



# Marine Mammal and Sea Turtles in the New York Bight and Mid Atlantic



Riverhead Foundation For  
**MARINE**  
RESEARCH &  
PRESERVATION



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Executive Director/Senior  
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# Why Monitor Whales in New York?

- Determine number of animal in the New York Bight
- Understand frequency and distribution
- Determine duration of stay and habitat use
- Understand how current threats relate to animals in the New York Bight
- Identify potential impacts on the population

# Why important?

■ June 18, 2001

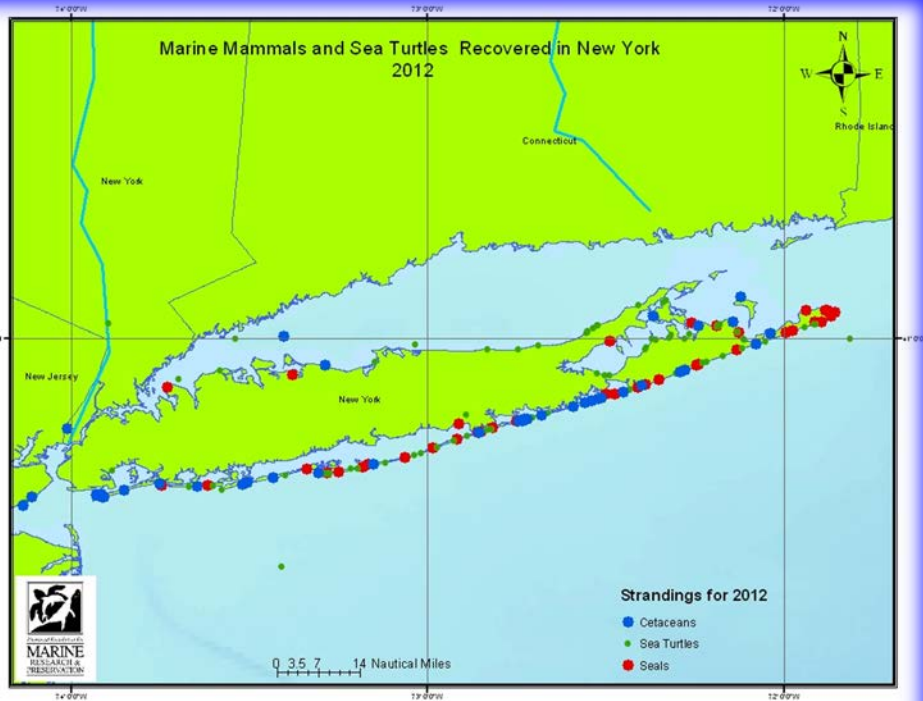


Photo taken from Cessna 172



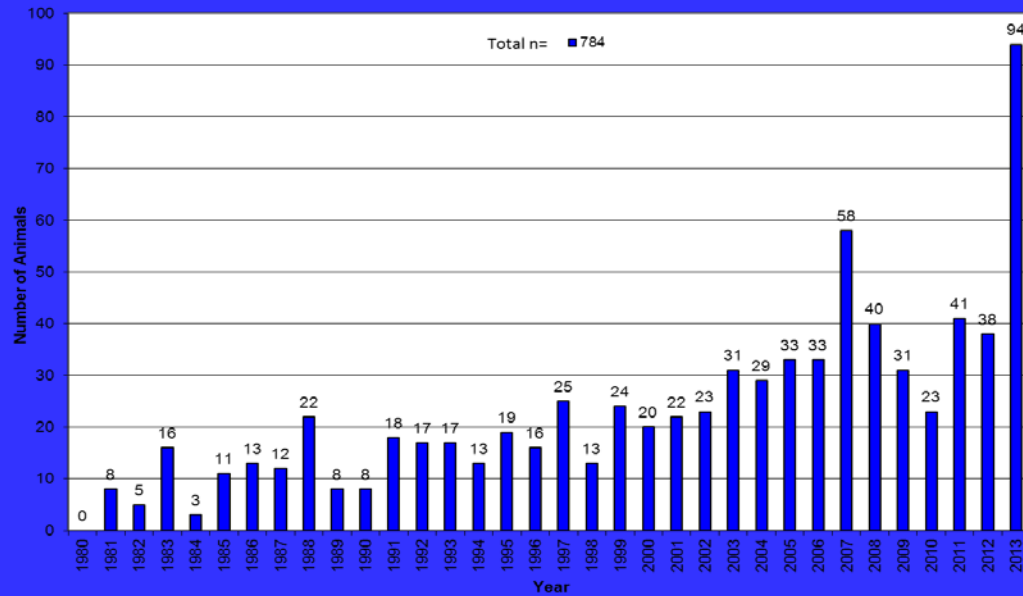


