

Maryland's Stakeholder Outreach and the MMS Offshore Wind Energy Task Force Draft RFI Area

July 14, 2010



Goals of Maryland's Stakeholder Outreach:



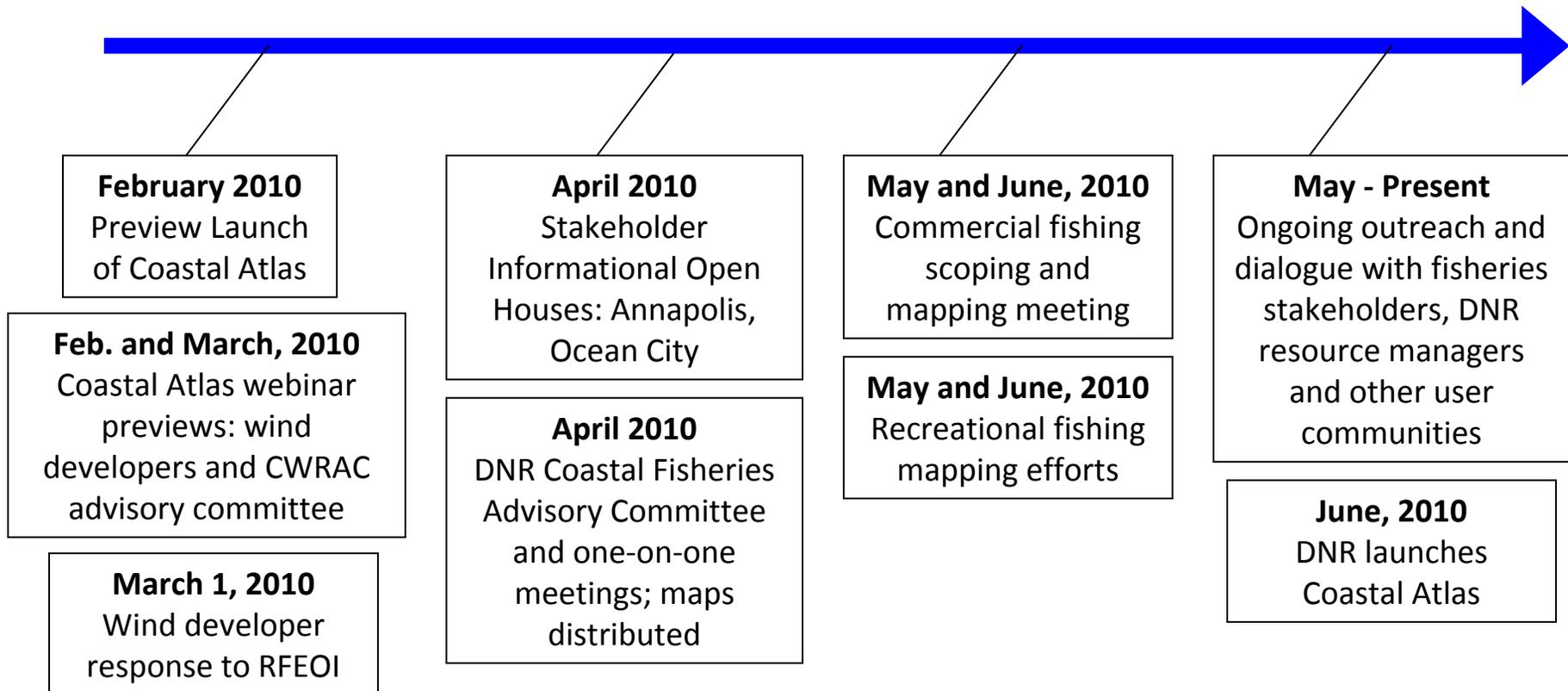
- 1.) To provide opportunities for the public and targeted user groups to learn more about what Maryland is doing related to offshore wind and get involved in the process to address questions and concerns
- 2.) To compile and organize data, information, and feedback to help identify areas of high use and/or natural resource overlap to create a more transparent process

...so that potential conflicts can be identified and be avoided early in the planning process

Maryland's Ocean is a Busy Place...

