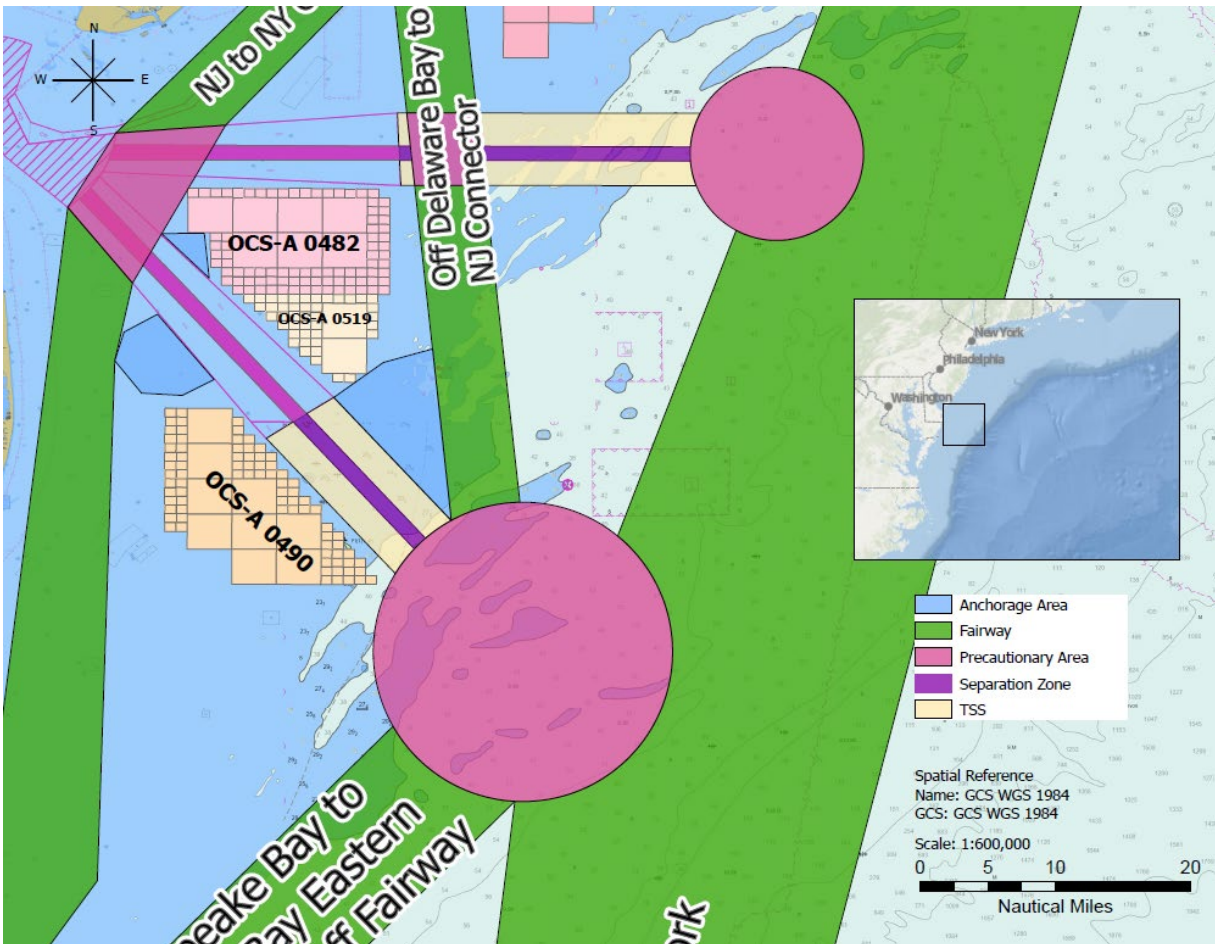


Figure 5 Recommended Fairways in the vicinity of OCS-A 0490

offshore, the potential fairway would no longer conflict with the U.S. Wind lease area and would still provide a lane for the tug and tow industry to avoid significant inbound/outbound Delaware Bay traffic and safely return to coastwise transit along the New Jersey coast. By establishing a precautionary area at the intersection of the TSS extension and the recommended fairways, the mariner is warned to navigate with particular caution in that area. Furthermore, a precautionary area would encapsulate the traffic that typically fans out when exiting the TSS traffic lane, therefore negating the need for any setback from the terminus of a traffic lane as recommended in the Coast Guard's Marine Planning Guidelines. Designating the Offshore Delaware Bay to New Jersey Connector Fairway could meet this need and warrants further consideration.

Although initially reintroduced as a 7 NM wide fairway, this update reduces the fairway's width to 4 NM. While the Coast Guard is focusing on this safe access for traditional towline tugboats with barges towing astern, AIS data suggests two of these vessels would rarely meet or be abreast of one another. Based on the maneuvering width of 2 NM recommended in the ANPRM, and an additional 1 NM buffer for contingencies, a 4 NM wide fairway is deemed sufficient in this area and is consistent with the width of the New Jersey to New York Connector Fairway. This updated fairway also provides a larger contiguous area between the Delaware Bay Eastern and Southeastern TSS approaches for further offshore wind development opportunities.

