

Omnibus Essential Fish Habitat Amendment 2

Highlights of Draft Environmental Impact Statement

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NEFMC Staff



Public Hearings

Presentation Outline

- How to comment
 - Timeline
 - Public comment information
- DEIS Outline
 - EFH and HAPC designation alternatives
 - Habitat alternatives and impacts
 - Spawning alternatives and impacts
 - Framework adjustments and monitoring



Timeline

- Identified preferred alternatives in February
- Preliminary draft EIS submitted May 20
- DEIS resubmitted after editing on Sept 2
- DEIS published on October 10, 2014
- Comment period: October 10, 2014 – January 8, 2015 at 5 p.m.
 - Written comments (90 days)
 - In-person comments during public hearings



Public Hearing Schedule

Date, City, and Time	Location
Monday, November 24	Portsmouth, NH
Tuesday, November 25	Plymouth, MA
Tuesday, December 2	Warwick, RI
Thursday, December 4	Riverhead, NY
Friday, December 5	Cape May, NJ
Tuesday, December 9	Baltimore, MD – MAFMC Council meeting
Tuesday, December 16	New Bedford, MA
Wednesday, December 17	Gloucester, MA
Thursday, December 18	Newport News, VA
Monday, January 5	Webinar - register at www.nefmc.org
Tuesday, January 6	Ellsworth, ME
Wednesday, January 7	Portland, ME



Written Comments – until January 8

- **Mail:**

John Bullard, Regional Administrator
National Marine Fisheries Service
Greater Atlantic Regional Fisheries Office
55 Great Republic Drive
Gloucester, MA 01930
Subject line: “OA2 DEIS Comments”

- **FAX:**

National Marine Fisheries Service
(978) 281-9135
Subject line: “OA2 DEIS Comments”

- **Email:**

Send to nmfs.gar.OA2.DEIS@noaa.gov
Subject line: “OA2 DEIS Comments”



Next steps

- Summarize public comments
- Habitat Committee reviews comments
 - Makes recommendations to full Council about final preferred alternatives
- Council selects final preferred alternatives
- Staff submits Final EIS
- NMFS reviews amendment, regulations drafted and deemed, proposed rule with comment period, final rule
- Implementation



Other opportunities for comment

- Habitat Committee meetings
 - Submit written comments or attend in-person
- Council meeting when final preferred alternatives are selected
 - Submit written comments or attend in-person
- Comments on proposed rule – written comments only

All notices will be published in the Federal Register and at www.nefmc.org



What's in the DEIS?

- **Volume 1:** Executive summary, background information
- **Volume 2:** EFH and HAPC designation alternatives and impacts analysis
- **Volume 3:** Spatial management alternatives and impacts analysis
- **Volume 4:** Practicability, cumulative effects
- **Volume 5:** Appendices



Notes on alternatives:

- EFH designations grouped into No Action, preferred action, and other alternatives developed
 - Within these categories, arranged by plan, then by species
- Spatial management alternatives are organized by type, then numbered by region
 - Alternatives are groupings of management areas
 - Various fishing restriction options can be chosen
- Alternative 1 is always No Action. For this amendment, No Action represents the current management approach or EFH designation



Impacts analysis - ecosystem components

- **Physical and biological habitats** – focus on seabed; also looked at species diversity measures and overlap with designated EFH
- **Managed species** – major focus on groundfish; also other NEFMC, MAFMC, and ASFMC stocks overlapping the management areas
- **Human communities** – economic and social considerations
- **Protected resources** – sea turtles, marine mammals, Atlantic sturgeon



Essential Fish Habitat and Habitat Area of Particular Concern Designations

- EFH = text plus map coverage
- HAPC = subset of EFH with particular conservation focus
- Both are administrative designations; purpose is to focus Council attention/action
- Also used in EFH consultation process – may trigger conservation measures on projects
- Do not directly affect when, where, or how people can fish
- Final preferred alternatives already identified, but subject to Council review as needed