- Sand is mined from the ocean to replenish beaches
- Artificial reefs are created to provide fishing opportunities and fish habitat
- We fish commercially and/or recreationally for sea bass, tautog, bluefish and flounder
- Waterbirds and marine mammals feed and migrate along the Atlantic Coast
- Unique cold-water corals, tilefish and living resources inhabit the ocean shelf and provide habitat
- Ships use shipping lanes to move cargo
- Telecommunication cables connect the globe

Stakeholder Outreach Timeline



Each component designed to help ensure well-informed ocean siting and effective participation in the decision making process for offshore wind energy development



Overview: Stakeholder Participation

Maryland began working with targeted stakeholders in April 2010 to begin a forward-looking planning and data collection process to guide actions about wind energy leasing.



Informational meetings were held to provide information on offshore wind, project timelines, the anticipated process, and the opportunity for community response. (Open Houses)

Scoping meetings will identify the planning areas under consideration for offshore wind using the Coastal Atlas, and request feedback on additional public use and planning areas.

Open houses were hosted in Annapolis and Ocean City

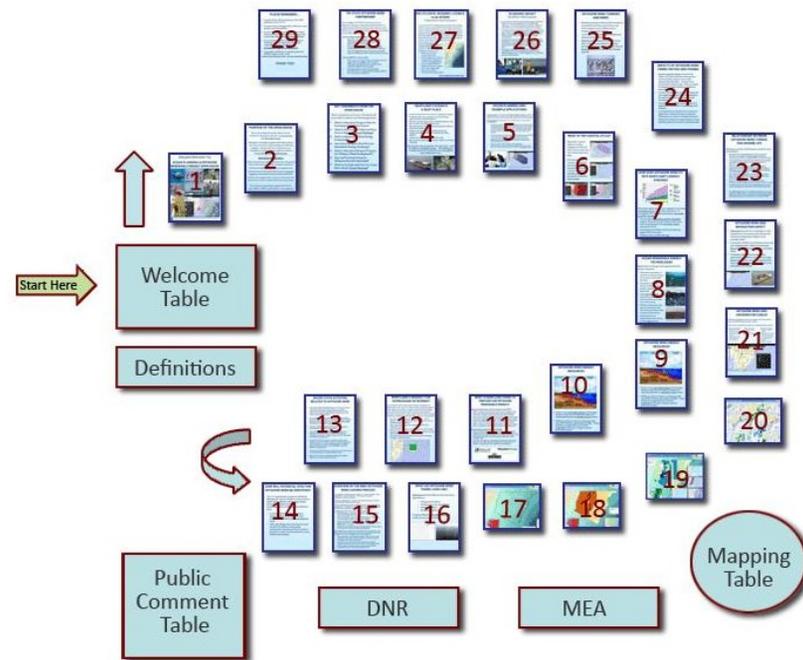
- Open Houses were open to the public and were advertised several weeks ahead of time
- 75+ people attended, including local elected officials, watermen, industry representatives
- Comment and mapping stations
- Poster sessions cover information about process, timelines, science, opportunities to get involved



Virtual Open House

Maryland created a [Virtual Open House](#) webpage for stakeholders unable to attend the April open houses in Annapolis and Ocean City. The same posters and information presented at the open houses are available to view. An online [Public Comment](#) database allows people to submit comments.

oceanplanning@dnr.state.md.us



Fisheries & Human Use Input Scoping

One-on-One Interviews

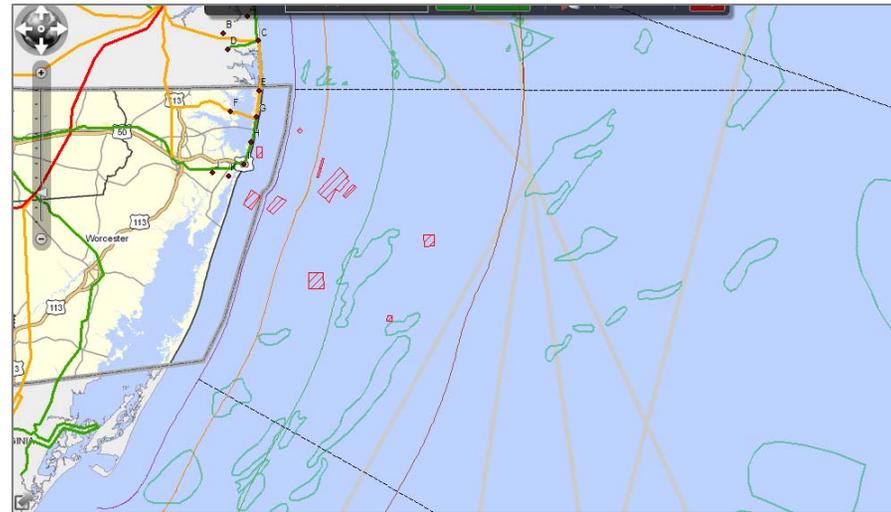
- Local, community knowledge
- Historical, current and future use

