

Omnibus Essential Fish Habitat Amendment 2 Management Alternatives

New England Fishery Management Council

Portland, ME

June 19, 2013

Purpose of meeting

- Select a range of alternatives to be analyzed in the OA2 DEIS
- Two types of alternatives:
 - Groundfish spawning
 - Habitat protection – minimize adverse effects on EFH, protect juvenile groundfish habitats, designate areas for habitat research
- Alternatives related to EFH and HAPC designations are already included in the amendment

Recent meetings and analyses

- Joint meetings to develop individual area management options and suggest regional groupings of alternatives
 - Technical teams April 29, May 10, and May 29-30
 - Habitat and Groundfish Committees May 17 and June 11
- Joint technical team
 - Evaluated most of the options in terms of juvenile and spawning groundfish hotspots and habitat vulnerability (5/10)
 - Determined whether sub-regional options in combination are likely to meet key objectives of the amendment (5/29-5/30)
 - Drafted sub-regional alternatives to meet objectives (5/30)

Next steps

- Develop draft EIS, analyze probable effects, including practicability analysis
- Fine tune alternatives as needed to improve performance and/or practicality
- Council reviews draft and selects preferred alternatives (planned for November)
- Public hearings and comment period
- Council reviews comments and selects final alternatives (planned for April)

Materials

- Committee summaries – **Documents 2 and 3**
- Alternatives document – **Document 4**
- Memo from CATT/PDT to Committees with evaluation of objectives and draft alternatives – **Document 14**
- Gears that catch groundfish – **Document 8**
- Enforcement Committee comments – **Document 1 under Tab 11**
- Correspondence

Goals and objectives – EFH-driven

- Identify and implement mechanisms to protect, conserve, and enhance the EFH of those species managed by the Council to the extent practicable;
- Integrate and optimize measures to minimize the adverse impacts to EFH across all Council managed FMPs;
 - Develop analytical tools for designation of EFH, minimization of adverse impacts, and monitoring the effectiveness of measures designed to protect habitat
 - Modify fishing methods and create incentives to reduce the impacts on habitat associated with fishing
 - Develop criteria for establishing and implementing dedicated habitat research areas, design a system for monitoring and evaluating the benefits of EFH management actions including dedicated habitat research areas

Goals and objectives – groundfish-driven

- Enhance groundfish fishery productivity
- Maximize societal net benefits from the groundfish stocks while addressing current management needs
 - Improved groundfish spawning protection; including protection of localized spawning contingents or sub-populations of stocks
 - Improved protection of critical groundfish habitats
 - Improved refuge for critical life history stages
 - Improved access to both the use and non-use benefits arising from closed area management across gear types, fisheries, and groups. These benefits may arise from areas designed to address the other three groundfish closed area objectives

Spawning alternatives

- **Alternative 1 (No Action):** Year round groundfish closures (WGOM, CL, CAI, CAII, NLCA), sector rolling closures, common pool rolling closures, May Georges Bank closure, GOM seasonal cod spawning area (Whaleback). Closed to gears capable of catching groundfish. Seasonal recreational fishery closures for Whaleback (and two MA areas).
- **Alternative 2:** Seasonal implementation of CAI and CAII groundfish closures (Feb, March, April), spawning closures to groundfish gears based on sector rolling closure boundaries (April, May, June), the May Georges Bank closure, and the GOM seasonal cod spawning area (Whaleback). Probably closed to same fleets as above.
- **Alternative 3:** Alternative 2 but northern part of CAI only?

No Action
Spawning
Alternative,
March

Includes all existing year round groundfish closures (parts of CAI, CAII, and NLCA not shown) and March common pool rolling closure.

No Action
Spawning
Alternative,
April

Includes all existing year round groundfish closures (parts of CAI, CAII, and NLCA not shown), GOM cod spawning protection area (Whaleback), and April sector and common pool rolling closures.

No Action
Spawning
Alternative,
May

Includes all existing year round groundfish closures, GOM cod spawning protection area (Whaleback), May sector and common pool rolling closures, and the Georges Bank seasonal closure area.

No Action
Spawning
Alternative,
June

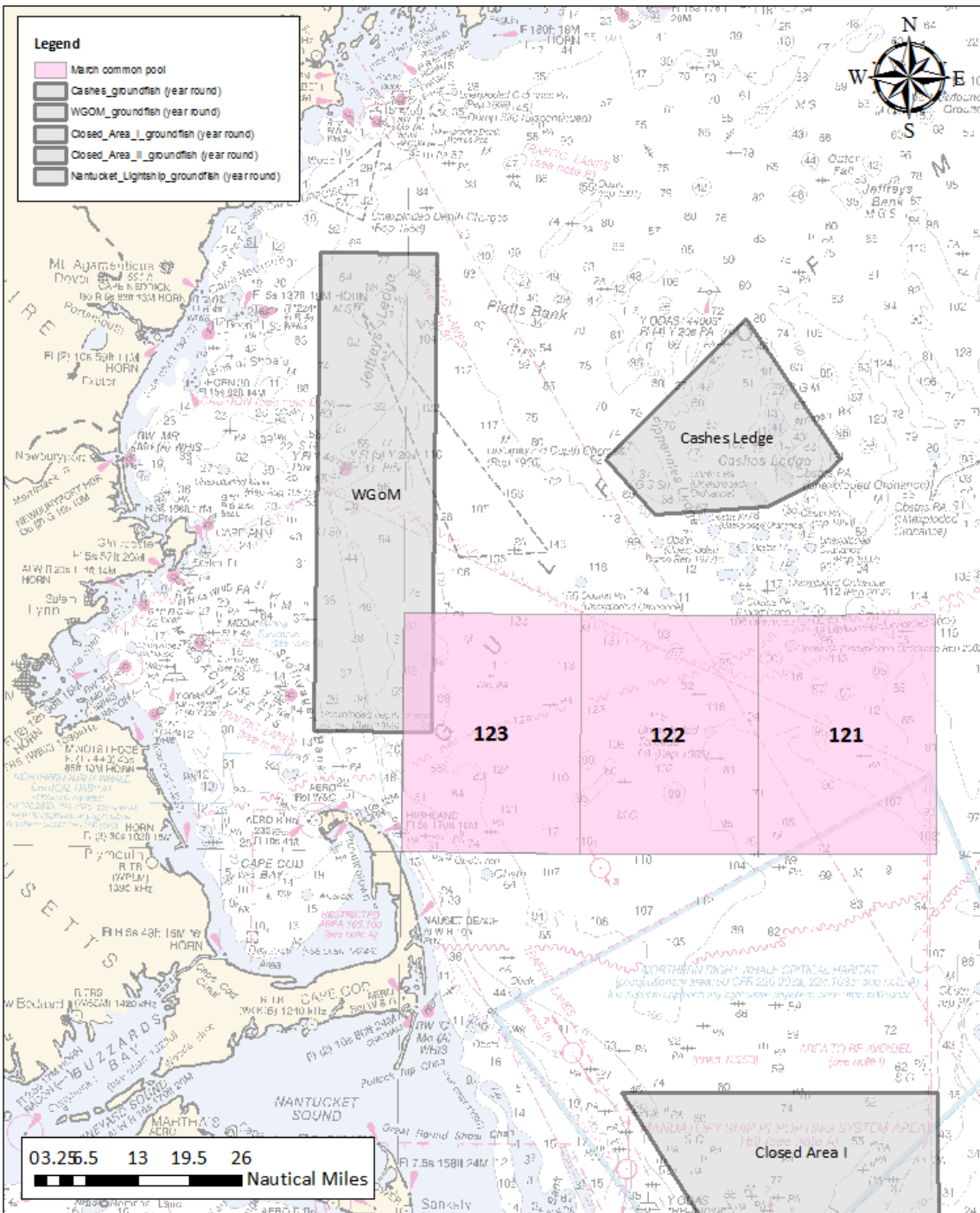
Includes all existing year round groundfish closures (parts of CAI, CAII, and NLCA not shown) and March common pool rolling closure.

No Action
Spawning
Alternative,
Oct-Nov

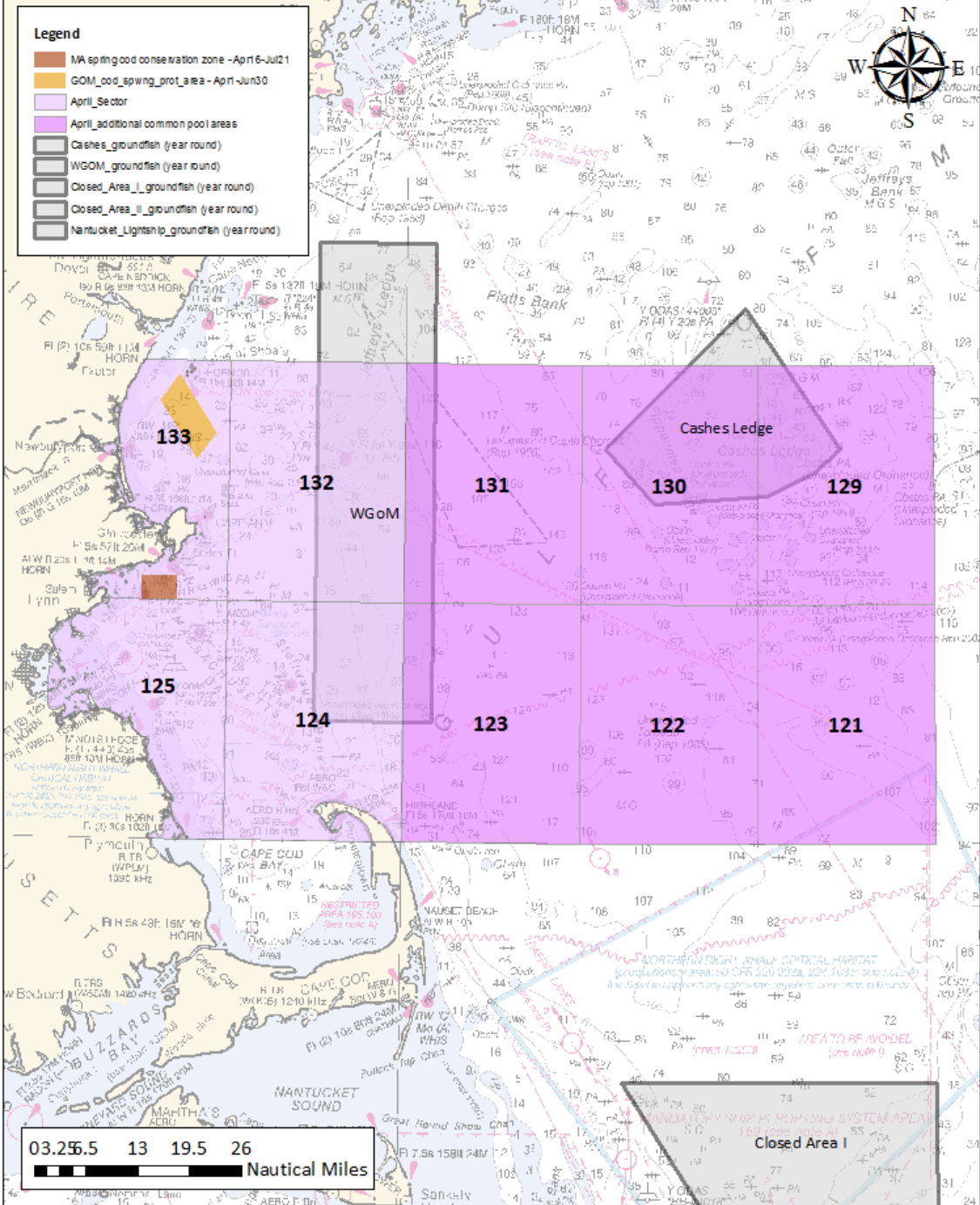
Includes all existing year round groundfish closures (parts of CAI, CAII, and NLCA not shown), GOM cod spawning protection area (Whaleback), and June sector and common pool rolling closures.

No Action
Spawning
Alternative,
other months

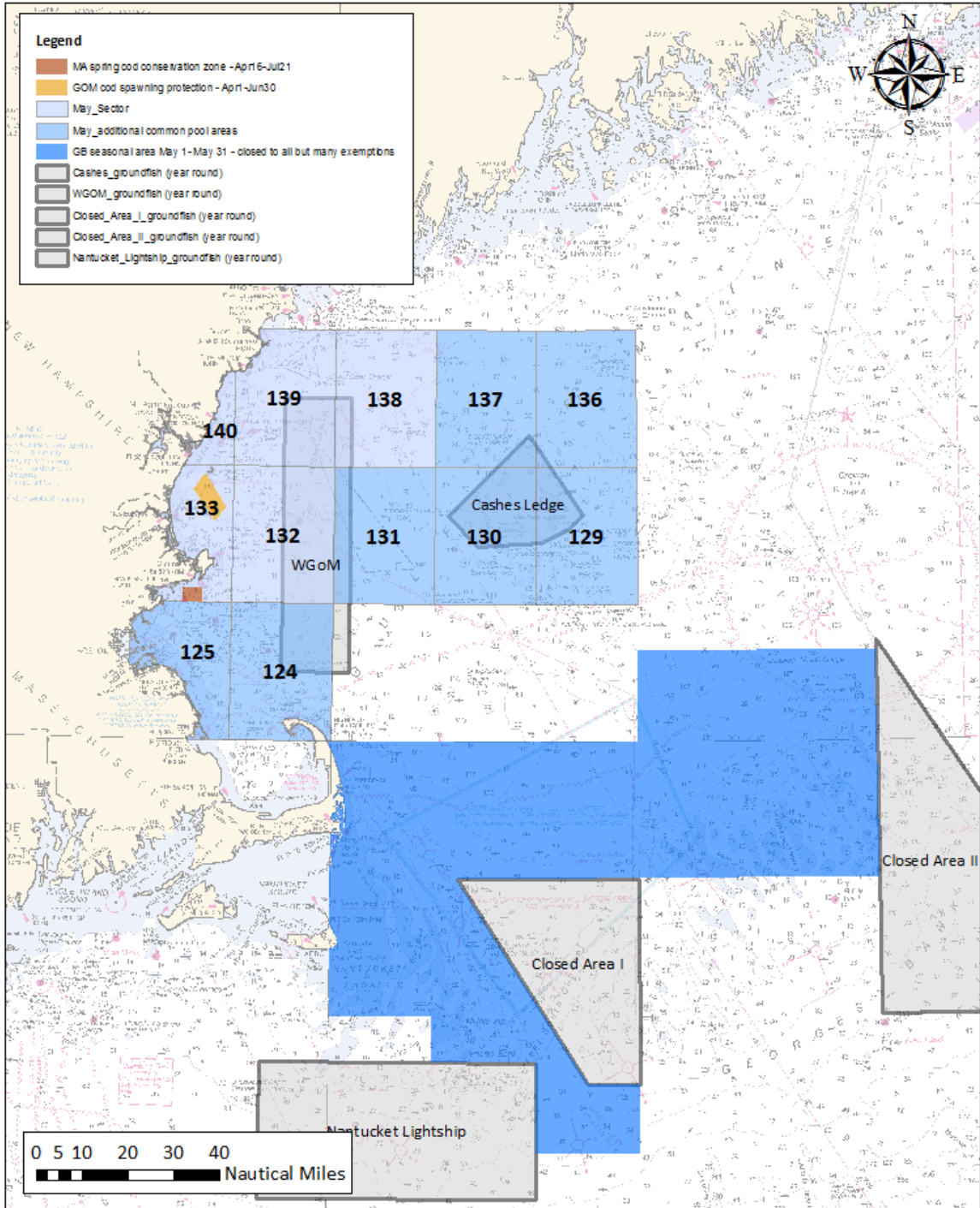
Includes all existing year round groundfish closures