- The Office of Navigation Systems concurs with the recommendation for offshore precautionary areas where a wide variety of vessel traffic converges east of the OREI development projects. The proposed size and location of the precautionary areas at the convergence point of these fairways with the Eastern and Southeastern approaches should be adjusted to best meet the recommendations of the Fifth Coast Guard District and

highlight areas that require particular caution when navigating². The recommended precautionary area at the terminus of the Southeastern approach is larger than the recommended precautionary area at the terminus of the Eastern approach. This is to account for a potential convergence of traffic from up to seven different directions.

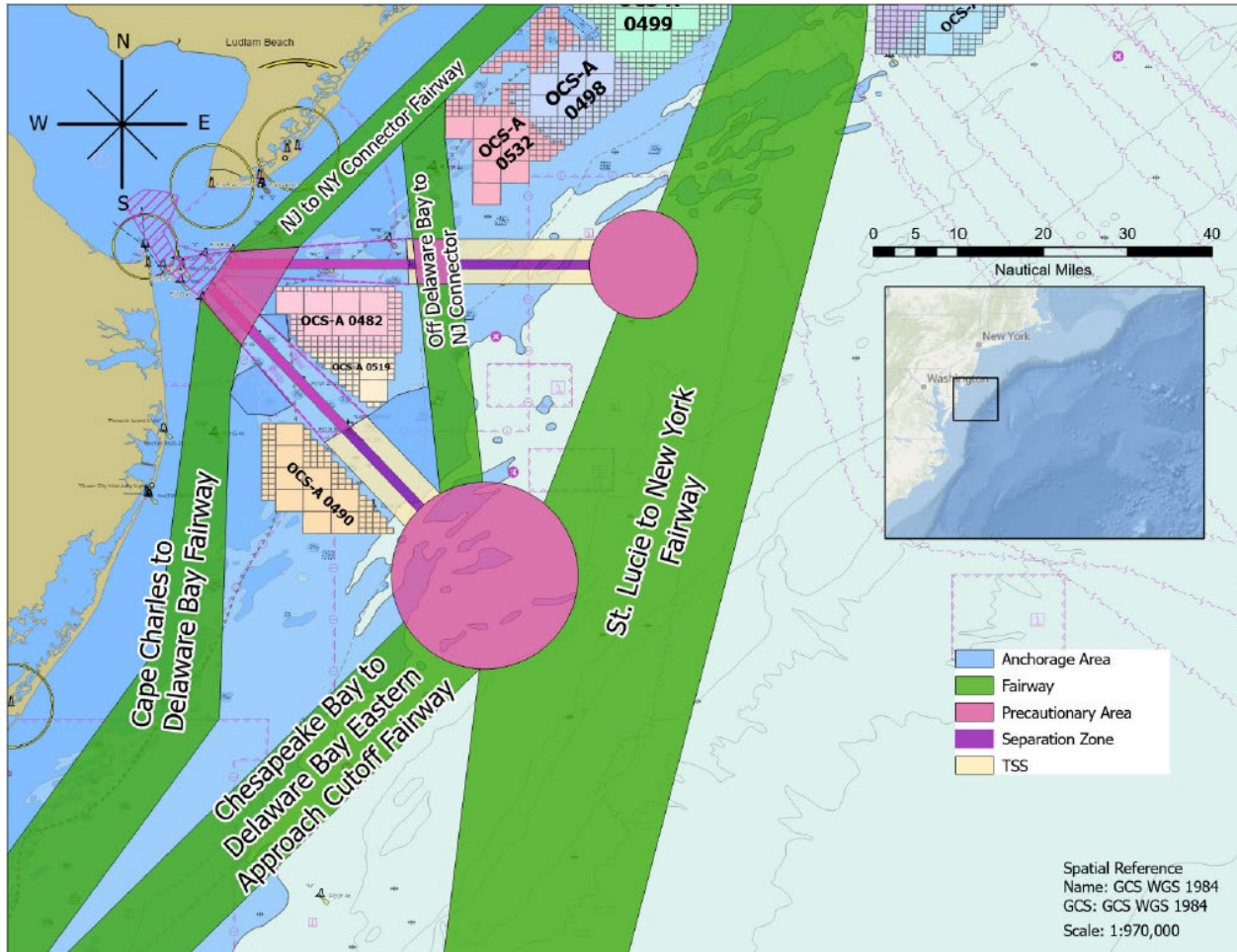


Figure 6: Seacoast of New Jersey Recommended Fairways and Routing Measures

- The Office of Navigation Systems does not concur with establishing a new two-way route across the entrance to Delaware Bay as recommended in the NJ PARS. To account for the recommended orientation of the Cape Charles to Delaware Bay Fairway, the expansion of fairways to 9 NM where practicable, and the dense traffic at the entrance to

² Figure 6, as initially published in the CPAPARS dated August 31, 2022, erroneously depicted the Delaware Bay TSS extensions with a flare to seaward. Figure 6 has been updated to the static width as recommended in the NJ PARS.