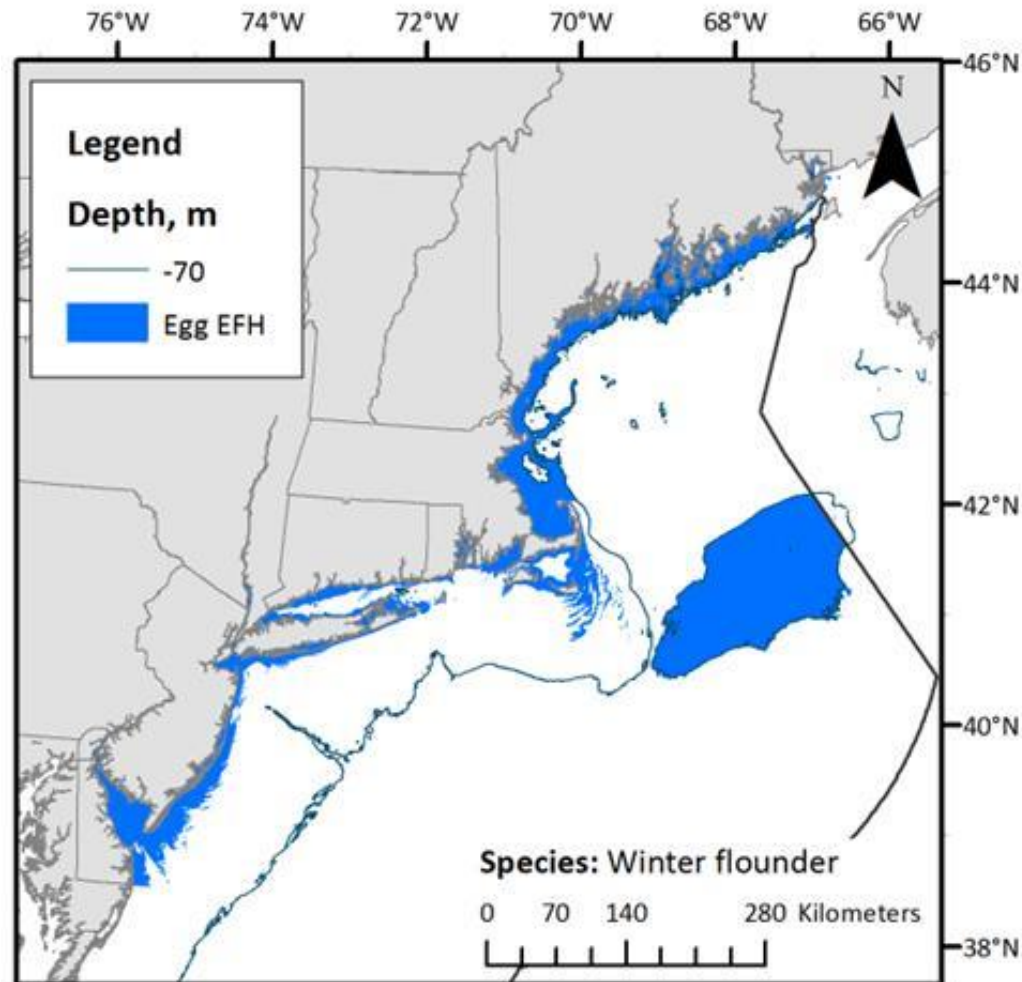


EFH example – winter flounder eggs

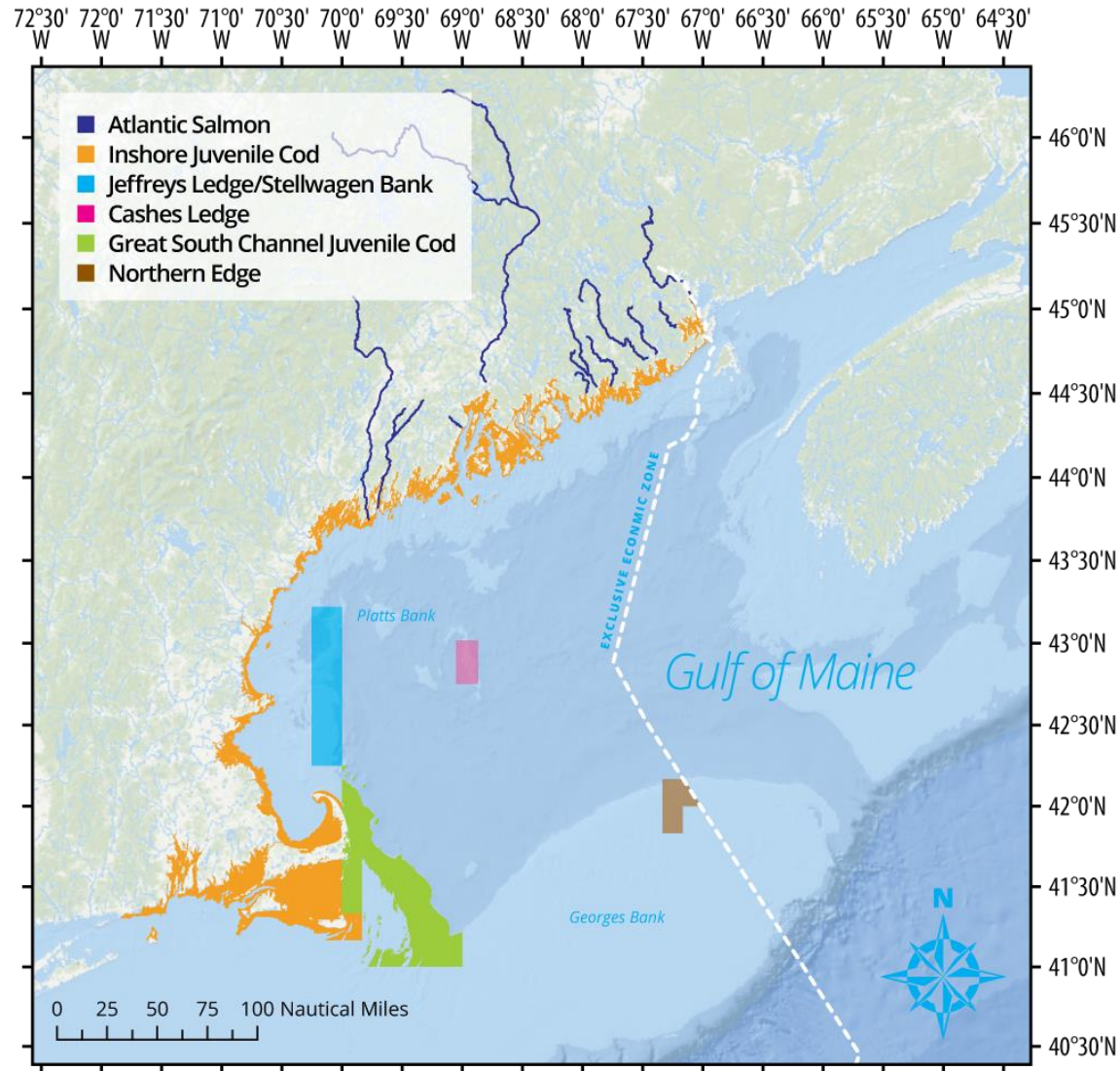
- **Eggs:** Sub-tidal estuarine and coastal benthic habitats from mean low water to 5 meters from Cape Cod to Delaware Bay, and as deep as 70 meters on Georges Bank and in the Gulf of Maine (see Map 63), and including mixed and high salinity zones in the bays and estuaries listed in Table 24. The eggs are adhesive and deposited in clusters on the bottom. Essential habitats for winter flounder eggs include mud, sand, muddy sand, gravel, and submerged aquatic vegetation, especially in areas where currents and wave action are not strong enough to dislodge and disperse the eggs and where they are not buried by suspended sediment settling to the bottom. South of Cape Cod, sand seems to be the most common substrate.



EFH example – winter flounder eggs



Habitat Areas of Particular Concern



Management options for habitat areas

- Option 1: No mobile bottom-tending gear (MBTG)
- Option 2: No MBTG - hydraulic clam dredges exempted
- Option 3: Ground cables with 20 cm elevating disks spaced at 5 fathoms, max length 45 fathoms/side. Dredges permitted.
- Option 4: Eliminate ground cables and cap bridles at 30 fathoms/side. Dredges permitted.
- Option 5: Complete restrictions on use of gears capable of catching groundfish (EGOM Alternative 2 only).



Impacts analysis summary tables

Symbol	Meaning
+++	Highly positive
++	Moderately positive
+	Slightly positive
0	Neutral
-	Slightly negative
--	Moderately negative
---	Highly negative
Negl	Negligible
Unk	Unknown or uncertain