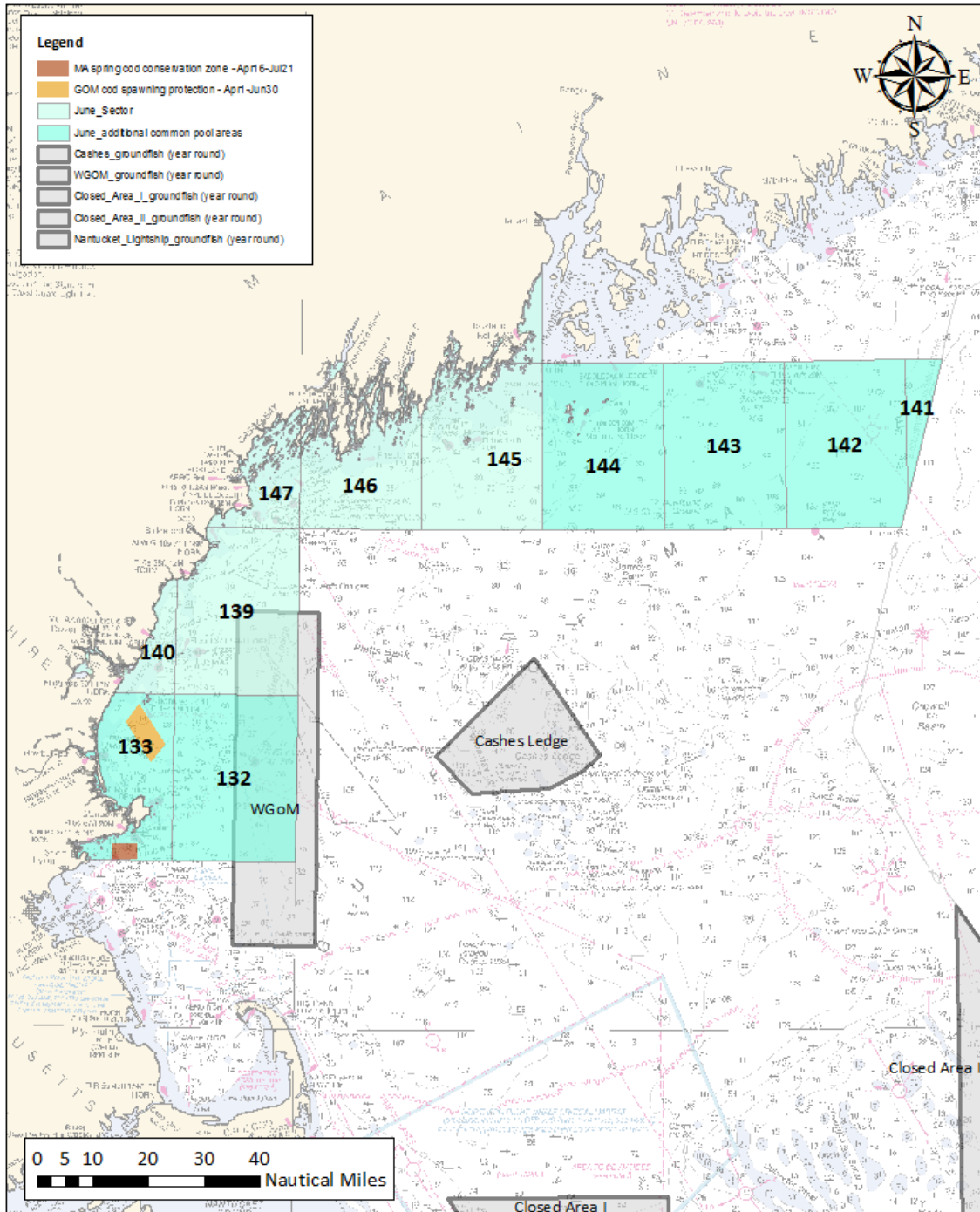
No Action
Spawning
Alternative,
March



No Action Spawning Alternative, April



No Action Spawning Alternative, May

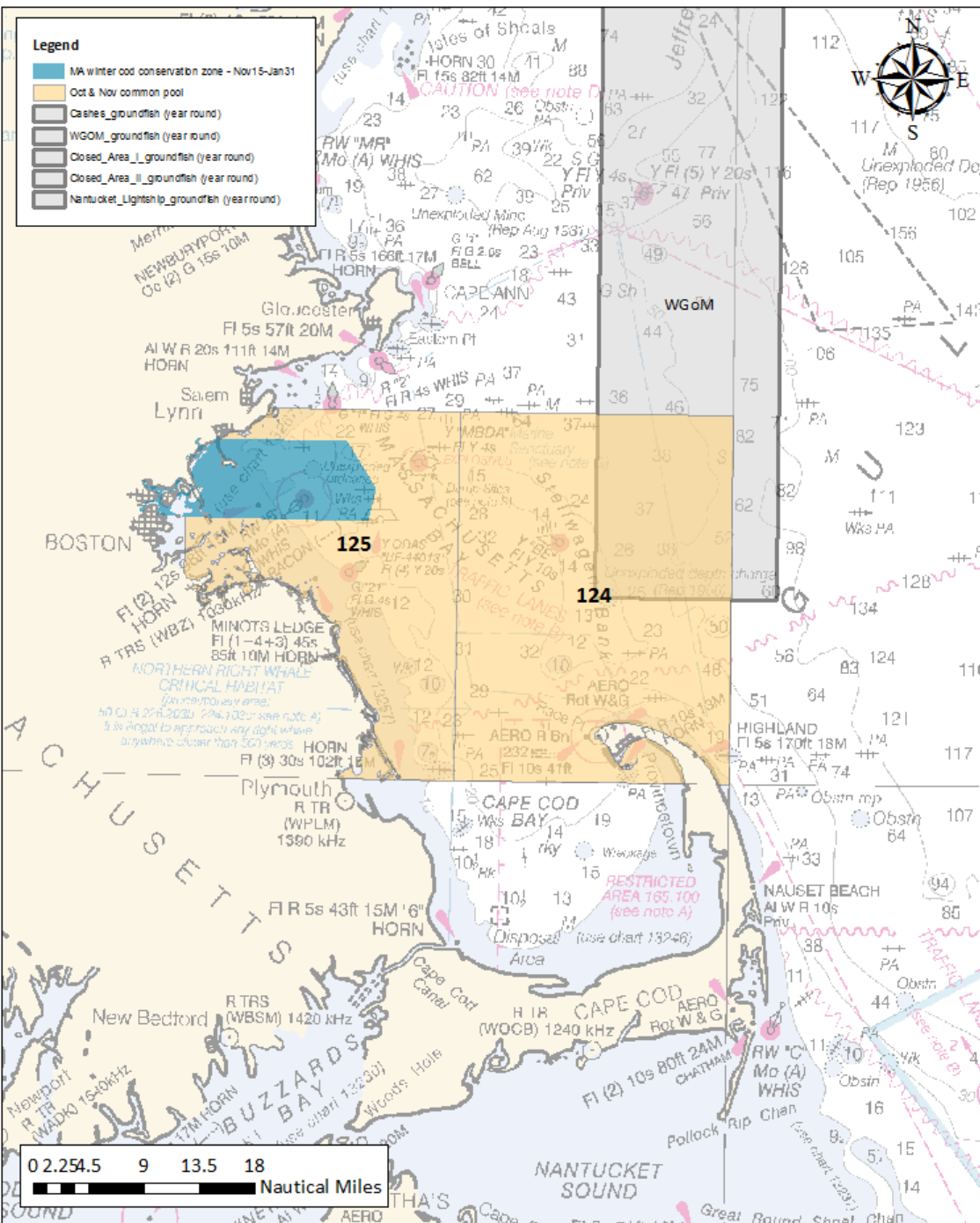


No Action
Spawning
Alternative,
June



- Legend**
- MA winter ood conservation zone - Nov15-Jan31
 - Oct & Nov common pool
 - Cashes_groundfish (year round)
 - WGOM_groundfish (year round)
 - Closed_Area_I_groundfish (year round)
 - Closed_Area_II_groundfish (year round)
 - Nantucket_Lightfish_groundfish (year round)



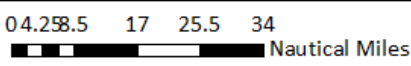
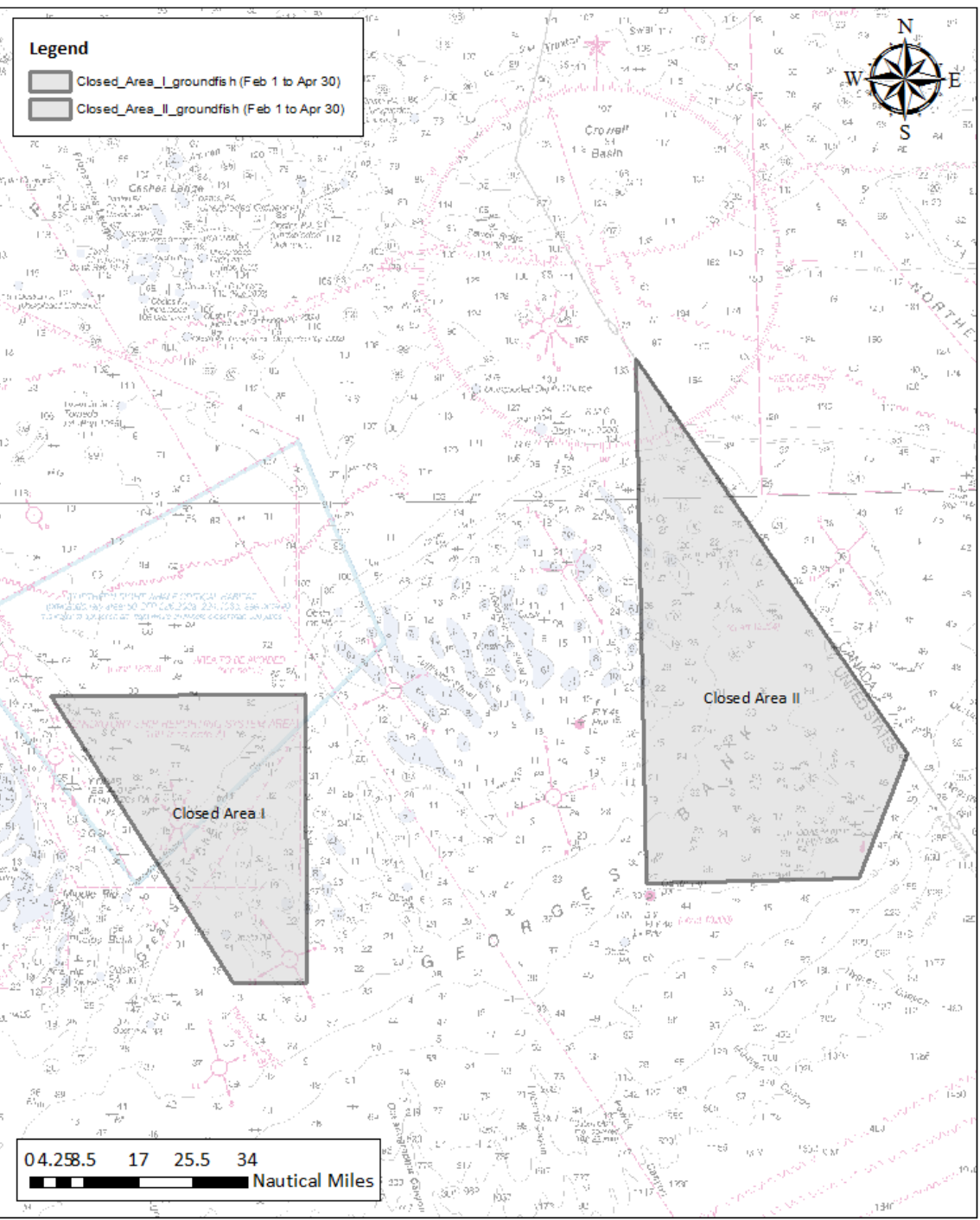
No Action Spawning Alternative, Oct-Nov

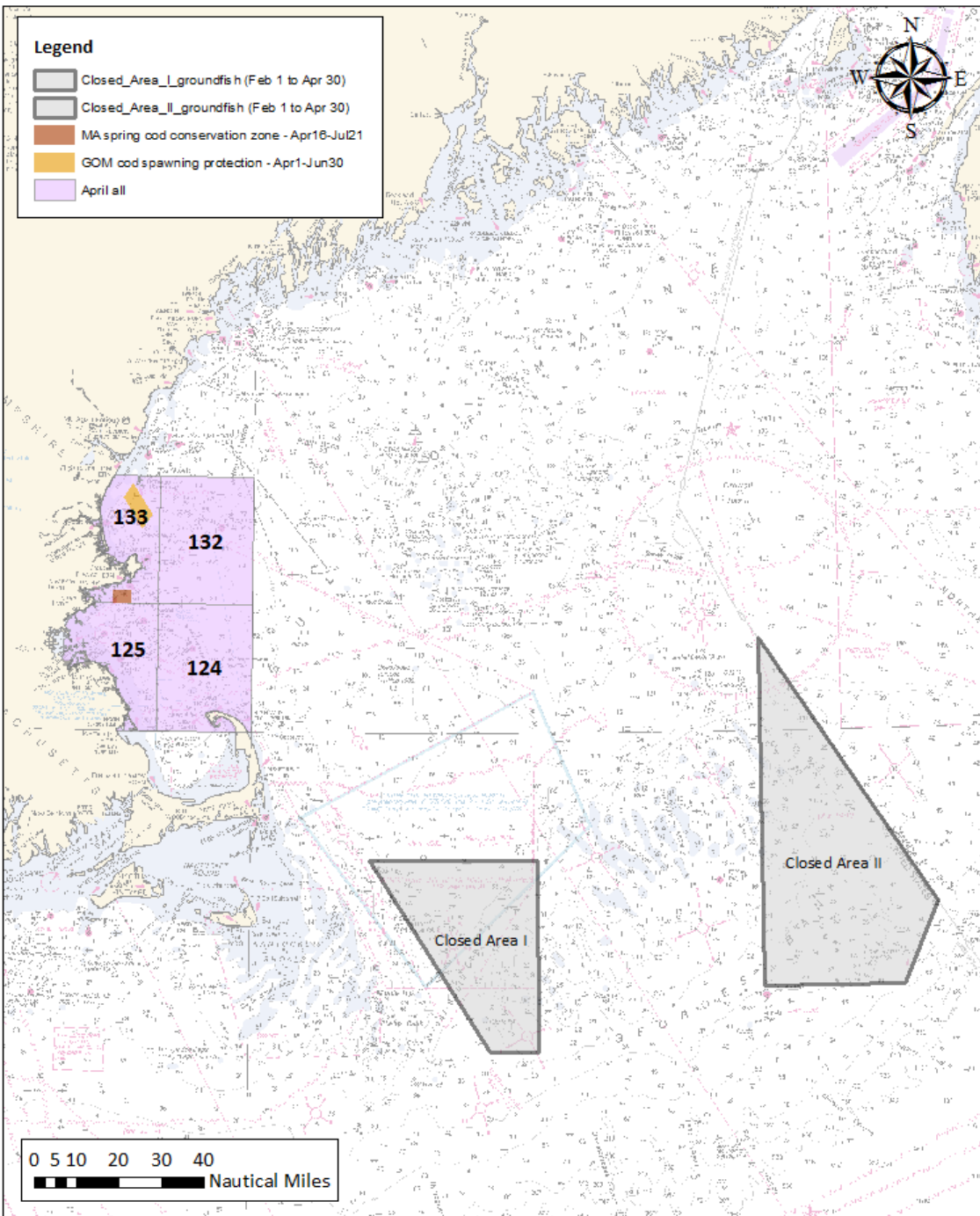


Legend

-  Closed Area I_groundfish (Feb 1 to Apr 30)
-  Closed Area II_groundfish (Feb 1 to Apr 30)

Spawning Alternative 2, Feb-Mar

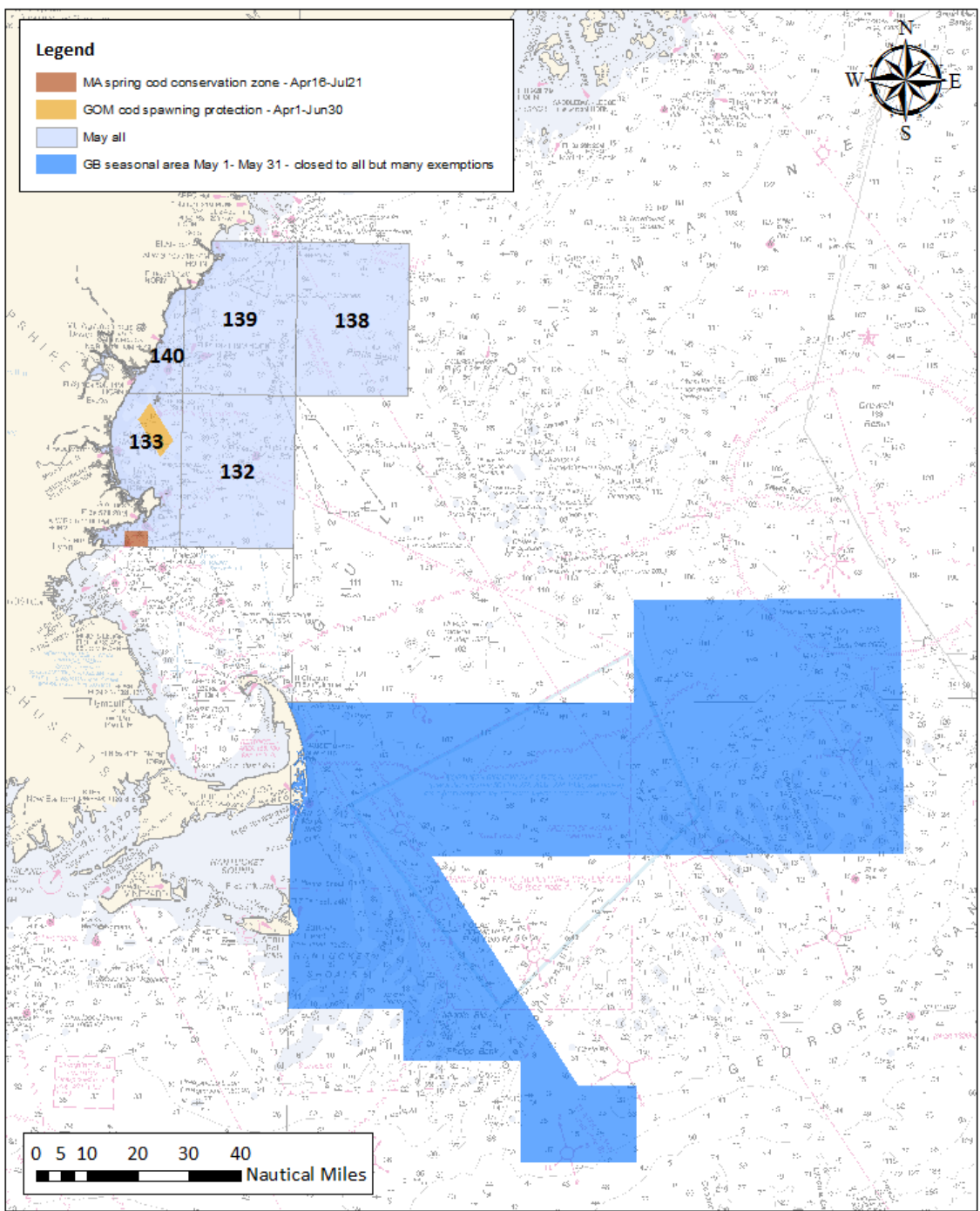




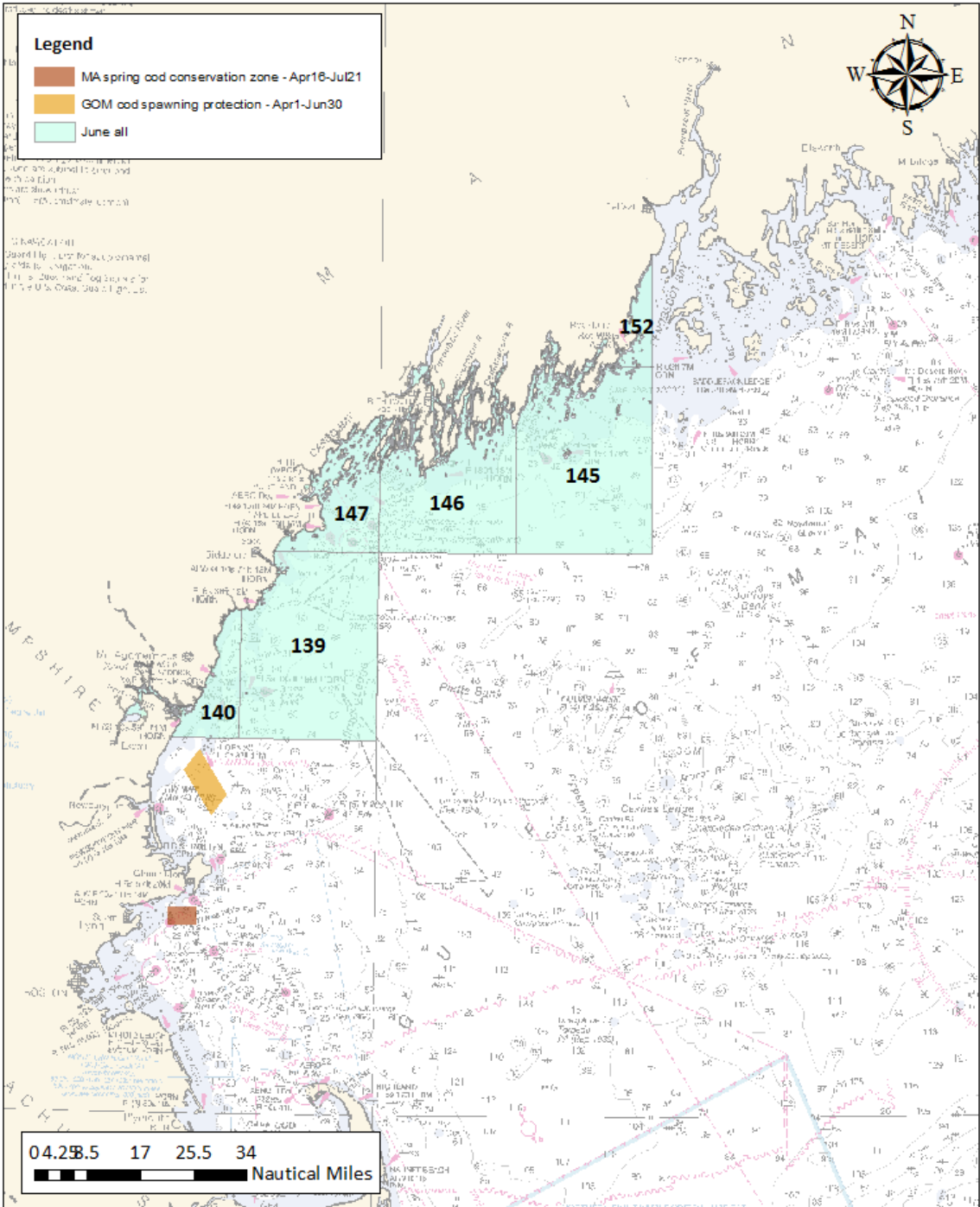
Spawning Alternative 2, April

Legend

- MA spring cod conservation zone - Apr16-Jul21
- GOM cod spawning protection - Apr1-Jun30
- May all
- GB seasonal area May 1- May 31 - closed to all but many exemptions



