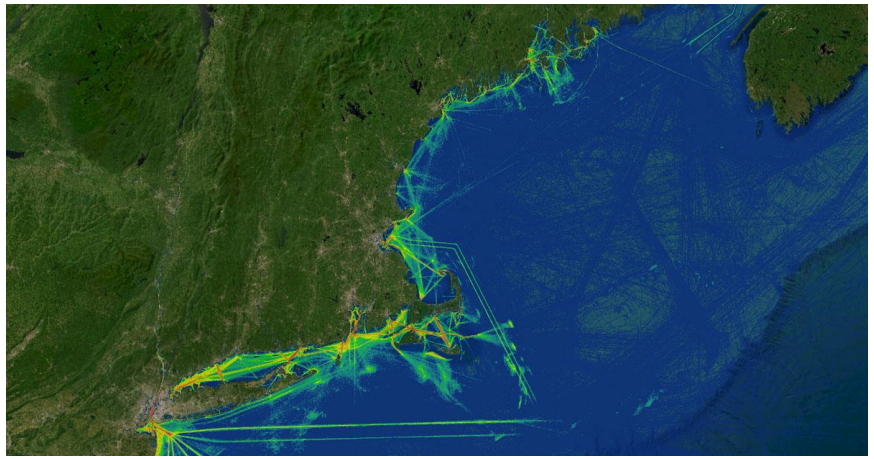
OCEAN PLANNING COMMITTEE

NROC Spring 2025 Meeting

OCEAN PLANNING COMMITTEE

- Regional forum to coordinate and balance current and emerging uses
- Implement best practices for review, permitting, management
- Develop ocean user and expert-reviewed data products and tools



- Emerging Issues
  - Aquaculture
  - Security and technology
  - Subsea cables
  - Seafloor disturbance
  - Sand, sediment, minerals
  - Exploration, mapping, research
- Submerged Archeological and Cultural Resources Workgroup
- Northeast Ocean Data Portal
- RWSC

SUBMERGED ARCHEOLOGICAL AND CULTURAL RESOURCES WORKGROUP

SUBMERGED ARCHEOLOGICAL AND CULTURAL RESOURCES WORKGROUP

- Regional coordination of Tribes, experts, researchers, historic preservation offices, managers

- Identified priorities to advance archeological and cultural resource understanding in the region
  - Currently advancing these priorities through pre-qualified candidates

CURRENT WORK

TASK 1: Literature Review and Synthesis

Synthesis of information related to archeological and cultural resources for the coastal and offshore environment

a. Traditional ecological and cultural knowledge provided by Tribes in the project area that has been published or documented
b. Published research including information on historic sea levels, marine archaeological and related geological and geophysical survey data and projects, paleolandscape reconstruction, seafloor mapping, and predictive climate and sea-level modeling
c. Data and information from recent surveys and studies in development areas
d. Review literature and provide a summary of cultural resource publications, including their methods, that have been implemented in other US regions

CURRENT WORK

TASK 2: Summary of Ongoing Submerged and Coastal Archeological and Cultural Resources Work

A synthesis of information and geospatial data related to ongoing studies in the Northeast coastal environment

a. Written inventory and any available geospatial data layers of coastal cultural sites

b. Summary of the sensitivity of any information identified and recommendations about whether geospatial data and other information could be incorporated into the Northeast Ocean Data Portal

SUBMERGED ARCHEOLOGICAL AND CULTURAL RESOURCES WORKGROUP

PRODUCTS

- Literature review and synthesis including references and specific areas of study
- Relevant data and information related to submerged archeological and cultural resources for discussion with the Workgroup and potential inclusion on Northeast Ocean Data Portal
- GIS shapefiles for the Northeast Ocean Data Portal outlining the geographic extent of study/resources reviewed in the literature review, including specific study links

DATA-RELATED INDUSTRY OUTREACH

PORTS AND MARITIME

- Engaging ports and maritime industry to obtain recommendations to improve Northeast Ocean Data Portal products
  - Maine through New York City (USCG District 1, headquarters, NAVCEN) to review the Data Portal and provide recommendations

- Currently working to pull in data from Coast Guard Marine Safety Information products based on feedback

COMMERCIAL AND RECREATIONAL FISHING

- Fishing data are being reorganized by fishery (instead of by data type) on the Portal in response to industry feedback
- Working with NOAA Fisheries to integrate recent fishing footprint data and to identify and develop potential new products
- Obtaining industry input on methods for mapping footprint of recreational fishing
- Recently integrated data from the NE Regional Marine Fish Habitat Assessment produced by NEFMC and MAFMC

RECREATIONAL BOATING

- Northeast Ocean Data Portal contains data and products on recreational boating developed in collaboration with the industry over a decade ago
  - New England Recreational Boating Survey

- Convene industry meetings at national and regional level
  - To explore new technology options and develop a project plan for collecting data and updating products representing recreational boating patterns and economics

REFOCUSING WORKGROUP FOR SEAFLOOR PLANNING

RECENTLY PROPOSED AND POTENTIAL SEAFLOOR PROJECTS

- NSF Hydrogeology Research
- Moving or installing new submarine cables for telecommunications
- Other submarine cables
- Boulder relocation
- Sand, sediment, minerals
- Exploration, mapping, research

WORKGROUP PURPOSE AND OBJECTIVE

To inform interjurisdictional coordination on seafloor planning by improving the collective understanding data needs, assessments, and related engagement that is or will be occurring in New England.

NROC will provide a regional venue for information sharing, including lessons learned from previous or ongoing seafloor mapping, research, and planning work; identifying data and information gaps that could be pursued to better inform planning; and informing and coordinating any future assessments or models in the region.

OCEAN AND COASTAL ECOYSTEM HEALTH COMMITTEE

NROC Spring 2025 Meeting

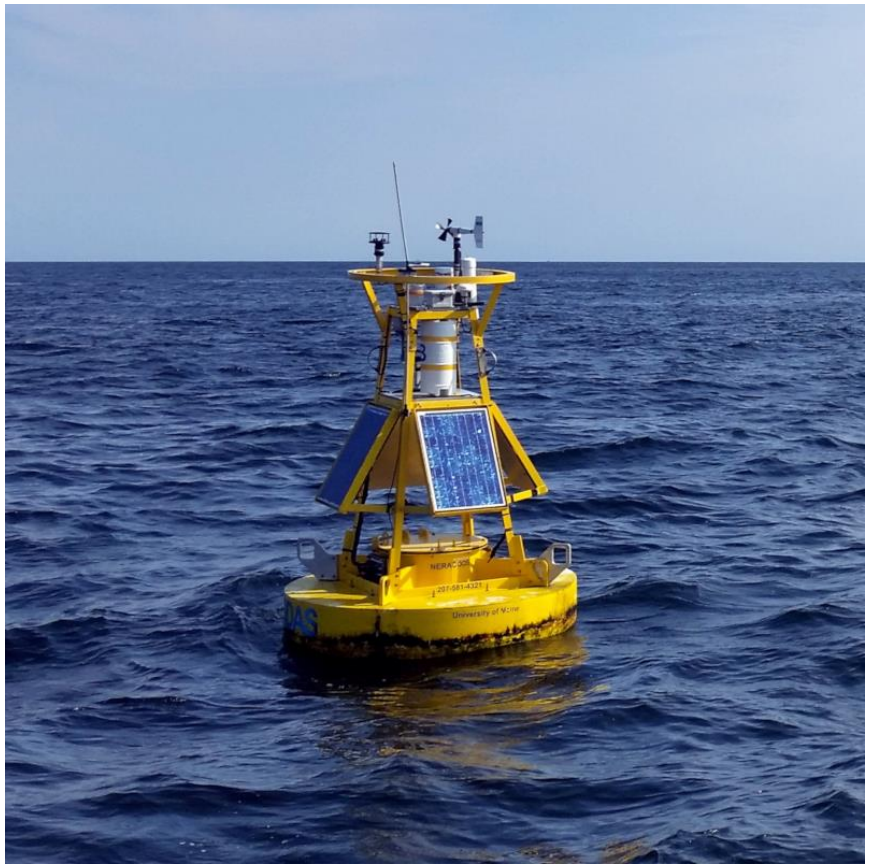
OCEAN AND ECOSYSTEM HEALTH COMMITTEE

- Strengthen regional coordination, governance, and communication
- Update monitoring plans and assessments; link research and monitoring to management decisions
- Enhance data collection, integration, and dissemination

- Coastal Vegetation Workgroup
- Habitat Classification and Ocean Mapping Subcommittee
- Ocean Acidification

OCEAN ACIDIFICATION

OCEAN ACIDIFICATION MONITORING IN THE NORTHEAST



- Robust data collection and monitoring of environmental variables associated with OA are essential.
- NROC is playing a leading role in supporting OA monitoring and management efforts in the region.
- In November 2023, NECAN-NROC hosted workshop to identify priorities for understanding OA in the region and impacts.
- Workshop outcomes served as basis for development of draft Ocean Acidification Monitoring Plan.