Delaware Bay, the Office of Navigation Systems has determined an expansion of the current precautionary area better suits the navigation requirements. This expansion would encompass the convergence of the proposed Cape Charles to Delaware Bay Fairway and the New Jersey to New York Connector Fairway with the established TSS. Expanding the precautionary area would appropriately caution the mariners transiting the area while maximizing maneuvering space for opposing vessel traffic.

- The Office of Navigation Systems recommends extending the recommended New Jersey to New York Connector Fairway south to connect with the proposed precautionary area expansion at the entrance to Delaware Bay. This expansion would absorb a portion of the established two-way route to the north of the approaches to Delaware Bay. Designating the water surrounding the two-way route would ensure future offshore development would not constrict current traffic flow and customary routes in the region.

Port Access Route Study: Approaches to the Chesapeake Bay, Virginia

On October 22, 2021, the Fifth Coast Guard District announced the completion of the approaches to the Chesapeake Bay, VA PARS in the **Federal Register** (86 FR 58684). The Fifth Coast Guard District analyzed relevant data, including existing and potential traffic patterns, existing regulations, and public comments made in response to the Approaches to Chesapeake Bay, VA PARS. The Coast Guard considered these factors when determining whether to designate new or revise existing fairways and routing measures to improve navigation safety off the coast of Virginia and in the approaches to Chesapeake Bay due to vessel traffic density, vessel traffic patterns, weather conditions, or navigation challenges in the study area. The results from this study led to the following recommendations:

- The International Maritime Organization (IMO) adoption of expanded precautionary area between the Eastern and Southern TSS approaches to Chesapeake Bay.
- Modifications to fairways, as proposed in the ANPRM, to include:
 - Re-orienting the Chesapeake Bay to Delaware Bay Eastern Approach Cutoff Fairway to increase available maneuvering space for crossing vessels in the approaches to Delaware Bay, and to allow space for an offshore anchorage in the approach to the Delaware Bay.
 - Re-orienting the Cape Charles to Montauk Point Fairway closer to the Delmarva Peninsula.