Spawning Alternative 2, May



Spawning Alternative 2, June

Alternatives to minimize adverse effects, improve protection for juvenile groundfish, and designate research areas

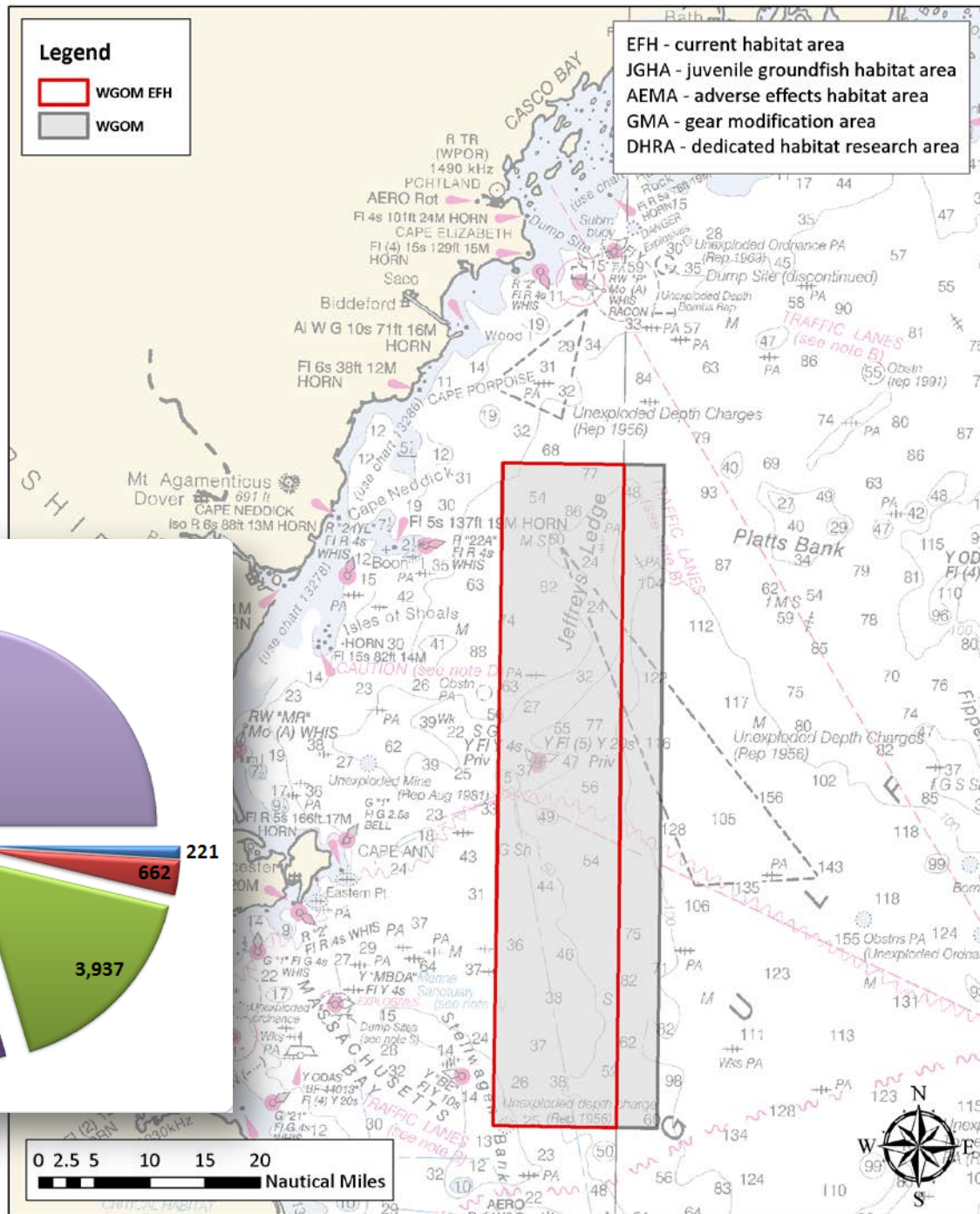
- **Alternative 1 (No Action):** Existing year-round groundfish closures (gears capable of taking groundfish, with some access programs) and habitat closures (closed to bottom tending mobile gears)
- **Action alternatives:** Areas developed by the Habitat PDT, CATT, and Oversight Committees to protect vulnerable habitats, aggregations of juvenile groundfish and their associated habitats, and facilitate habitat research (closed to bottom tending mobile gears; possible exemptions for hydraulic dredges)
 - **Presented by region** – Western GOM, Central GOM, Eastern GOM, Georges Bank, Great South Channel/SNE

WGOM

Alternative 1

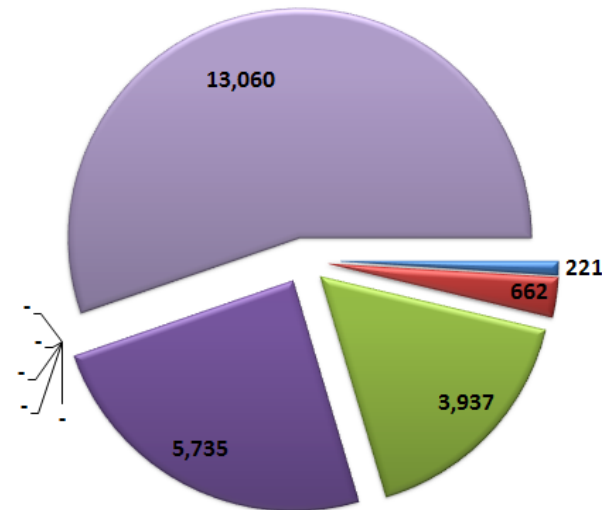
- Existing WGOM habitat closed area, plus
- Existing WGOM groundfish closed area

WGOM Alternative 1



Western Gulf of Maine

- Year round closed area
- Essential Fish Habitat Closure Areas
- Rolling closure
- Common Pool Rolling Closures
- Adverse Effects Management Area
- Dedicated Habitat Research Area
- Juvenile Groundfish Habitat Area
- Gear Modification Area
- Spawning closure area
- Open to fishing

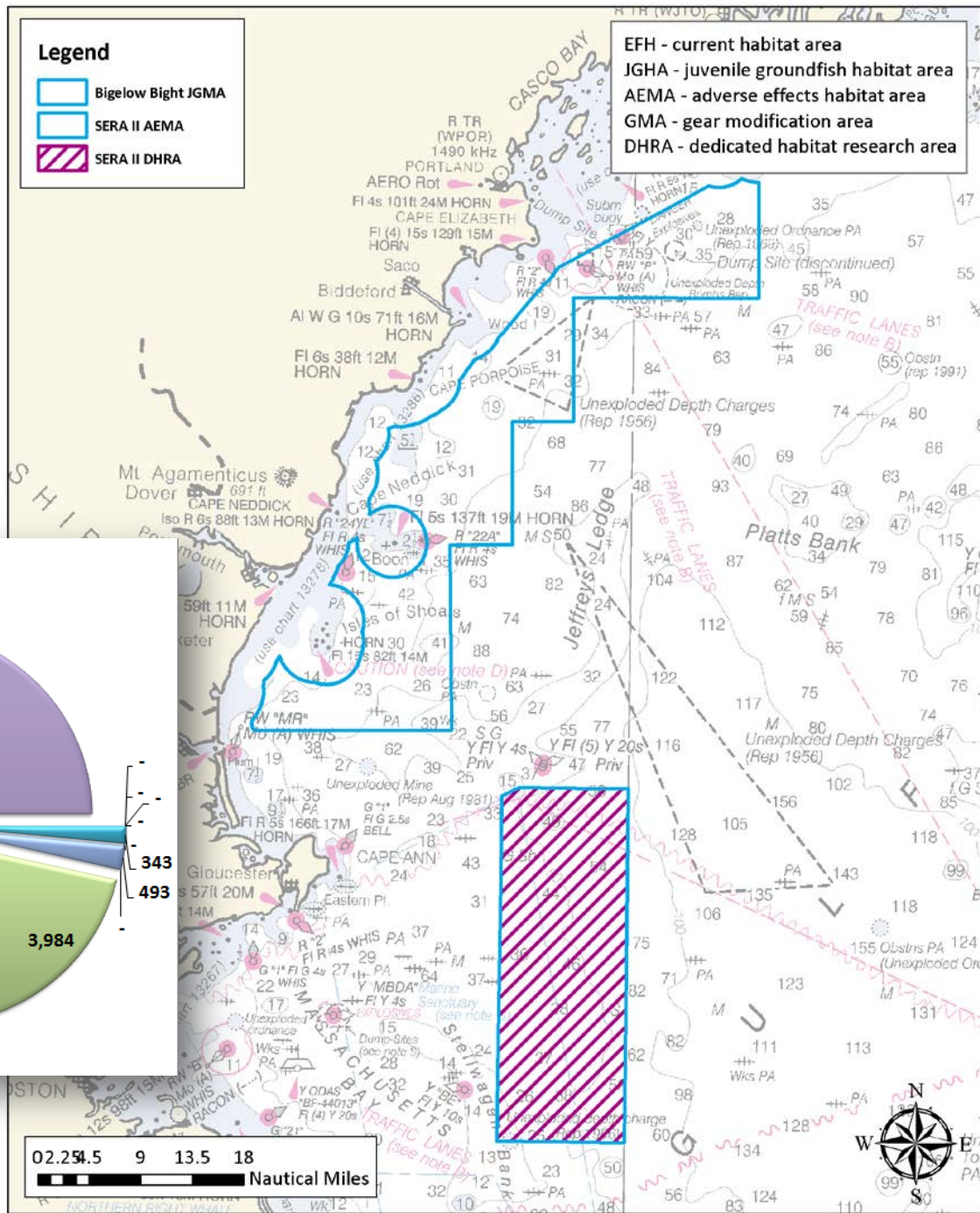


WGOM

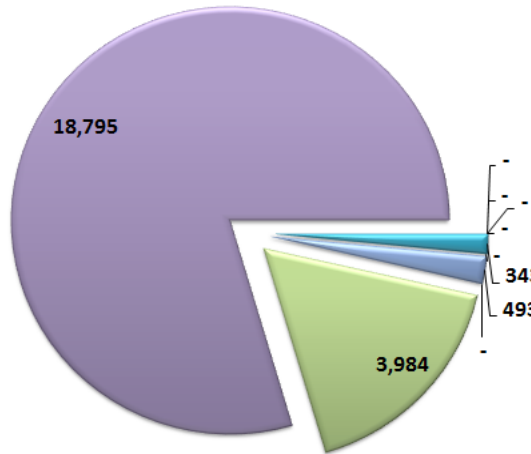
Alternative 2

- Bigelow Bight juvenile groundfish habitat area (coastal area) and the Sanctuary Ecological Research Area (SERA) II adverse effects minimization area (overlaps with hatched area).
- The SERA II area would also be designated as a DHRA.
- All areas would be designated outside of state waters.

WGOM Alternative 2



Western Gulf of Maine



WGOM

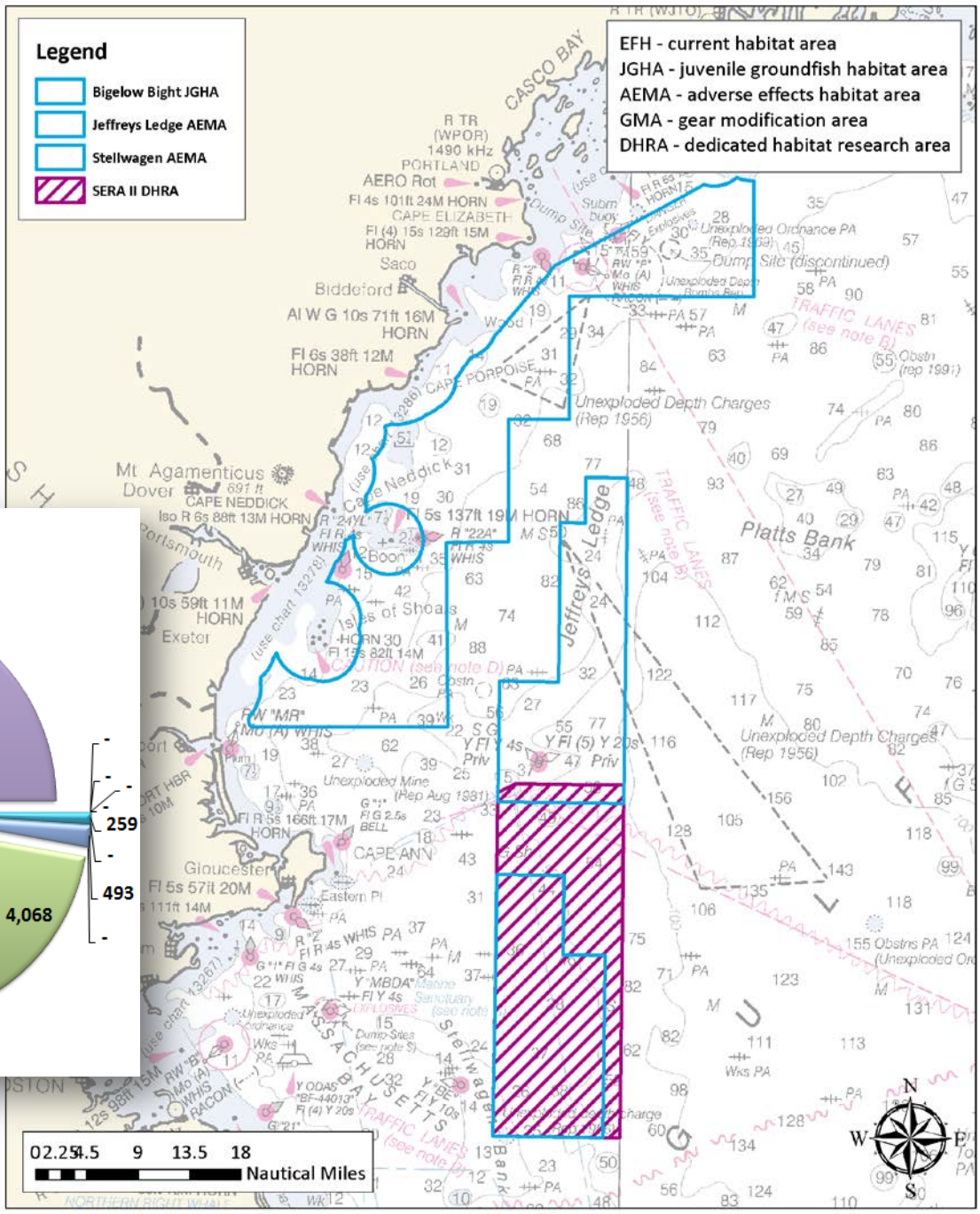
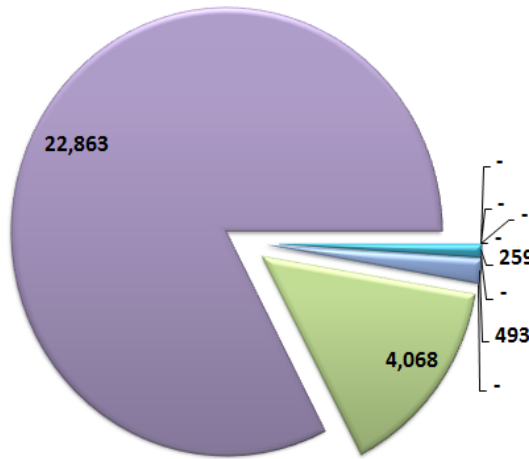
Alternative 3

- Bigelow Bight juvenile groundfish habitat area (coastal area) and the Jeffreys Ledge and Stellwagen adverse effects minimization areas. The Committees recommended considering an exemption for surfclam/ocean quahog hydraulic dredges.
- The SERA II area would be designated as a DHRA.
- All areas would be designated outside of state waters.