Mapping Mailers

- Varied distribution
- Groundwork completed before group meetings

User-group mapping meetings

- Review existing maps
- Edit and identify areas in groups





Issue-specific Outreach with Stakeholders and Resource Experts

- Offshore Birds: DNR Wildlife & Heritage Service
- Artificial Reefs: DNR Fisheries, Maryland Geological Survey (MGS) surveyors
- Fishery Resources and Tournaments: DNR Fisheries
- Marine Mammals: DNR Fish & Wildlife Health, marine mammals
- Bats: University of Maryland Center for Environmental Science (UMCES)
- Sand Resources and Shoals: DNR Engineering and Construction, MGS
- Viewsheds: Town of Ocean City, Assateague Island NS
- Offshore Wind Development Community: MD's RFEOI



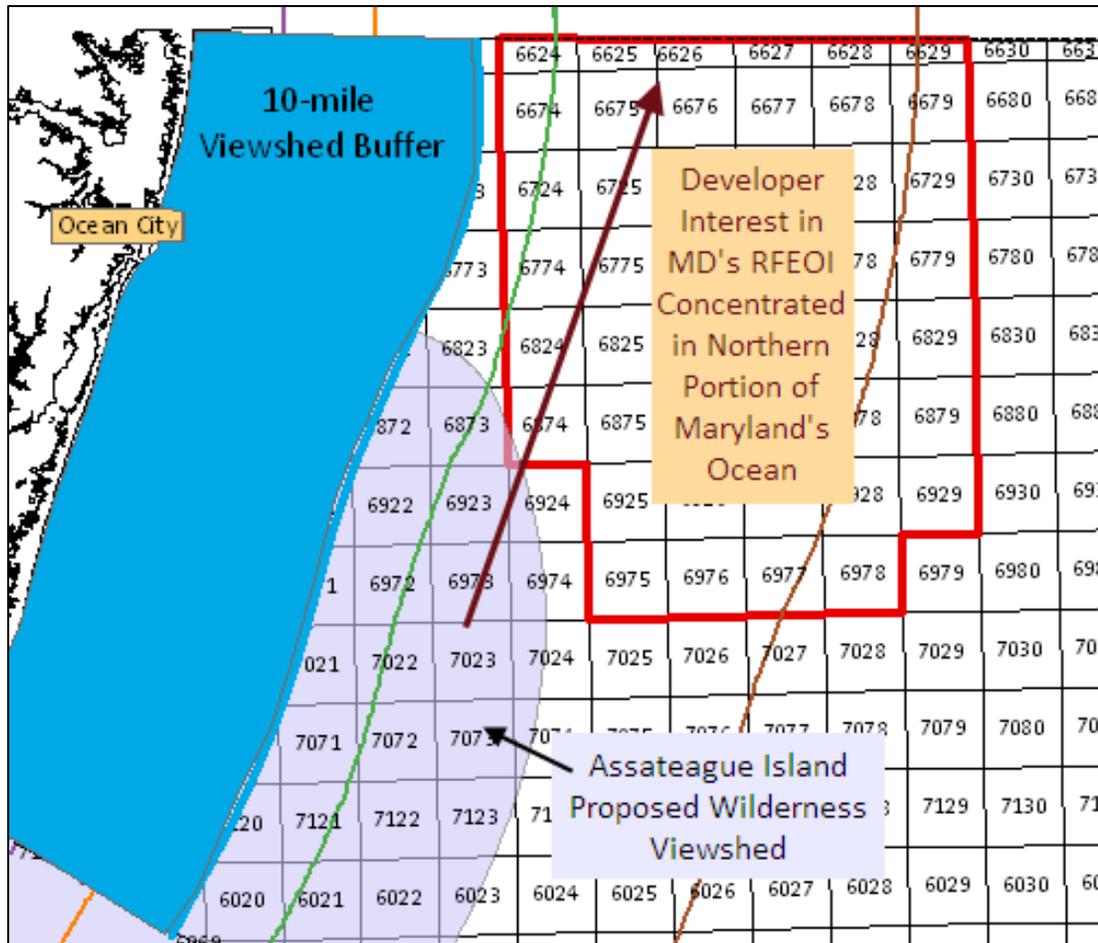
Stakeholder Outreach Results

- Site-specific ocean use and natural resource data
- Identification of knowledge gaps and research needs
- Better understanding of the breadth of ocean uses and potential areas of conflict
- Early discussions with stakeholder groups to establish a transparent process that will help build trust

These efforts have informed Maryland's comments about the draft RFI planning area's overlap with human use and natural resources.

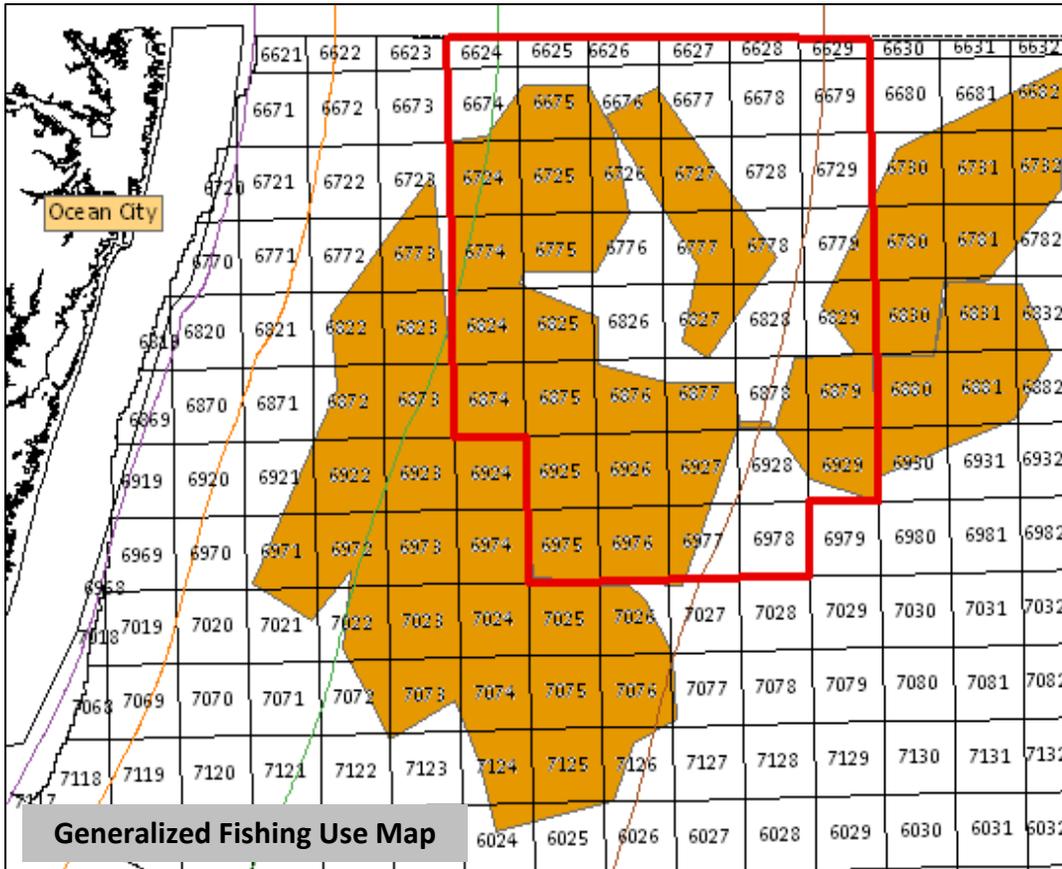
It has also informed recommendations on how conflicts can be reduced and/or resolved.