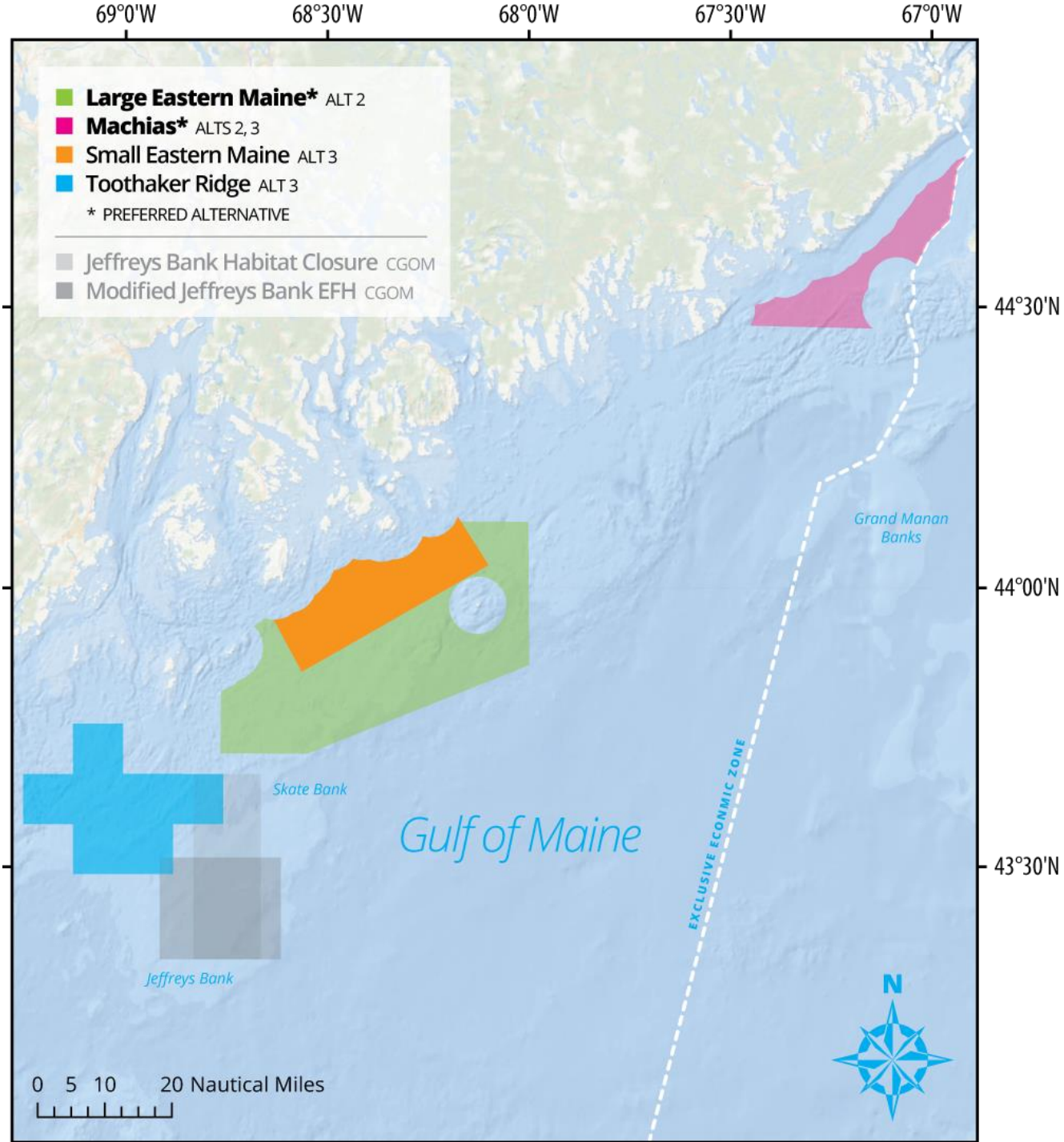


Eastern Gulf of Maine

1. No action (there are currently no habitat management areas)
2. **Large Eastern Maine and Machias***
3. Small Eastern Maine, Machias, and Toothaker Ridge

***Preferred, as a closure to mobile bottom-tending gears and gears capable of catching groundfish**





Eastern Gulf of Maine Impacts

Alternative	Lg. mesh				Social	Social	Prot.
	Habitat	GF res	Econ ST	Econ LT	ST	LT	res
Alt. 1 (No action)	-	-	0	0	0	0	0
Alt. 2 Options 1, 2, 5	+	++	-	+	-	+	0
Alt. 2 Options 3 and 4	Unk	0	-	-	-	-	0
Alt. 3 Options 1 and 2	++	++	-	+	-	+	0
Alt. 3 Options 3 and 4	Unk	0	-	-	-	-	0

- *Habitat = benthic habitats and associated non-target species*
- *Lg. mesh GF res. = Large mesh groundfish resource (not fishery)*
- *LT = Economic or social, long-term*
- *ST = Economic or social, short-term*
- *Prot. res = Protected resources such as mammals, turtles*

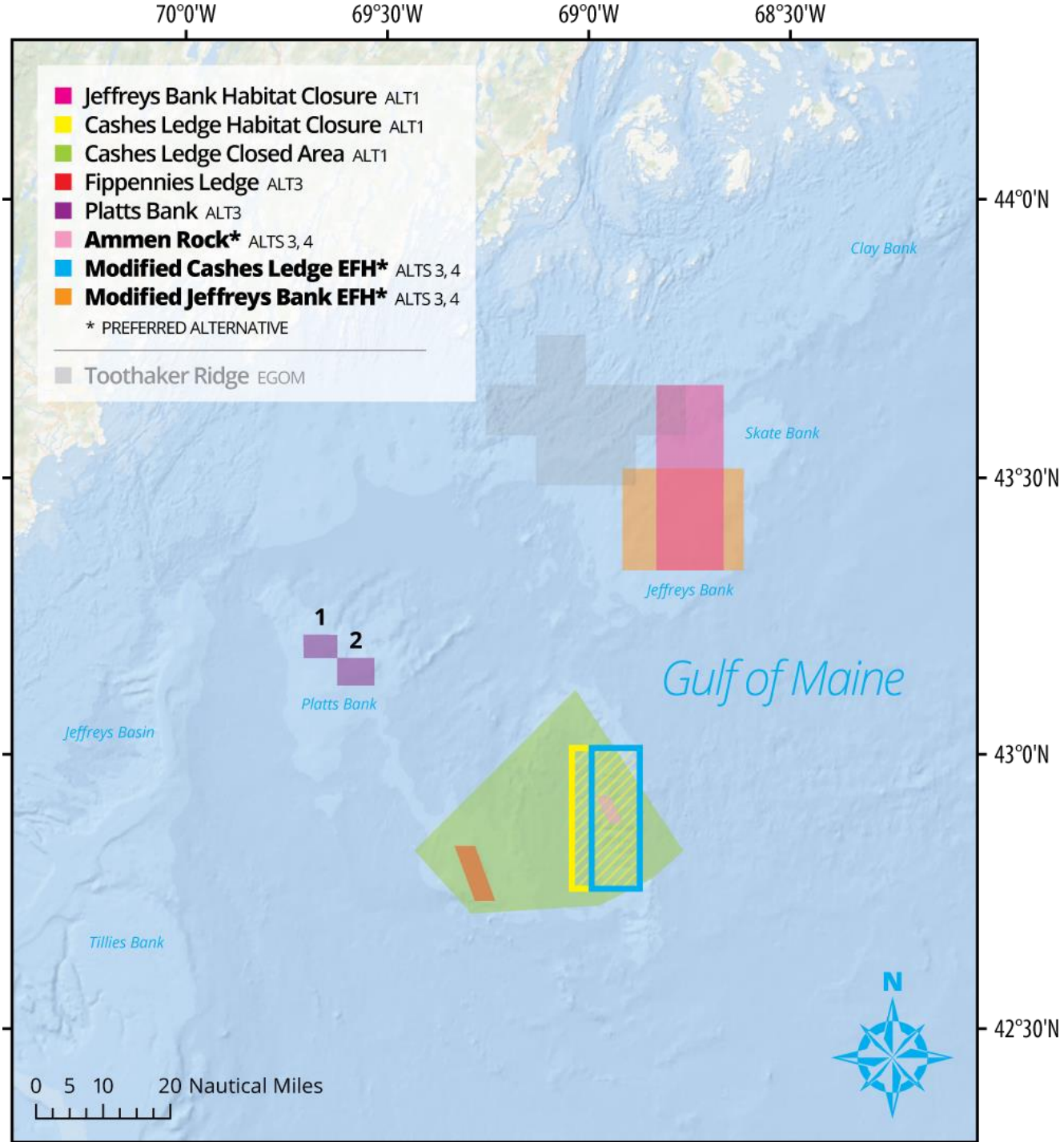


Central Gulf of Maine

1. No action: Cashes Groundfish and Habitat, Jeffreys Bank Habitat
2. No Habitat Management Areas
3. Modified Cashes, Modified Jeffreys Bank, Ammen Rock, Fippennies Ledge, Platts Bank
4. **Modified Cashes, Modified Jeffreys Bank, Ammen Rock***

***Preferred, as a closure to MBTG**





Central Gulf of Maine Impacts

Alternative	Habitat	Lg mesh GF res	Econ ST	Econ LT	Social ST	Social LT	Prot res
Alt. 1 (No action)	+++	+	+	+	0	0	0
Alt. 2 (No area)	---	--	+	-	+	-	-
Alt. 3 Options 1 and 2	+++	-	+	-	-	-	-
Alt. 3 Options 3 and 4	---	--	-	-	-	-	-
Alt. 4 Options 1 and 2	++	-	+	-	-	-	-
Alt. 4 Options 3 and 4	---	--	-	-	-	-	-

