

## Quick Guide to Whale Alerts

WHALE ALERTs are short text and email messages that are intended for entities with marine operations that would benefit from real-time knowledge of known right whale sightings.

WHALE ALERTs represent sightings from trained or verified sources and are sent via email from Florida Fish & Wildlife Conservation Commission (FWC) or Clearwater Marine Aquarium Research Institute (CMARI). Recipients include: U.S. Navy (via FACSFACJAX), USCG, USACE, dredge operations, shipping entities, law enforcement and whale researchers/managers.

To subscribe to WHALE ALERTs: Email [nmfs.ser.rw.subscribe@noaa.gov](mailto:nmfs.ser.rw.subscribe@noaa.gov) with your name, affiliation, and reason for request.

The WHALE ALERT message you receive will look like the one below in the following format:

**Subject: RI WHALE ALERT 10NM NE "STJ" (FWS050)**

**Body: 07MAR2016, 14:16(L), 3031.7N 08112.9W, 1 ADULT, 1 CALF, HDG NW**

Subject Format: RI (for right whale) or HU (for humpback) "WHALE ALERT" followed by the distance in nautical miles and bearing from the whale sighting to the nearest sea buoy and a consecutively numbered identifier for each survey organization in parentheses

Body Format: Date, Time (local), Latitude and Longitude (in degrees decimal minutes to one decimal place), Number of animals, Direction of whale's travel

Identifier used in the subject of the email represent who reported the sighting

GWS- Georgia Whale Survey Aircraft (survey area Savannah to Cape Canaveral out to 30nm offshore)

FWS- Florida Whale Survey Aircraft (survey area Savannah to Cape Canaveral, out to 30nm offshore)

RSRCH- Small vessels conducting right whale research (Savannah to Cape Canaveral)

VSN- Volunteer sighting network (sightings confirmed by land-based volunteers)

OTHER- Any other sighting source

OTHER, RSRCH or VSN sources will be identified in the body of the message and include:

NAVY- sighting originates with a Navy asset (vessel or aircraft) and is relayed through FACSFACJAX to 877-WHALE-HELP hotline.

USCG- sighting originates with a USCG asset (vessel or aircraft) and is relayed through Sector Jacksonville or Sector Charleston to 877-WHALE-HELP hotline

DREDGE- sighting originates with a USACE dredge operation and is relayed directly to 877-WHALE-HELP hotline

PUBLIC- sighting originates with a member of the public and is relayed through USCG via Ch.16 (boaters) or directly to 877-WHALE-HELP hotline (land).

GDNR- sighting is from a Georgia Dept. of Natural Resources research vessel

FWC- sighting is from a Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission research vessel

NOAA- sighting is from a National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration research vessel

DUKE- sighting is from a Duke University research vessel

FAU- sighting is from a Florida Atlantic University research vessel

MRC- Marine Resources Council- nearshore sightings (all of coastal Florida)

MLD- Marineland Right Whale Project –nearshore sightings (St. Augustine to Ponce Inlet)

Example of OTHER sighting:

Subject: RI WHALE ALERT 7NM W "STM" (OTHER014)

Body: 25JAN2016, 15:06(L), 3042.5N 08122.3W, 1 ADULT, HDG W, USCG

**Please report all right whale sightings from your assets to 877-WHALE-HELP! The hotline is monitored, and someone will return your call to gather additional information.**

**Buoy Information**

STA: St. Augustine, FL

STJ: St. Johns, FL

STM: Fernandina, FL

STS: Brunswick, GA

T: Savannah, GA

C: Charleston, SC

WB: Georgetown, SC

Ponce Inlet: Ponce Inlet R2, FL

Canaveral R8: Port Canaveral, FL

Sebastian Inlet: Sebastian Inlet, FL

Ft. Pierce R2: Ft. Pierce Inlet, FL

St. Lucie R2: St. Lucie Inlet, FL

LW: Lake Worth Inlet, FL

PE: Port Everglades, FL

M: Miami, FL

KW: Key West, FL

CH: Chesapeake

CB: Chesapeake

OI: Oregon Inlet, NC

Cape Hatteras Light: Cape Hatteras Light, NC

OC: Ocracoke Inlet, NC

Cape Lookout Light: Cape Lookout Light, NC

NR: New River Inlet, NC

CF: Cape Fear River, NC

Charlotte Harbor R2: Charlotte Harbor, FL

NP: Sarasota, FL

T: Tampa, FL (helpful to input location information as this is the same buoy code for Savannah)