# Response & Recovery

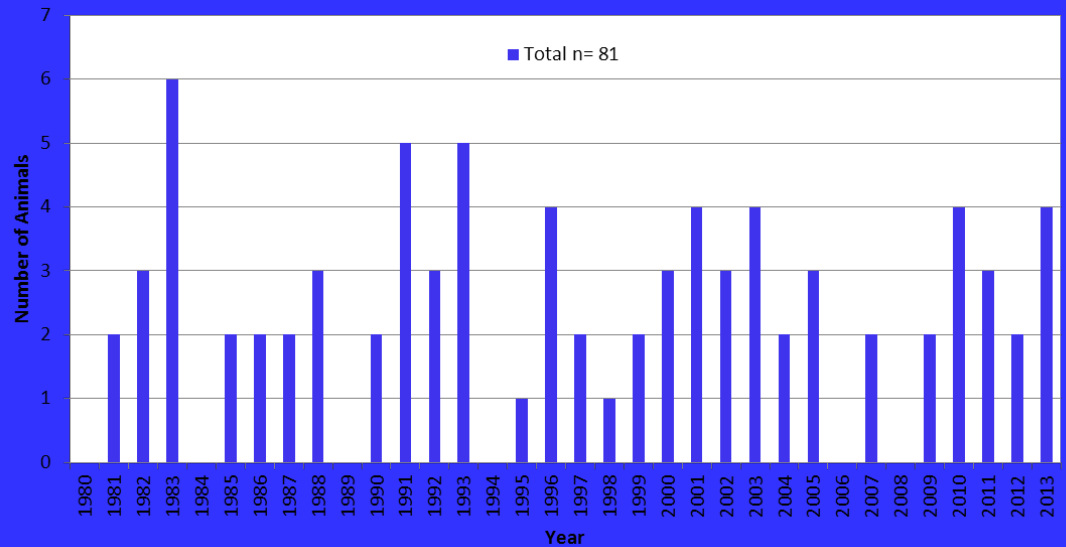




Cetacean Strandings 1980 through 2013



Large Whale Strandings  
1980 through 2013



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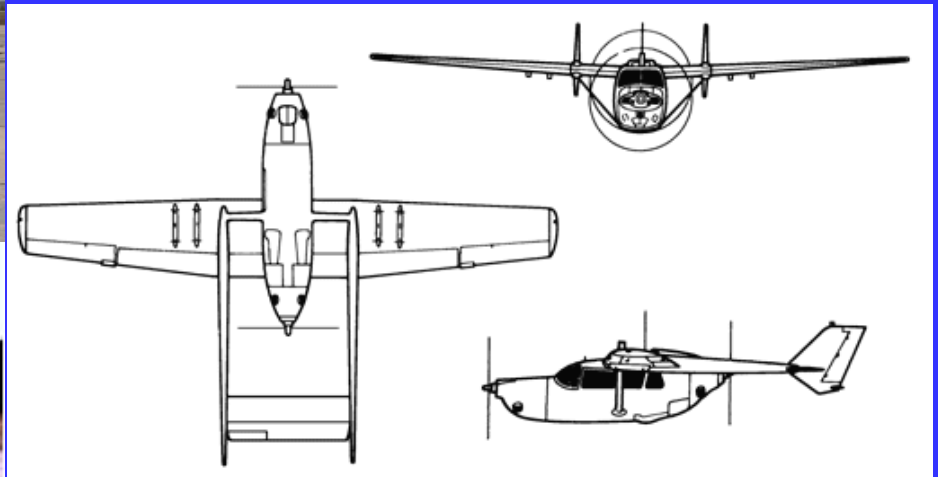
# Aerial survey platforms



Twin Otter



Cessna 172



Cessna Skymaster 337





# Summary of Marine Mammals Observed November 2004 through April 2005

- 249 individual sightings events
- 2,129 individual animals  
marine mammals
- 12 different species
  - Fin whale
  - Sei whale
  - Humpback whale
  - Right whale
  - Minke whale
  - Sperm whale
  - Risso's dolphin
  - Common dolphin
  - Bottlenose dolphin
  - Pilot whale
  - White sided dolphin
  - Harbor porpoise
  - Harbor seal