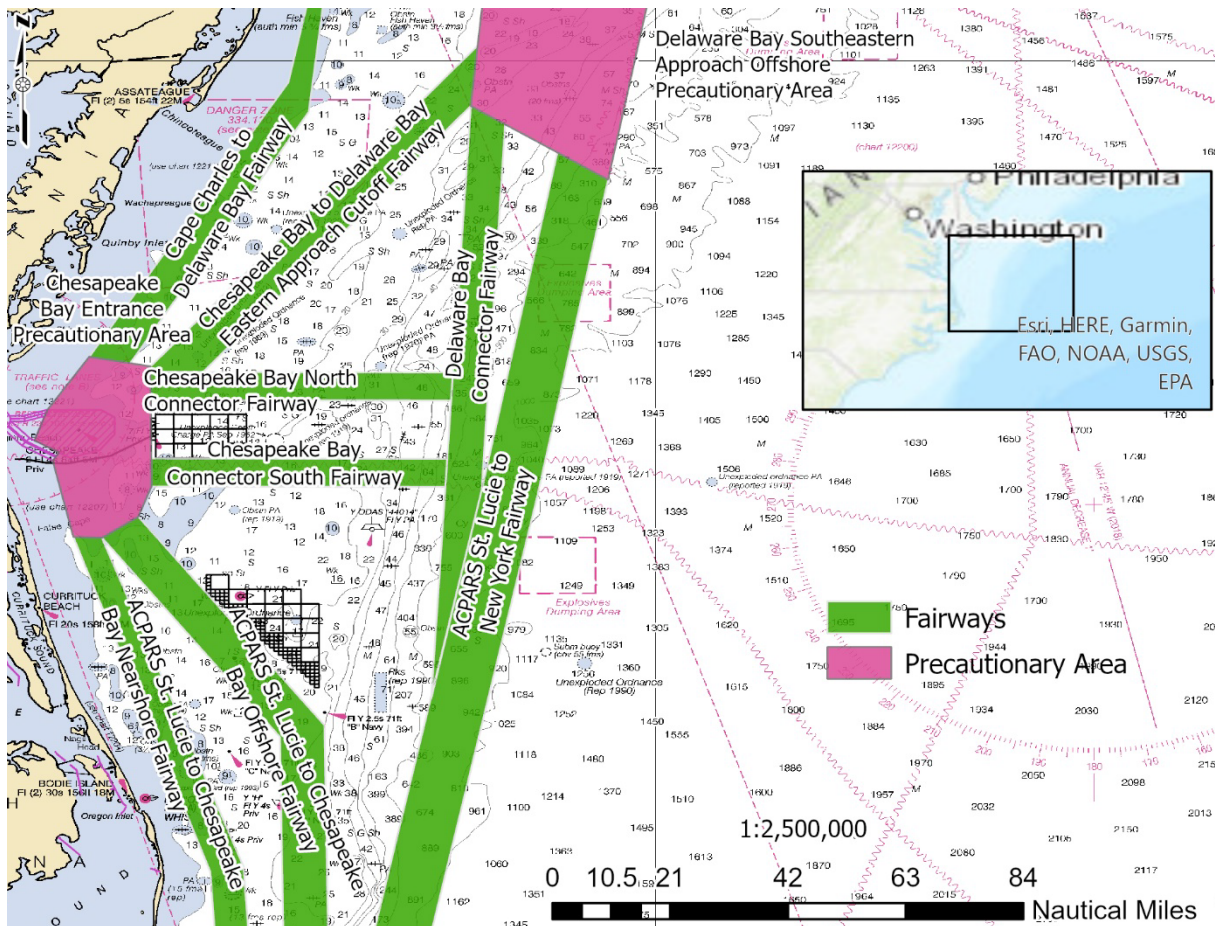


Figure 7: Approaches to Chesapeake Bay, VA PARS Recommended Actions

- Adding North and South connector fairways from the St. Lucie to New York Fairway and the Chesapeake Bay TSS, around BOEM lease area OCS-A 0483 (Commercial Virginia Offshore Wind), to facilitate safe transit of commercial vessels around future offshore energy installations.

The Office of Navigation systems considered these recommendations and concurs, with the following exceptions:

- All recommended fairways should be widened to 9 NM or the maximum sea space available based on the ACPARS, comments received from the American Waterways Operators (AWO), and the tug and tow community.
- The Cape Charles to Montauk Point Fairway should be divided into three distinct sections, as identified in the Seacoast of New Jersey PARS and the Northern New York

