



**NOAA  
FISHERIES**



# Update on Pelagic Longline (PLL) Closed Area Research Exempted Fishing Permit (EFP)

Atlantic Highly Migratory Species  
Management Division

March 7, 2018

# Summary of Initial EFP Application

- Complete EFP application received November 6, 2016
- Purpose –
  - Evaluate PLL catch and bycatch rates within the East Florida Coast PLL Closed Area and compare those to rates from an open area
  - Evaluate the effectiveness of the existing area closure at meeting current conservation and management goals
- Requested authorizing 6 vessels (with 6 “backup” vessels)
  - All vessels associated with Dayboat Seafood, LLC
- Project requested for 12 months and, pending annual review, consider authorization for two additional 12-month periods
- All fish legally caught and otherwise authorized for retention and sale could be sold

# Draft Environmental Assessment & Public Comment

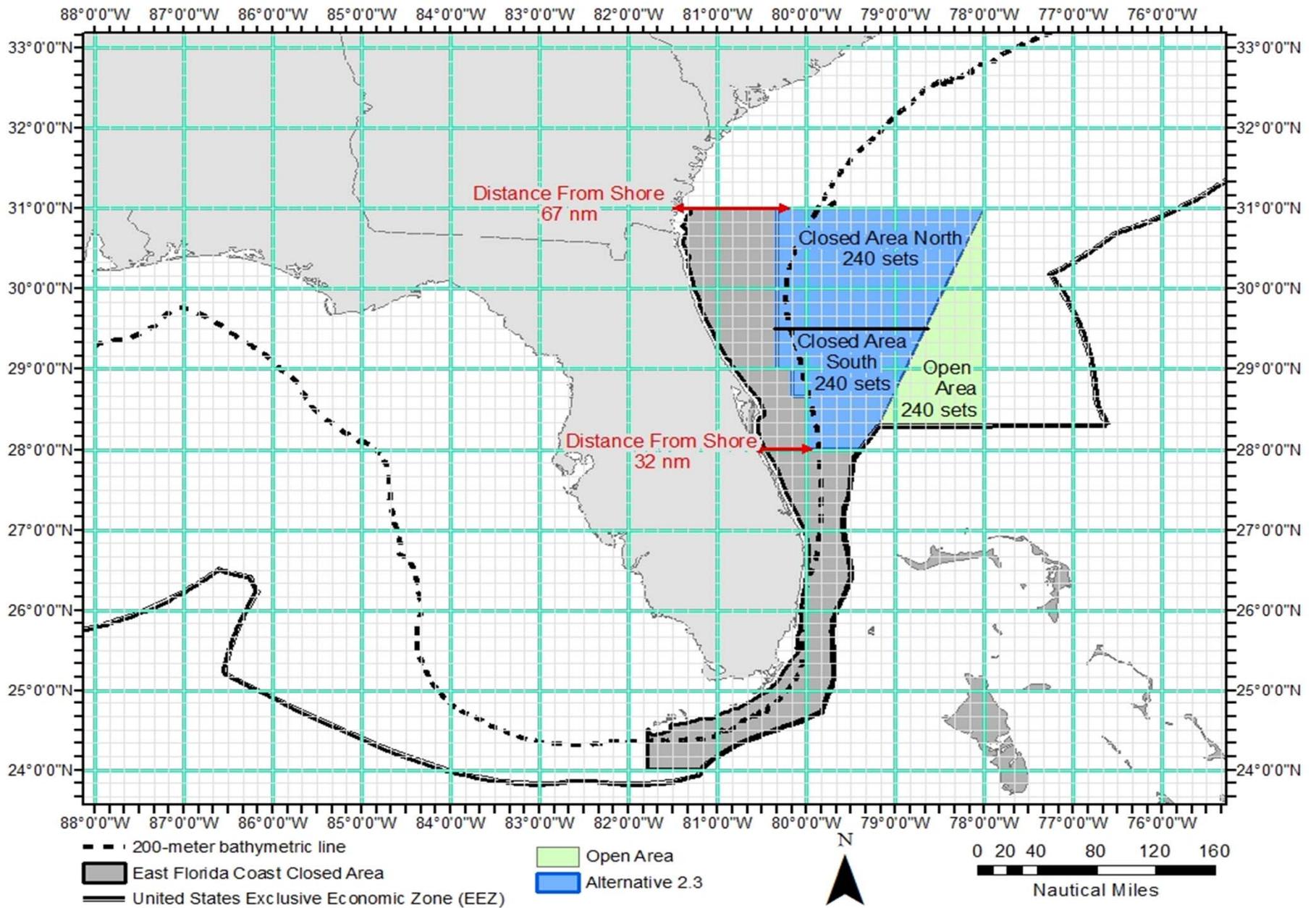
- NMFS determined that the initial EFP application warranted additional consideration and an opportunity for public comment
  - Draft Environmental Assessment (EA) released on Jan 13, 2017; comment period closed on March 29, 2017
    - South Atlantic Fishery Management Council presentation on March 9, 2017
    - Public Webinar on March 27, 2017
  - 3 alternatives analyzed
    - No Action
    - Smaller Area
    - Larger Area (includes 100 fm. contour)

