

**From:** Bowman, Randal  
**To:** [Downey Magallanes](#)  
**Subject:** Fwd: Information needed on NE Seamounts  
**Date:** Monday, June 12, 2017 5:02:26 PM  
**Attachments:** [NortheastCanyonsandSeamountsMNM\\_600.pdf](#)  
[NCSMNM Briefing 6-9-17.docx](#)

---

Hopefully everything comes through this time

----- Forwarded message -----

**From:** **Rupert, Jeff** <[jeff\\_rupert@fws.gov](mailto:jeff_rupert@fws.gov)>  
**Date:** Fri, Jun 9, 2017 at 10:29 AM  
**Subject:** Re: Information needed on NE Seamounts  
**To:** "Bowman, Randal" <[randal\\_bowman@ios.doi.gov](mailto:randal_bowman@ios.doi.gov)>  
**Cc:** Betsy Hildebrandt <[betsy\\_hildebrandt@fws.gov](mailto:betsy_hildebrandt@fws.gov)>

Randy, Please see attachments. Let Betsy or me know if you need any additional information. Thanks--Jeff

On Tue, Jun 6, 2017 at 8:53 AM, Bowman, Randal <[randal\\_bowman@ios.doi.gov](mailto:randal_bowman@ios.doi.gov)> wrote:

This is both a "jump the gun" and early alert note - the Secretary is going to New England mid-month for several reasons, but one is to talk with various people - details unknown to me - about the NE Seamounts monument.

The Service will be, or perhaps have been (in which case this is not an early alert) requested to prepare a briefing memo, due Monday, on this. However, Downey needs background information by Friday. If you could get it to me by 3 pm Friday that would give me time to go over it before sending it on to her.

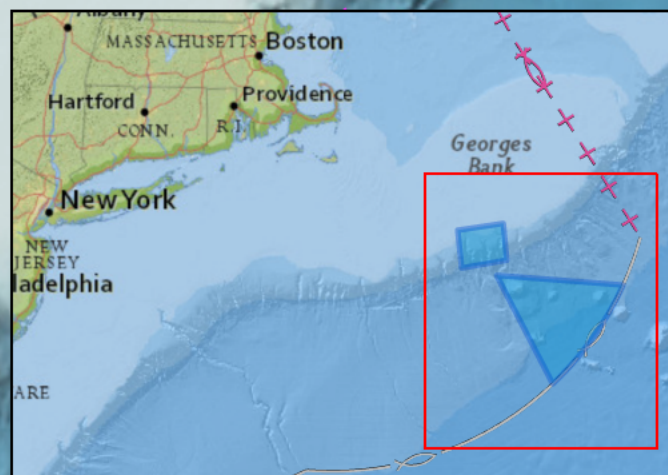
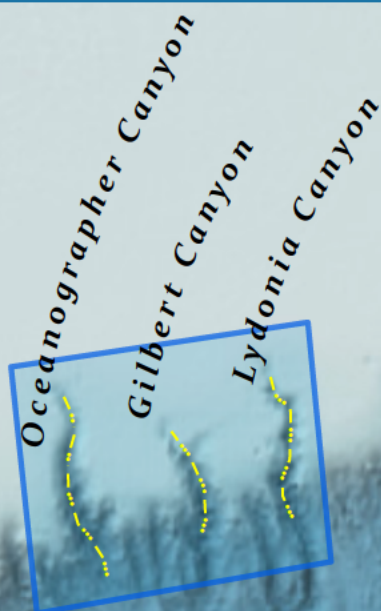
Unlike the memo, the background information does not need to be in any particular format, can be more detailed than what would go in a briefing paper, and could be multiple attachments of existing material to an email, for example. This should include anything that has been provided to NOAA, as well as information on staffing levels, budget, any schedule for developing the management plan and anything else on hand or that you or the monument staff think she should be aware of as the Secretary's lead staff for the issue.

The Proclamation appears to go into monument resources in considerable detail, but if the staff has anything else on hand, they could include it.

--

Jeff Rupert  
Chief, Division of Natural Resources  
703-358-2660

# Northeast Canyons and Seamounts Marine National Monument



## Legend

- Seamounts
- Canyons
- Northeast Canyons and Seamounts Marine National Monument
- Exclusive Economic Zone
- International Maritime Boundary

Canyon Unit	
Latitude	Longitude
40.122	-68.212
40.527	-68.268
40.600	-67.628
40.207	-67.578