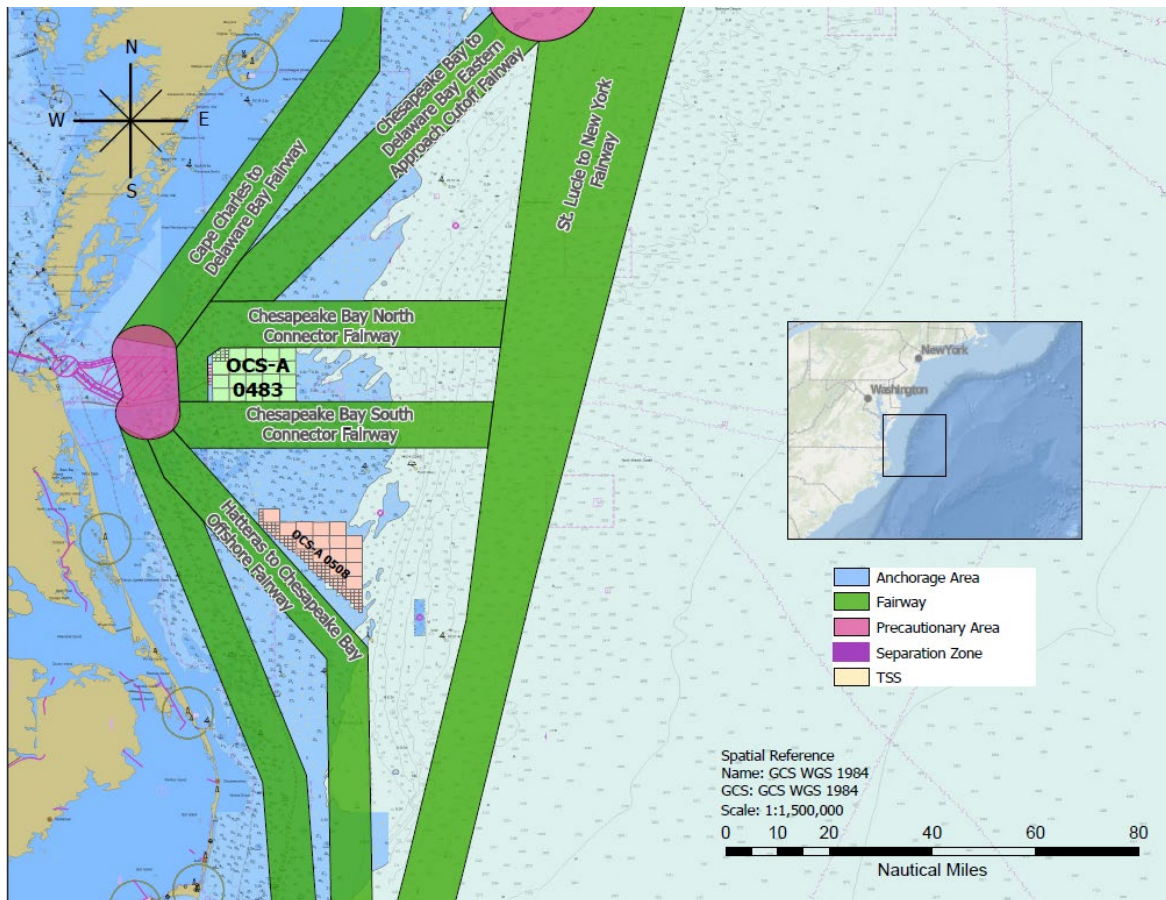


Figure 8: Approaches to Chesapeake, VA Fairways and Routing Measures

Bight PARS. The southernmost section should be renamed the Cape Charles to Delaware Bay Fairway.

- The Delaware Bay Connector Fairway should reorient to the east and be combined into the St. Lucie to New York Fairway to better support the vessel traffic flow in and out of the Delaware Bay Southeastern approach.
- The recommended precautionary area connecting the offshore termini of the eastern and southern approaches to the TSS in the approaches to Chesapeake Bay should be reduced to a size consistent with the widths of the converging fairways and TSS approaches.

Port Access Route Study: Seacoast of North Carolina Including Approaches to the Cape Fear River and Beaufort Inlet, North Carolina

On May 16, 2022, the Fifth Coast Guard District announced in the **Federal Register** (87 FR 29756) the completion of the Seacoast of North Carolina Including Approaches to the Cape Fear River and Beaufort Inlet, North Carolina PARS. The Fifth Coast Guard District analyzed relevant data, including existing and potential traffic patterns, existing regulations, and public comments made in response to the Seacoast of North Carolina Including Approaches to the Cape Fear River and Beaufort Inlet, North Carolina PARS. The Coast Guard considered these factors when determining whether to designate new or revise existing fairways and routing measures to improve navigation safety off the coast of North Carolina and the approaches to the Cape Fear River and Beaufort Inlet due to vessel traffic density, vessel traffic patterns, weather conditions, or navigation challenges in the study area. The results from this study led to the following recommendations:

- Establish the fairways proposed in the ANPRM.

- Establish the Beaufort Inlet Connector, Cape Fear Southeastern Connector, and Cape Fear Southwestern Connector fairways.
- Establish a precautionary area at the offshore terminus of the TSS in the approaches to the Cape Fear River.