St. George Lighthouse: Apalachicola Bay, FL

M: Mobile, AL

GP: Gulf Port, MS

SW: Mississippi

Atchafalaya R2: Louisiana

GA: Galveston, TX

MSC: Corpus Cristi, TX

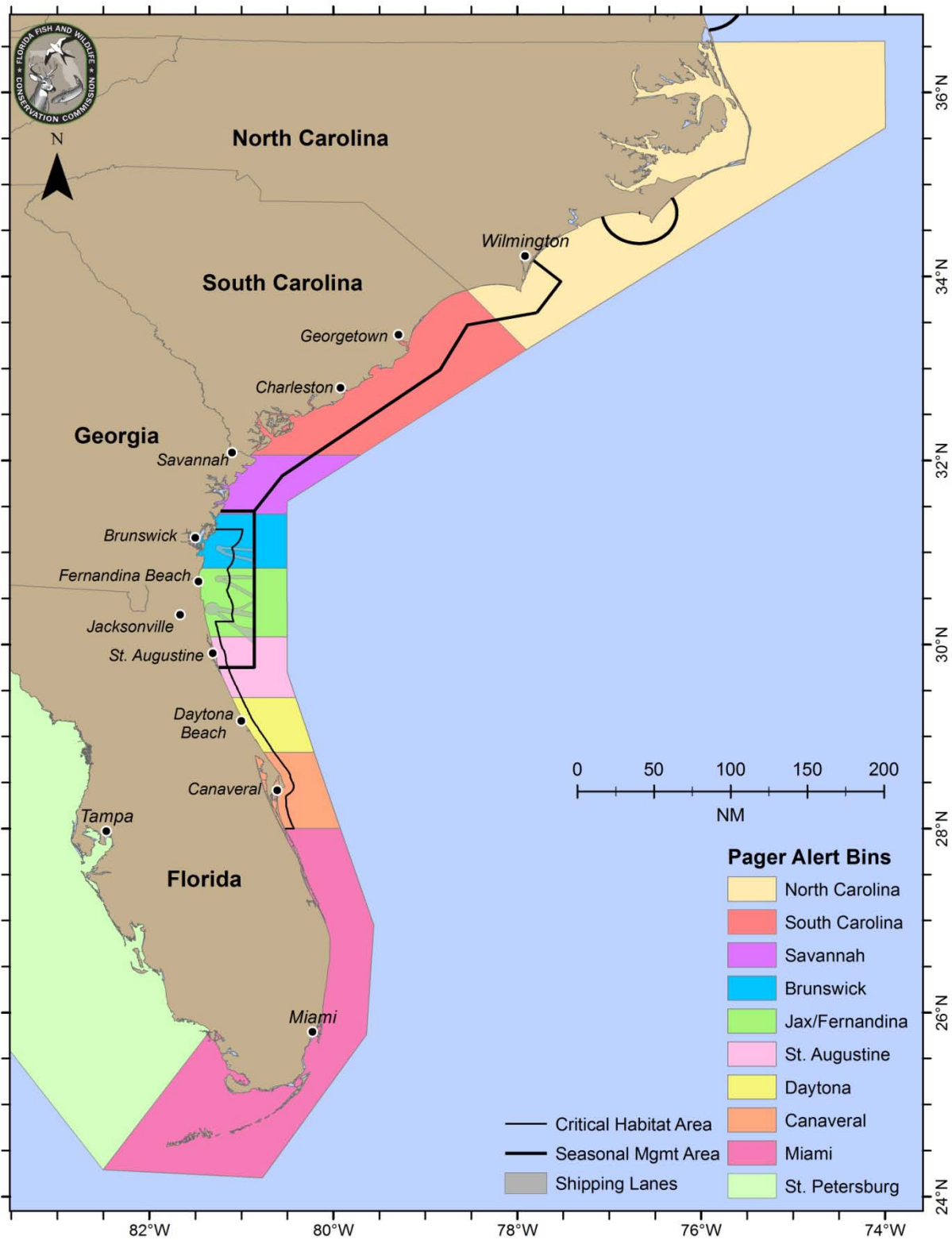
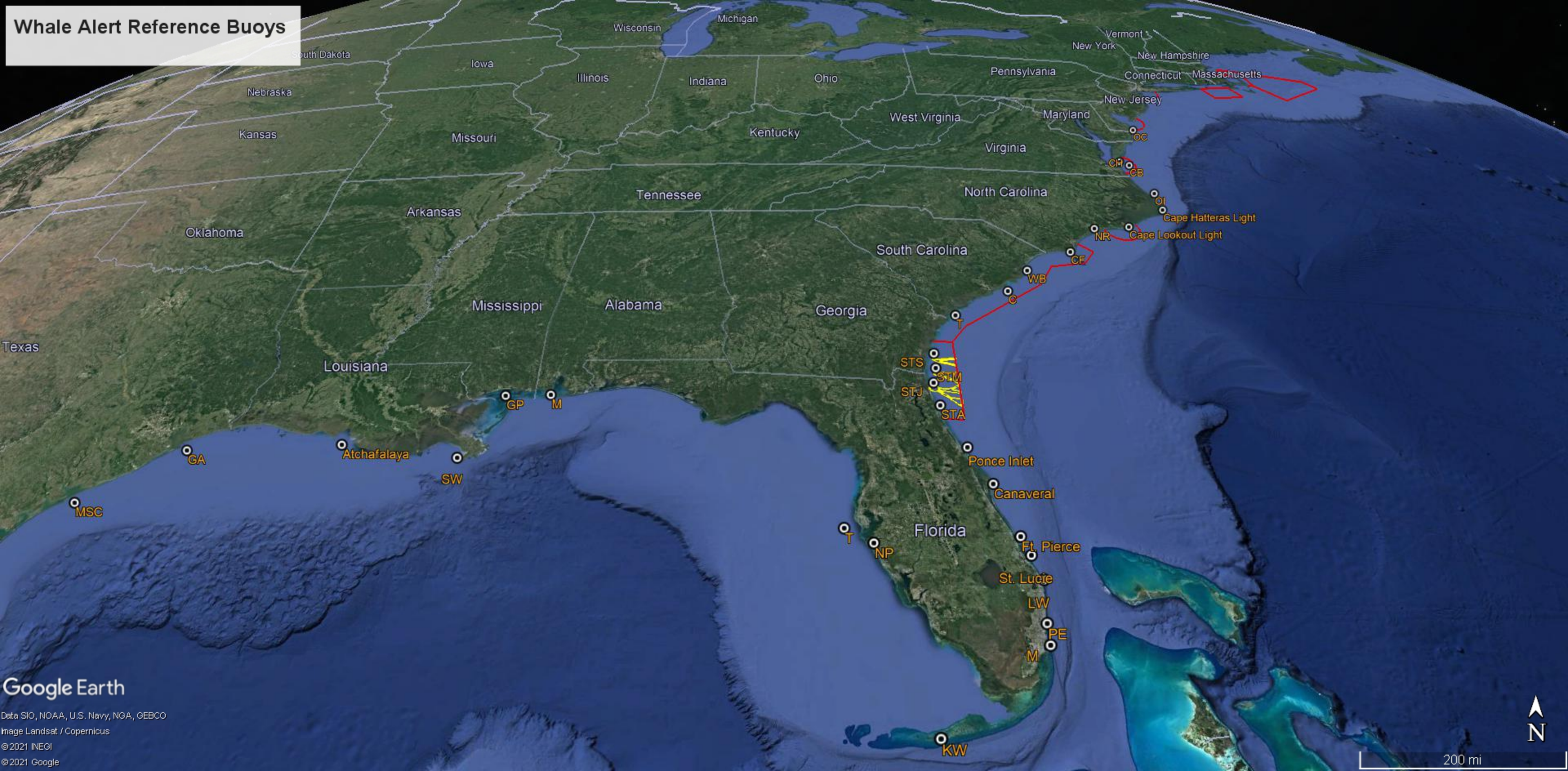


Figure 5. Revised Early Warning System pager alert bin boundaries in the SEUS.





# Whale Alert Reference Buoys

Google Earth

Data SIO, NOAA, U.S. Navy, NGA, GEBCO  
Image Landsat / Copernicus  
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200 mi