Seamount Unit	
Latitude	Longitude
38.865*	-66.931
39.939	-65.943
40.044	-67.722

\*The U.S. EEZ limit forms the eastern boundary

Credit: NOAA

DOI-2018-06 00201

## **INFORMATION/BRIEFING MEMORANDUM FOR THE SECRETARY**

DATE: June 9, 2017

SUBJECT: Northeast Canyons and Seamounts Marine National Monument

### **BACKGROUND**

The Northeast Canyons and Seamounts Marine National Monument (NCSMNM) was created on September 15, 2016 through the Antiquities Act of 1906. This is the first Marine National Monument to be designated in the Atlantic Ocean. The Monument is located 130 miles southeast of Cape Cod and includes a total area of 4,913 square miles which is divided into two separate units to protect two distinct geological features. Three submarine canyons (Oceanographer, Gilbert, and Lydonia) make up the canyons area (941 square miles) which are located at the edge of the continental shelf. Each of the canyons are approximately 6500-7000 feet deep and up to 20-30 miles in length. The seamounts unit is located farther offshore and consists of four undersea mountains or seamounts (Bear Mytilus, Physalia, and Retriever) and encompass an area of 3,972 square miles. These seamounts are extinct volcanos that rise as high as 7,700 feet above the ocean floor. The outer boundary of the seamounts unit is the 200 nautical mile limit of the Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ).

### **Protected Ecosystem**

The undersea features of the canyons and seamounts create nutrient rich upwellings that support significant and diverse concentrations of marine life from the ocean floor to the sea surface. Based on years of deep-sea research expeditions led by the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA), in partnership with numerous academic and educational institutions, they have documented the unique ecological significance of the area included within the boundaries of the NCSMNM.

Serving as a biological hotspot, the Monument area contains an incredible diversity of life including numerous species that are new to science. Deep-sea explorations in the canyons and seamounts have discovered 54 species of coral, some of which are hundreds of years old and 6-7 feet tall, prompting scientists to call the unique coral formations “coral forests”. The upwelling of nutrients carried by currents fuel eruptions of plankton that draw large schools of small fish that become prey for large concentrations of sharks, tuna, marine mammals, and seabirds. Scientists who have spent their careers exploring the Atlantic Ocean speak to the exemplary marine resources of the Monument by calling it the “Serengeti of the Sea” and the “Ocean Oasis”.

### **Endangered Species**

The Marine Monument serves as an important feeding area for several endangered species. Endangered leatherback and threatened loggerhead sea turtles are drawn to the seamounts to feed on jellyfish, crustaceans and invertebrates. The canyons provide important feeding habitat for endangered sperm whales and critically endangered right whales. Two additional species of endangered whales, fin and sei whales, have been observed feeding in the monument waters.

## **Allowed Activities**

Activities allowed include: recreational fishing, sailing, bird and marine mammal watching, research and scientific exploration, educational activities that support the monument, anchoring of scientific instruments, and construction and maintenance of submarine cables.

## **Commercial Fishing**

Commercial fishing for red crab and American lobster continues for a period of not more than 7 years. All other commercial fishing was closed 60 days after the monuments creation.

## **Other Prohibited Activities**

Prohibited activities include : exploring, developing, or producing oil and gas, using poisons, electrical charges or explosives to harvest monument resources, introducing or releasing introduced species, removing or disturbing any living or non-living resource except as provided for in the regulated activities, and drilling into, anchoring, dredging or otherwise altering the submerged lands.

## **Enforcement**

Enforcement to date has been restricted to educational outreach through a NOAA website and an educational flyer. Future enforcement will be carried out through agreement with the U.S. Coast Guard. Vessel monitoring systems carried on vessels fishing in Federal waters will aid in monitoring the use of the Monument.

## **Management**

The Secretaries of Commerce and Interior share management responsibility for the monument. NOAA has responsibilities for management of activities and species that fall under the Magnusson-Stevens Fishery Management Act, the Endangered Species Act (for species regulated by NOAA), the Marine Mammal Protection Act, and other applicable legal authorities of the Department of Commerce. The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) has responsibility for management of activities and species under it's legal authorities including the National Wildlife Refuge System Administration Act, the Refuge Recreation Act, the Endangered Species Act, Public Law 98-532 and Executive Order 6166.

The Proclamation tasks the USFWS and NOAA with preparing a joint management plan within 3 years. Senior Leadership of both agencies have met twice over the last six months to define each agencies roles and responsibilities and to discuss management planning including development of a work plan, public scoping options, a draft Action Plan, monument vision and goals, and interim compatibility review and permitting processes.

Planning for the Marine Monument has ceased while the monument review process takes place.

## **Staffing and Funding**

The USFWS appointed Brian Benedict, currently the Refuge Manager at Maine Coastal Islands National Wildlife Refuge, as Interim Superintendent for the Marine Monument. Senior Leadership in Refuges, External Affairs and Planning staff all have contributed time to the effort. Dedicated funds for marine

monument management were provided to the Northeast Region of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, National Wildlife Refuge System in FY17 in the amount of \$180,000. These funds were used to support staff salaries, travel, and planning efforts.

## Information Provided to NOAA for Monument Review

Based on the questions provided within the monument review U.S. Fish and Wildlife had no relevant information to add to NOAA's response.

## ATTACHMENTS

# Northeast Canyons and Seamounts Marine National Monument Map

PREPARED BY: Brian Benedict, Interim Superintendent, Northeast Canyons and Seamounts  
Marine National Monument Date: June 9, 2017