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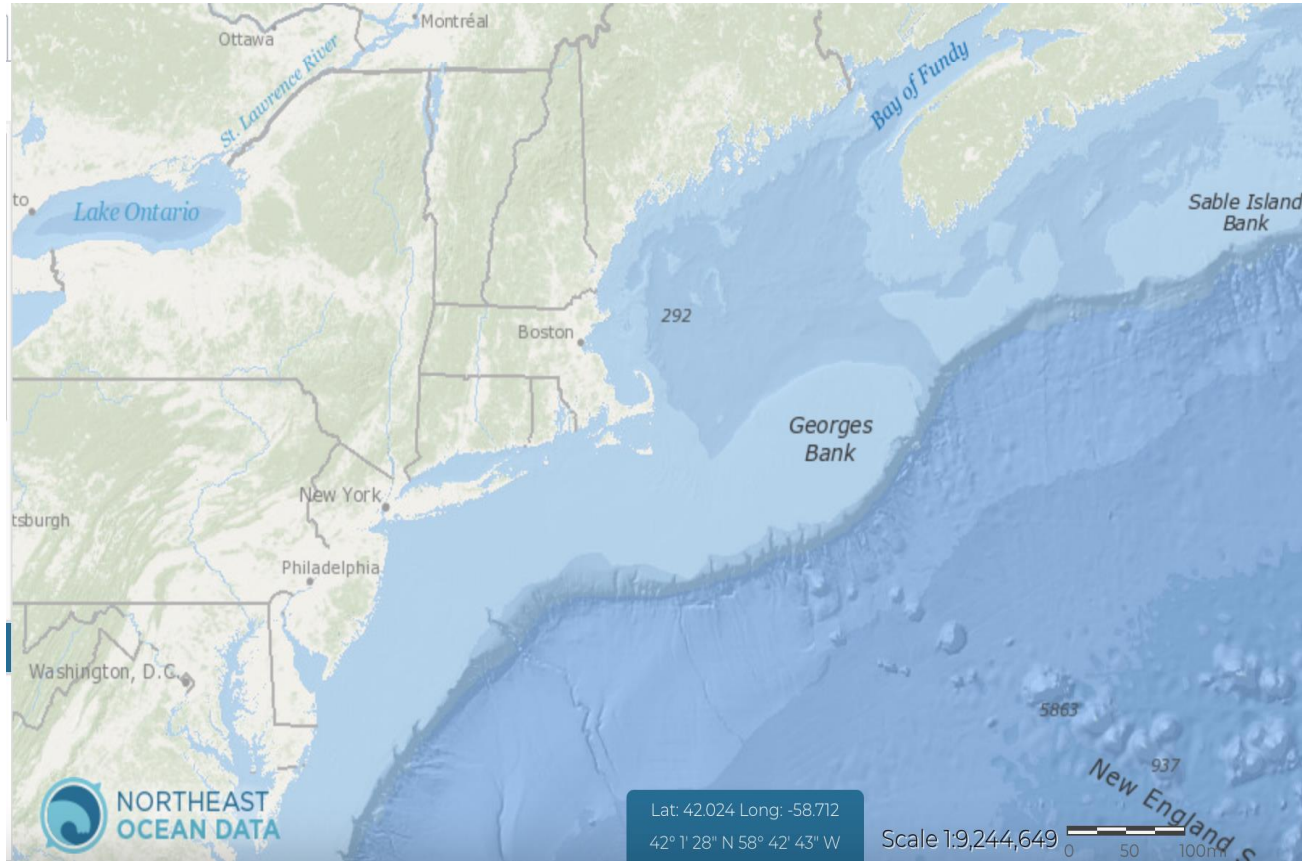
DEVELOPMENT OF OCEAN ACIDIFICATION MANAGEMENT TOOLS



- NROC is prioritizing the development of an OA theme in the Northeast Ocean Data Portal.
- Conducting outreach with Tribes, scientists, and managers to inform the development of OA data theme.
- Key findings related to data needs, species specific concerns, thresholds, regions of interest etc. will be key in developing this data theme.

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OUTREACH AND ENGAGEMENT UPDATE: SPRING 2025

- NROC began outreach in Spring 2025 with state coastal managers in Maine, New Hampshire, Massachusetts, Rhode Island and Connecticut.
- Currently engaging representatives from SeaGrant programs in the region.
- Shared overview of outreach with members of NROC Tribal Caucus, potentially host future webinar.
- Engagement with regional scientists will take place following outreach to decision makers.

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OUTREACH AND ENGAGEMENT: MANAGEMENT QUESTIONS

- What are the species of concern as it relates to ocean acidification in New England for your program and why (i.e., lobsters, oysters, scallops, others).

- What specific management/regulatory activities apply?

- What types of maps, tools, or data products could help inform your agency's engagement in those management activities? Specifically, information beyond the monitoring being conducted in specific locations – for example, maps of ocean acidification concentrations and risks to individual species sensitivity?

- Have efforts been employed to map species and areas that are increasingly vulnerable to ocean acidification in New England? If so, who were these efforts carried out by? What types of data were collected to support their characterization as vulnerable? Where are these data/products stored?

- Anything additional you want to discuss related to management needs? Are there others in your state/agency we should engage?

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OUTREACH AND ENGAGEMENT: MANAGEMENT DATA NEEDS TO DATE

- Overview of species concerns, management needs and recommended data products to inform decision making:
  i. Species of importance include American lobsters, oysters, clams (softshell, quahog/hard, razor, Atlantic surf clam), mussels, seagrass, eel grass, squid, forage fish species, sand lance and bay anchovies.
  ii. It would be useful if NROC is able to map the regional extent of ocean acidification risk and identify habitats that might be at risk.
  iii. Developing features that allow users and decision makers to know the spatial extent of ocean acidification hot spots (i.e., pinpoint areas where ocean acidification is occurring, the time scale of occurrences, localized areas that experience higher than average ocean acidification).
  iv. Also useful are products that help inform aquaculture site selection (i.e., beneficial when identifying new shellfish growth in more near-offshore sites owing to saturation of nearshore sites, technology permitting).
  v. Data products that can help outline the effects of ocean acidification in most important growing areas (i.e., it would be valuable to have a measure of coastal acidification that overlays natural beds and other important growing areas).
  vi. Mapping the extent of ocean acidification can help improve development of mixed trophic aquaculture techniques and understanding impact of parasites in growth areas.

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OUTREACH AND ENGAGEMENT: REPORTING AND NEXT STEPS

- Following engagement with states, Tribes, scientists and industry representations, NROC will compile responses into a report which will be published in fall 2025.
- The findings documented in this report will include:
  - Series of key recommendations
  - Summary of what we heard
  - Agencies/organizations listed (no name specifics).
- If you would like to provide feedback or recommend an entity that we should engage, please let us know!