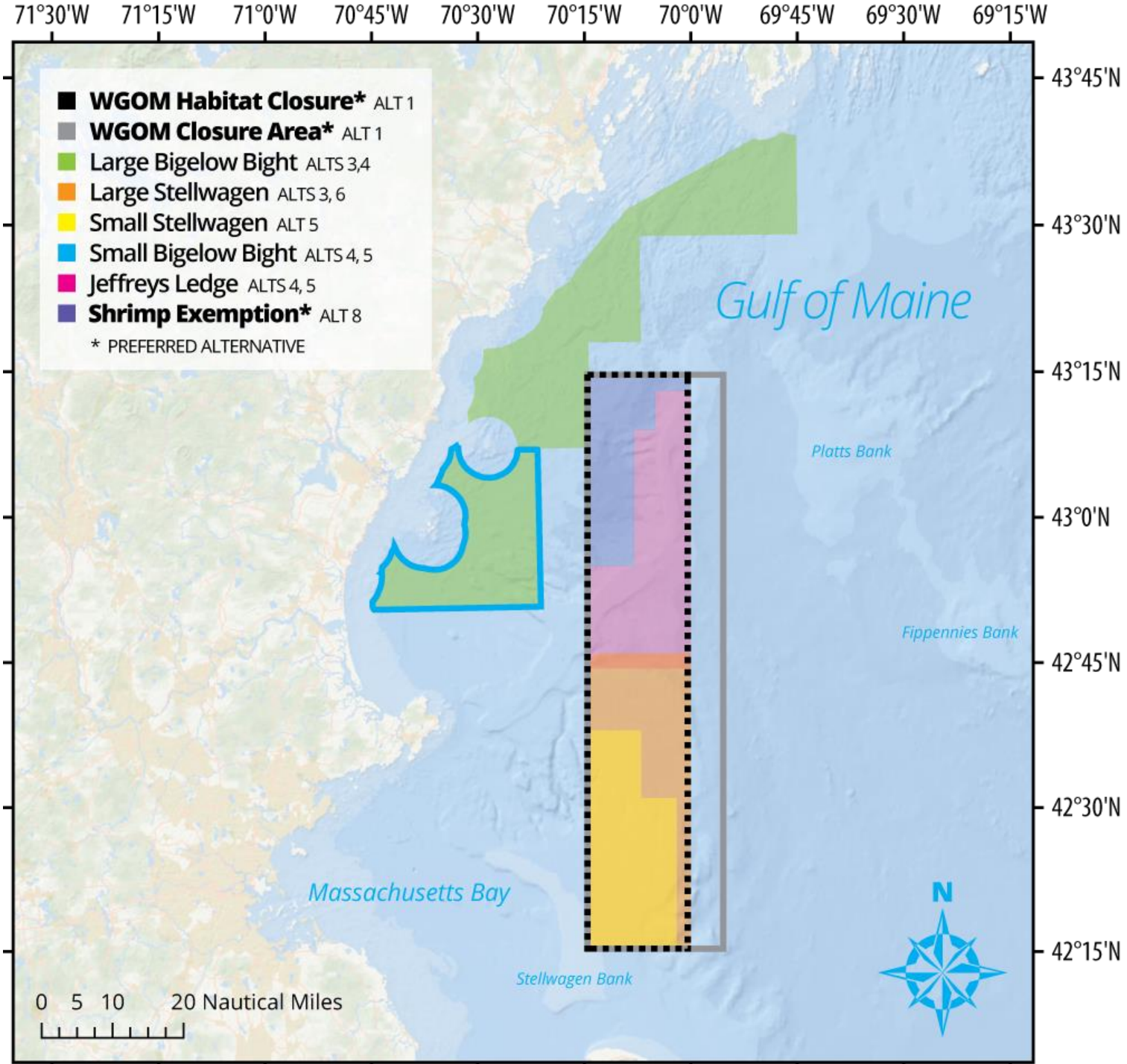


Western Gulf of Maine

1. **No action: WGOM groundfish and habitat closures***
2. No Habitat Management Areas
3. Large Bigelow Bight, Large Stellwagen
4. Large Bigelow Bight, Small Stellwagen, Jeffreys Ledge
5. Small Bigelow Bight, Small Stellwagen, Jeffreys Ledge
6. Large Stellwagen
7. **Make roller gear area a habitat measure (7a)*, or apply in an alternative area (7b)**
8. **Shrimp trawl exemption area***

*** Preferred**





Western Gulf of Maine Impacts

Alternative	Habitat	Lg mesh	Econ	Econ	Social	Social	Prot
		GF res	ST	LT	ST	LT	res
Alt. 1 (No action)	+++	+	++	++	0	0	0
Alt. 2 (No area)	--	--	++	--	+	--	-
Alt. 3 Options 1 and 2	+++	+++	--	++	--	++	-
Alt. 3 Options 3 and 4	---	--	-	--	--	--	-
Alt. 4 Options 1 and 2	+++	+++	--	++	--	+	-
Alt. 4 Options 3 and 4	---	--	-	--	--	--	-
Alt. 5 Options 1 and 2	+++	++	--	++	--	+	-
Alt. 5 Options 3 and 4	---	--	-	--	-	-	-
Alt. 6 Options 1 and 2	--	-	+	-	+	-	-
Alt. 6 Options 3 and 4	---	--	-	--	-	--	-
Alt. 7A	+	0	0	0	0	0	0
Alt. 7B	+	+	0	0	0	0	0
Alt. 8	0	+	0	0	0	0	0