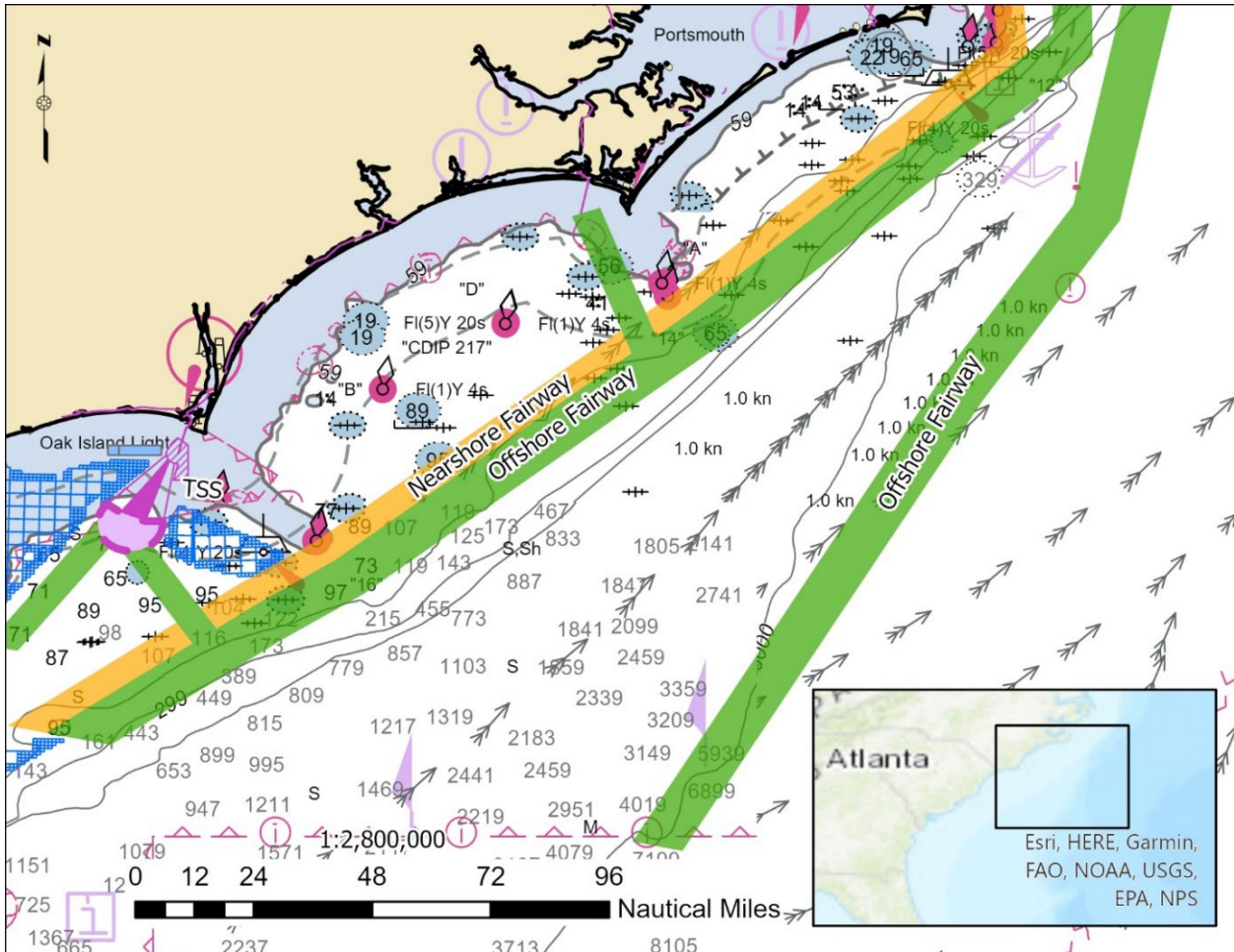


Figure 9: Seacoast of North Carolina PARS Recommended Actions

The Office of Navigation Systems considered these recommendations and concurs, with the following exceptions:

- After consultation with the Seventh Coast Guard District, the Coast Guard proposes extending the recommended Cape Fear Southwestern Approach Connector Fairway past the Cape Romain Call Area to the approaches of Charleston, SC. This extension would

ensure vessels transiting along this nearshore route have unobstructed, safe passage to the Cape Fear River as future offshore renewable energy development continues.

- Combine the portions of the St. Lucie to Chesapeake Bay Nearshore and Offshore fairways from St. Lucie, FL to Cape Hatteras, NC into a single St. Lucie to Hatteras Fairway.
- Flare the Cape Fear Southeastern Connector Fairway and the Beaufort Inlet Connector Fairway to seaward to account for converging traffic.