Developer Interest & Viewsheds



Feedback Received
Relationship of Maryland offshore wind energy Task Force draft RFI planning area with:

- Developer interest received during Maryland's RFEOI
- Town of Ocean City and Proposed Wilderness Area at Assateague Island NS viewshed concerns



Feedback Received

- There are a number of critically-important commercial-, recreational- or sport-fishing grounds that have been recorded in all or portions of the **orange** areas
- In some of these areas, fishermen may haul 40–80% of their annual catch

- It is estimated that more than 85% of conflicts with commercial fishing activities are located in areas south of row 6774

Unique Benthic Habitats & Coldwater Corals



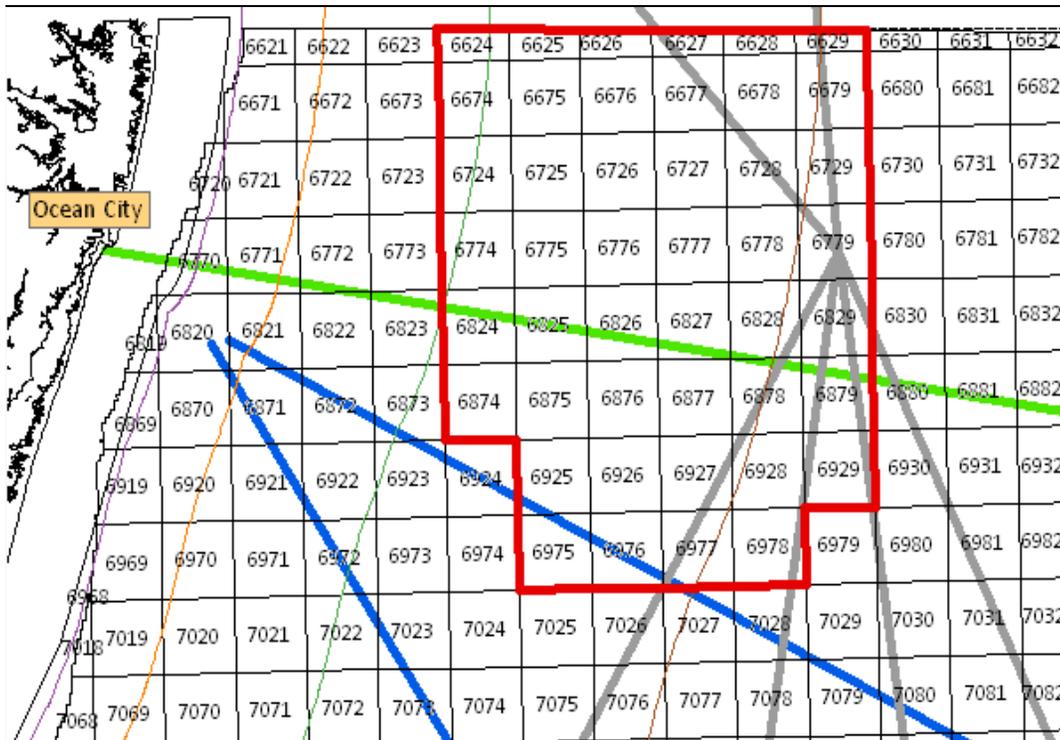
Feedback Received

- A number of benthic habitat types located off Maryland's Atlantic coast are sensitive to any type of bottom disturbance, including offshore energy development.

- Of specific importance are several documented communities of **slow-growing coldwater corals**

- Other **areas** may also have these corals and the entire area may have other unique benthic communities