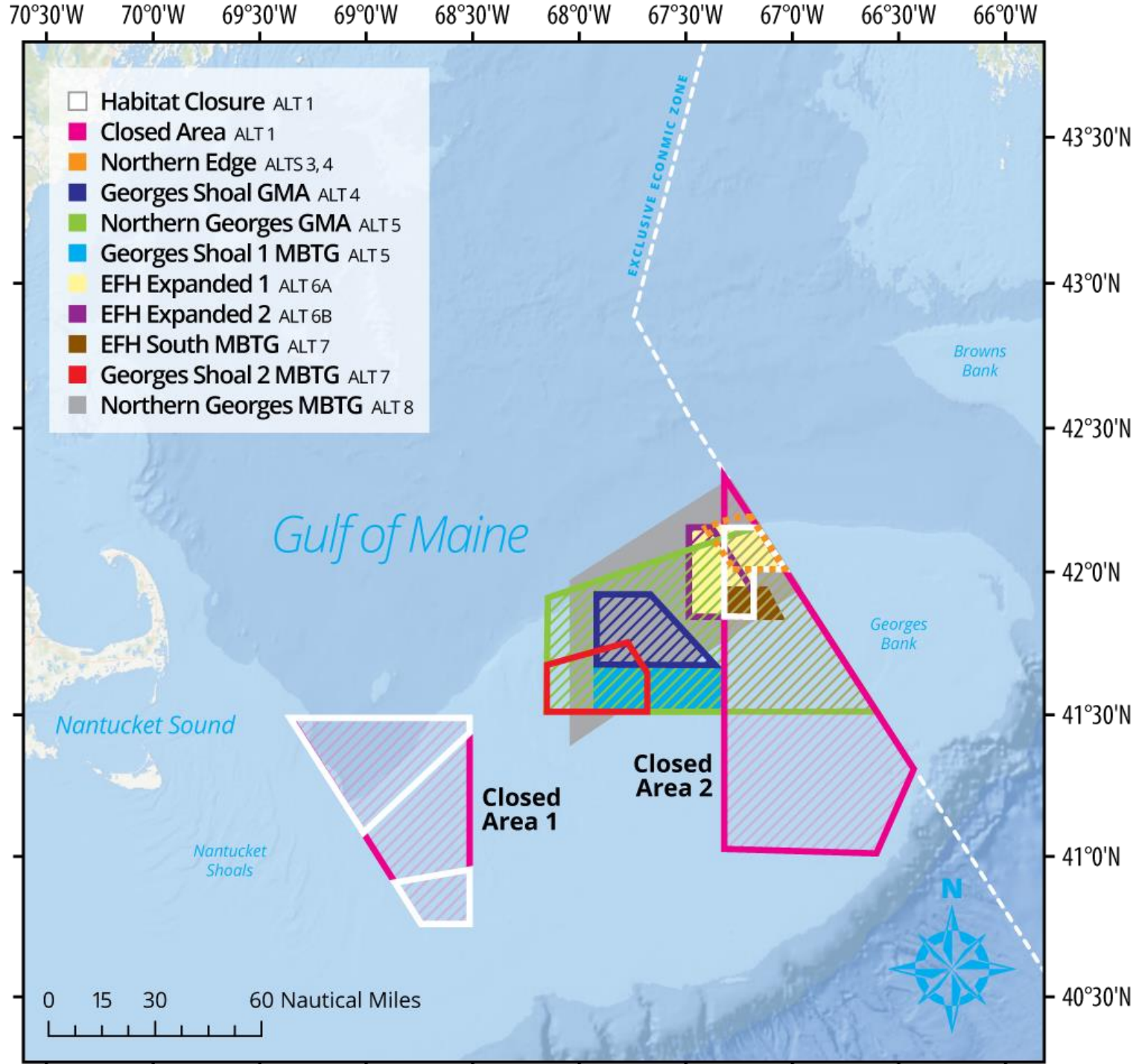


Georges Bank

1. No action: CAI and CAII groundfish and habitat closures
2. No Habitat Management Areas
3. Northern Edge
4. Northern Edge and Georges Shoal GMA
5. Northern Georges GMA, Georges Shoal 1 MBTG
6. EFH Expanded 1 (6A) or 2 (6B)
7. Georges Shoal 2 MBTG, EFH South MBTG
8. Northern Georges MBTG

No preferred alternative identified





Georges Bank Impacts

	Lg mesh GF						
Alternative	Habitat	res	Econ ST	Econ LT	Social ST	Social LT	Prot res
Alt. 1 (No action)	++	++	---	---	0	0	0
Alt. 2 (No area)	--	---	+++	+++	++	--	-
Alt. 3 Option 1	++	--	+++	++	++	--	-
Alt. 3 Option 2	++	--	+++	++	++	--	-
Alt. 3 Options 3 and 4	--	--	+++	++	++	--	-
Alt. 4 Option 1	++	--	+++	++	++	--	-
Alt. 4 Option 2	++	--	+++	++	++	--	-
Alt. 4 Options 3 and 4	--	--	+++	++	++	--	-
Alt. 5	--	--	++	++	-	-	-
Alt. 6A Option 1	+++	-	--	---	--	--	-
Alt. 6A Option 2	+++	-	--	---	--	--	-
Alt. 6A Options 3 and 4	--	--	+++	+++	+	--	-
Alt. 6B Option 1	-	---	+++	+++	++	--	-
Alt. 6B Option 2	-	---	+++	+++	++	--	-
Alt. 6B Options 3 and 4	--	---	+++	+++	+	--	-
Alt. 7 Options 1 and 2	+	---	+++	+++	++	-	-
Alt. 8 Options 2 and 2	+++	++	---	---	--	--	-

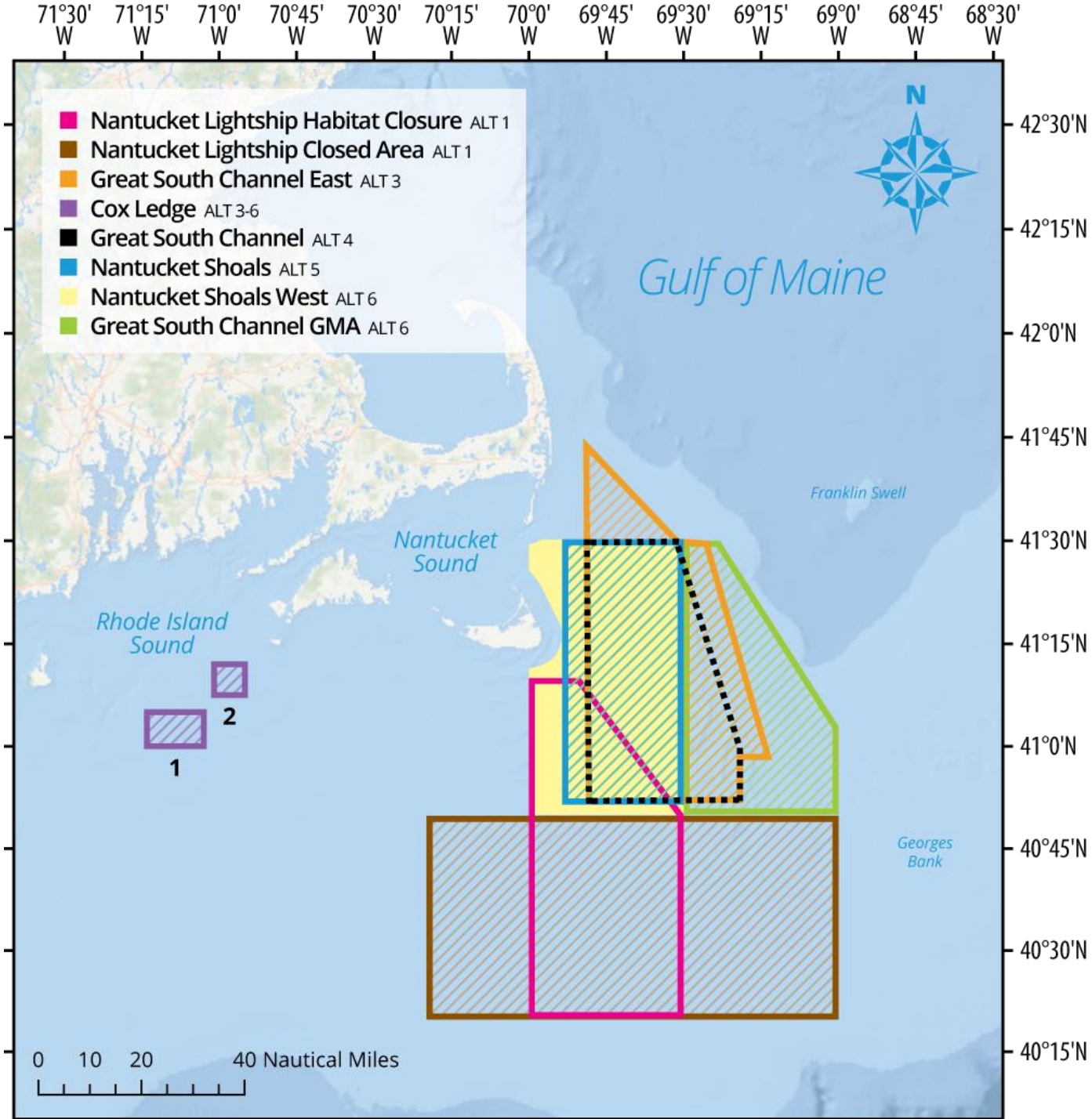


Great South Channel/SNE habitat alts

1. No action: NLCA and NL habitat closure
2. No Habitat Management Areas
3. Great South Channel and Cox Ledge
4. Great South Channel East and Cox Ledge
5. Nantucket Shoals and Cox Ledge
6. Nantucket Shoals West MBTG closure, Great South Channel gear modification area, Cox Ledge

No preferred alternative identified





Great South Channel/SNE Impacts

Alternative	Habitat	Lg mesh GF res	Econ ST	Econ LT	Social ST	Social LT	Prot res
Alt. 1 (No action)	-	0	--	--	0	0	0
Alt. 2 (No area)	+	-	+	+	+	-	-
Alt. 3 Option 1	++	+	---	---	--	-	-
Alt. 3 Option 2	+	+	---	---	--	-	-
Alt. 3 Options 3 and 4	0	Unk	++	++	+	+	-
Alt. 4 Option 1	+	Unk	--	+	--	++	-
Alt. 4 Option 2	+	Unk	++	-	+	++	-
Alt. 4 Options 3 and 4	0	Unk	++	--	+	-	-
Alt. 5 Option 1	+	Unk	-	+	--	++	-
Alt. 5 Option 2	+	Unk	+	+	+	++	-
Alt. 5 Options 3 and 4	0	Unk	+	--	+	-	-
Alt. 6	0	Unk	--	--	--	--	-