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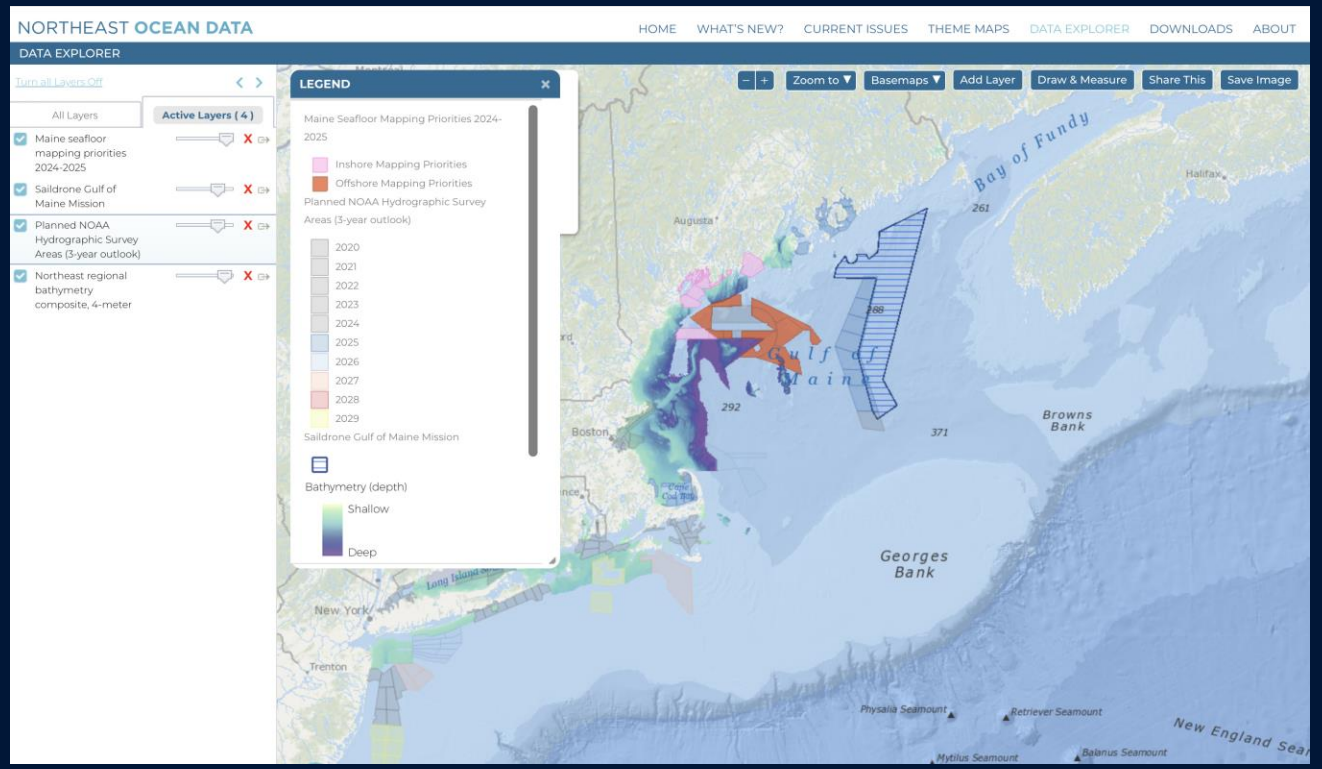
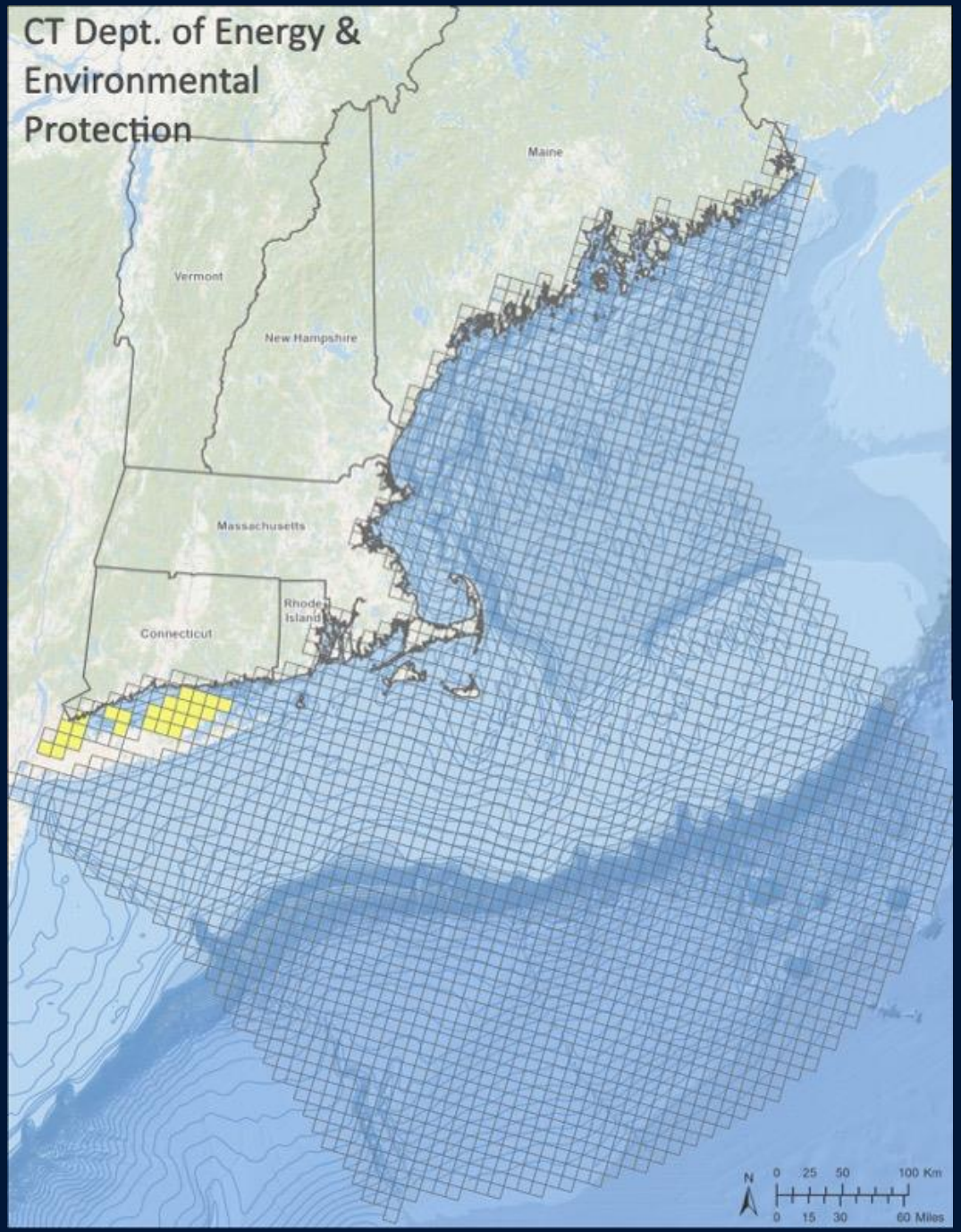
HABITAT CLASSIFICATION AND OCEAN MAPPING SUBCOMMITTEE

HABITAT CLASSICIFICATION AND OCEAN MAPPING SUBCOMMITEE

- Released the latest Gulf of Maine Seascapes data via Portal
- Areas critical to informing long-term Maine DMR is mapping m planning
- Report of seafloor mapping priorities for the region
  - prioritization instrumental in guiding investments in seafloor mapping and characterization
- Currently working to update 2025 priorities; expand engagement

