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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
Universal Geographic Codes (UGCs) for which TAFB issues
forecasts and warnings.

Table 2 lists the marine zones and corresponding UGCs 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 Atlantic including the Bahamas	AMZ088
SW N Atlantic S of 31N W of 65W including the Bahamas	AMZ080
Synopsis for the Caribbean Sea and Tropical N Atlantic 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

Table 2. Marine Zones and Corresponding UGCs for which TAFB will Issue Forecasts and Warnings Effective April 3, 2012 (continued):

New Marine Zone Name -----	NEW UGC -----
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 website:

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
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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

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 (USCG), 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 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 Service Change Notices are online at:

<https://www.weather.gov/notification/archive>

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