Boating Corridors & the Transportation Separation Scheme

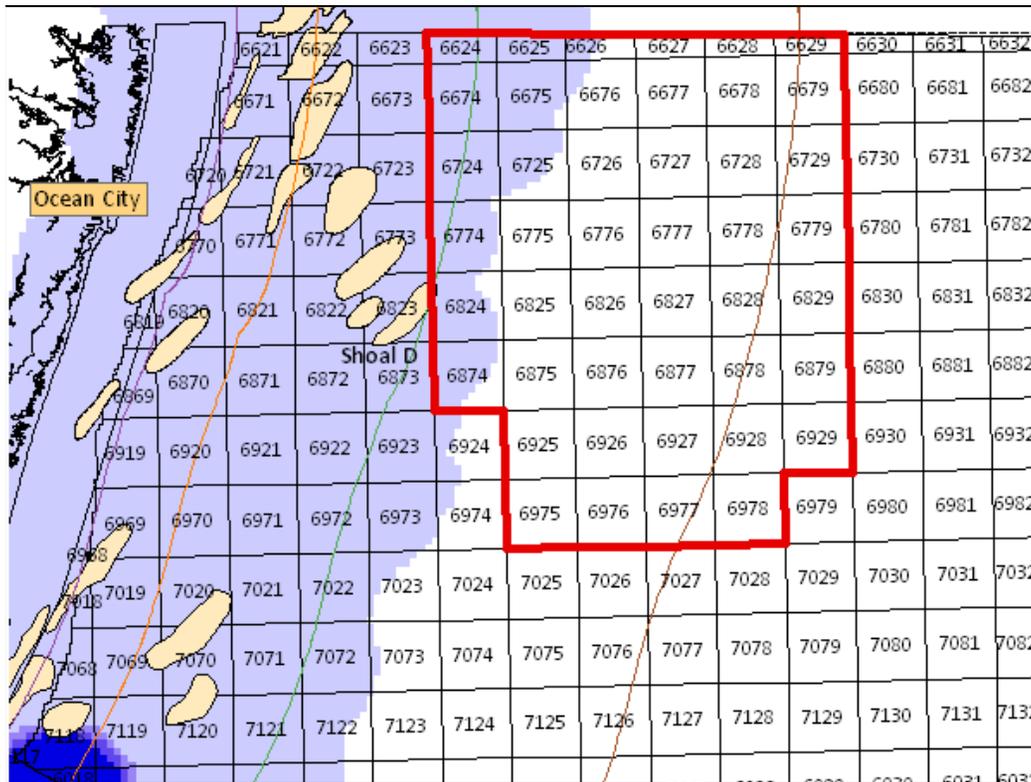


Feedback Received

- A boating corridor traversed annually during the multi-million dollar White Marlin Open and other summer fishing **tournaments**. These tournaments are of great importance to the local economy and recreational- and sport-fishing communities.

- Boating corridors in the south are used by various **fishing communities** to reach diverse fishing grounds.