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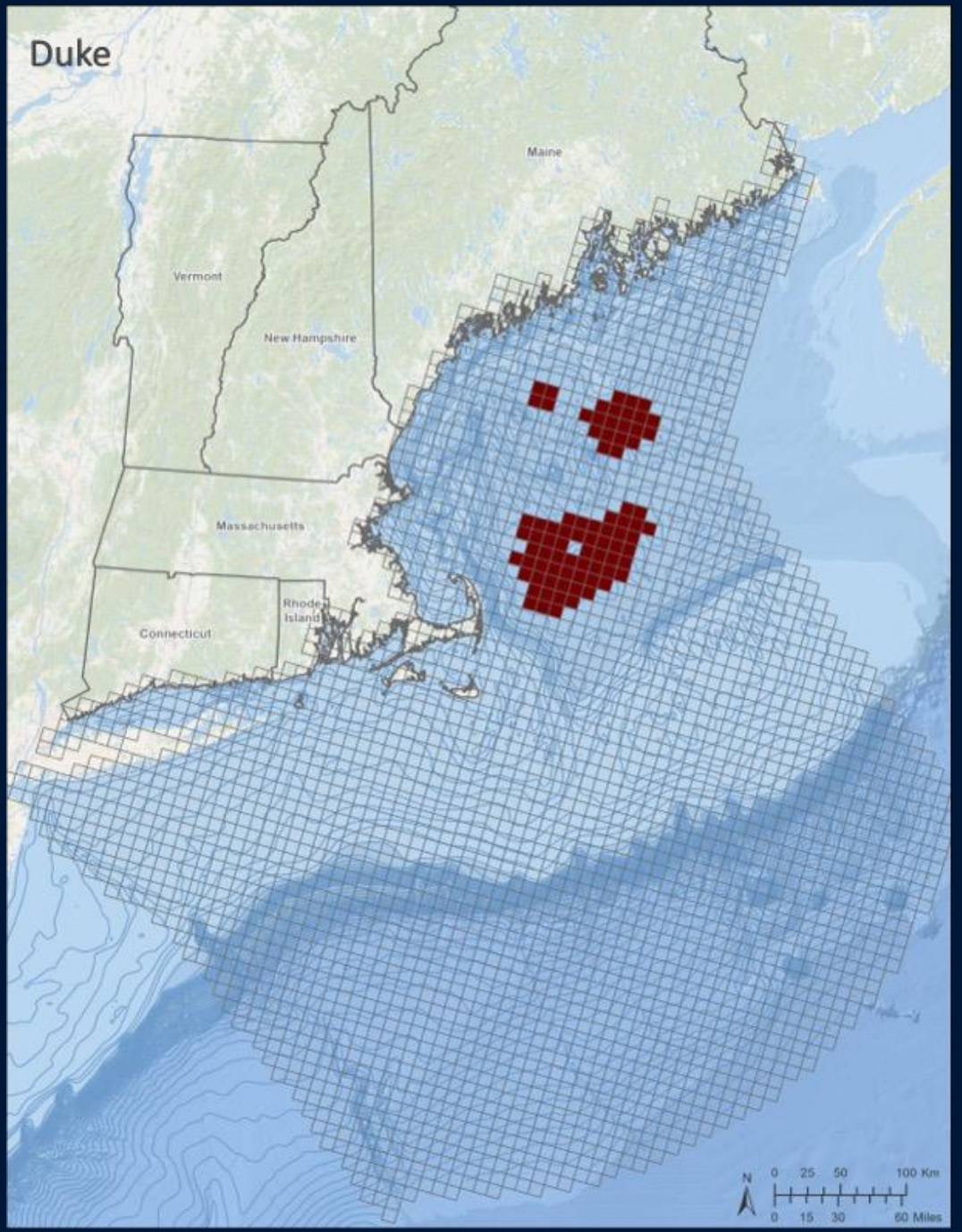
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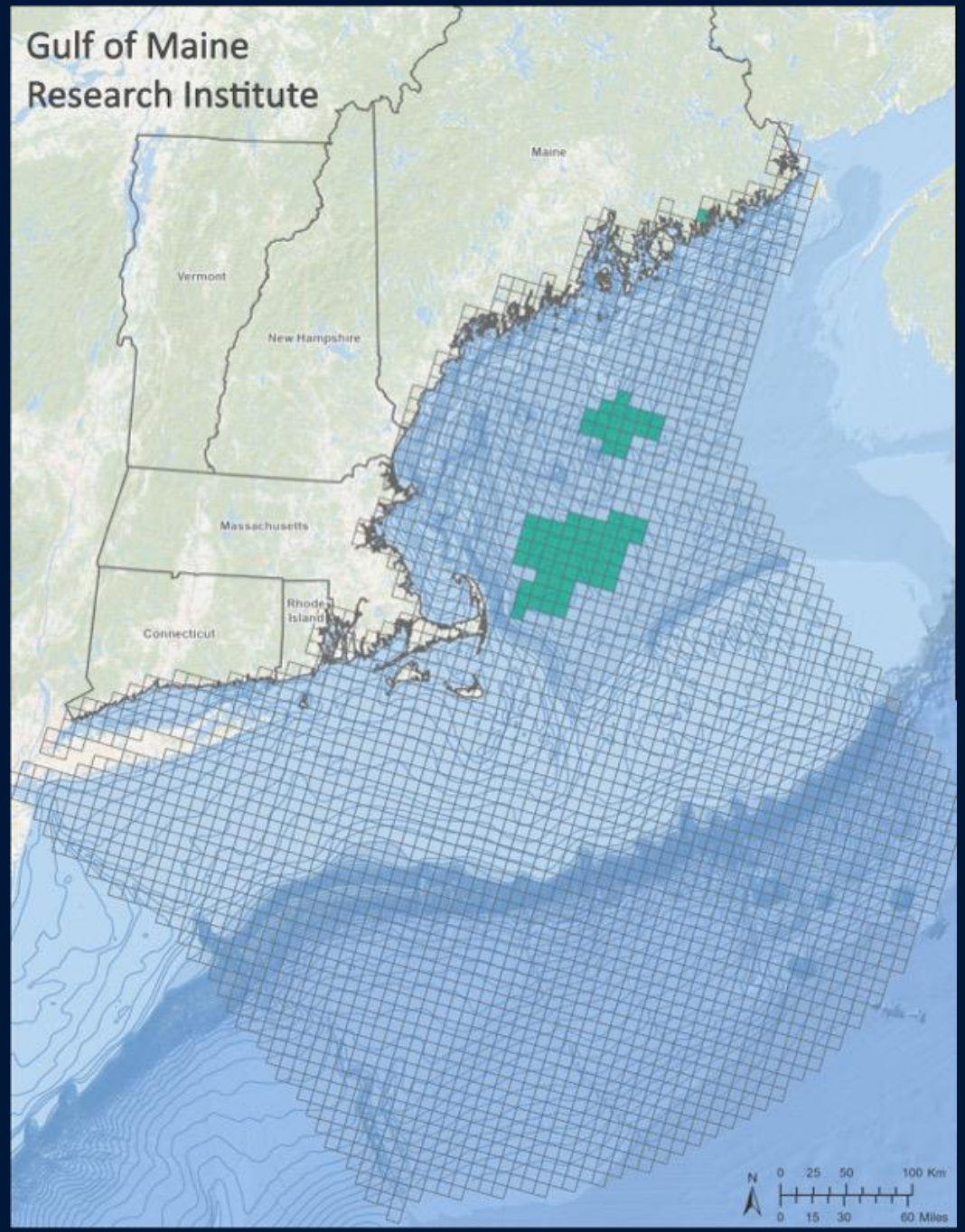
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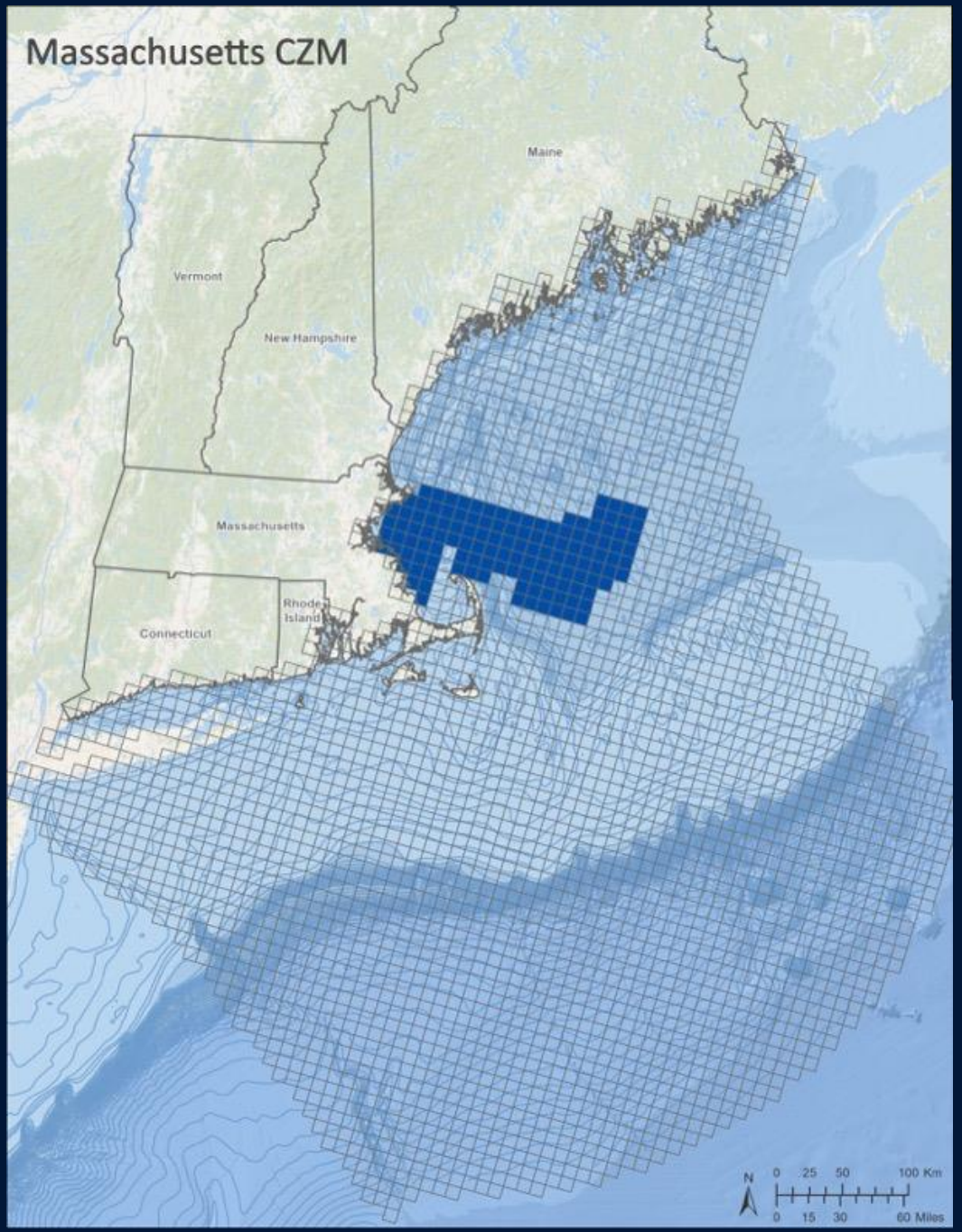