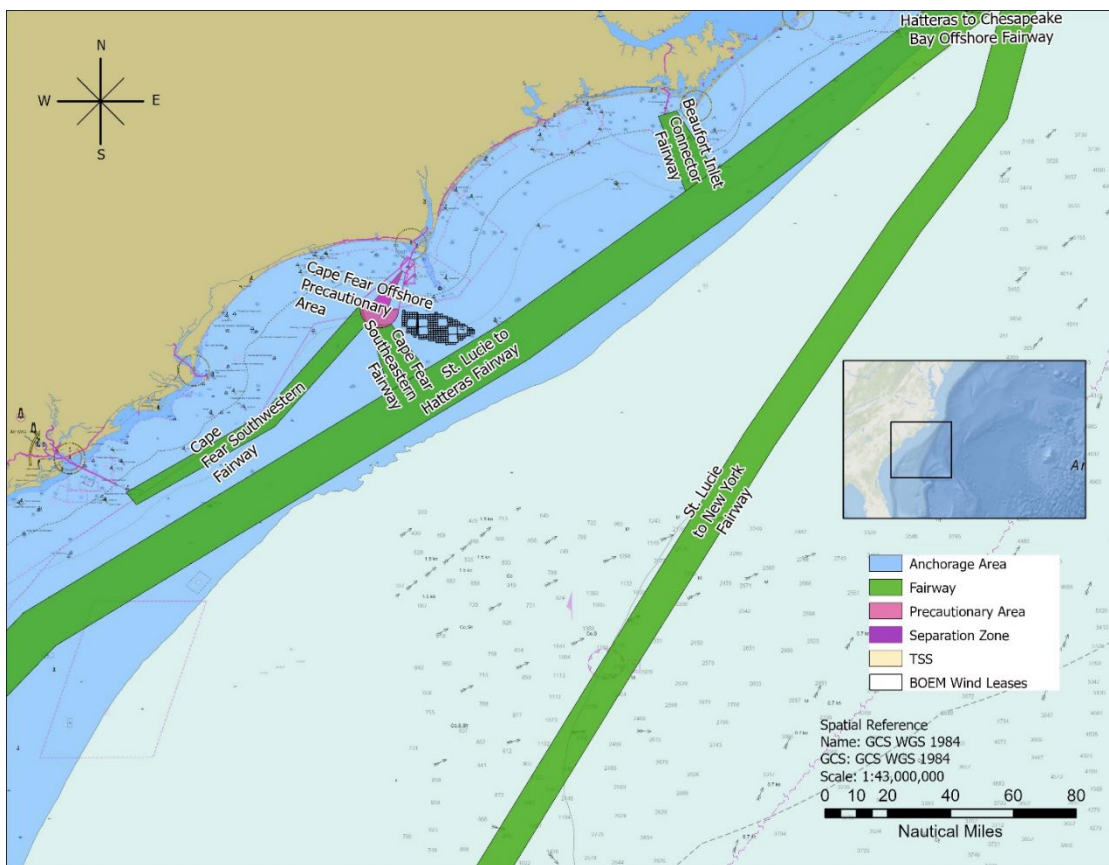


Figure 10: Seacoast of North Carolina Recommended Fairways and Routing Measures

Non-Supplemental PARS Area Review

The ANPRM sought comments on possible fairways from St. Lucie, FL to Nantucket, MA. The four supplemental PARS study areas did not review port access south of the Seacoast of North Carolina PARS study area. The recommended fairways from St. Lucie, FL to Seacoast of North Carolina PARS study area, as published in the ANPRM, should carry forward toward

any subsequent proposed rulemaking. To align with the recommendations of the Seacoast of North Carolina PARS, the portions of the St. Lucie to Chesapeake Bay Nearshore and Offshore

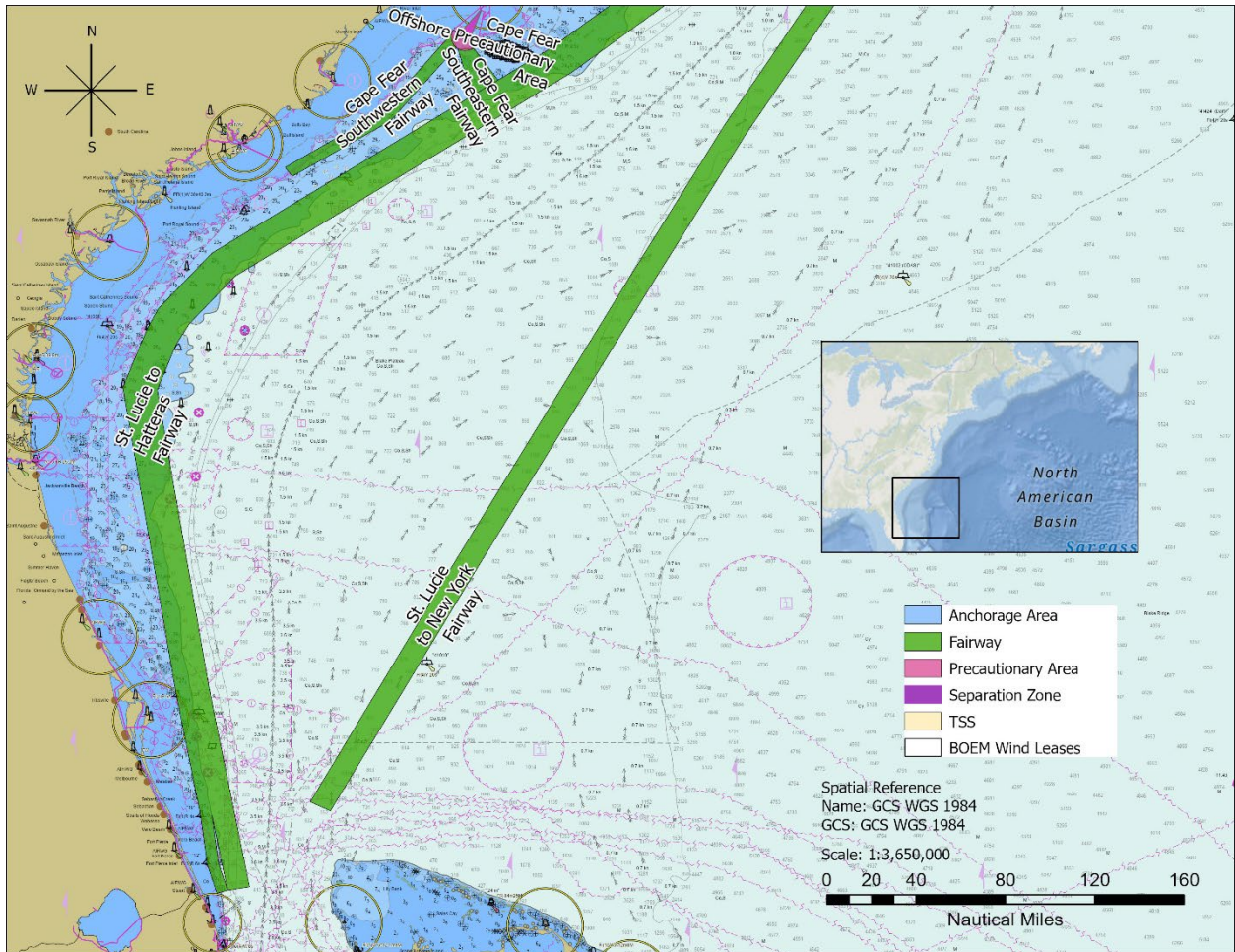


Figure 11: Recommended Fairways and Routing Measures South Carolina to St. Lucie, FL

fairways from St. Lucie, FL to Cape Hatteras, NC should be combined into a single St. Lucie to Hatteras Fairway.