# Right whales sighted



- Snowball
- March 13, 2005
- location
- Re-sighted March 26, 2005, Cape Cod Bay

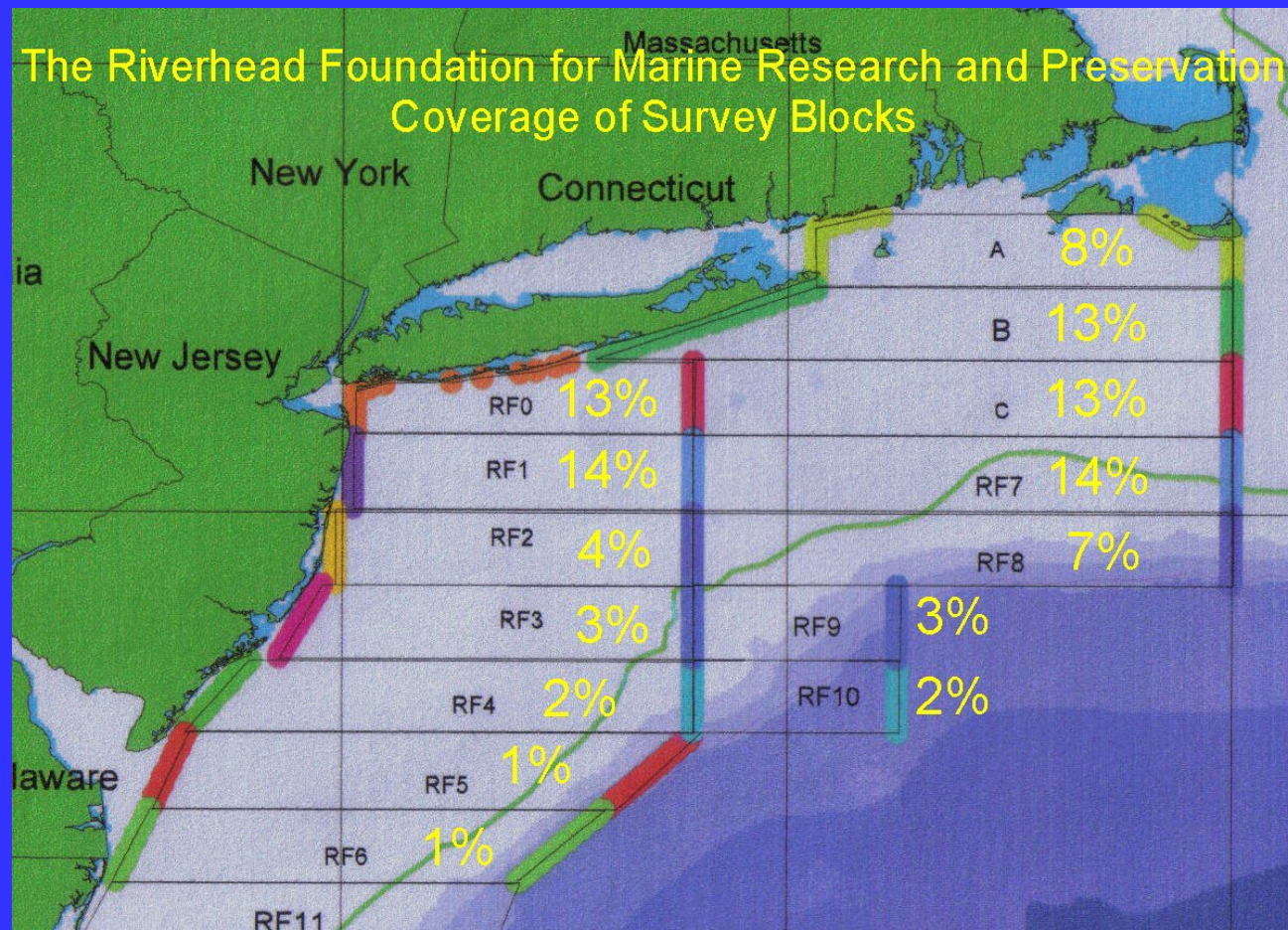
# Right whales sighted



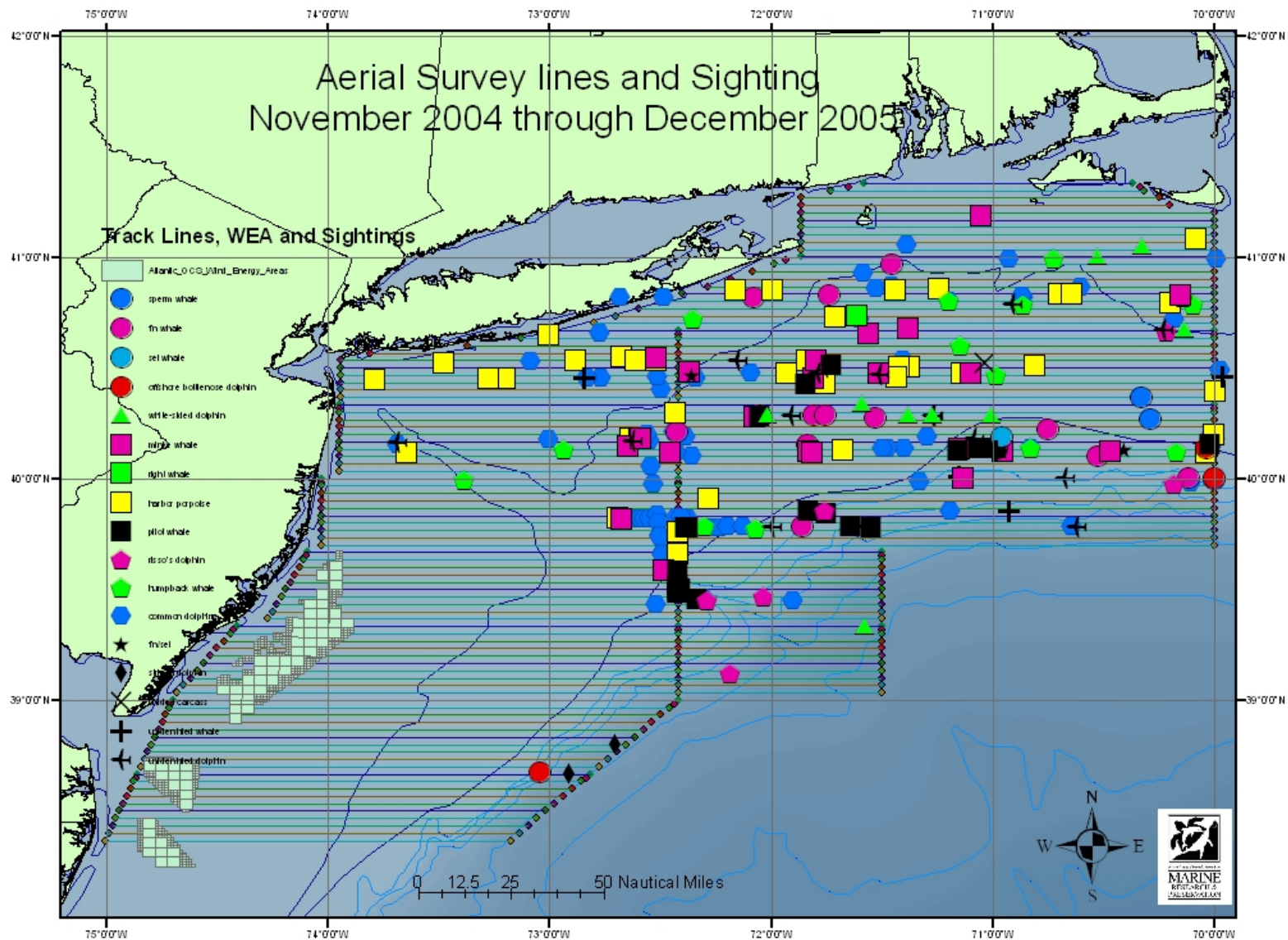
- Manta
- February 8, 2006
- Off East Hampton, NY
- Re-sighted March 28, 2006 , Cape Cod Bay