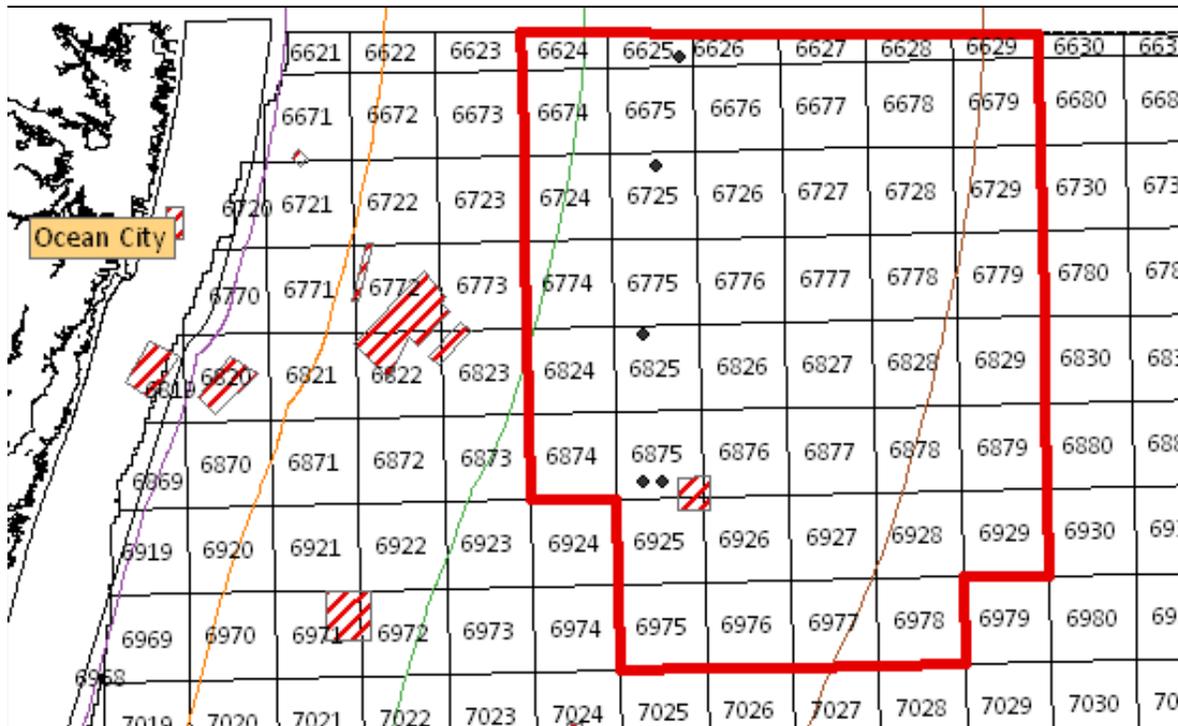
Offshore Birds and Shoals



Feedback Received

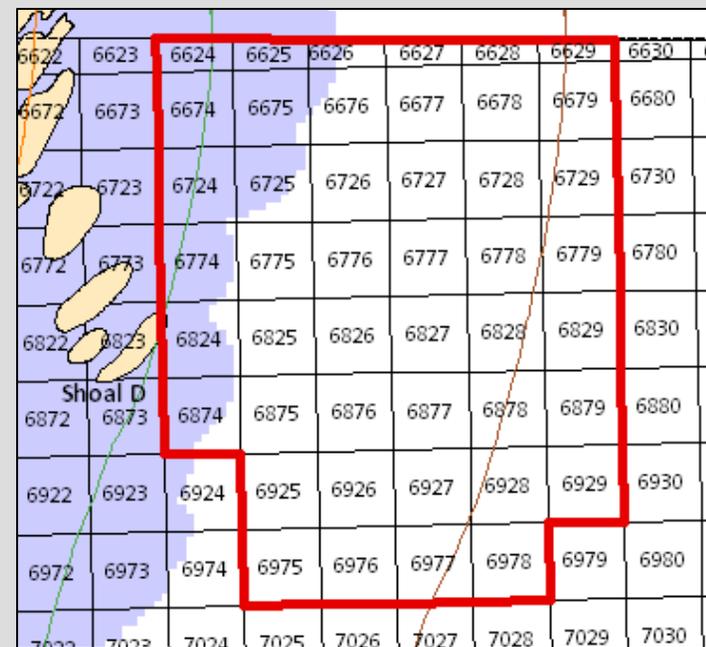
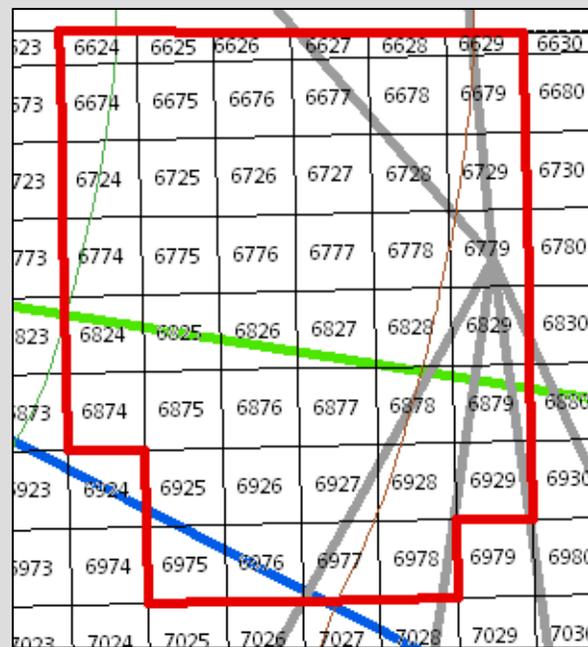
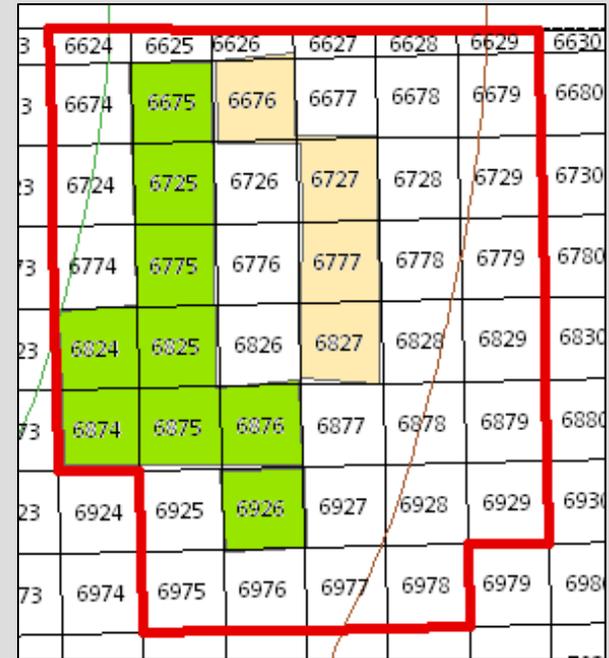
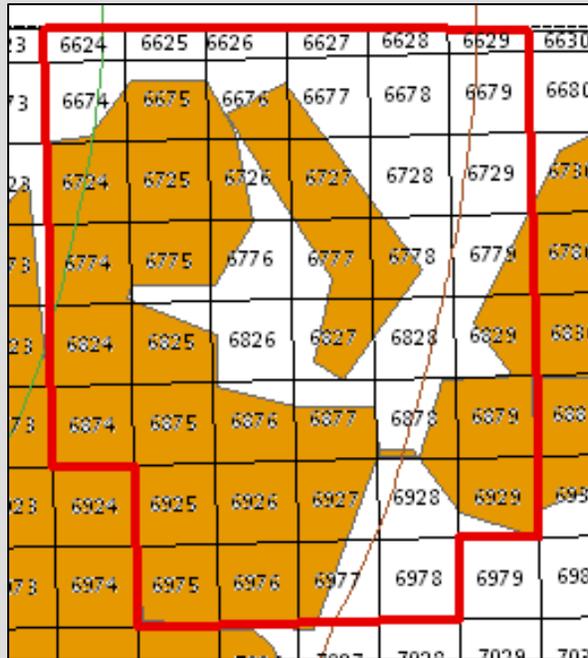
- Areas along the western boundary of the draft RFI planning area overlap with known **offshore bird density** areas
- **Shoals** B & D may concentrate bird feeding and migrating activities
- The Fenwick **shoal** area at the MD-DE border is at increased risk to contain unexploded ordinance