Conclusions

This report is a consolidation of the recommendations from the First, Fifth, and Seventh Coast Guard Districts, and provides recommendations, which should be included in a subsequent rulemaking proposal. The recommendations in this report provide a system of safety fairways, traffic separations schemes, and precautionary areas that do not conflict with any lease area auctioned by BOEM. Any subsequent potential lease areas will be considered separately.

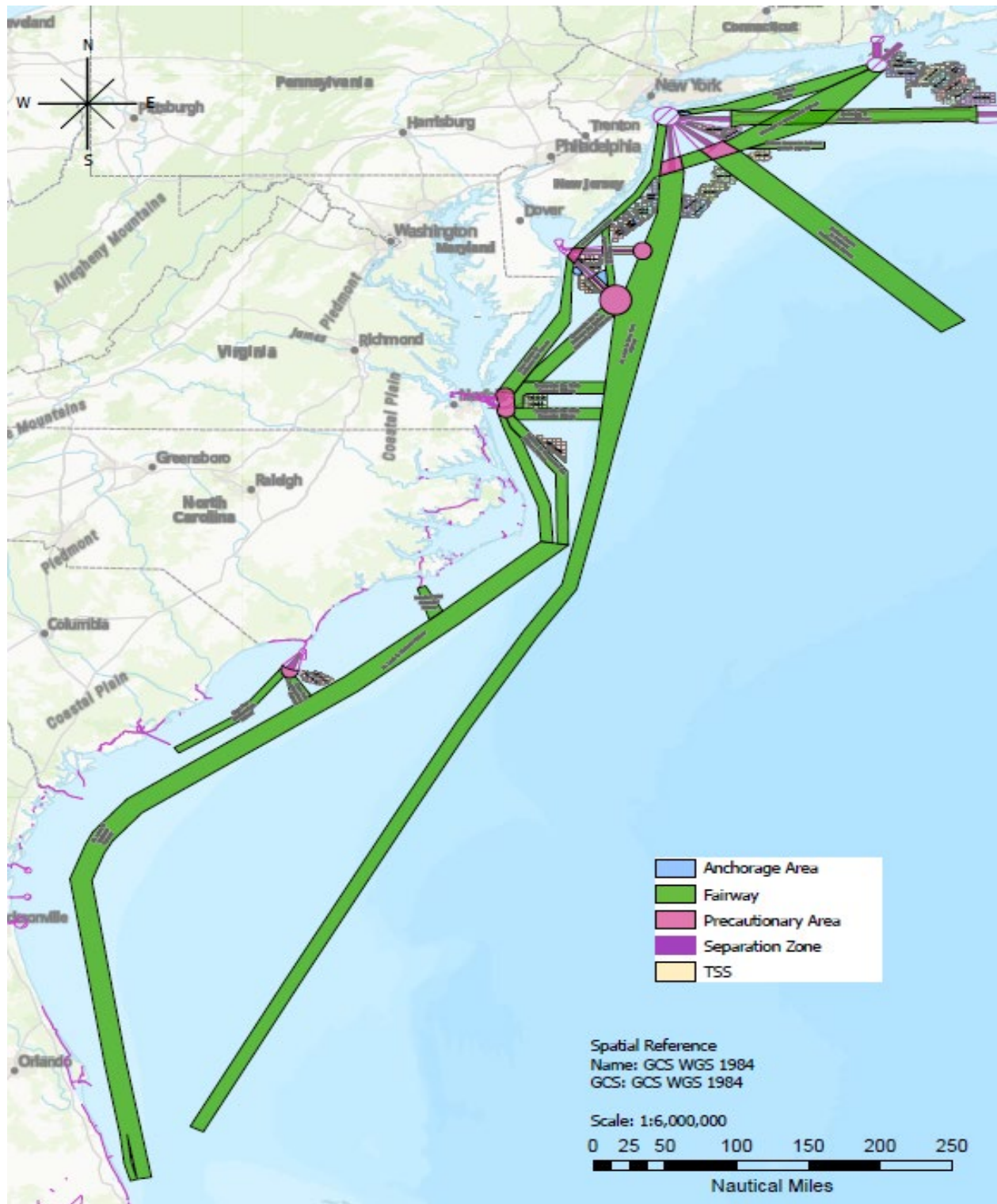


Figure 12: Consolidated Recommended Fairways and Routing Measures