# Summary of Public Comments on Draft EA

- Over 500 comments received – most were opposed to issuance of the EFP
- Comments opposed expressed concerns about bycatch (*e.g.*, undersized swordfish, billfish, dusky sharks, white sharks, sea turtles)
- Comments in support were in favor of collecting current catch information from the area, increased swordfish landings, and obtaining information on electronic logbooks to facilitate real-time reporting



# Issuance of Initial EFP & Final EA



# Authorized in EFP Issued August 11, 2017

Up to 720 sets/year (120 sets/year/vessel\*) distributed equally by quarter and area (480 sets in closed area & 240 sets in open area)

*\*based on historical effort of the 6 vessels*

600 hooks per set

40% of all sets would have observer coverage

Shark-specific terms & conditions

6 vessels (with 6 "backup" vessels)

Electronic logbook submission for all trips and 100% NMFS review of all Dayboat EM footage

All other PLL regulations apply (100% logbooks, regular observer coverage, size limits, seasons, gear/bait requirements, IBQs, reporting, workshops, etc)

# Revised EFP Application

- No research activity has occurred under the initial EFP
- A new EFP application was received on December 14, 2017, changing the affiliation of Principal Investigator from NOVA Southeastern University to Florida Fisheries Solutions, LLC
- No other aspect of the research project was altered
  - With receipt of the new application and change in affiliation of the Principal Investigator, NOAA Fisheries considers the original EFP, issued August 11, 2017, to be invalid
  - Because of this change and the controversial nature of the EFP request, consideration of the new EFP application will require further evaluation including consultation with the HMS Advisory Panel and informing the South Atlantic Fishery Management Council

# Next Steps

- NOAA Fisheries remains committed to ensuring that any future decisions regarding HMS conservation and management measures and closed areas are based upon current data
- Obtaining current fishery data from the closed areas can be controversial, difficult, and expensive
- NOAA Fisheries intends to work collaboratively with the HMS Advisory Panel, the ICCAT Advisory Committee, commercial and recreational fishing interests, academia, environmental non-governmental organizations, and others on appropriate next steps to improve long-term management of highly migratory species

# QUESTIONS or COMMENTS?

## Thank You!

Listserv and links to Final EA, Federal Register Notice, & Revised Application are available at:

<https://www.fisheries.noaa.gov/bulletin/pelagic-longline-closed-area-research-exempted-fishing-permit-update>

and

[https://www.fisheries.noaa.gov/feature-story/final-notice-pelagic-longline-closed-area-research?utm\\_medium=email&utm\\_source=govdelivery](https://www.fisheries.noaa.gov/feature-story/final-notice-pelagic-longline-closed-area-research?utm_medium=email&utm_source=govdelivery)