Artificial Reefs and Shipwrecks



Feedback Received

- The **Great Eastern Reef** is present in the SW region of the draft RFI area
- Several documented shipwrecks are present in the draft RFI area – black dots .



RFI Planning Area Recommendation

- **Recommending that OCS blocks 6824, 6874, 6875, 6925, 6975 and 6976 be removed from consideration as part of the final RFI planning area due to a large number of co-occurring use and resource conflicts.**
- In these blocks, the total area of multiple use conflict and/or resource overlap ranges from approximately 55% to more than 90%



Bird concentration areas
 Tournament and boating corridors
 Recreational- and sport-fishing areas
 Shipwrecks

Critically-important commercial fishing grounds
 Artificial reefs
 Natural corals
 Other unique benthic habitats

Other Feedback Received

- Marine mammals and sea turtles:
 - Generally known to be widespread
 - Large whale species migrate along the East Coast
 - Smaller, toothed whales are found more inshore
 - Little known about migration routes and feeding areas
- Offshore bat migration
 - Bats migrate between 0–13 miles from shore in the Mid-Atlantic region
 - While bats have not been recorded in the draft RFI area to date, additional study is planned for 2010-2011.
- Horseshoe crabs and biomedical manufacturing
 - Trawlers catch horseshoe crabs along the western boundary for use in the biomedical manufacturing industry



Best Management, Navigational Safety and Micro-Siting Recommendations

- **Recommending that best management, navigational safety and micro-siting practices be implemented in any final RFI area.**

Such practices are requested in order to limit impacts to unique benthic and natural coral communities; ensure safe boating and fishing access to artificial and natural reefs, existing fishing grounds, and boating corridors; and limit impacts to known bird concentration areas as well as other ocean resources where known information gaps exist.



- **Requesting support to address known research and data gaps.**

These include marine mammal and sea turtle migration pathways, impacts of turbines on prey and fish communities, noise and vibration impacts to living resources, resource values of Shoal D, detailed benthic and natural coral community surveys, and the presence of unexploded ordinance near Fenwick Shoal and the surrounding area.



For more information:
<http://dnr.maryland.gov/ccp/>



Catherine McCall
Chesapeake & Coastal
Program, DNR

410.260.8737

cmccall@dnr.state.md.us