WGOM Alternative 3

- Year round closed area
- Essential Fish Habitat Closure Areas
- Rolling closure
- Common Pool Rolling Closures
- Adverse Effects Management Area
- Dedicated Habitat Research Area
- Juvenile Groundfish Habitat Area
- Gear Modification Area
- Spawning closure area
- Open to fishing

Western Gulf of Maine

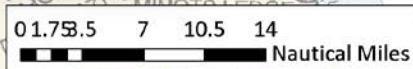
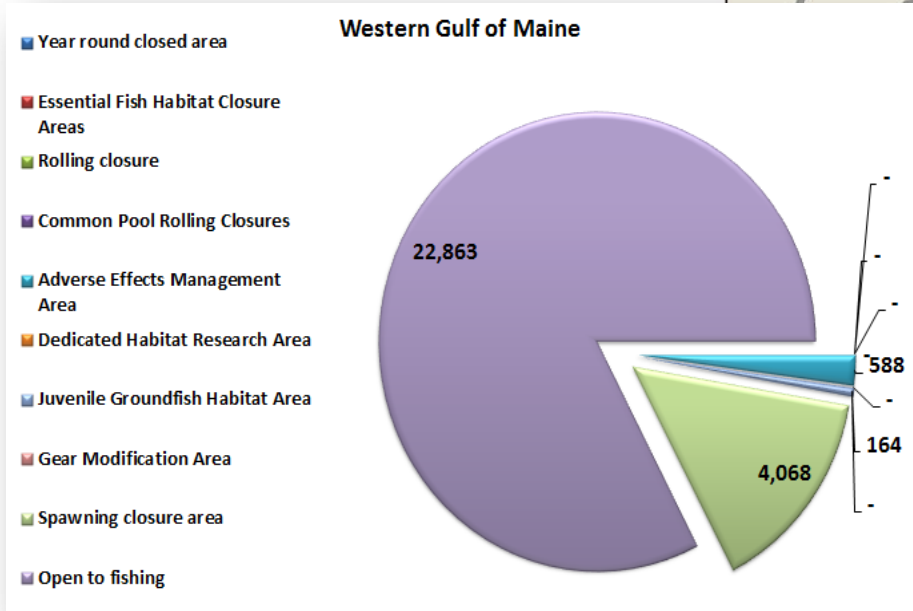
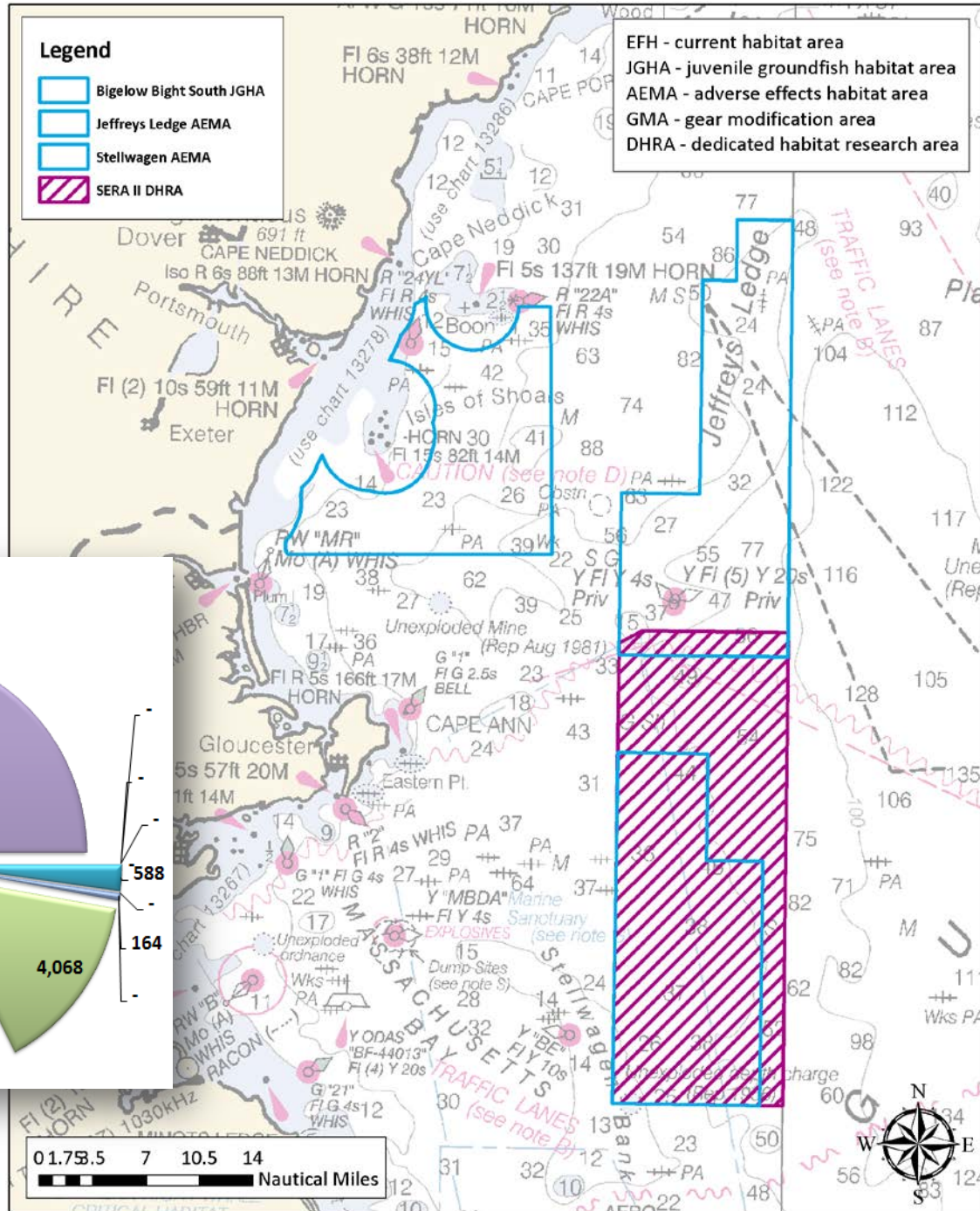


WGOM

Alternative 5

- A smaller subset of the Bigelow Bight juvenile groundfish habitat area (coastal area) and the Jeffreys Ledge and Stellwagen adverse effects minimization areas.
- The DHRA designation in the SERA area
- All areas would be designated outside of state waters.

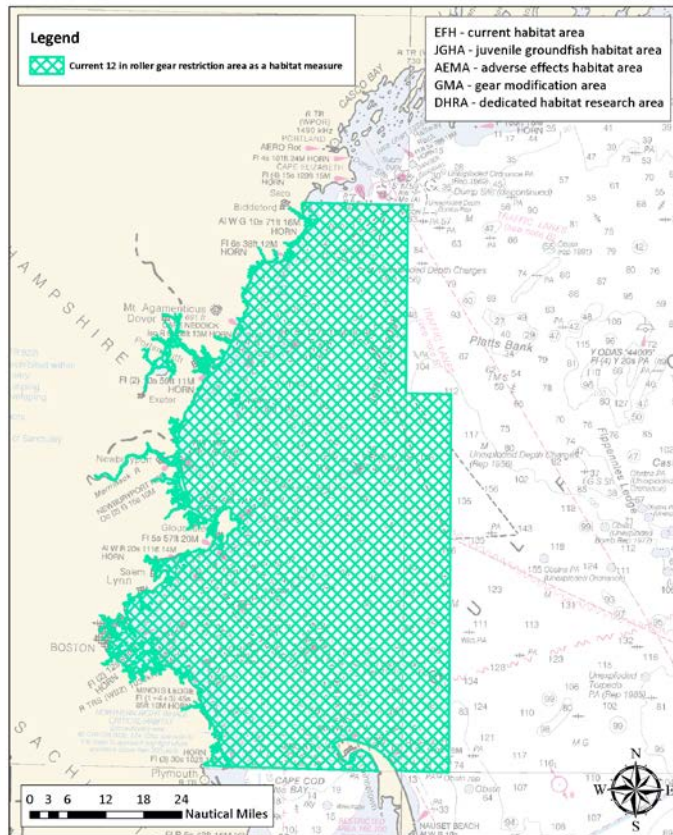
WGOM Alternative 5



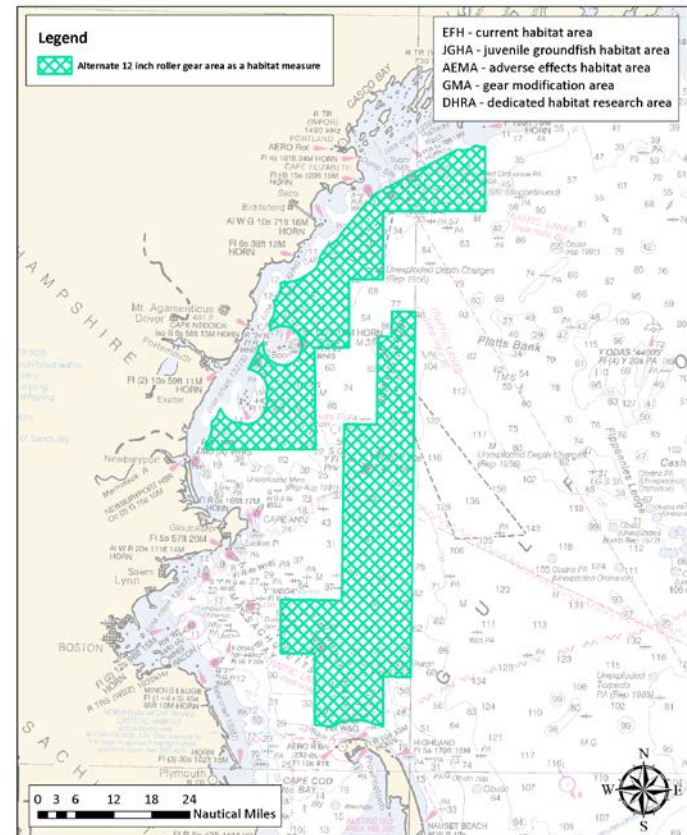
Other options for WGOM

Specify roller gear restriction as a habitat measure

Western Gulf of Maine
Additional option 1 - to be added to Alt 2, 3, or 5



Western Gulf of Maine
Additional option 2 - to be added to Alt 2, 3, or 5

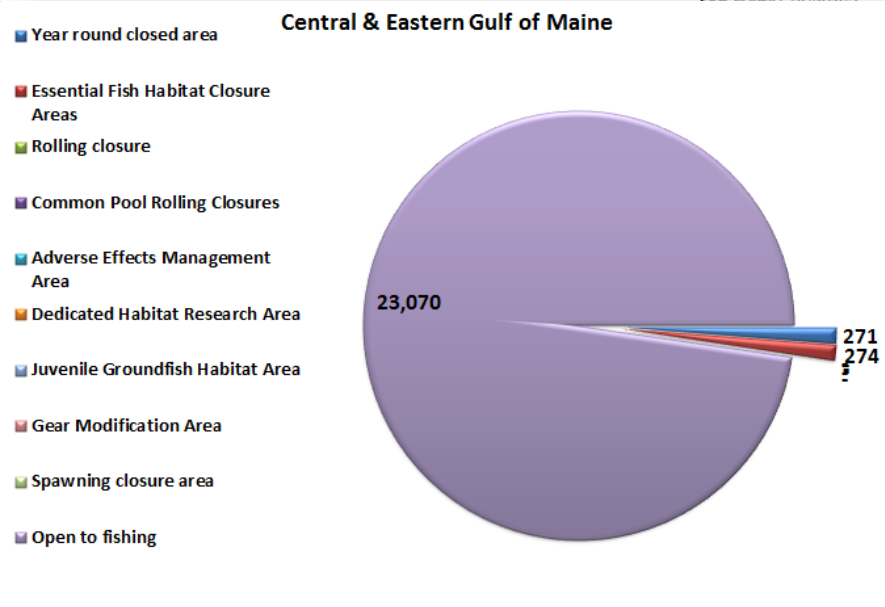
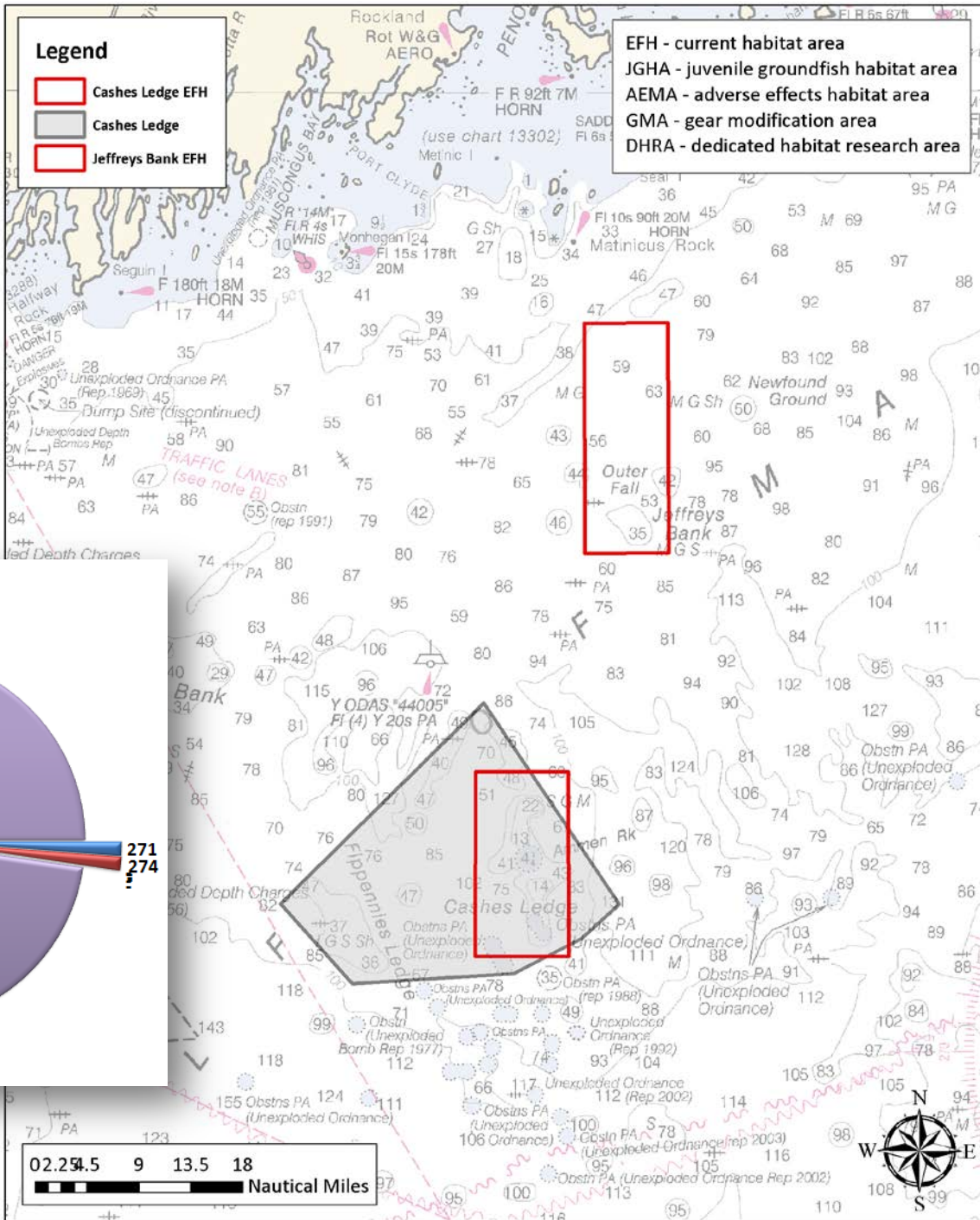


Central GOM

Alternative 1

- Cashes Ledge and **Jeffreys Bank** habitat closed areas,
- Cashes Ledge groundfish closed area
- Note that Jeffreys Bank is also listed with the Eastern Maine alternatives and should be assigned to a single region unless the central and eastern Maine alternatives are recombined.

Central GOM Alternative 1

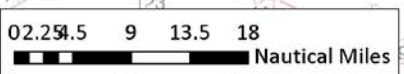
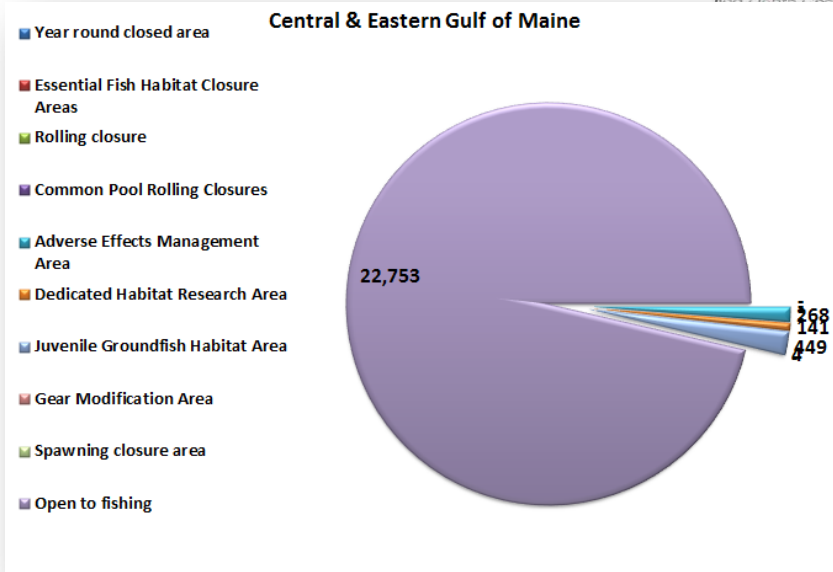
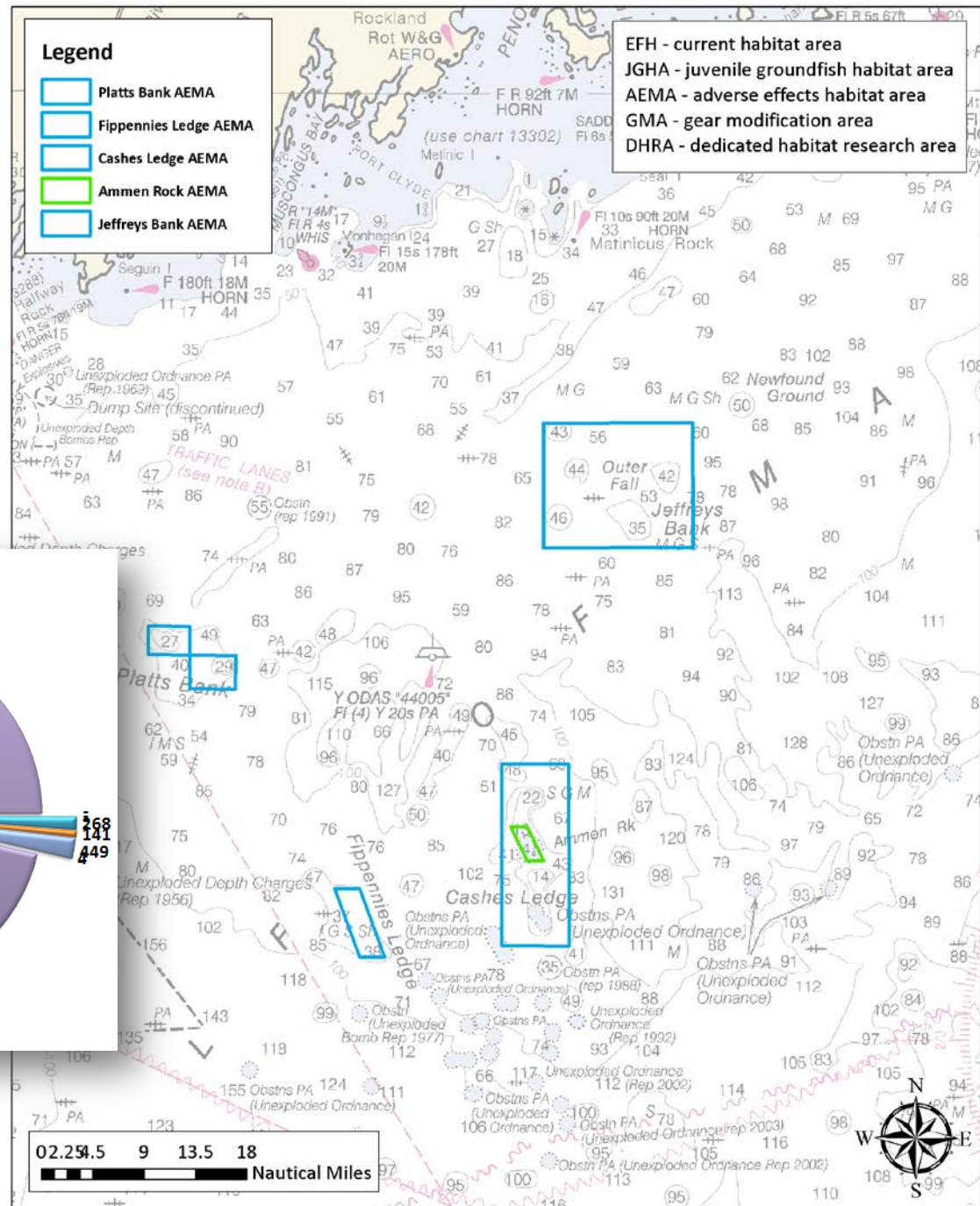


Central GOM

Alternative 2

- Cashes Ledge, Fippennies Ledge, Platts Bank, **Jeffreys Bank**, and Ammen Rock adverse effects minimization areas.
- The Jeffreys Bank (northernmost) and Cashes Ledge (easternmost) areas would be modifications of existing habitat closures.
- Ammen Rock which lies entirely with the Cashes Ledge area and would be closed to all fishing gears that can be managed by the Council.