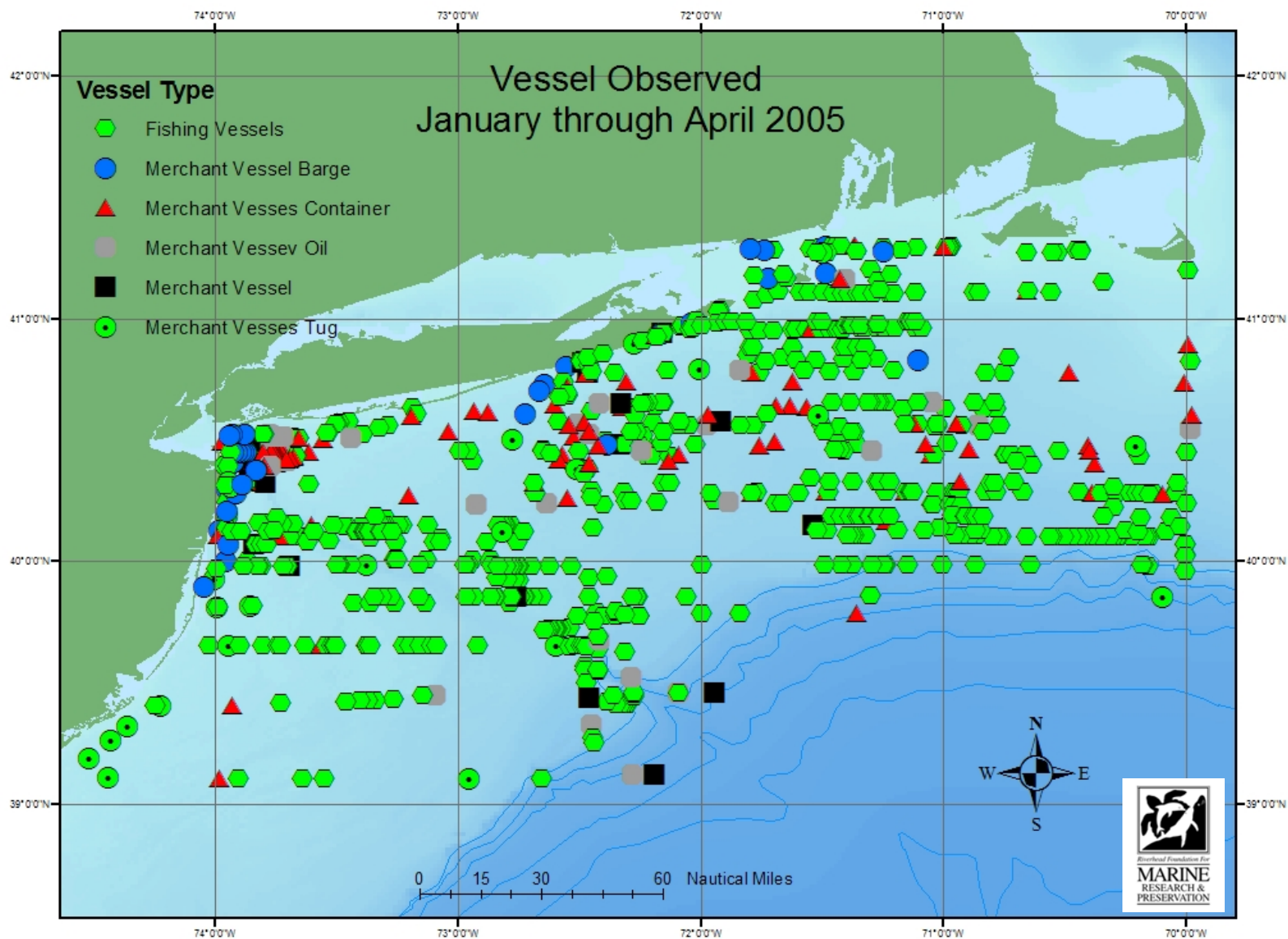
# Summary of survey effort



# Aerial Survey lines and Sighting November 2004 through December 2005





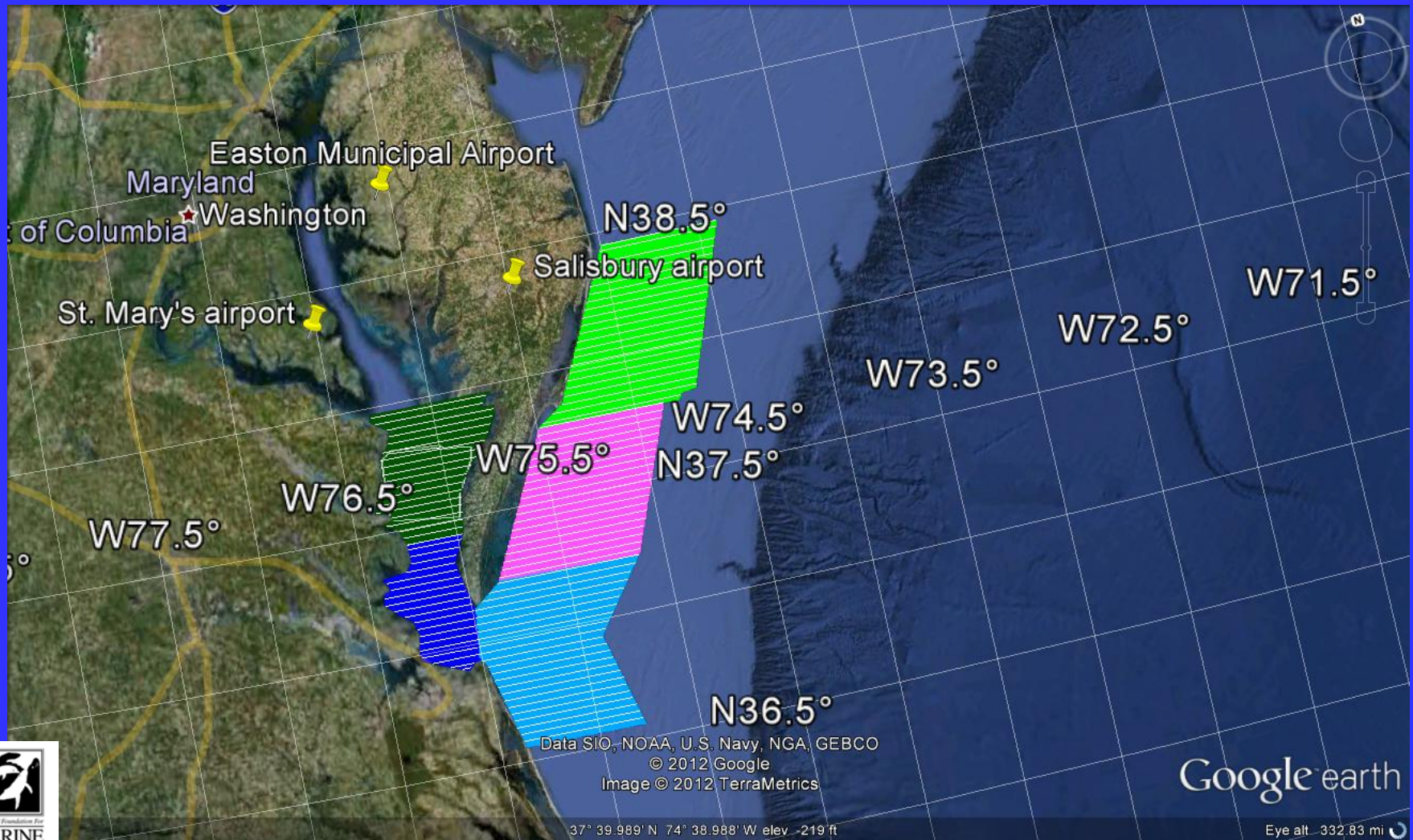


# Virginia Mid Atlantic Aerial Survey Program Objectives