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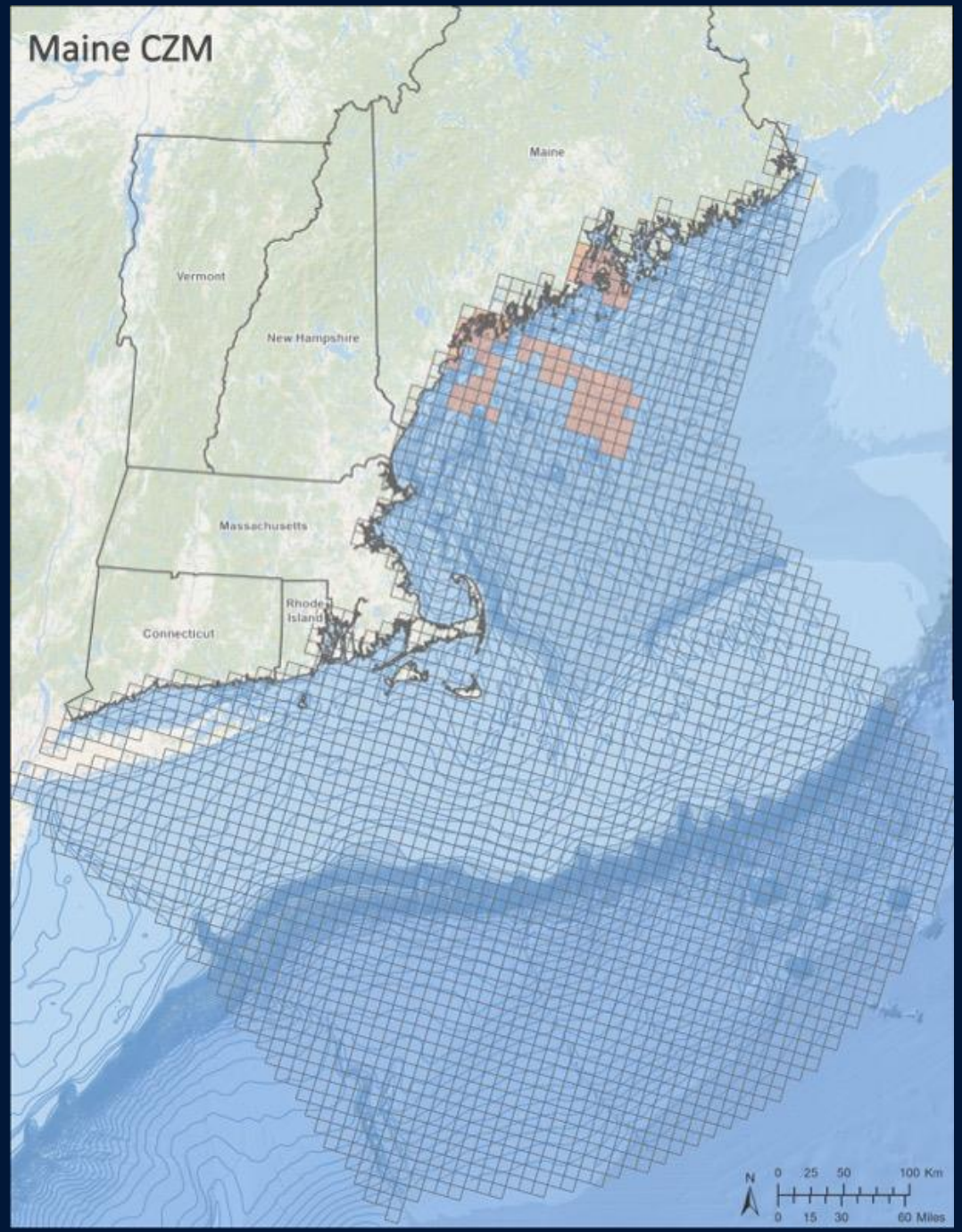
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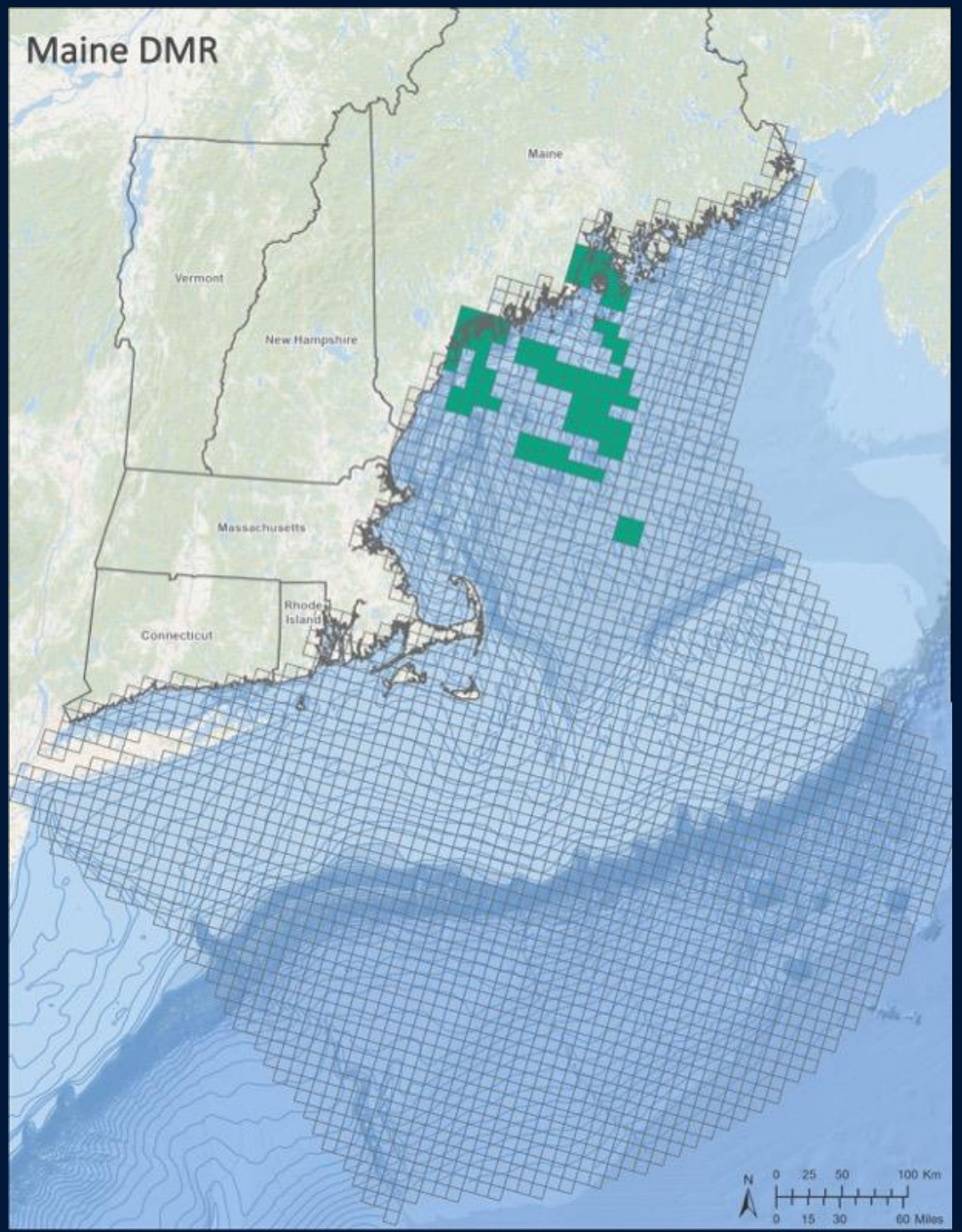
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