Management options for spawning areas

- **Option A:** Closed to commercial gears capable of catching groundfish
- **Option B:** Closed to commercial and recreational gears capable of catching groundfish
- **Option C:** Scallop dredges exempted from spawning areas (Georges Bank Alternatives 2 and 3 only)



Gulf of Maine Spawning Alternatives

Alternative 1/No Action*

- Year-round Cashes Ledge, WGOM groundfish areas
- Sector rolling closures
- Common pool rolling closures
- GOM Cod Spawning Protection Area

Alternative 2

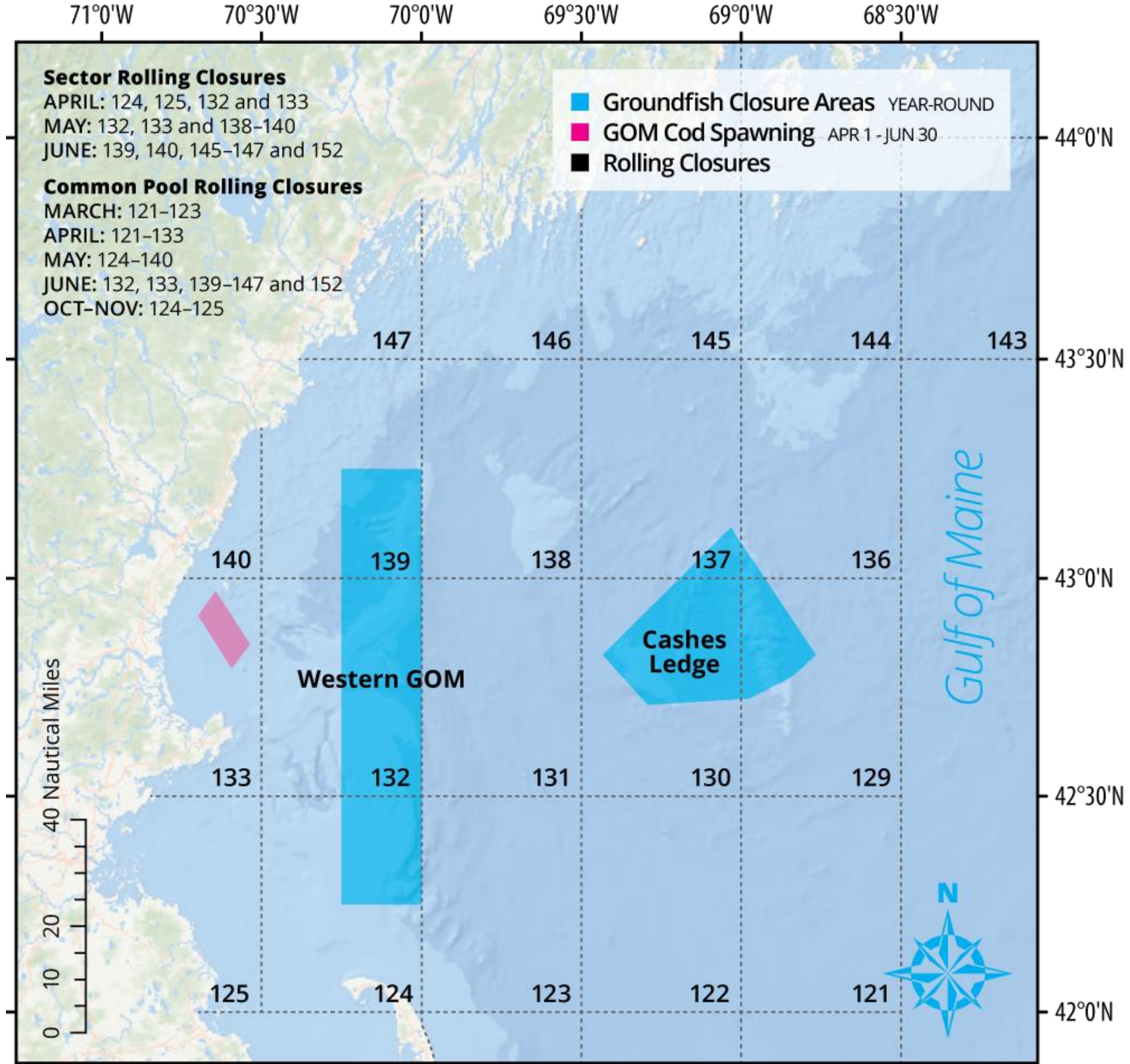
- Sector rolling closures
- GOM Cod Spawning Protection Area
- Massachusetts Bay Spawning Area (new)

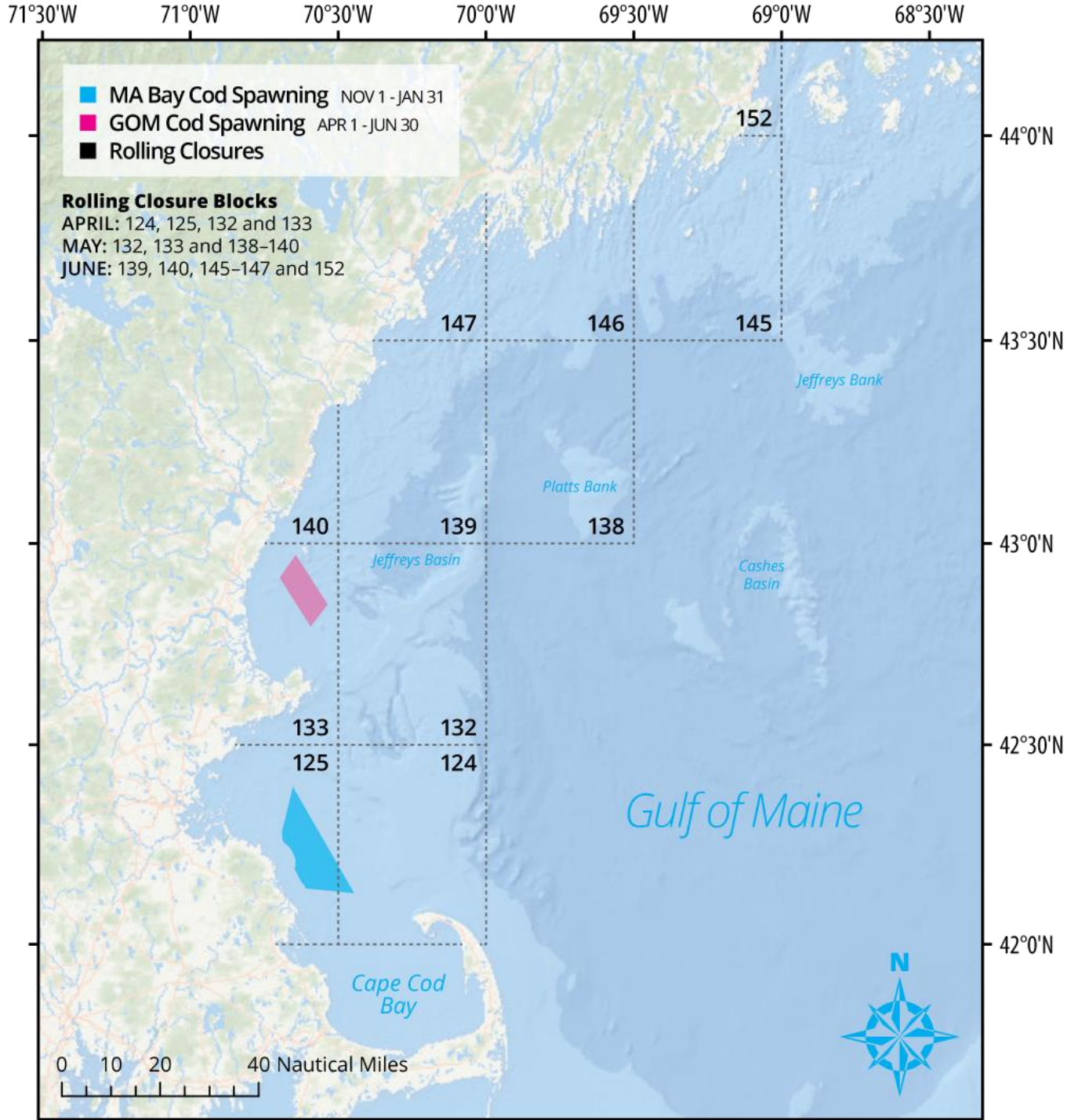
Alternative 3*

- Massachusetts Bay Spawning Area (new)

