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Service Change Notice 11-40  
National Weather Service Headquarters Washington DC  
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From: Therese Z. Pierce  
Chief, Marine and Coastal Services Branch

Subject: Changes in Offshore Waters Marine Zones  
For the Caribbean and Southwest North Atlantic  
And the Gulf of Mexico Effective April 3, 2012

Effective Tuesday April 3, 2012 at 200 pm Eastern Daylight Time (EDT) or 1800 Coordinated Universal Time (UTC), the Tropical Analysis and Forecast Branch (TAFB) of the National Hurricane Center will reconfigure its marine zones for the offshore waters in the Caribbean and Southwest North Atlantic and the Gulf of Mexico.

Currently there are five (5) marine zones covering the Caribbean and Southwest North Atlantic and four (4) marine zones covering the Gulf of Mexico. These zones will be reconfigured into twenty-four (24) marine zones to cover the Caribbean and Southwest North Atlantic and eight (8) zones to cover the Gulf of Mexico. Marine observations, local effects, and substantial customer feedback all indicate that the current configuration of marine zones does not adequately address the local effects and does not provide enough detail for the marine community. This reconfiguration will serve to improve the precision of marine warnings, forecasts, and other services by allowing forecasters to be more area specific.

Table 1 lists the current marine zones and corresponding UGCs for which TAFB issues forecasts and warnings.

Table 2 lists the marine zones and corresponding Universal Geographic Codes (UGC) for which TAFB will issue forecasts and warnings effective April 3, 2012.

Table 3 lists all of the products issued by TAFB that will be affected by the marine zone changes.

Table 1. Current marine zones and corresponding UGCs which TAFB issues forecasts and warnings:

| Current Marine Zone Name | Current UGC |
|--------------------------|-------------|
|--------------------------|-------------|

|  |        |
|--|--------|
| Synopsis for the SW N Atlc including the Bahamas                                       | AMZ088 |
| SW N Atlantic S of 31N W of 65W including Bahamas                                      | AMZ080 |
| Synopsis for the Caribbean Sea and Tropical N Atlc from 07N to 22N between 55W and 65W | AMZ089 |
| NW Caribbean N of 15N W of 75W   | AMZ082 |
| SW Caribbean S of 15N W of 75W   | AMZ084 |
| Caribbean E of 75W to the Windward and Leeward Islands                                 | AMZ086 |
| Tropical N Atlantic from 07N to 22N between 55W and 65W                                | AMZ087 |

|  |        |
|--|--------|
| Synopsis for the Gulf of Mexico  | GMZ089 |
| NW Gulf N of 25N W of 90W including the Flower Garden Banks Marine Sanctuary | GMZ080 |
| SW Gulf S of 25N W of 90W  | GMZ082 |
| Middle Gulf between 85W and 90W  | GMZ084 |
| E Gulf between 81W and 85W   | GMZ086 |

Table 2. Marine zones and corresponding UGCs for which TAFB will issue forecasts and warnings effective April 3, 2012:

| New Marine Zone Name | NEW UGC |
|----------------------|---------|
|----------------------|---------|

|  |        |
|--|--------|
| Synopsis for Caribbean Sea and Tropical N Atlantic from 07N to 22N between 55W and 65W | AMZ001 |
| Caribbean N of 18N W of 85W including Yucatan Basin                                    | AMZ011 |
| Caribbean N of 18N between 76W and 85W including Cayman Basin                          | AMZ013 |
| Caribbean approaches to the Windward Passage   | AMZ015 |
| Gulf of Honduras   | AMZ017 |
| Caribbean from 15N to 18N between 80W and 85W  | AMZ019 |
| Caribbean from 15N to 18N between 72W and 80W  | AMZ021 |
| Caribbean N of 15N between 64W and 72W   | AMZ023 |
| Offshore Waters Leeward Islands  | AMZ025 |
| Tropical N Atlantic from 15N to 19N between 55W and 60W                                | AMZ027 |
| W Central Caribbean from 11N to 15N W of 80W   | AMZ029 |
| Caribbean from 11N to 15N between 72W and 80W including Colombia Basin                 | AMZ031 |
| Caribbean S of 15N between 64W and 72W including Venezuela Basin                       | AMZ033 |
| Offshore Waters Windward Islands including Trinidad and Tobago                         | AMZ035 |
| Tropical N Atlantic from 07N to 15N between 55W and 60W                                | AMZ037 |