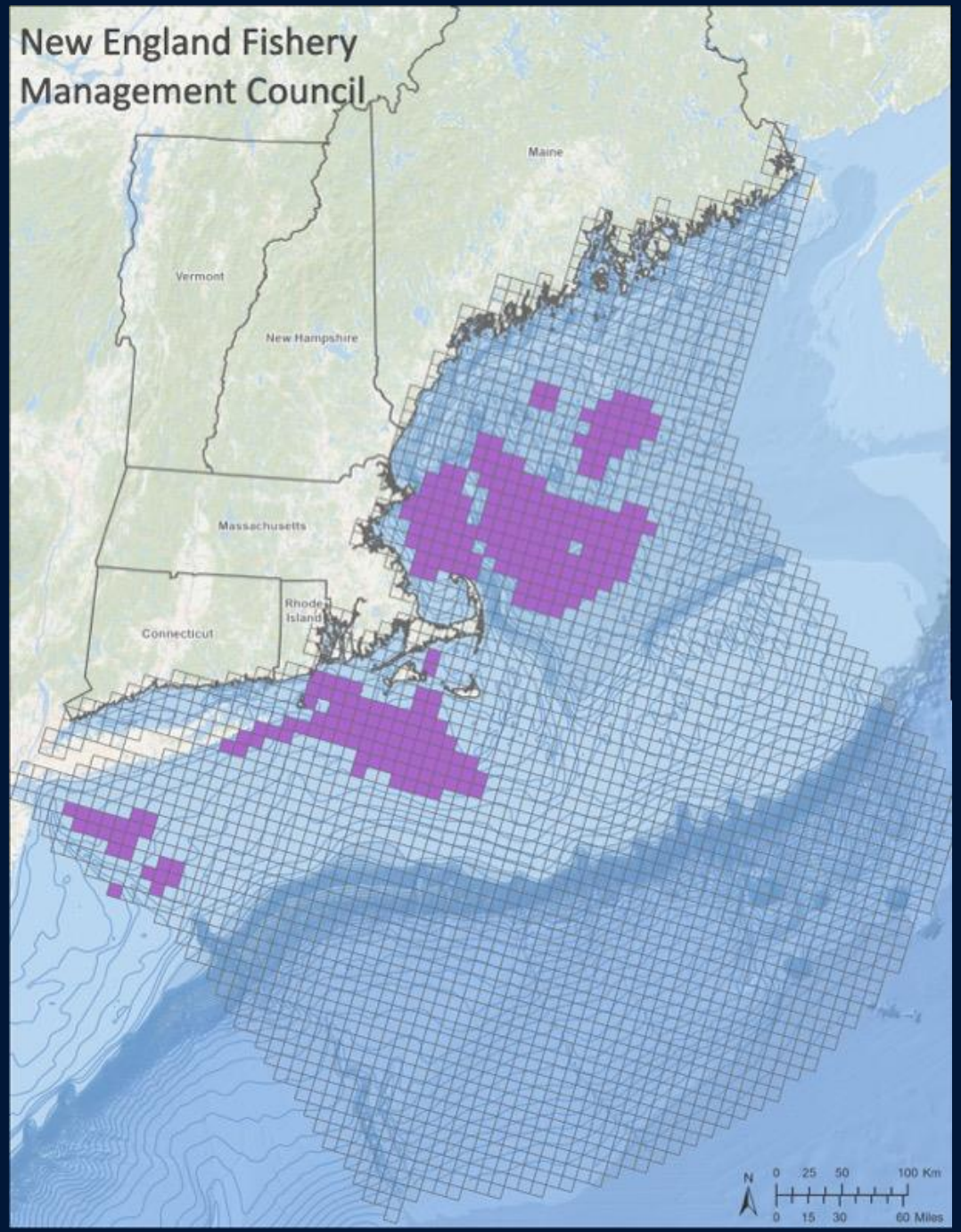
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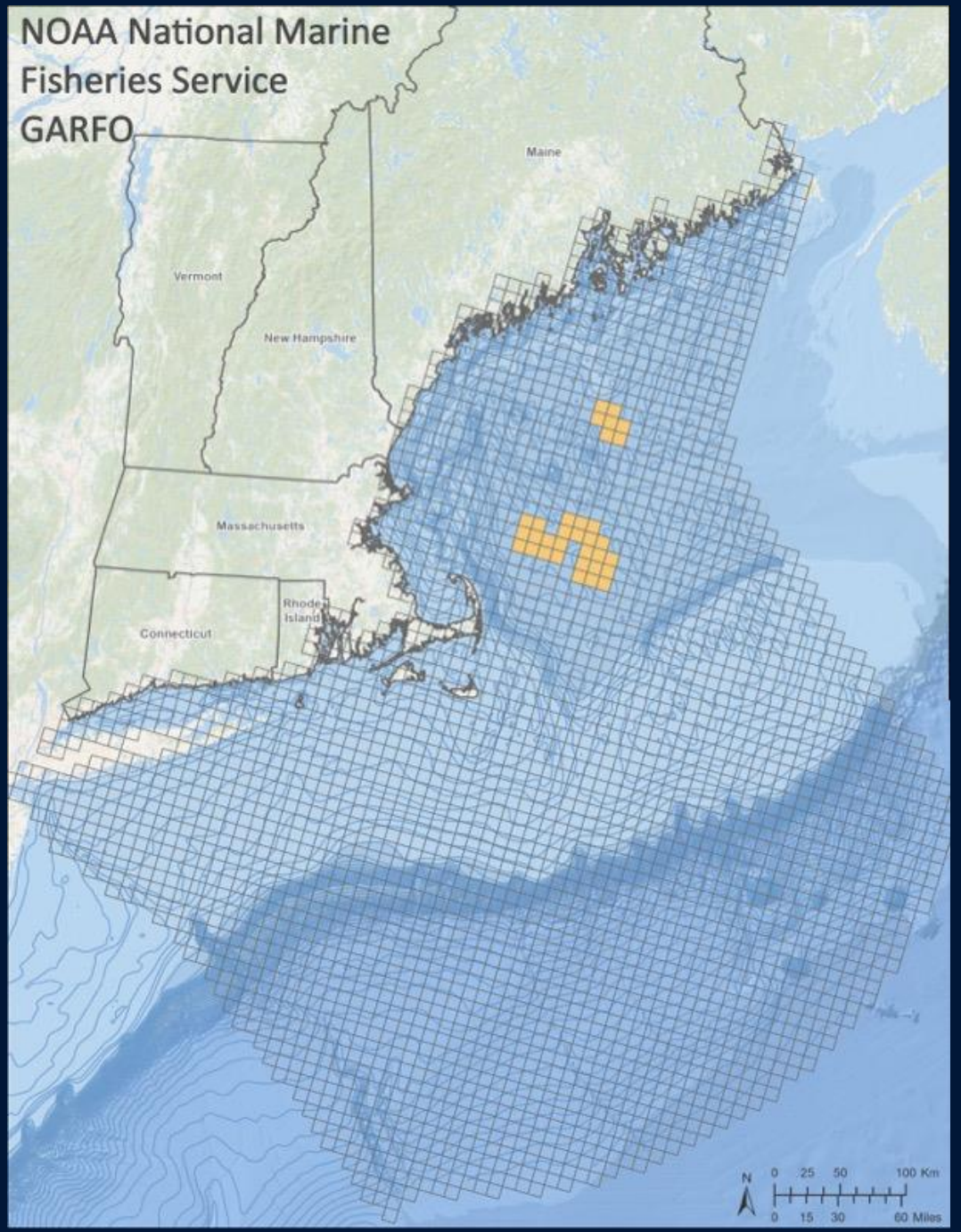
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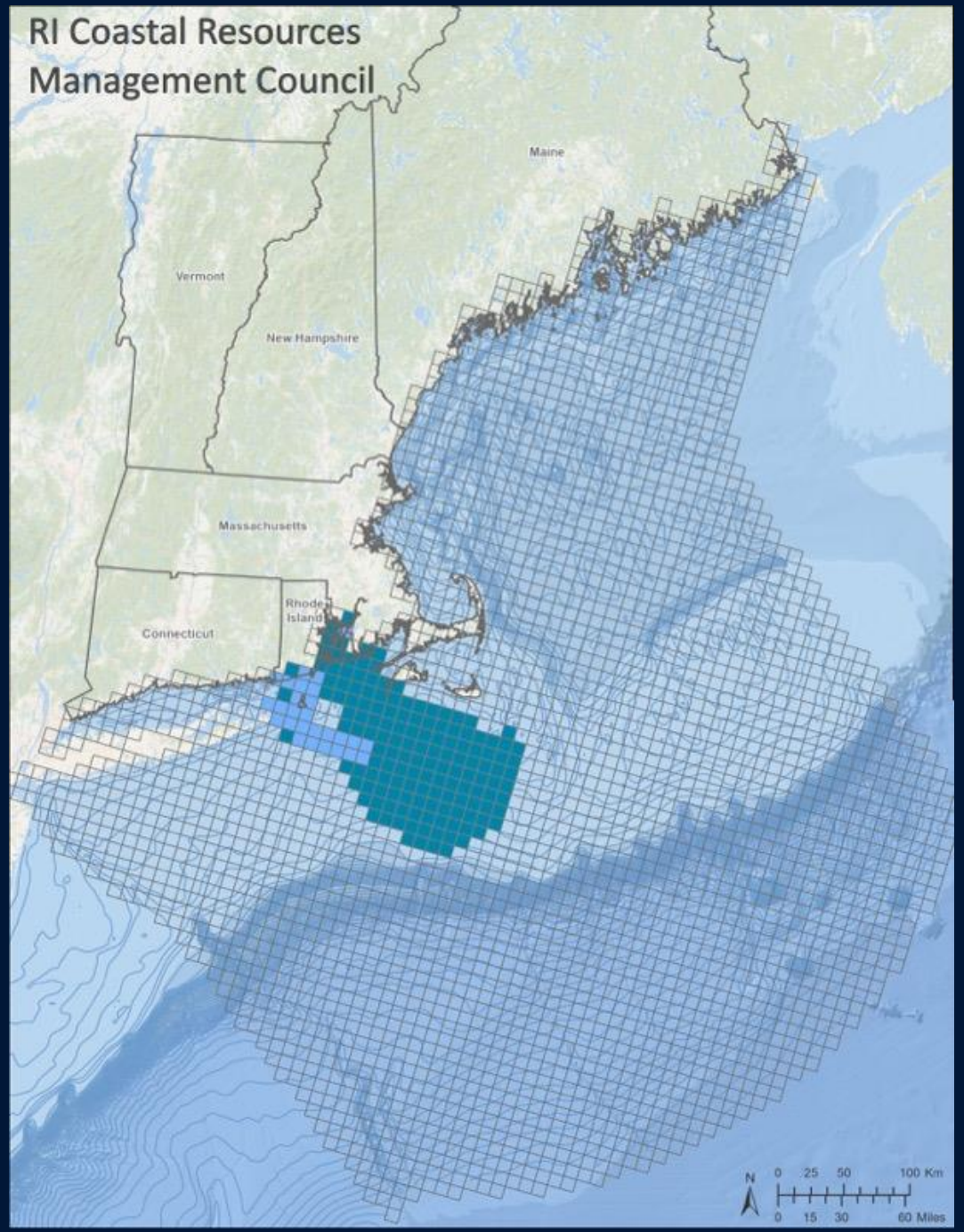