Central GOM Alternative 2



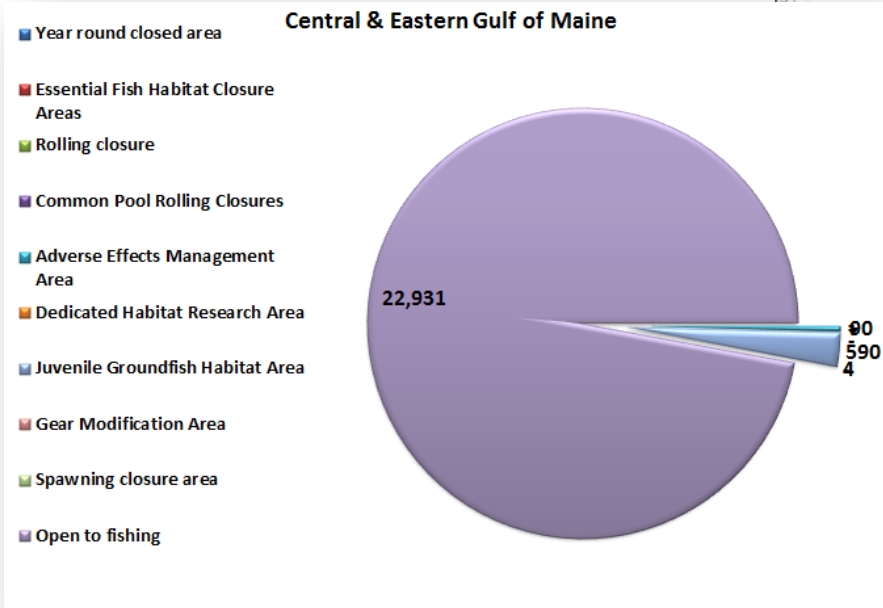
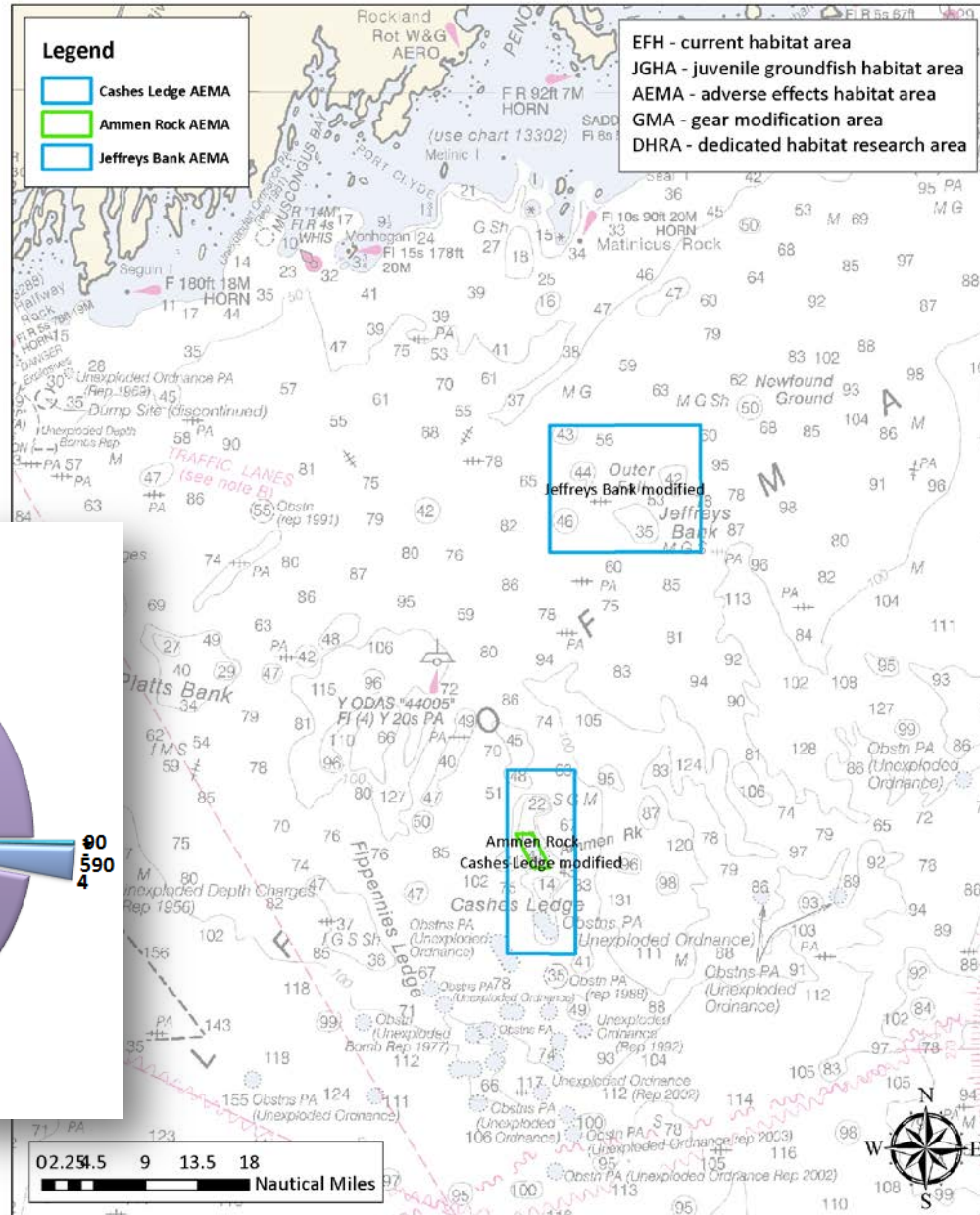
Central GOM

Alternative 3

- Cashes Ledge, **Jeffreys Bank**, and Ammen Rock adverse effects minimization areas.
- Ammen Rock which lies entirely with the Cashes Ledge area and would be closed to all fishing gears that can be managed by the Council.

Central GOM Alternative 3

Central Gulf of Maine
Alternative 3



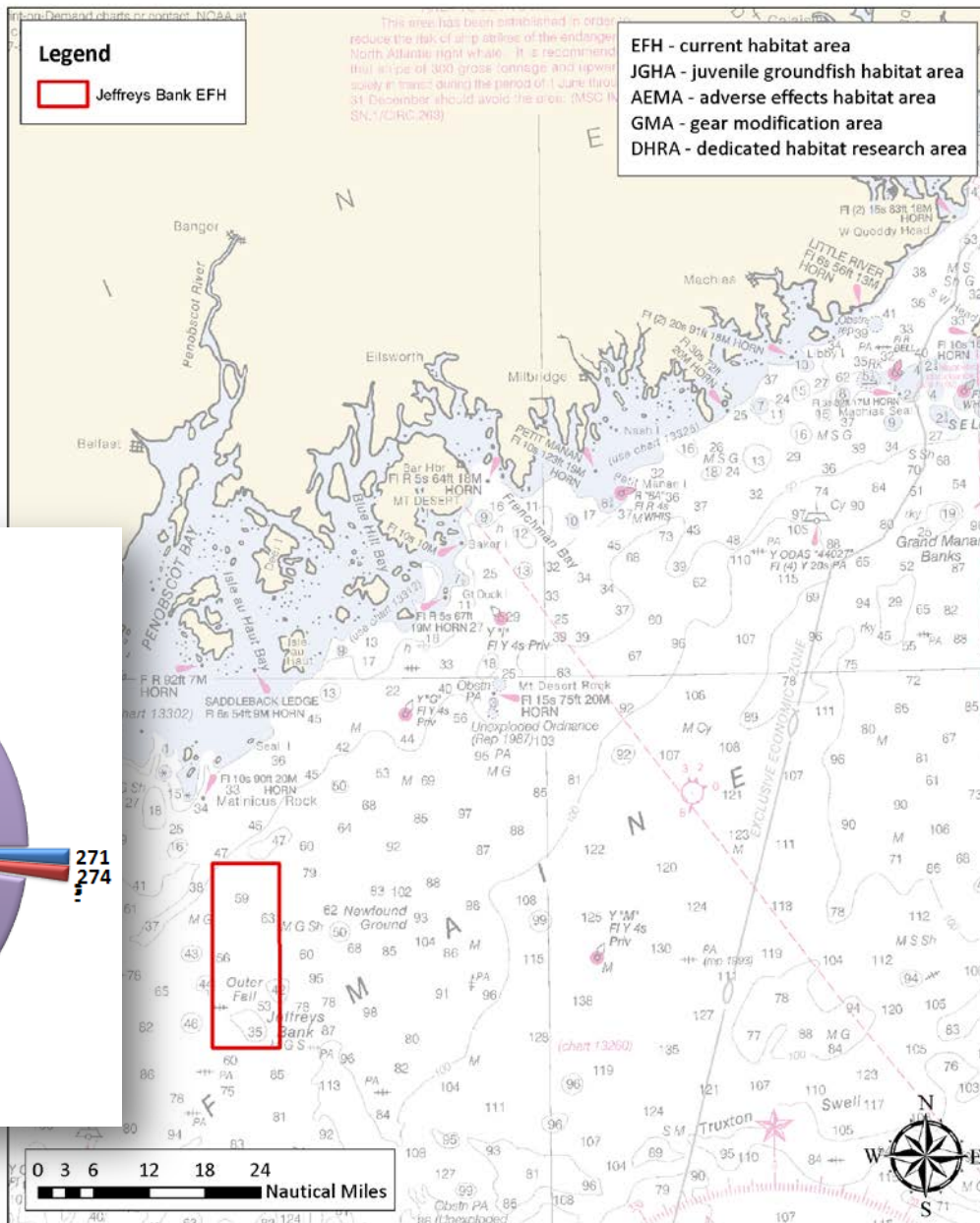
Eastern GOM

Alternative 1

- Jeffreys Bank habitat closure
- Note that Jeffreys Bank is also listed with the Central Maine alternatives and should be assigned to a single region unless the central and eastern Maine alternatives are recombined.

Eastern GOM Alternative 1

Eastern Gulf of Maine Alternative 1 - No Action



This area has been established in order to reduce the risk of ship strikes of the endangered North Atlantic right whale. It is recommended that all pairs of 300 gross tonnage and upward sailing in transit during the period of 1 June through 31 December should avoid the area. (MSC 1984/1/DIRC.263)

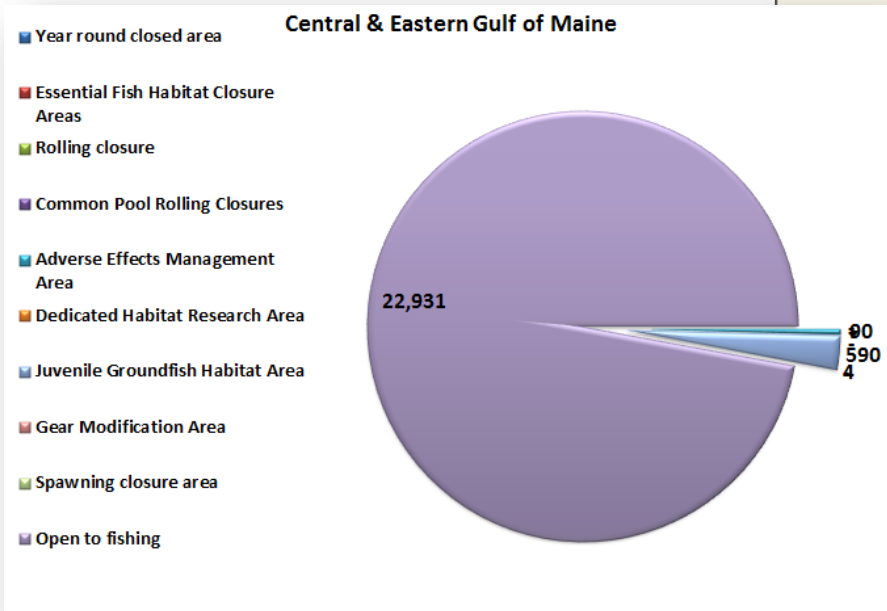
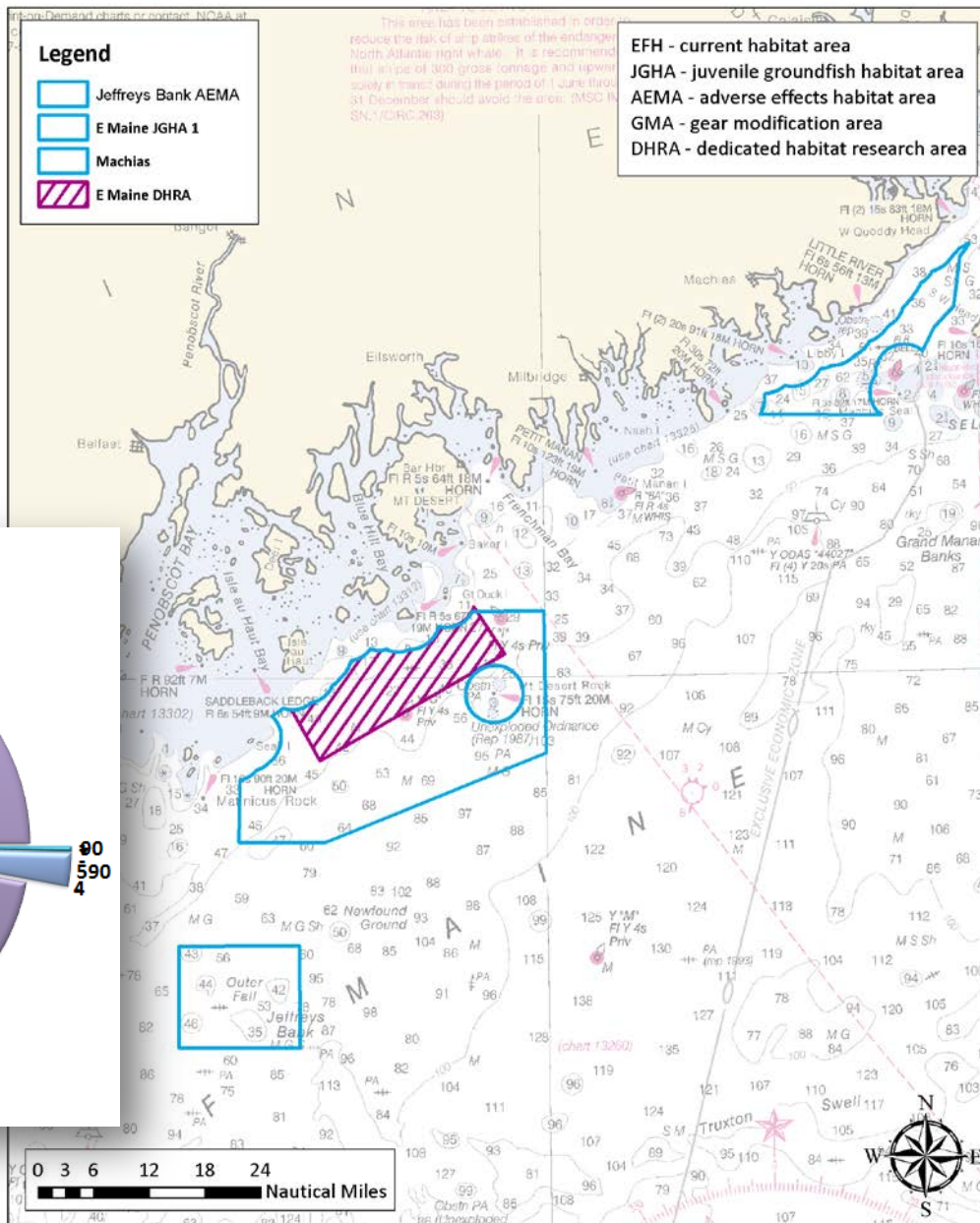
Eastern GOM

Alternative 3

- West to east, Jeffreys Bank adverse effects minimization area and the Eastern Maine and Machias juvenile groundfish habitat areas, outside of state waters.
- The smaller hatched area within the Eastern Maine JGHA would also be designated as a DHRA.