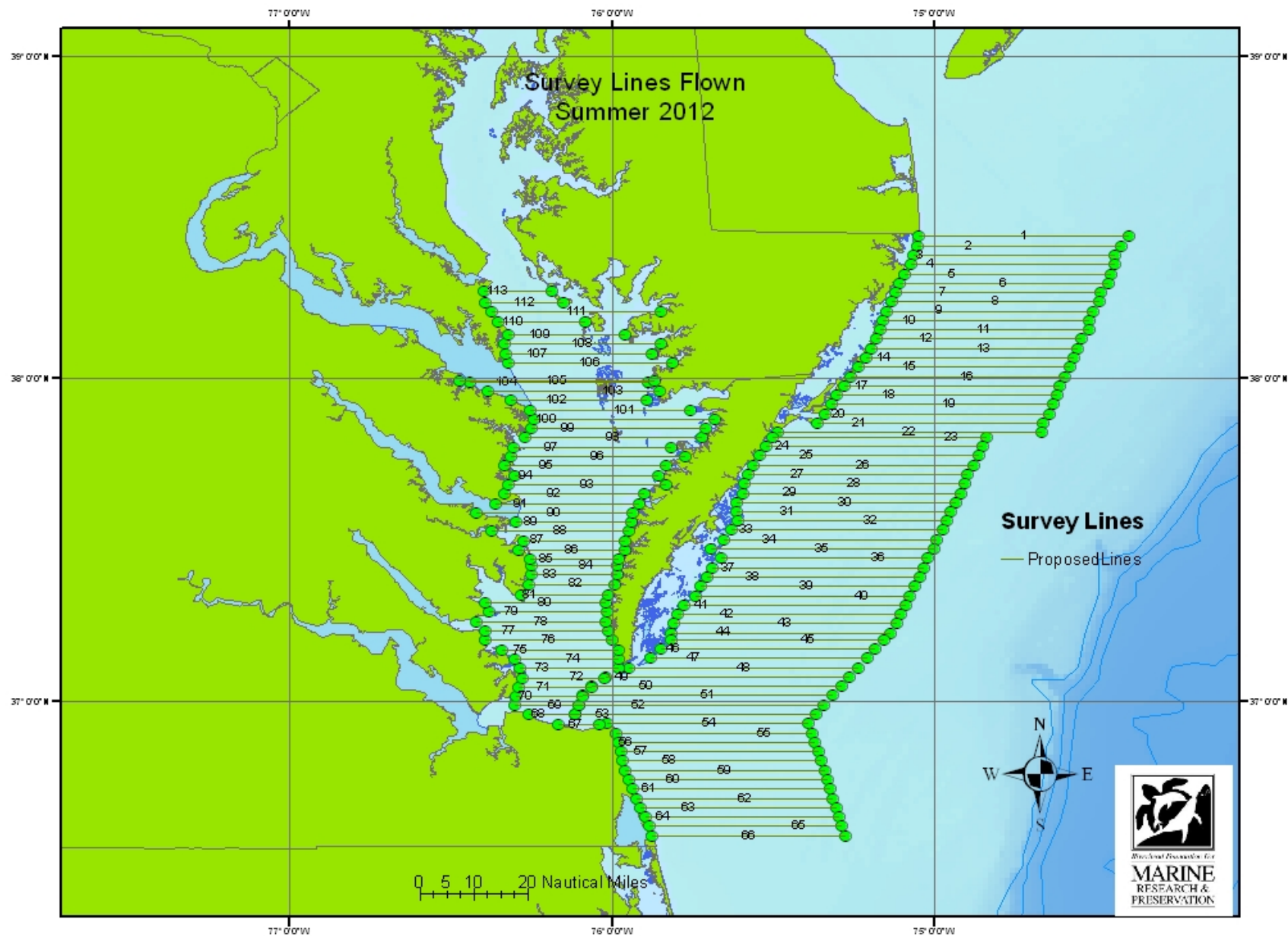
- Survey the coastal water south of Delaware Bay to the North Carolina border
- Survey the Chesapeake Bay for marine mammals and sea turtles
- Determine seasonal abundance of marine mammals and sea turtles