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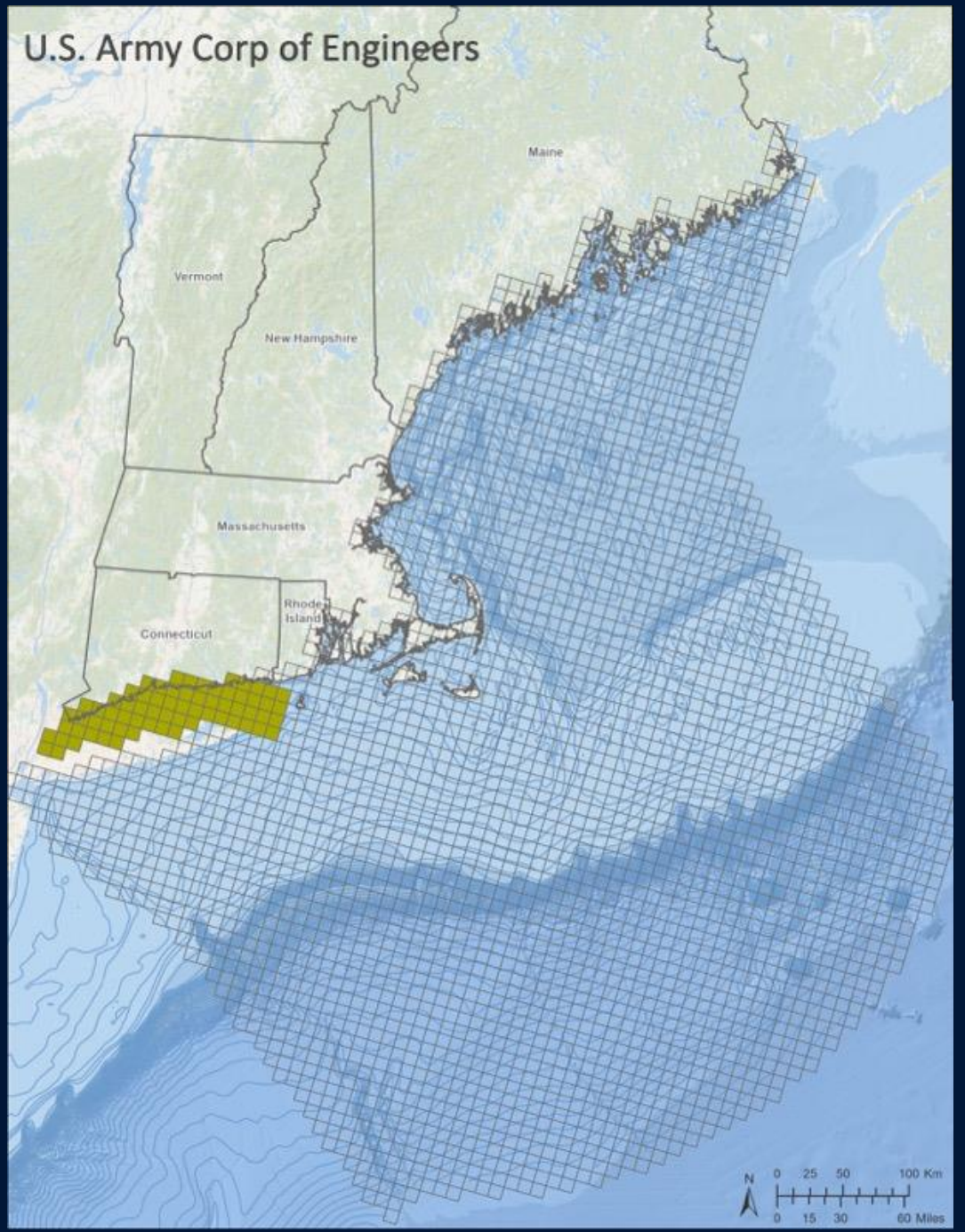
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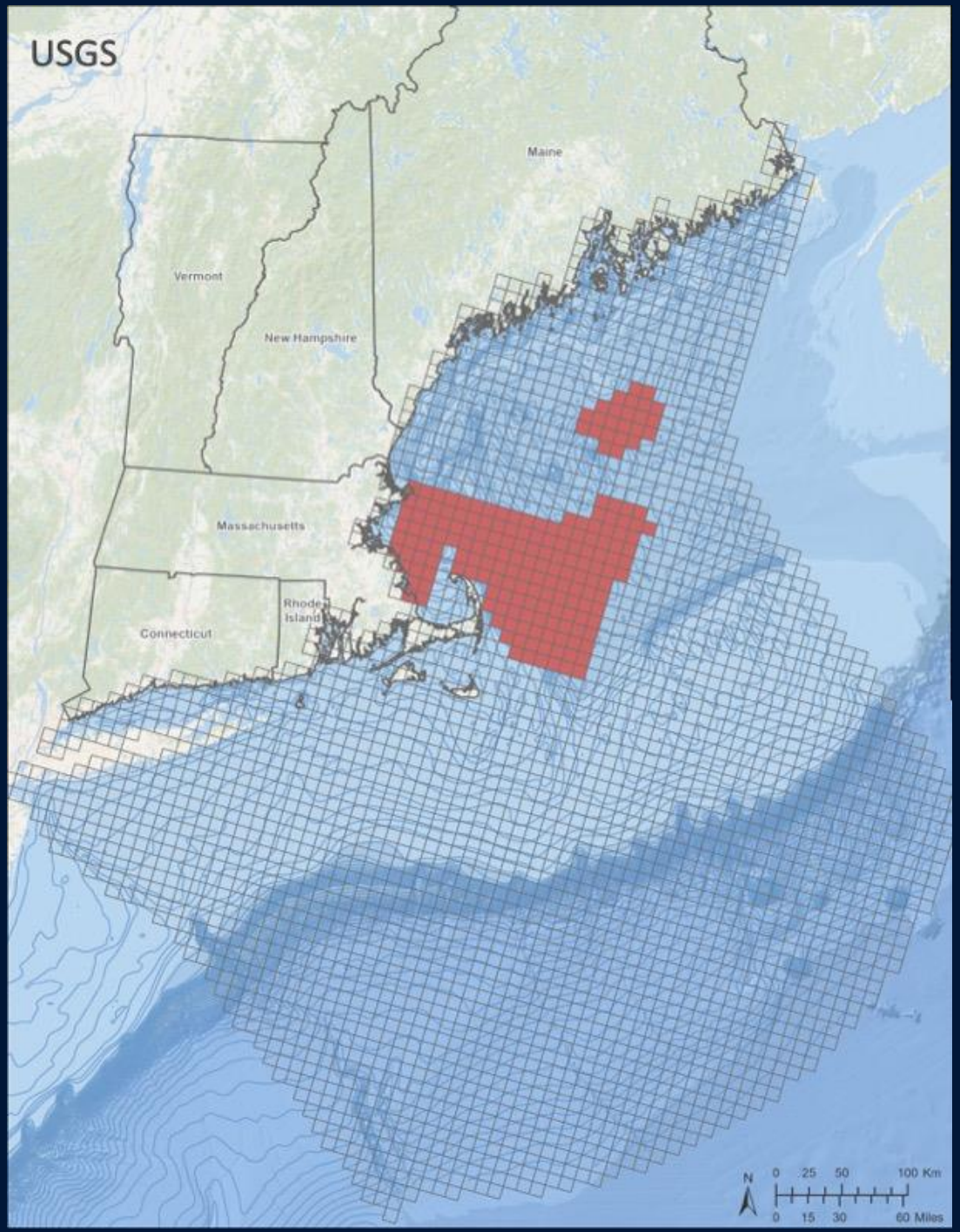
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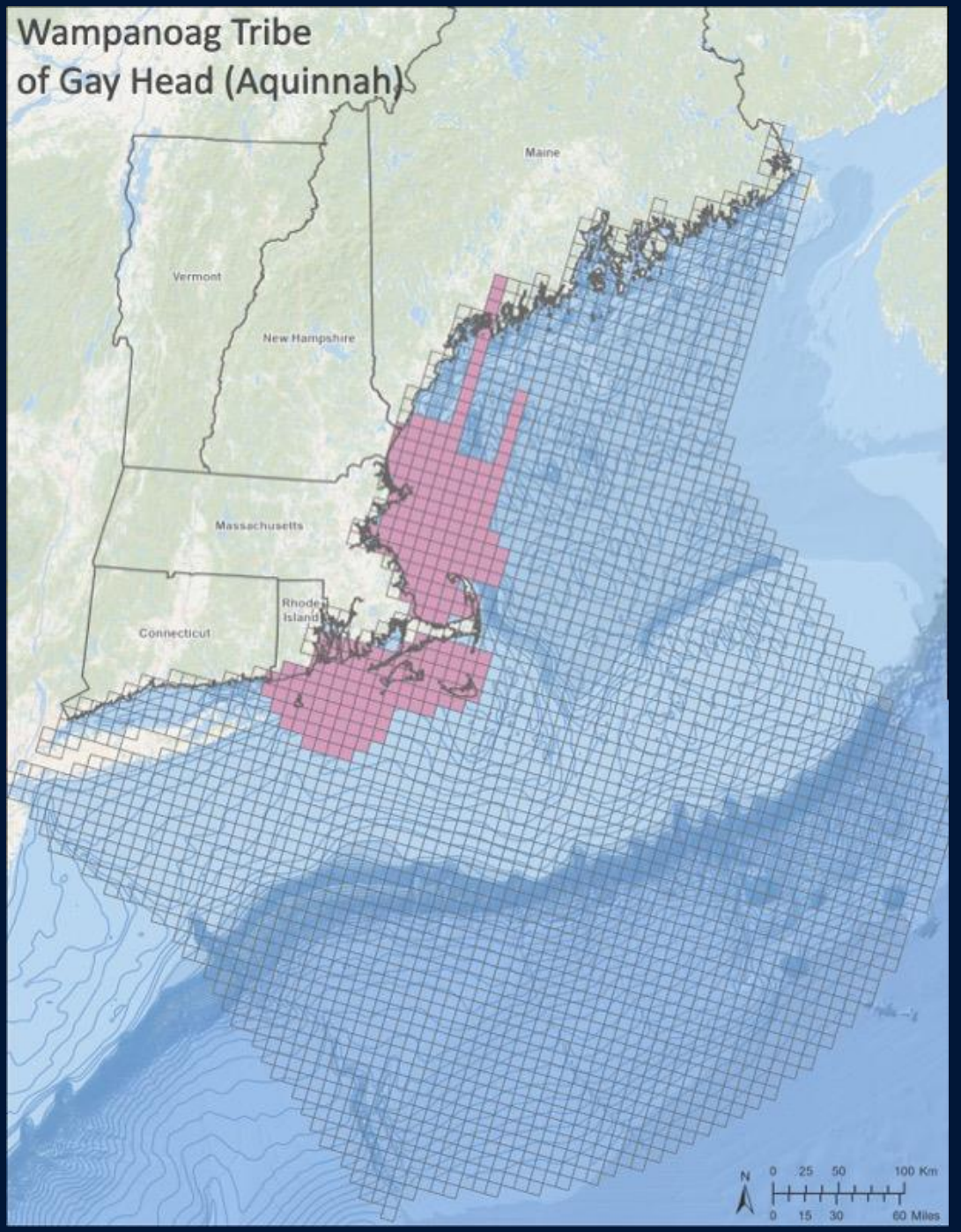