*** Preferred**







Gulf of Maine Spawning Impacts

Alternative	Habitat	Lg mesh GF res	Econ ST	Econ LT	Social ST	Social LT	Prot res
Alt. 1 (No Action)	-	++	++	++	-	-	Negl
Alt. 2A	-	++	+	-	0	0	Negl
Alt. 2B	-	++	+	-	-	-	Negl
Alt. 3	-	++	-	+	-	-	Negl



Georges Bank/SNE Spawning Alternatives

Alternative 1/No Action

- CAI, CAII, NLCA year round
- May seasonal closed area

Alternative 2*

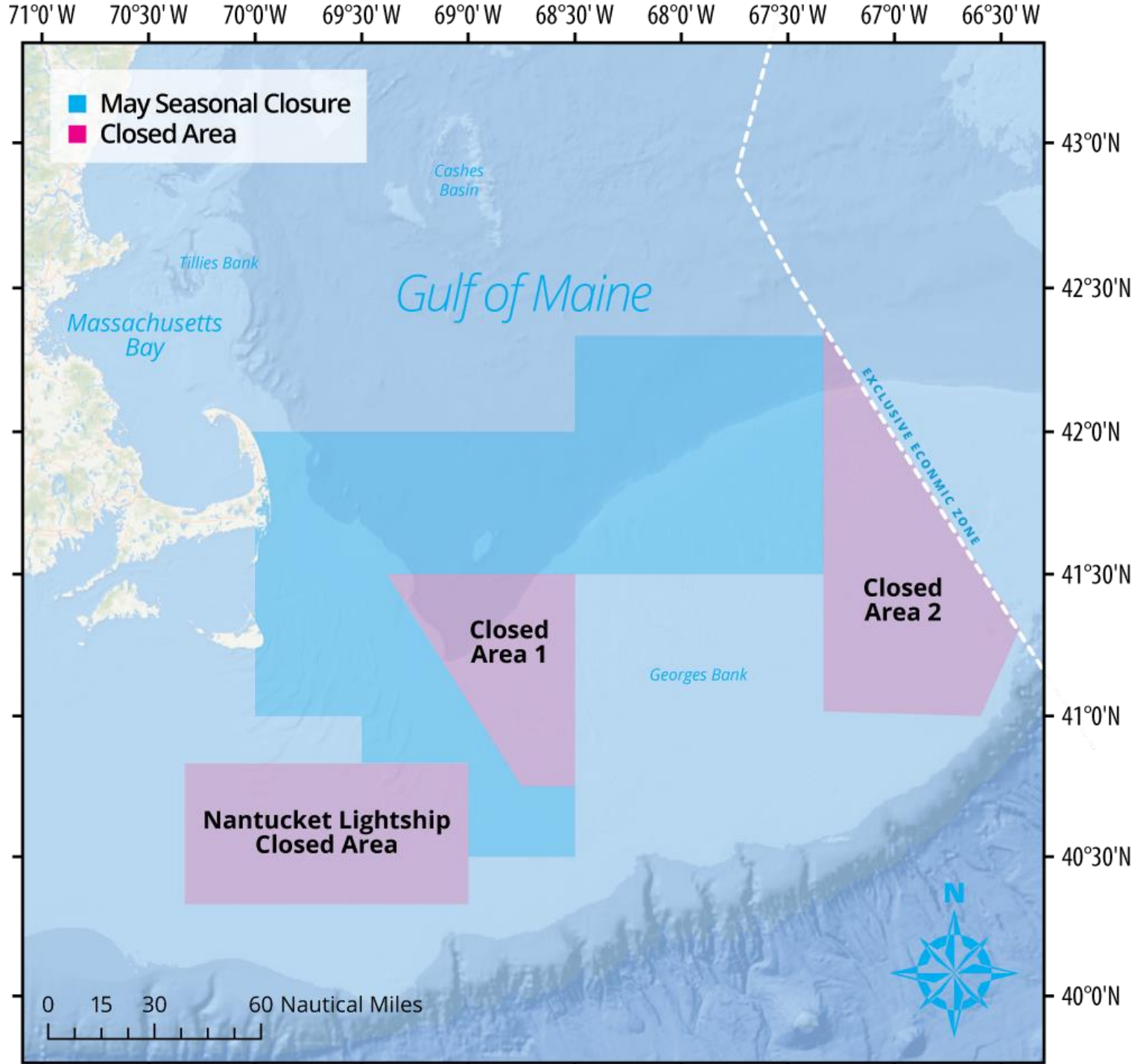
- CAII
- CAI
- All areas Feb 1 – Apr 15
- NLCA and May closure removed