Southwest Caribbean S of 11N including Approaches to the Panama Canal AMZ039

Synopsis for the SW N Atlantic including the Bahamas AMZ101

Atlantic from 27N to 31N W of 77W AMZ111

Atlantic from 27N to 31N between 70W and 77W AMZ113

Atlantic from 27N to 31N between 65W and 70W AMZ115

Bahamas including Cay Sal Bank AMZ117

Atlantic from 22N to 27N E of Bahamas to 70W AMZ119

Atlantic from 22N to 27N between 65W and 70W AMZ121

Atlantic S of 22N W of 70W including Approaches to the Windward Passage AMZ123

Atlantic S of 22N between 65W and 70W including Puerto Rico Trench AMZ125

Atlantic from 19N to 22N between 55W and 65W AMZ127

Synopsis for the Gulf of Mexico GMZ001

NW Gulf including Stetson Bank GMZ011

N Central Gulf including Flower Garden Banks Marine Sanctuary GMZ013

NE Gulf N of 25N E of 87W GMZ015

W Central Gulf from 22N to 26N W of 94W GMZ017

Central Gulf from 22N to 26N between 87W and 94W GMZ019

Gulf from 22N to 25N E of 87W including Straits of Florida GMZ021

SW Gulf S of 22N W of 94W GMZ023

E Bay of Campeche including Campeche Bank GMZ025

To view graphical images of the current marine zones and the proposed marine zones for which TAFB will issue forecasts and warnings effective April 3, 2012 go to the following web site:

[http://www.nhc.noaa.gov/scn/marine/2011/marine\\_zones/examples.html](http://www.nhc.noaa.gov/scn/marine/2011/marine_zones/examples.html)

TABLE 3. TAFB products affected by the marine zone changes effective April 3, 2012:

| Product Name                | WMO Heading | AWIPS ID |
|-----------------------------|-------------|----------|
| Offshore Waters Forecast    | FZNT23 KNHC | OFFNT3   |
| Offshore Waters Forecast    | FZNT24 KNHC | OFFNT4   |
| Miami NAVTEX Forecast       | FZNT25 KNHC | OFFN04   |
| San Juan NAVTEX Forecast    | FZNT26 KNHC | OFFN05   |
| New Orleans NAVTEX Forecast | FZNT27 KNHC | OFFN06   |

Customers must reprogram affected hardware and software to continue correctly processing the products listed in Table 3.

Also customers using a graphical representation of these zones must download an updated marine zone map shapefile to correctly depict the marine forecast areas for the Caribbean and southwest

North Atlantic and the Gulf of Mexico offshore waters.

An updated marine zone map shapefile containing the new zones is available for download from the following website:

[www.nws.noaa.gov/geodata/catalog/wsom/html/marinezones.htm](http://www.nws.noaa.gov/geodata/catalog/wsom/html/marinezones.htm)

The NAVTEX forecasts will be reconfigured to limit coverage to within 200 nm of the coasts assigned to each transmitter. Specifically, the forecast area for the New Orleans transmitter will cover the northern Gulf of Mexico from the Suwanee River, FL to the mouth of the Rio Grande, out 200 nm. The Miami NAVTEX forecast area will cover the waters around the peninsula of Florida from Suwanee River on the Gulf Coast, to Flagler Beach on the Atlantic Coast, out 200 nm. The San Juan forecast area will cover the waters within 200 nm of the San Juan transmitter, to include the Mona Passage and part of the Anegada Passage. This reconfiguration will better conform to the range of the transmitters, provide more detailed information along the immediate coast, and better meet broadcast time constraints. For more information, including maps of the new NAVTEX areas, please refer the following website:

<http://www.nhc.noaa.gov/experimental/offshores/navtex.php>

In order to better meet the time constraints for voice broadcast via the U.S. Coast Guard, two new products will be made available as listed in Table 4. These products will combine forecasts for the 32 zones in such a way that they will be similar to the Offshore Waters Forecasts before reconfiguration.

TABLE 4. Future Product Headers for USCG Voice Broadcasts:

| Product Name  | WMO Heading | AWIPS ID  |
|---|-------------|-----------|
| Broadcast Text for the Caribbean and Southwest North Atlantic | FZNT31 KNHC | MIAOFFN20 |
| Broadcast Text for the Gulf Of Mexico                         | FZNT32 KNHC | MIAOFFN21 |

If you have any questions or comments about this reconfiguration of TAFB offshore waters marine zones please contact:

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National Weather Service Change notices are posted at:  
<http://www.weather.gov/os/notif.htm>

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