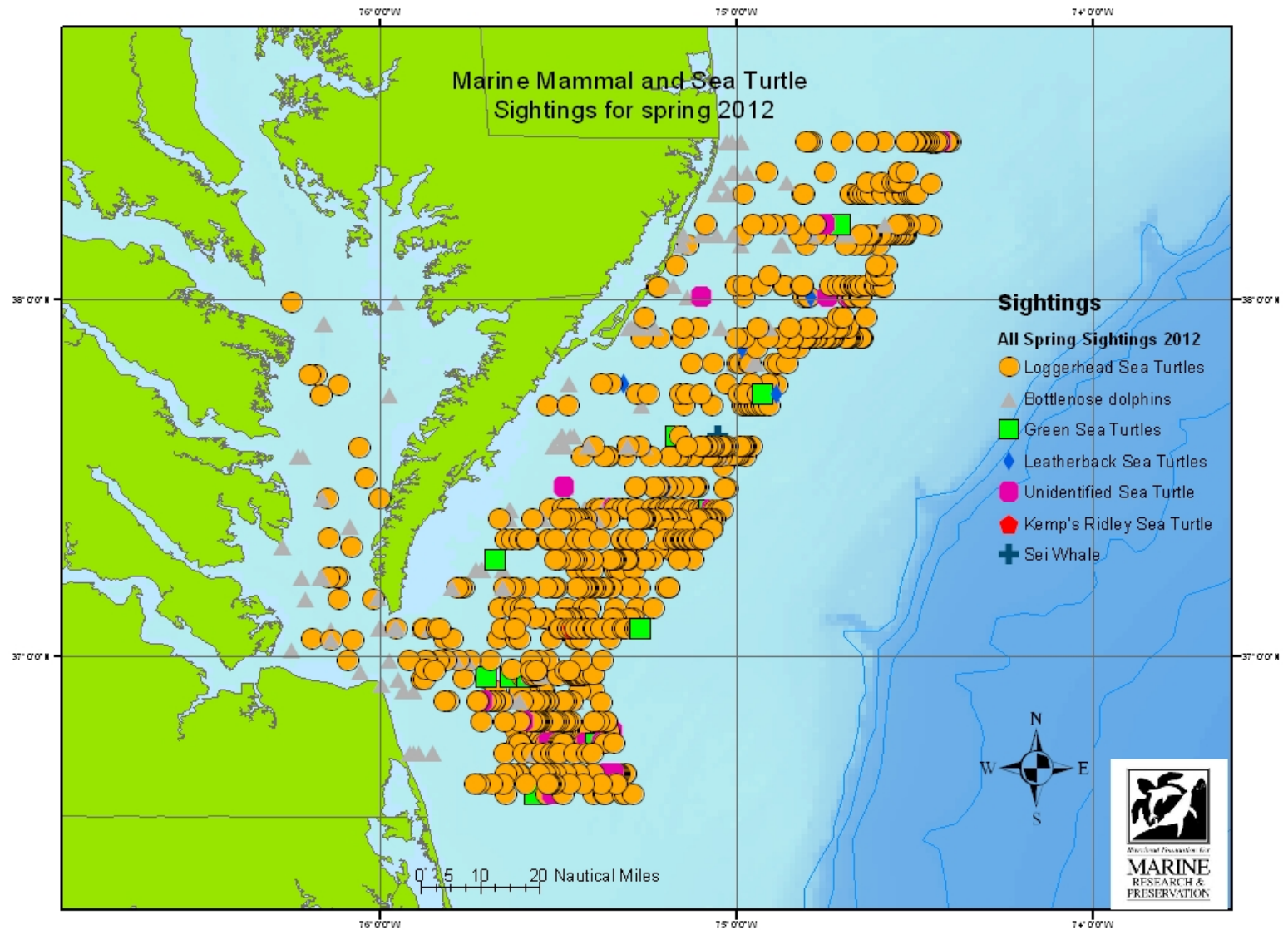
# Virginia Cetacean and Sea Turtle Survey Area