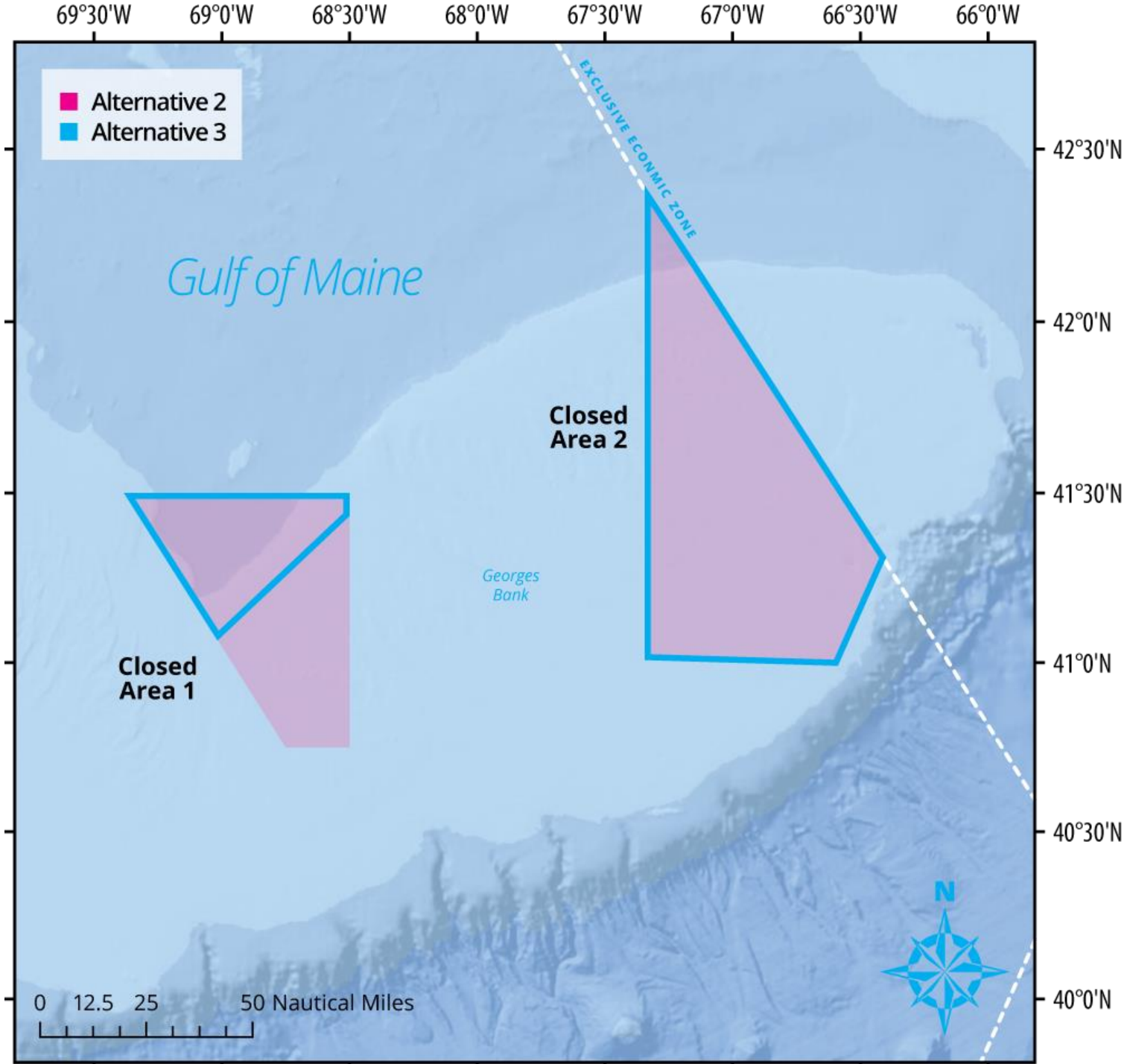
Alternative 3

- CAII
- CAI North
- All areas Feb 1 – Apr 15
- NLCA and May closure removed

*** Preferred**







Georges Bank/SNE Spawning Impacts

Alternative	Habitat	Lg mesh GF res	Econ ST	Econ LT	Social ST	Social LT	Prot res
Alt. 1 (No Action)	-	++	--	--	-	+	0
Alt. 2A	+	+	+	+	0	0	-
Alt. 2B	+	+	+	+	+	+	-
Alt. 2C	+	+	+	+	+	+	Negl
Alt. 3A	+	+	+	+	+	+	-
Alt. 3B	+	+	+	+	+	+	-
Alt. 3C	+	-	+	+	+	+	Negl

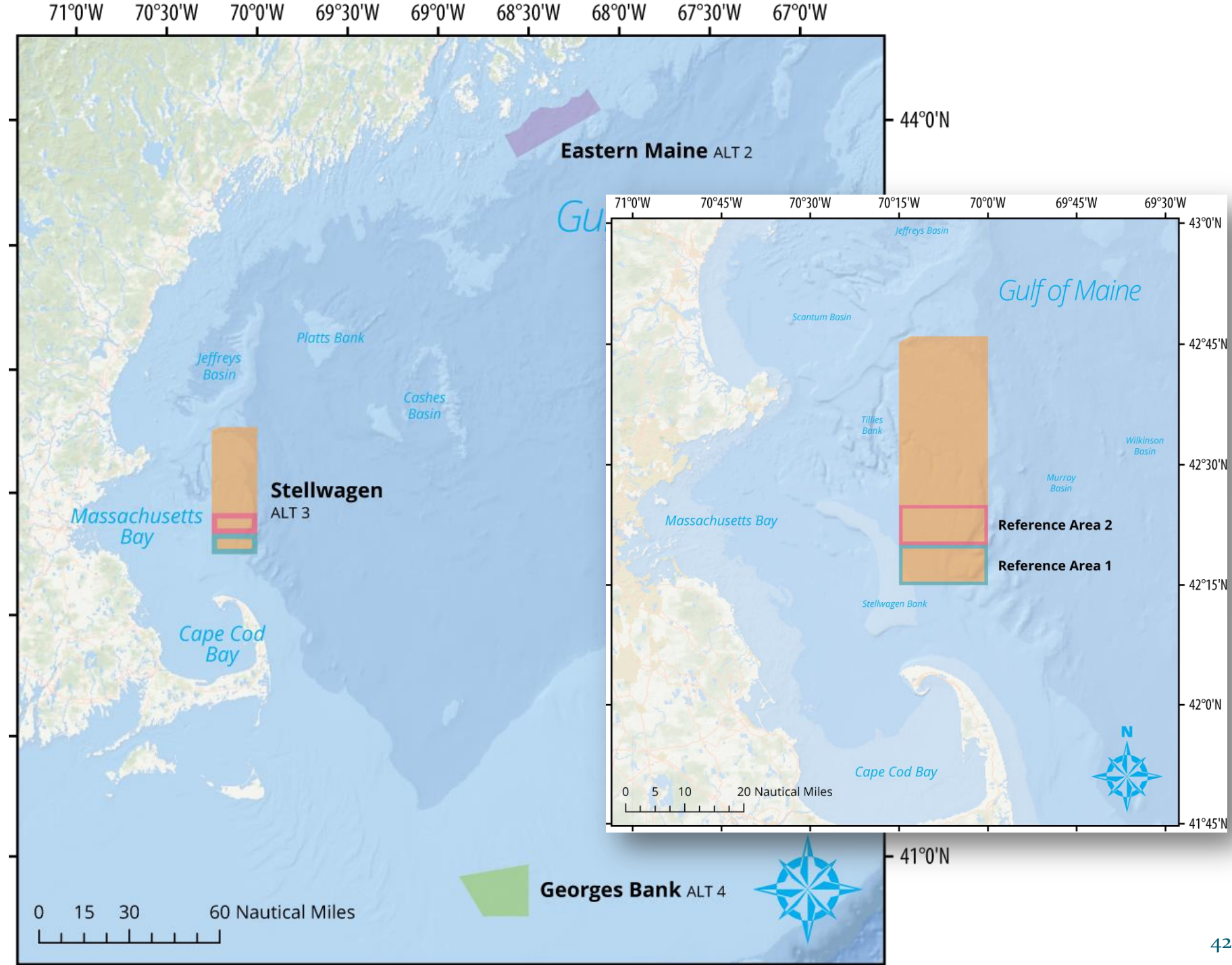


Dedicated Habitat Research Areas

1. No DHRA designations
2. **Eastern Maine DHRA closed to MBTG***
3. Stellwagen DHRA: maintain current restrictions throughout, i.e. no MBTG, no longlines, gillnets; additionally no recreational groundfishing in reference sub-area.
 - Option A: Southern Ref Area
 - **Option B: Northern Ref Area***
 - Option C: No Ref Area
4. **Georges Bank DHRA closed to MBTG***
5. **Sunset provision***

***Preferred**





DHRA Impacts

Alternative	Habitat	Lg mesh GF res	Econ ST	Econ LT	Social ST	Social LT	Prot res
Alt. 1 (No Action)	--	-	0	0	+	+	0
Alt. 2	++	++	-	+	0	0	Negl
Alt. 3A	++	++	-	+	+	+	Negl
Alt. 3B	++	++	-	+	-	+	Negl
Alt. 3C	++	++	0	+	+	++	Negl
Alt. 4	++	+	-	+	+	+	Negl
Alt. 5	0	+	0	+	++	++	Negl



Framework adjustments and monitoring

Alternative 1/No Action

- Ad-hoc approach to area management revisions in terms of strategy and timing
- No additional monitoring data requested

Alternative 2*

- Planned approach to area management revisions
- Additional monitoring data requests identified
- Specific additional frameworkable items identified

***Preferred**



Questions?

Contact NEFMC staff at (978) 465-0492

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Fiona Hogan – fhogan@nefmc.org , x 121