**Eastern Gulf of Maine
Alternative 3**

Eastern GOM Alternative 3



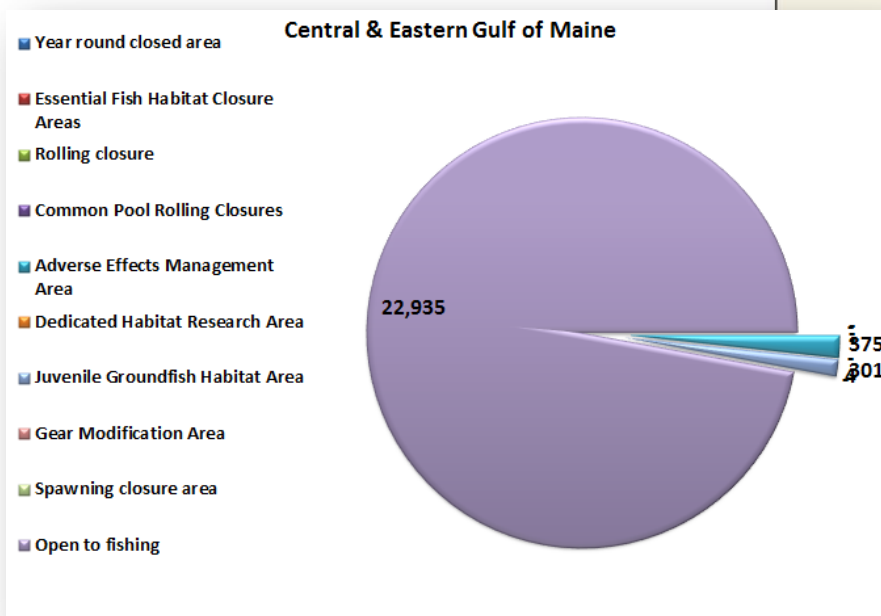
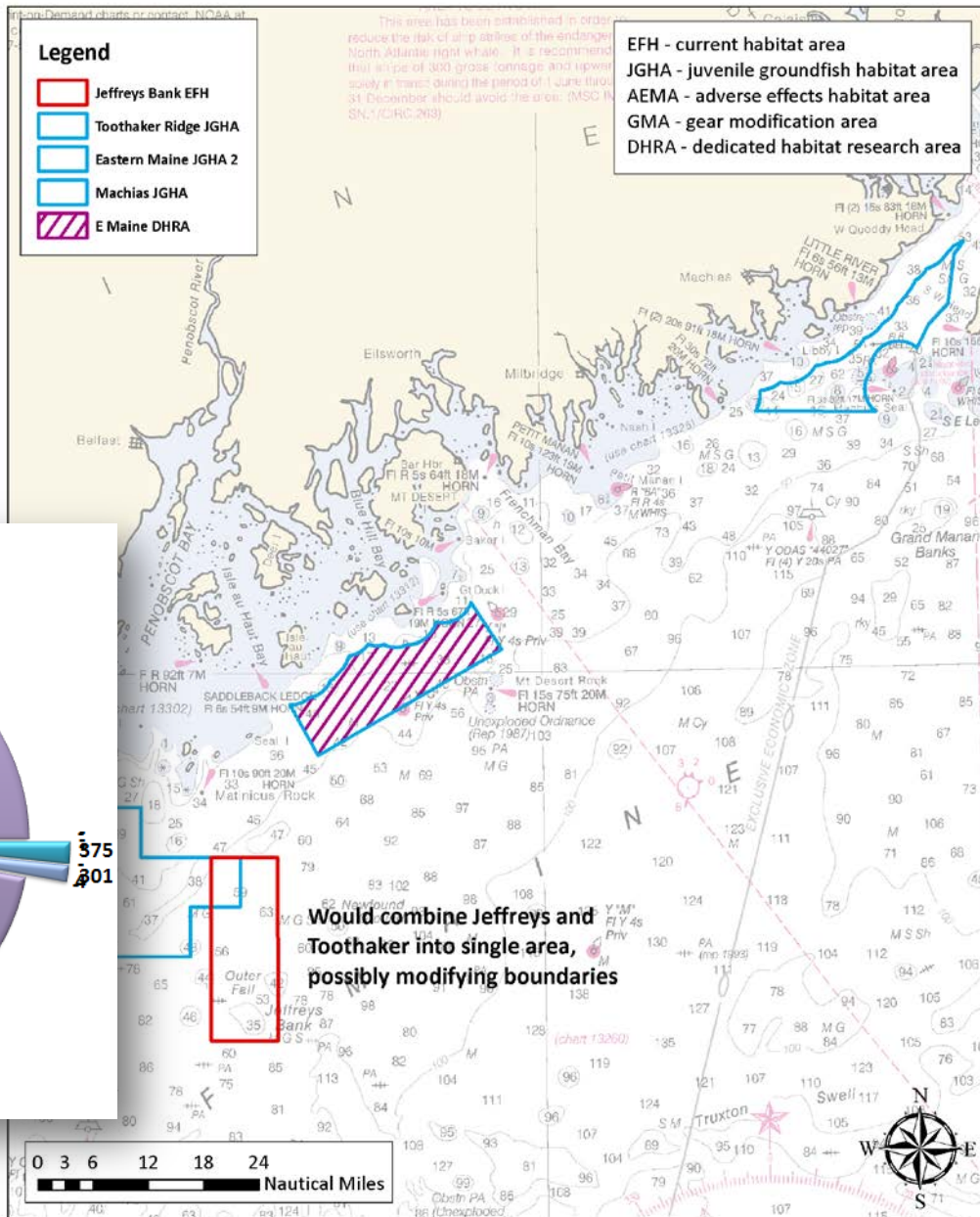
Eastern GOM

Alternative 4

- West to east, the Jeffreys Bank habitat closed area (red outline) and the Toothaker Ridge, Eastern Maine and Machias juvenile groundfish habitat areas.
- A single Toothaker/Jeffreys Bank area has been discussed but no boundaries have been developed yet. All areas would be designated outside of state waters.
- The smaller hatched area within the Eastern Maine JGHA would also be designated as a DHRA.

Eastern Gulf of Maine
Alternative 4

Eastern GOM Alternative 4

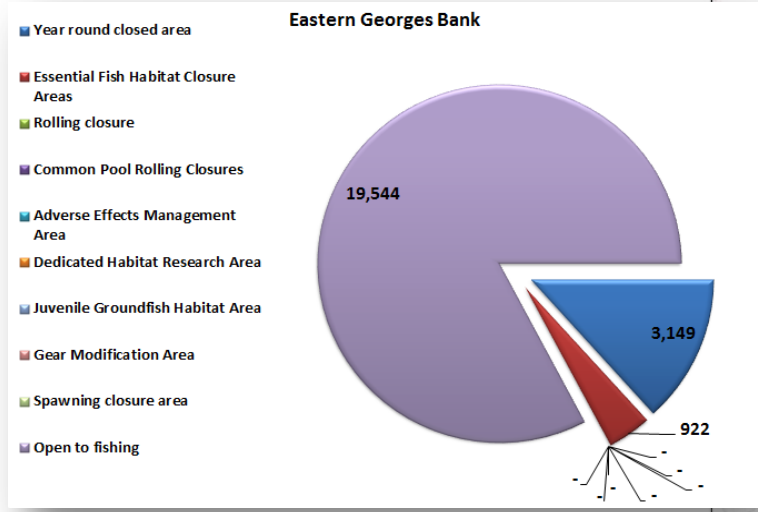
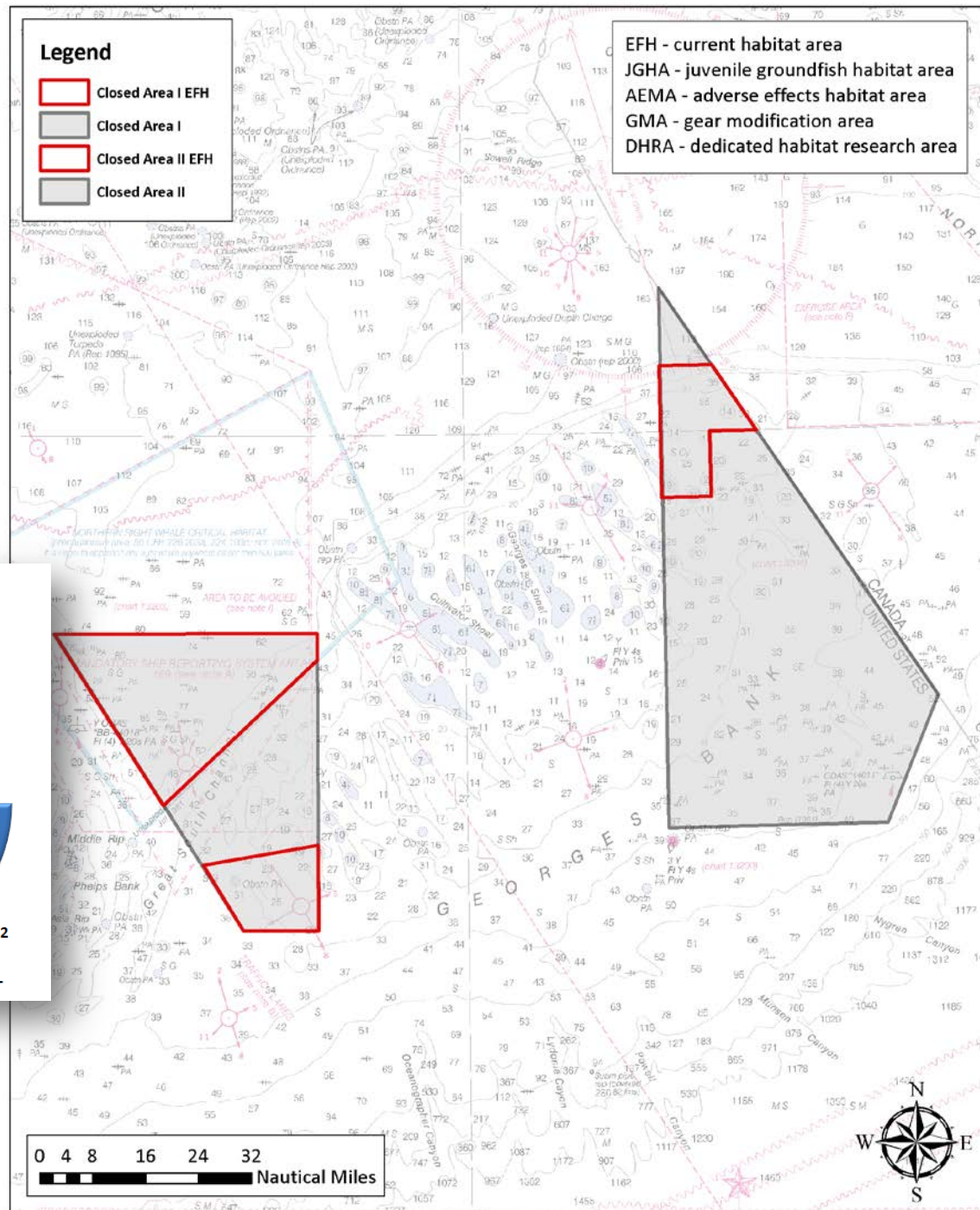


Georges Bank

Alternative 1

- The existing Closed Area I and Closed Area II habitat closed areas, which are closed to mobile bottom tending gears, and
- The existing Closed Area I and Closed Area II groundfish closed areas, which are generally closed to gear capable of catching groundfish, with various exemptions and access programs.

Georges Bank Alternative 1

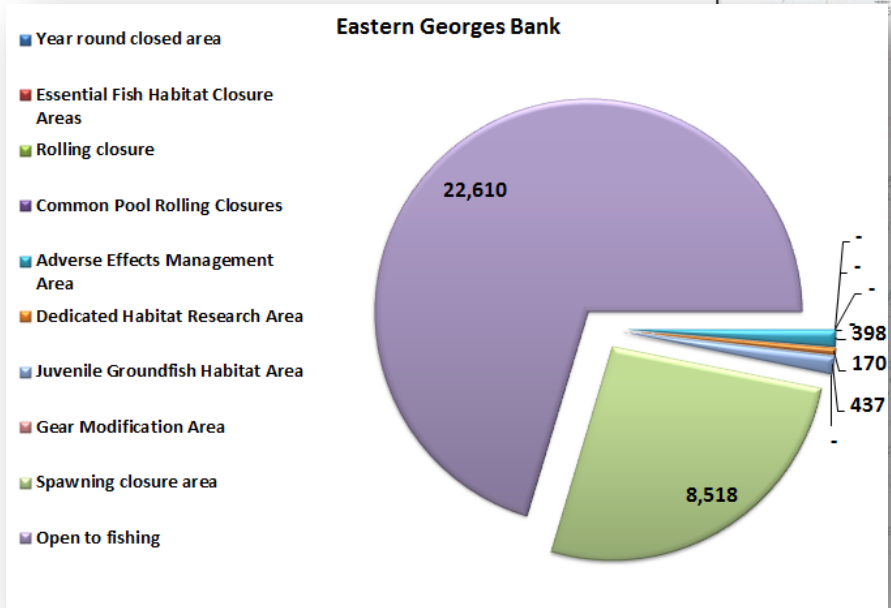
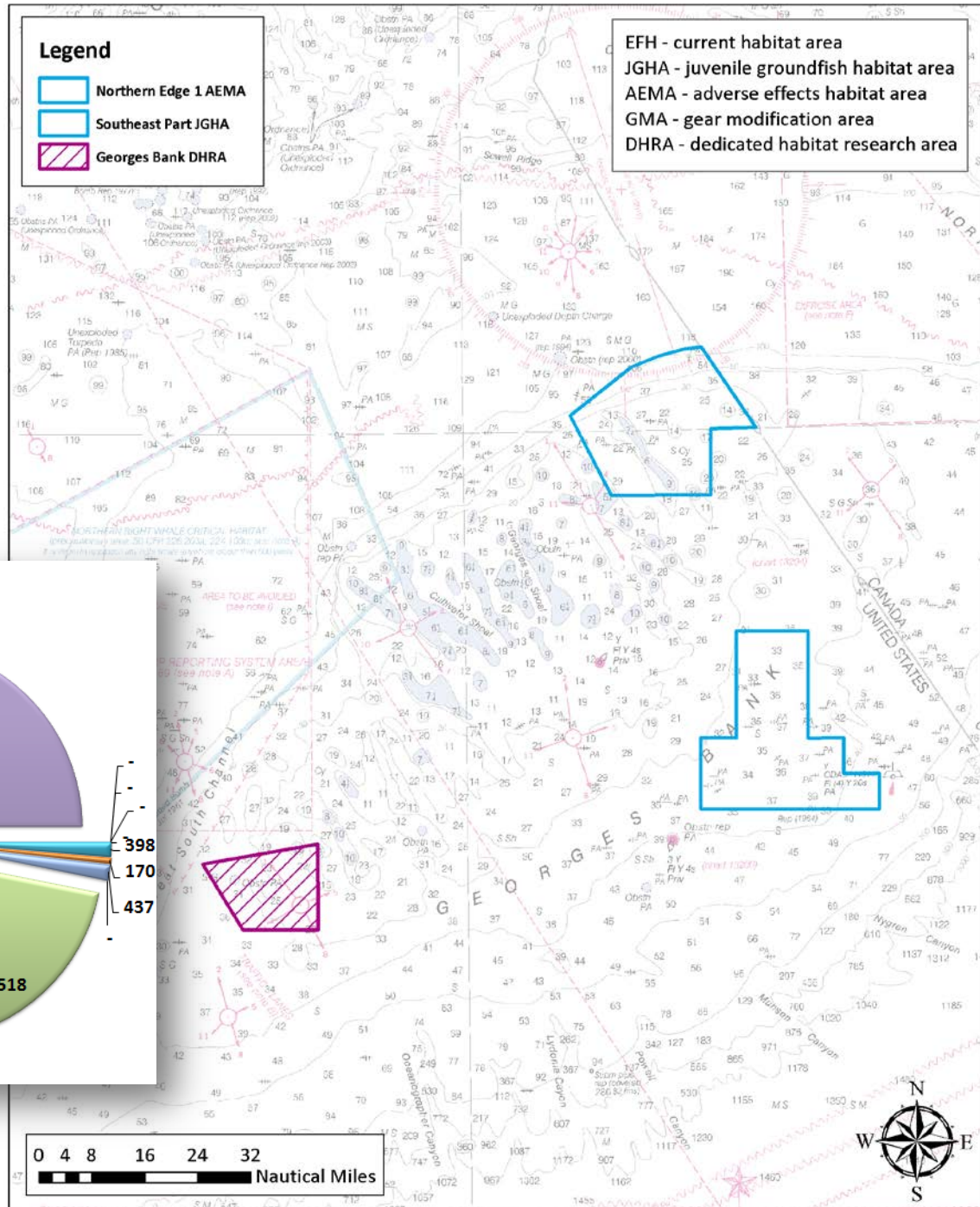


Georges Bank

Alternative 2

- The Northern Edge adverse effects area (north) and the Southeast Part juvenile groundfish habitat area (south).
- The hatched area would be designated as a DHRA.

Georges Bank Alternative 2

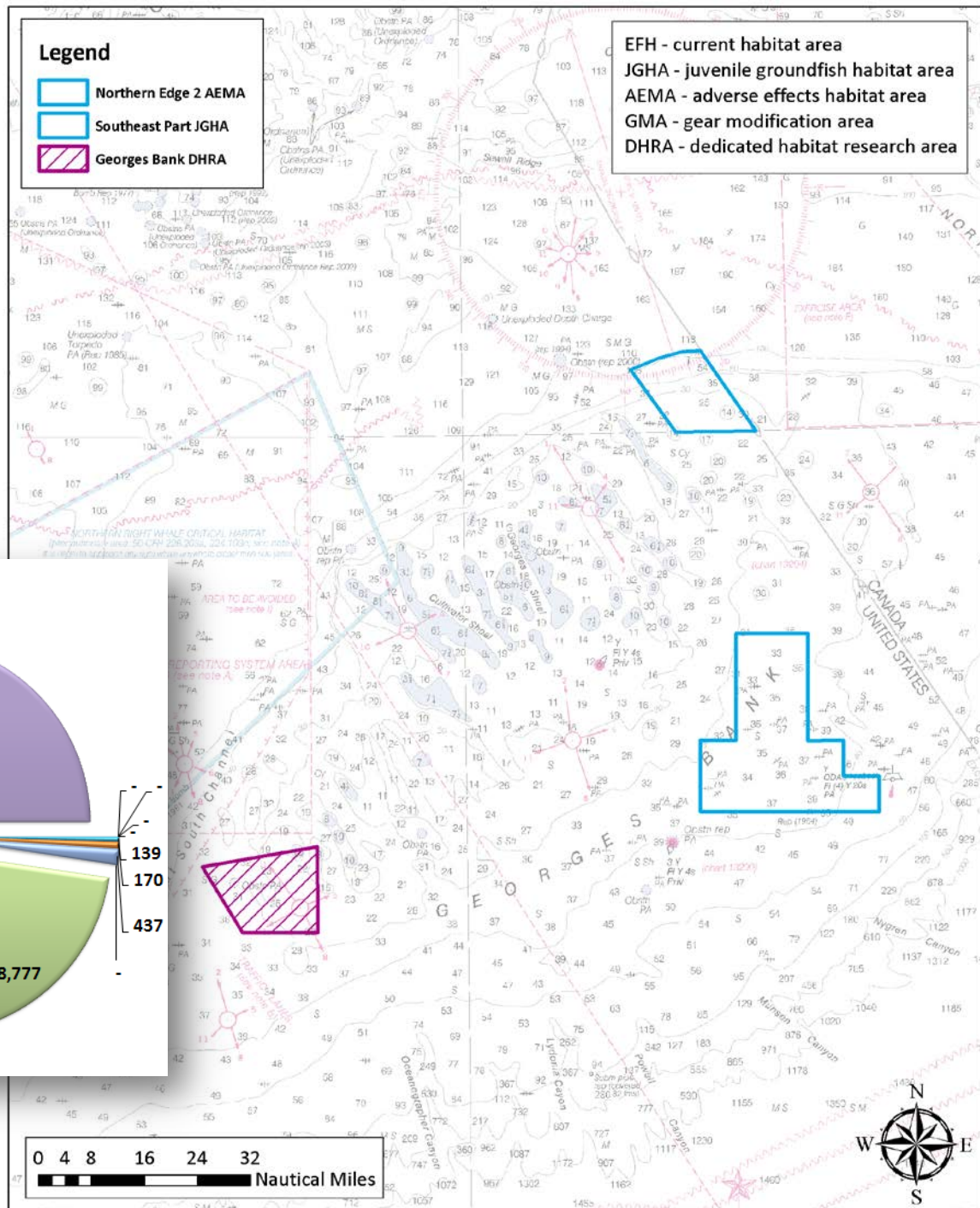


Georges Bank

Alternative 3

- A smaller version of the Northern Edge adverse effects area (north) and the Southeast Part juvenile groundfish habitat area (south).
- The hatched area would be designated as a DHRA.