2012 through 2014

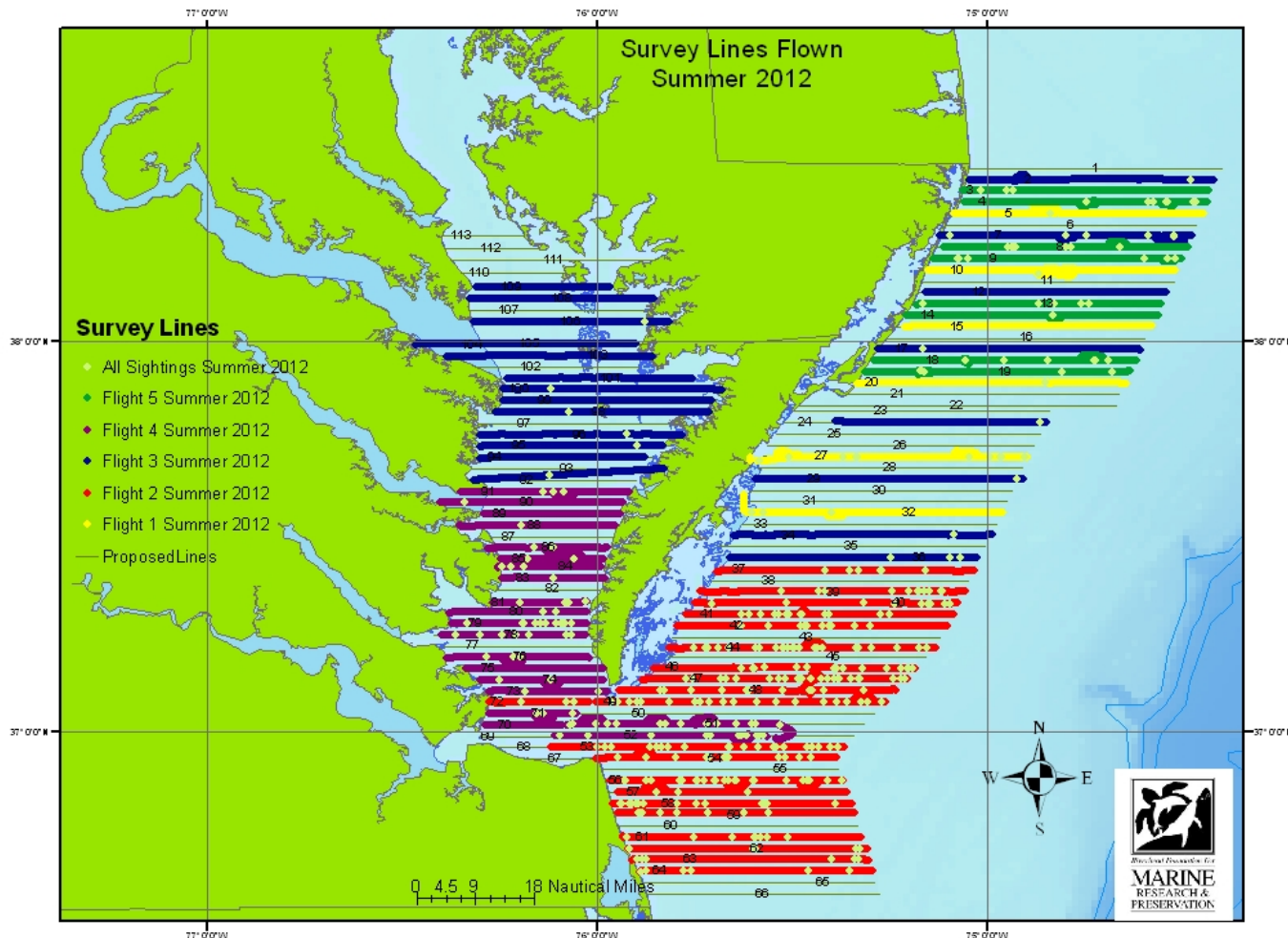








# Summary of VA survey lines and sightings



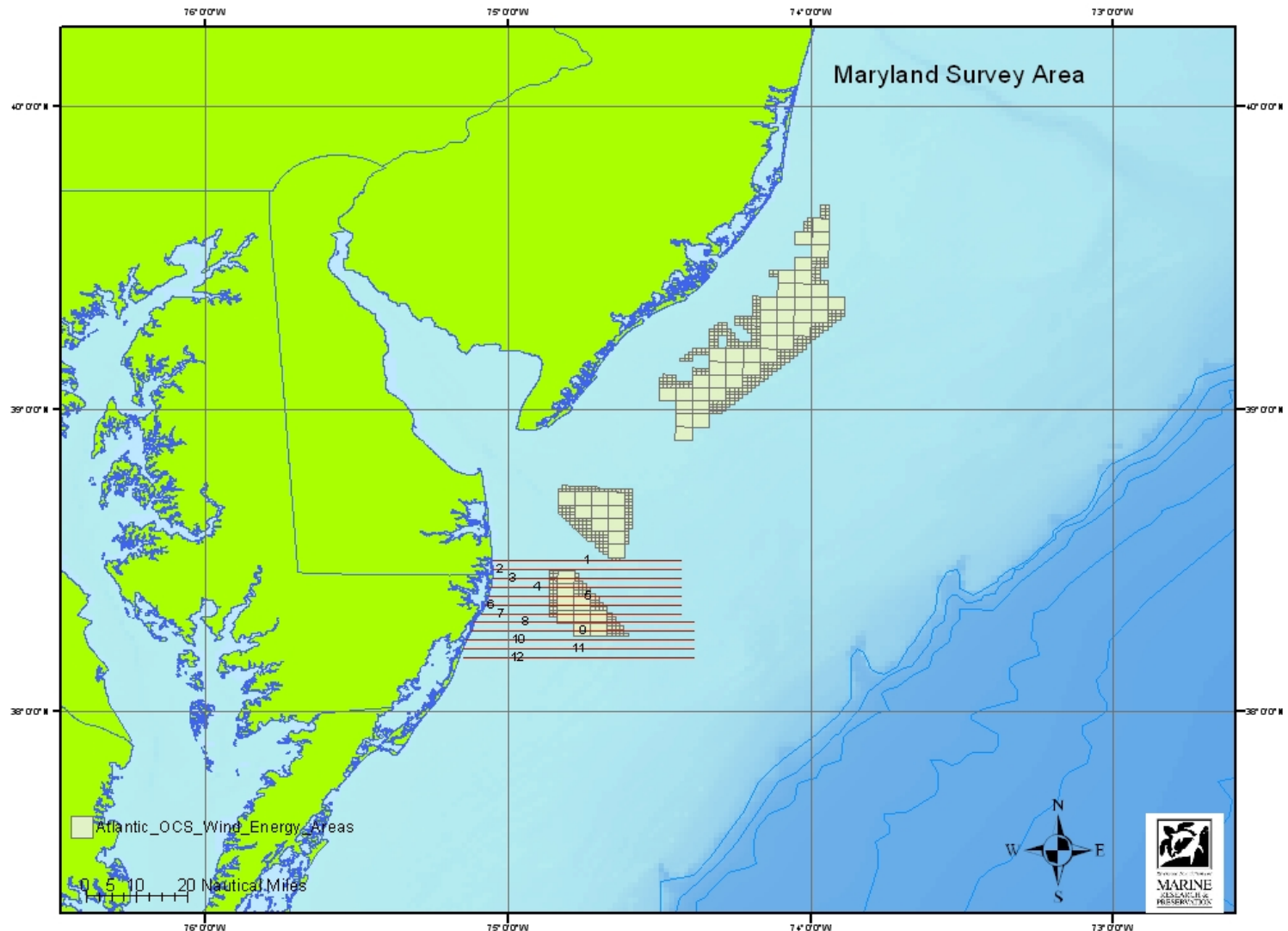


# Aerial Survey Program Objectives

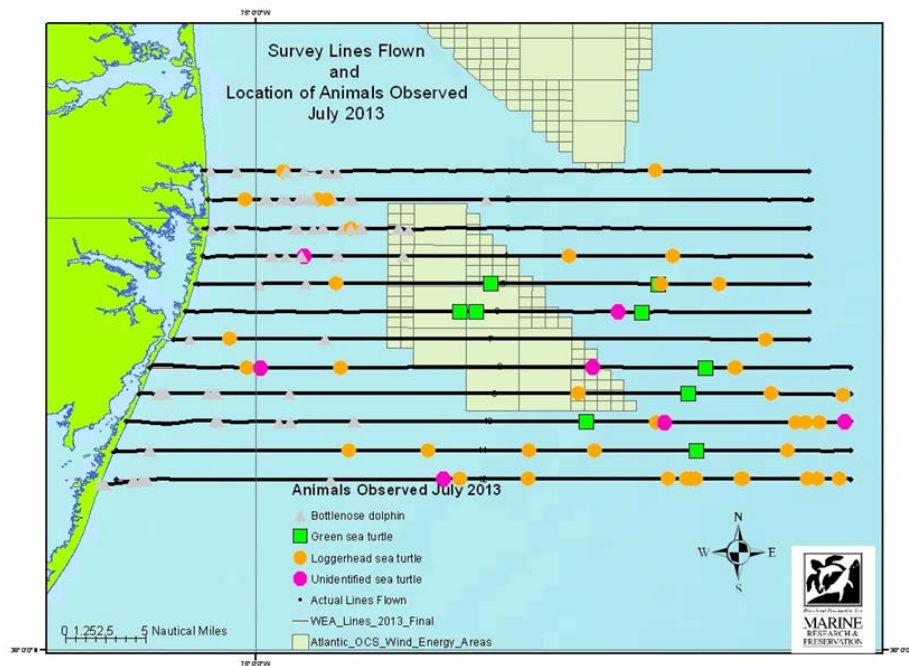
- Survey the WEA waters off Maryland
- Determine seasonal occurrence of marine mammals and sea turtles