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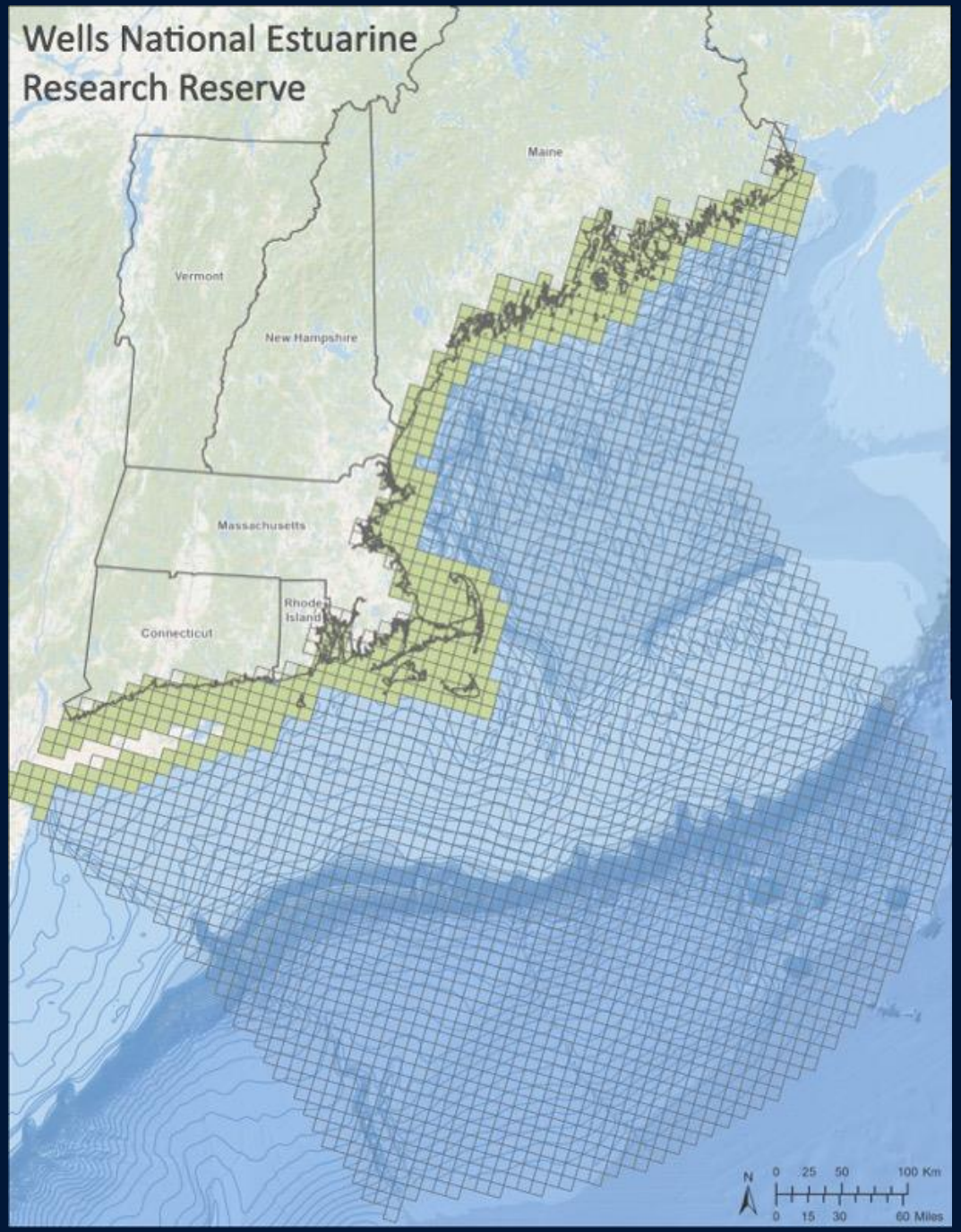
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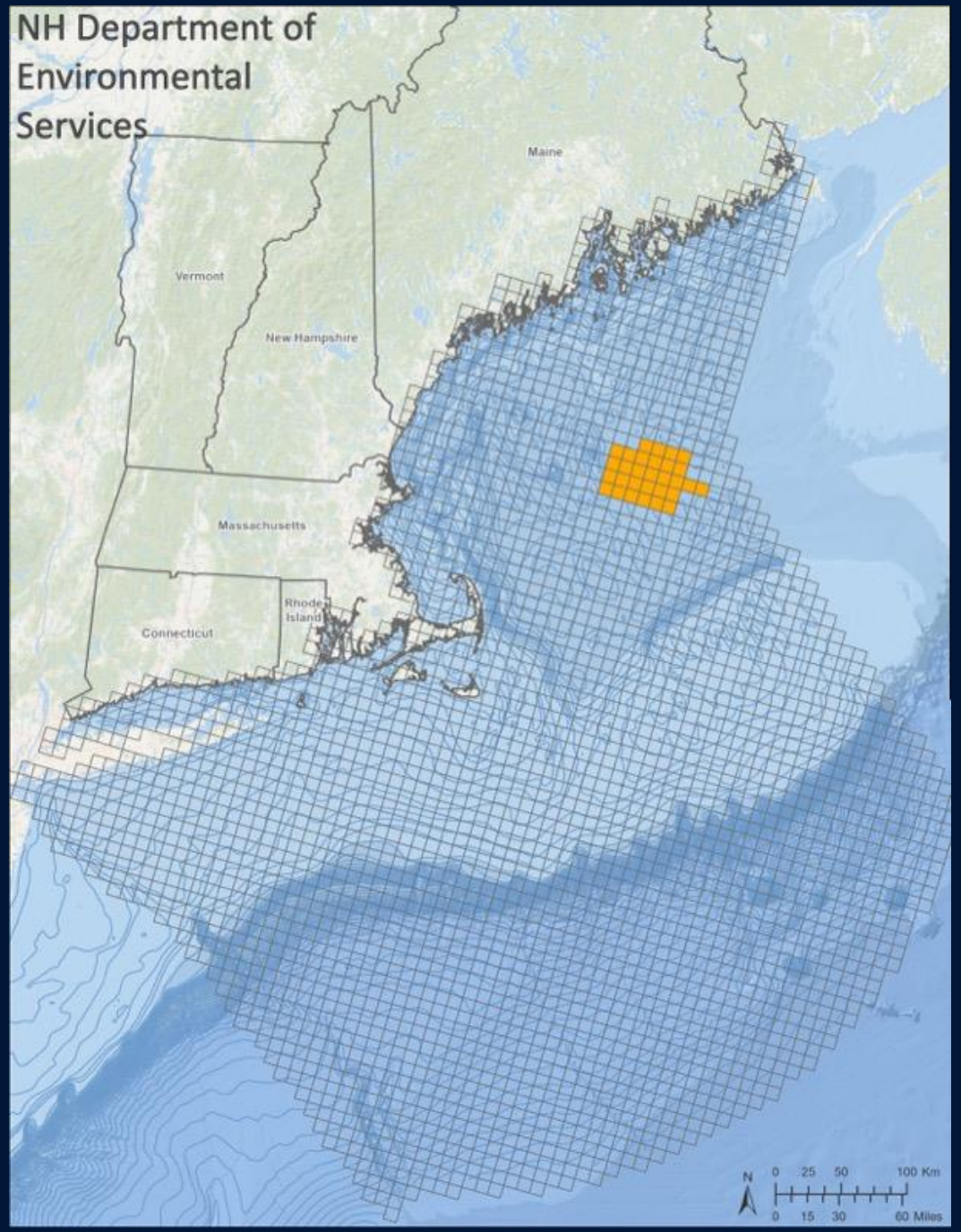
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COASTAL VEGETATION WORKGROUP