Georges Bank Alternative 3

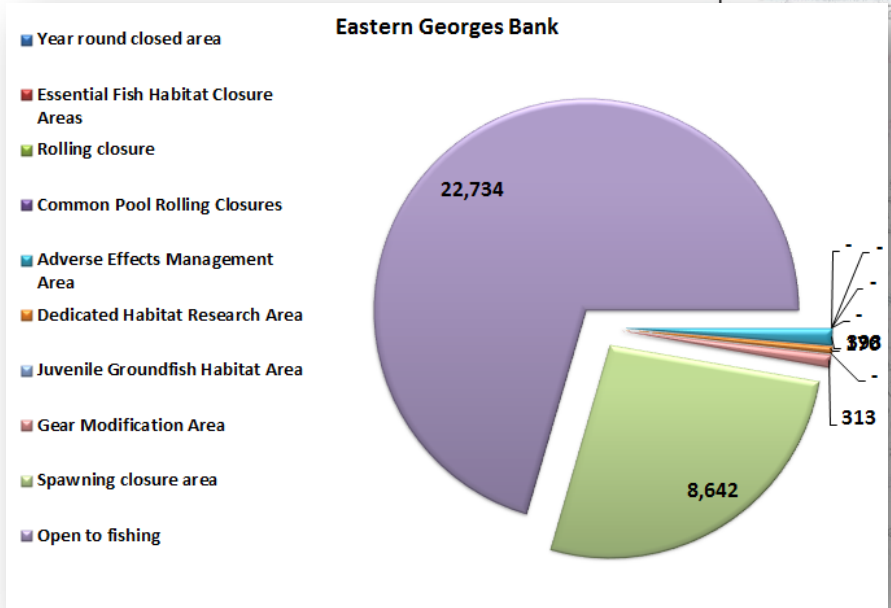
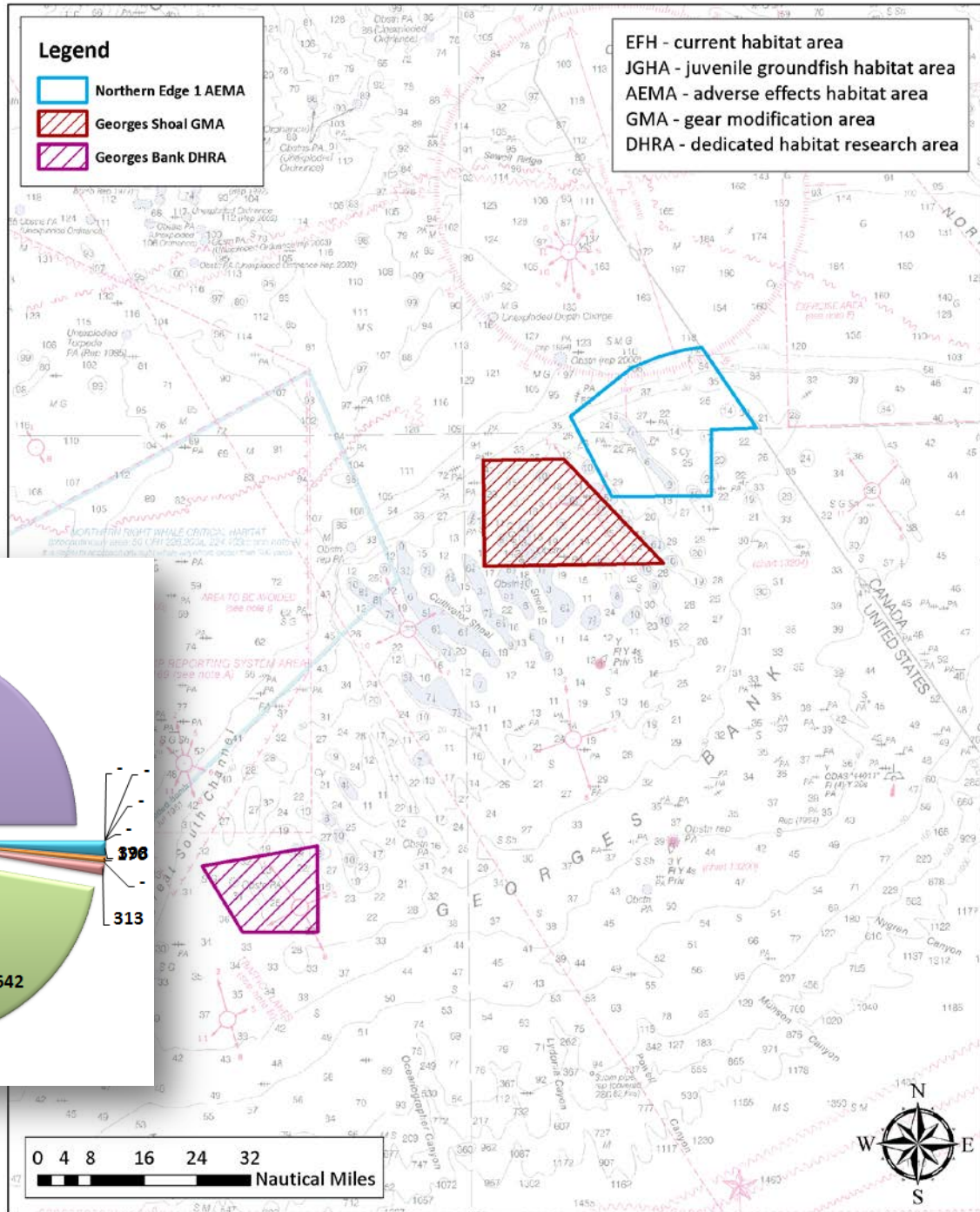


Georges Bank

Alternative 4

- The Northern Edge adverse effects area (east) and the Georges Shoal gear modification area (west). The former would be closed to mobile bottom tending gears, and the latter would include restrictions on trawl gears. These could include a prohibition on ground cables with bridle lengths capped at 30 fathoms, or a requirement to raise ground cables off the seabed with elevating disks at 5 fathom spacing with a cap on ground cable length of 45 fathoms. Measurements are per side.
- The Georges Shoal GMA (recommended by the Committee on 5/17) is similar to an area called Georges Shoal West. A potential MBTG area south of this GMA is not included in this alternative by the PDT/CATT, as the habitat types are less vulnerable to impact than those within the Northern Edge area.
- The hatched area would be designated as a DHRA.

Georges Bank Alternative 4

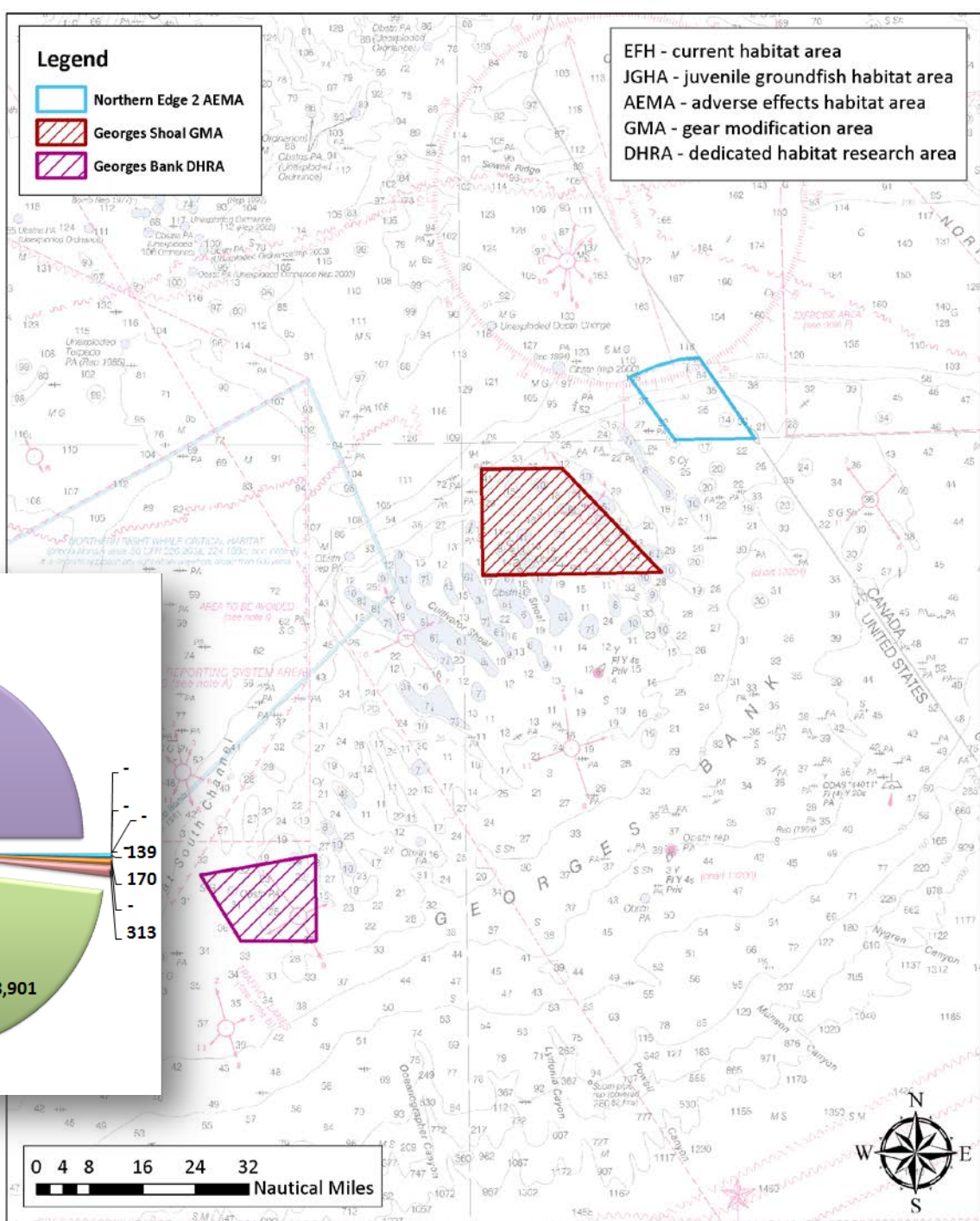


Georges Bank

Alternative 5

- A smaller version of the Northern Edge adverse effects area (east) and the Georges Shoal gear modification area (west). The former would be closed to mobile bottom tending gears, and the latter would include restrictions on trawl gears. These could include a prohibition on ground cables with bridle lengths capped at 30 fathoms, or a requirement to raise ground cables off the seabed with elevating disks at 5 fathom spacing with a cap on ground cable length of 45 fathoms. Measurements are per side.
- The Georges Shoal GMA (recommended by the Committee on 5/17) is similar to an area called Georges Shoal West. A potential MBTG area south of this GMA is not included in this alternative by the PDT/CATT, as the habitat types are less vulnerable to impact than those within the Northern Edge area.
- The hatched area would be designated as a DHRA.

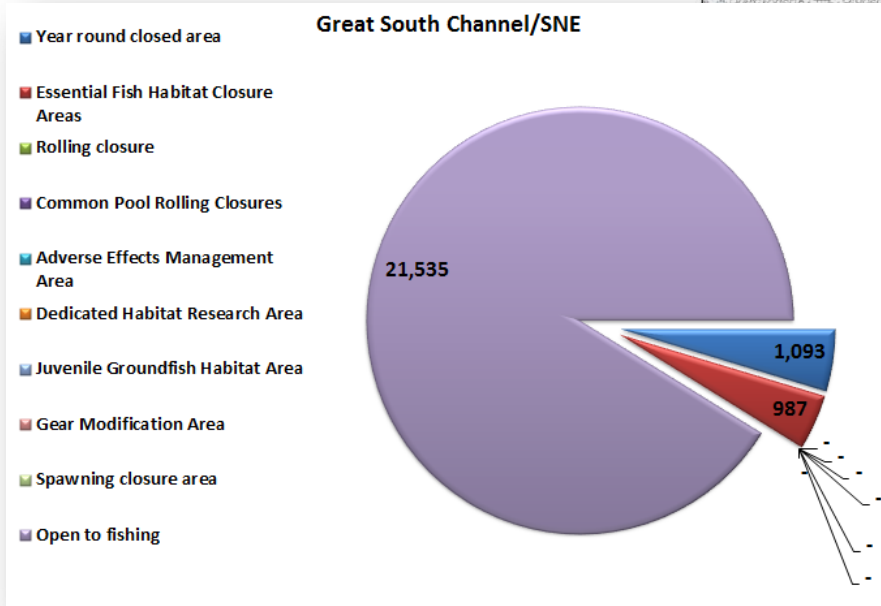
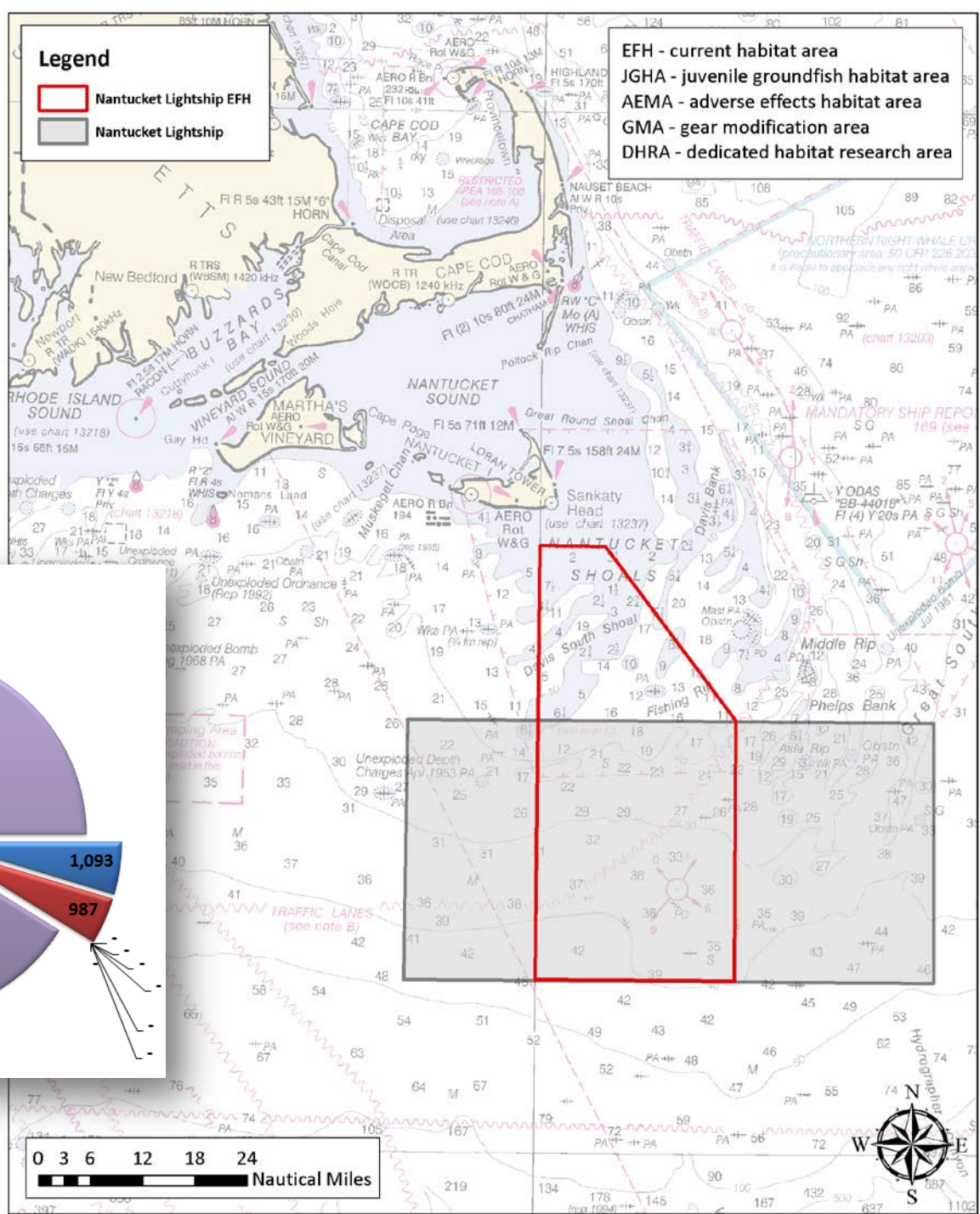
Georges Bank Alternative 5



Great South Channel/Nantucket Shoals/Southern New England Alternative 1

- The existing Nantucket Lightship habitat closed area, which is closed to mobile bottom tending gears, and
- The existing Nantucket Lightship groundfish closed area, which is generally closed to gear capable of catching groundfish, with various exemptions.

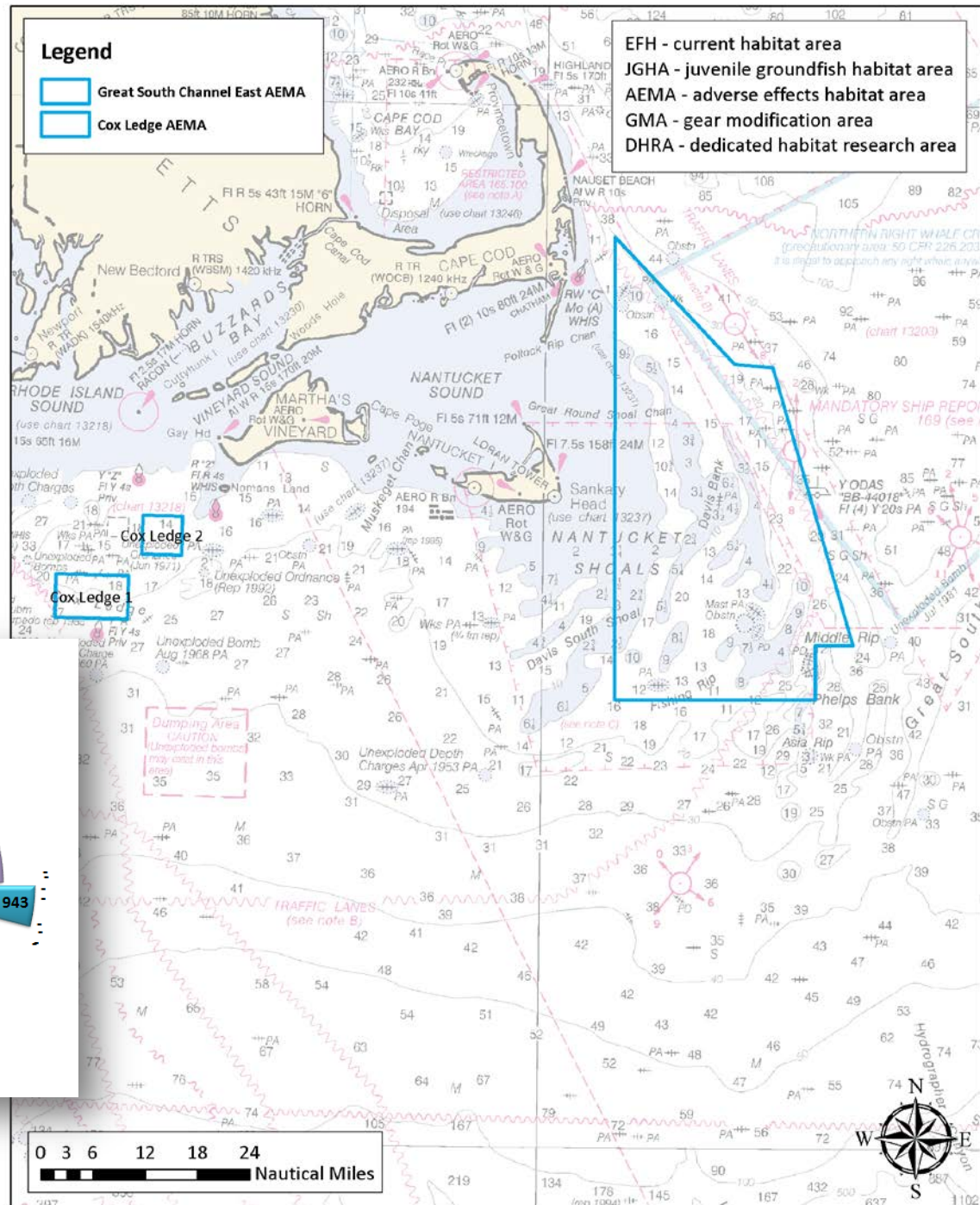
GSC/NS/SNE Alternative 1



Great South Channel/Nantucket Shoals/Southern New England Alternative 2

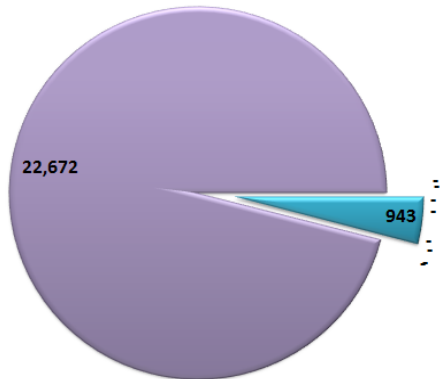
- An adverse effects area in the Great South Channel region (east) and the Cox Ledge adverse effects areas (west). The GSC area would either be closed to mobile bottom tending gears, or would have gear restrictions on trawls.
- The Committees recommended considering an exemption for surfclam/ocean quahog hydraulic dredges in the case of a MBTG closure.
- The boundaries of this particular GSC area include a core area identified by industry members, and six extensions of that area identified by Habitat PDT analysis.

GSC/NS/SNE Alternative 2



- Year round closed area
- Essential Fish Habitat Closure Areas
- Rolling closure
- Common Pool Rolling Closures
- Adverse Effects Management Area
- Dedicated Habitat Research Area
- Juvenile Groundfish Habitat Area
- Gear Modification Area
- Spawning closure area
- Open to fishing

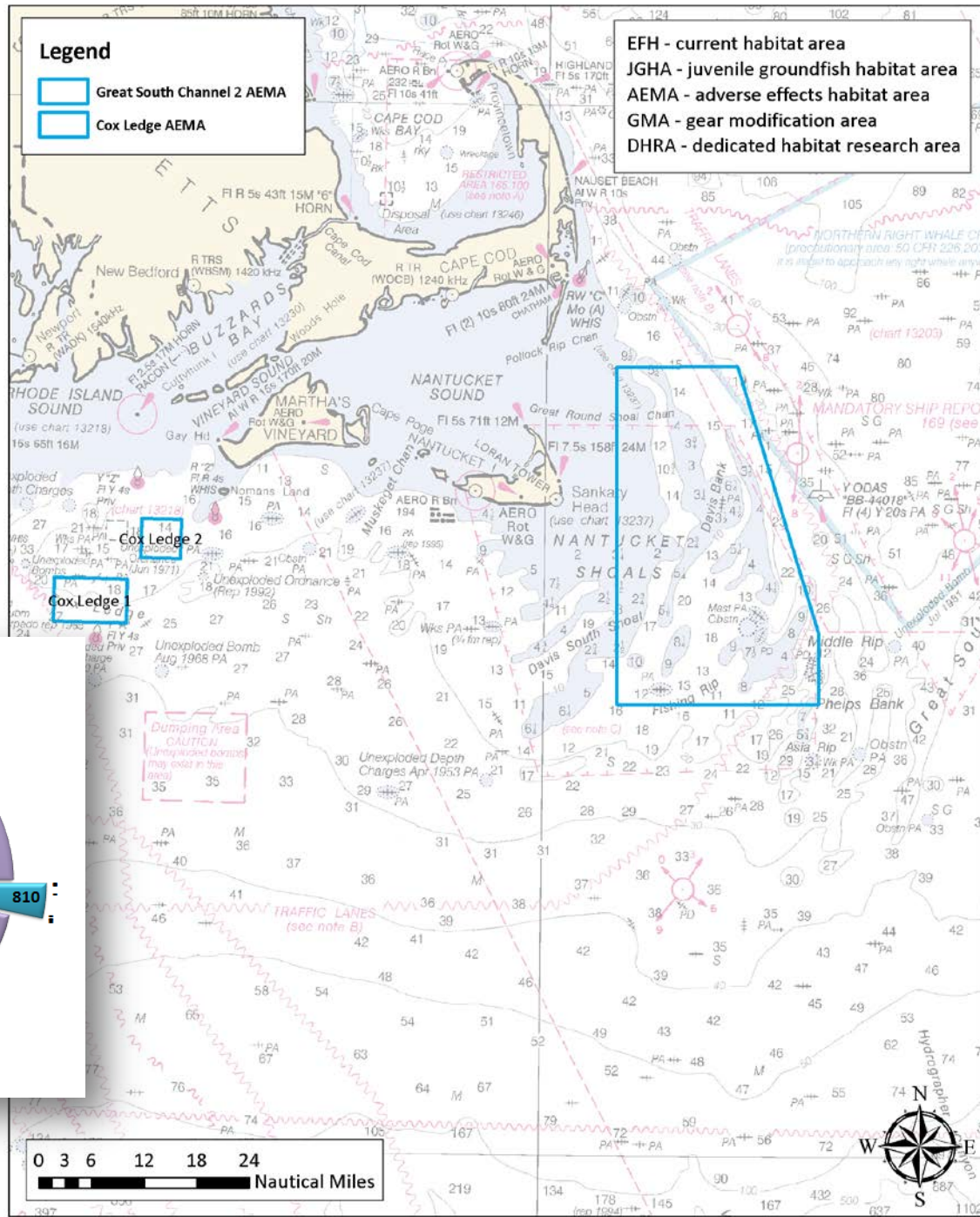
Great South Channel/SNE



Great South Channel/Nantucket Shoals/Southern New England Alternative 3

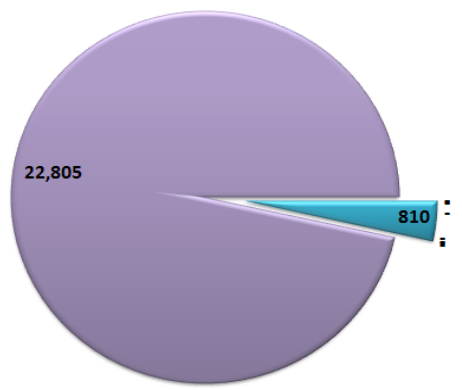
- An adverse effects area in the Great South Channel region (east) and the Cox Ledge adverse effects areas (west).
- The Committees recommended considering an exemption for surfclam/ocean quahog hydraulic dredges in the case of a MBTG closure.
- The boundaries of this particular GSC area include a core area identified by industry members, and four of six extensions of that area identified by Habitat PDT analysis.

GSC/NS/SNE Alternative 3



- Year round closed area
- Essential Fish Habitat Closure Areas
- Rolling closure
- Common Pool Rolling Closures
- Adverse Effects Management Area
- Dedicated Habitat Research Area
- Juvenile Groundfish Habitat Area
- Gear Modification Area
- Spawning closure area
- Open to fishing

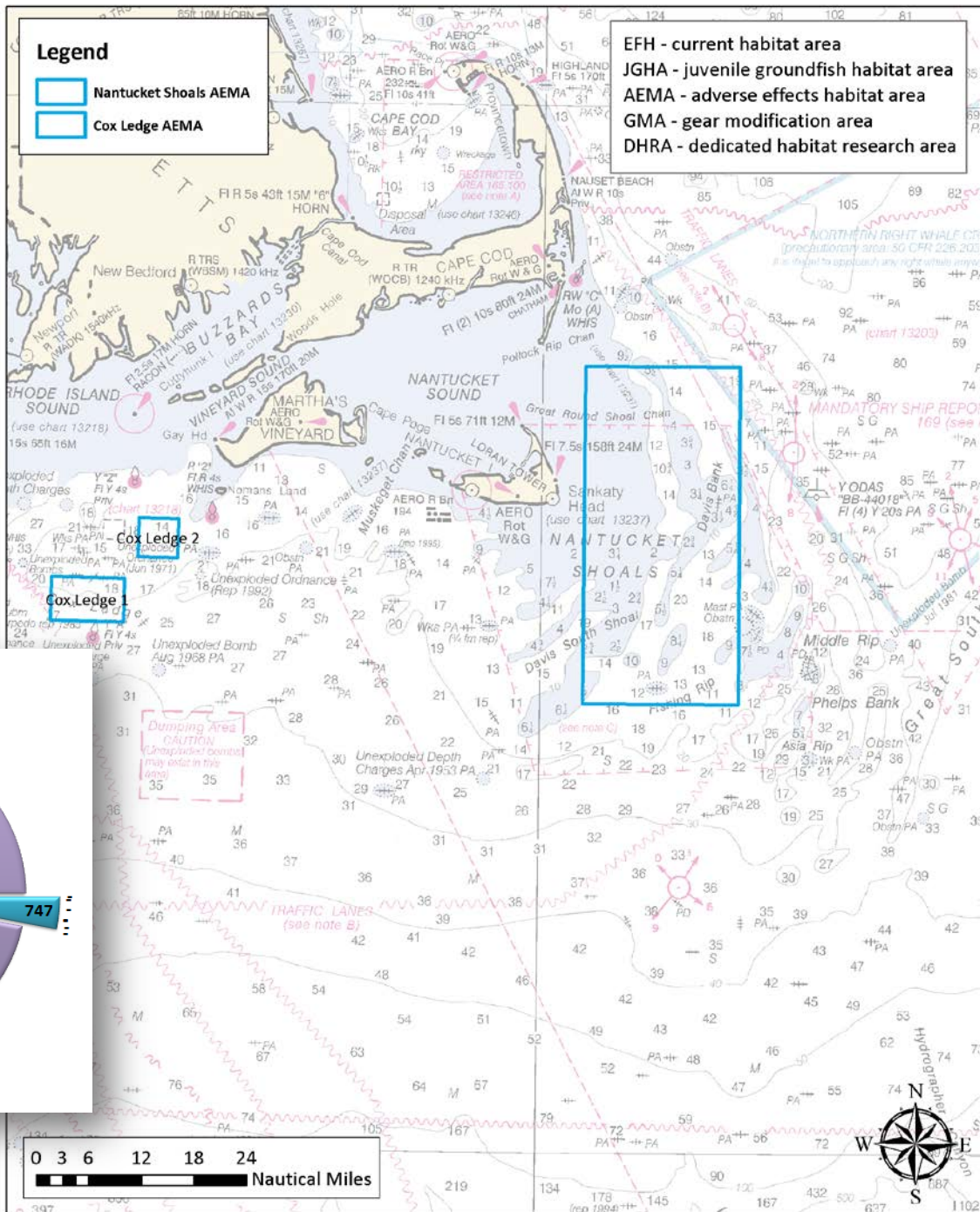
Great South Channel/SNE



Great South Channel/Nantucket Shoals/Southern New England Alternative 5

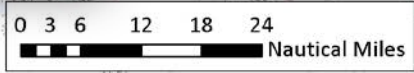
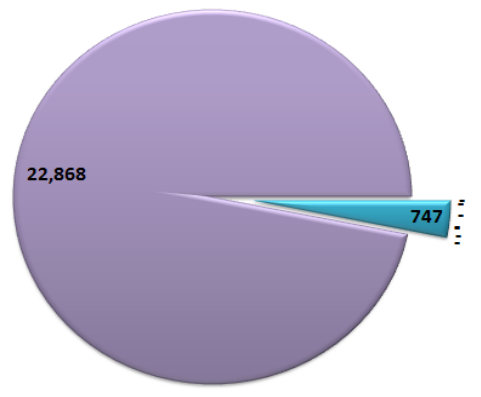
- An adverse effects area in the Great South Channel region (east) and the Cox Ledge adverse effects areas (west).
- The Committees recommended considering an exemption for surfclam/ocean quahog hydraulic dredges in the case of a MBTG closure.
- The boundaries of this particular GSC/Nantucket Shoals area were identified by the Committee on 5/17. They include a western boundary of 69° 50'.

GSC/NS/SNE Alternative 5



- Year round closed area
- Essential Fish Habitat Closure Areas
- Rolling closure
- Common Pool Rolling Closures
- Adverse Effects Management Area
- Dedicated Habitat Research Area
- Juvenile Groundfish Habitat Area
- Gear Modification Area
- Spawning closure area
- Open to fishing

Great South Channel/SNE



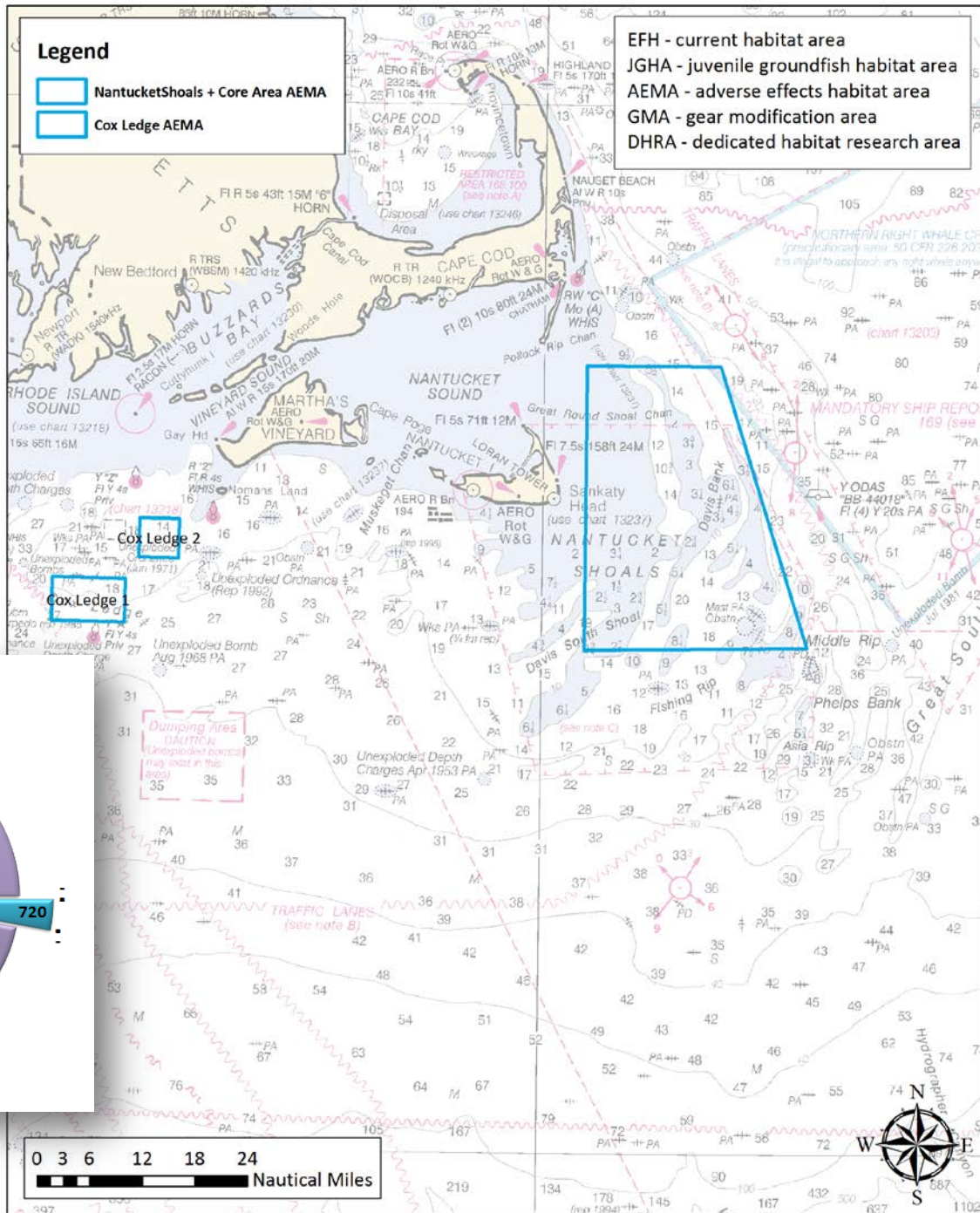
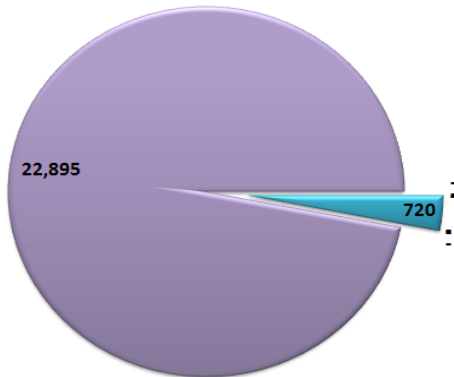
Great South Channel/Nantucket Shoals/Southern New England Alternative 7

- An adverse effects area in the Great South Channel region (east) and the Cox Ledge adverse effects areas (west).
- The Committees recommended considering an exemption for surfclam/ocean quahog hydraulic dredges in the case of a MBTG closure.
- The boundaries of this particular GSC/Nantucket Shoals area were identified by the Committee on 6/11. They include a **western boundary of 69° 50'** and an eastern boundary that runs to the edge of the original core area.

GSC/NS/SNE Alternative 7

- Year round closed area
- Essential Fish Habitat Closure Areas
- Rolling closure
- Common Pool Rolling Closures
- Adverse Effects Management Area
- Dedicated Habitat Research Area
- Juvenile Groundfish Habitat Area
- Gear Modification Area
- Spawning closure area
- Open to fishing

Great South Channel/SNE



Great South Channel/Nantucket Shoals/Southern New England
Alternative 7

GSC/NS/SNE
Alternative 7 revised