# Maryland Cetacean Survey Area

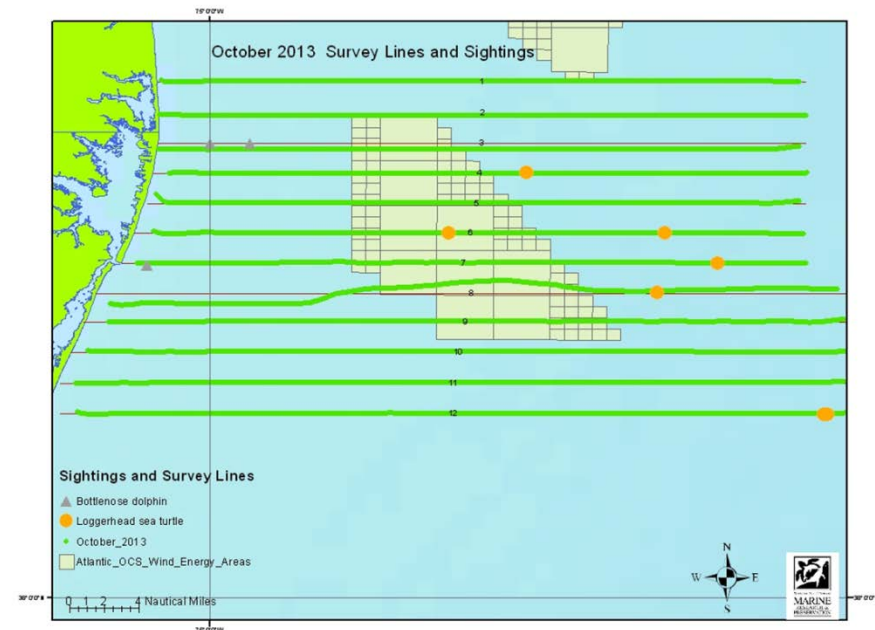
## 2013 through 2015



Funding provided by Maryland Department of Natural Resources  
and the Maryland Energy Administration



Funding provided by Maryland Department of Natural Resources and the Maryland Energy Administration





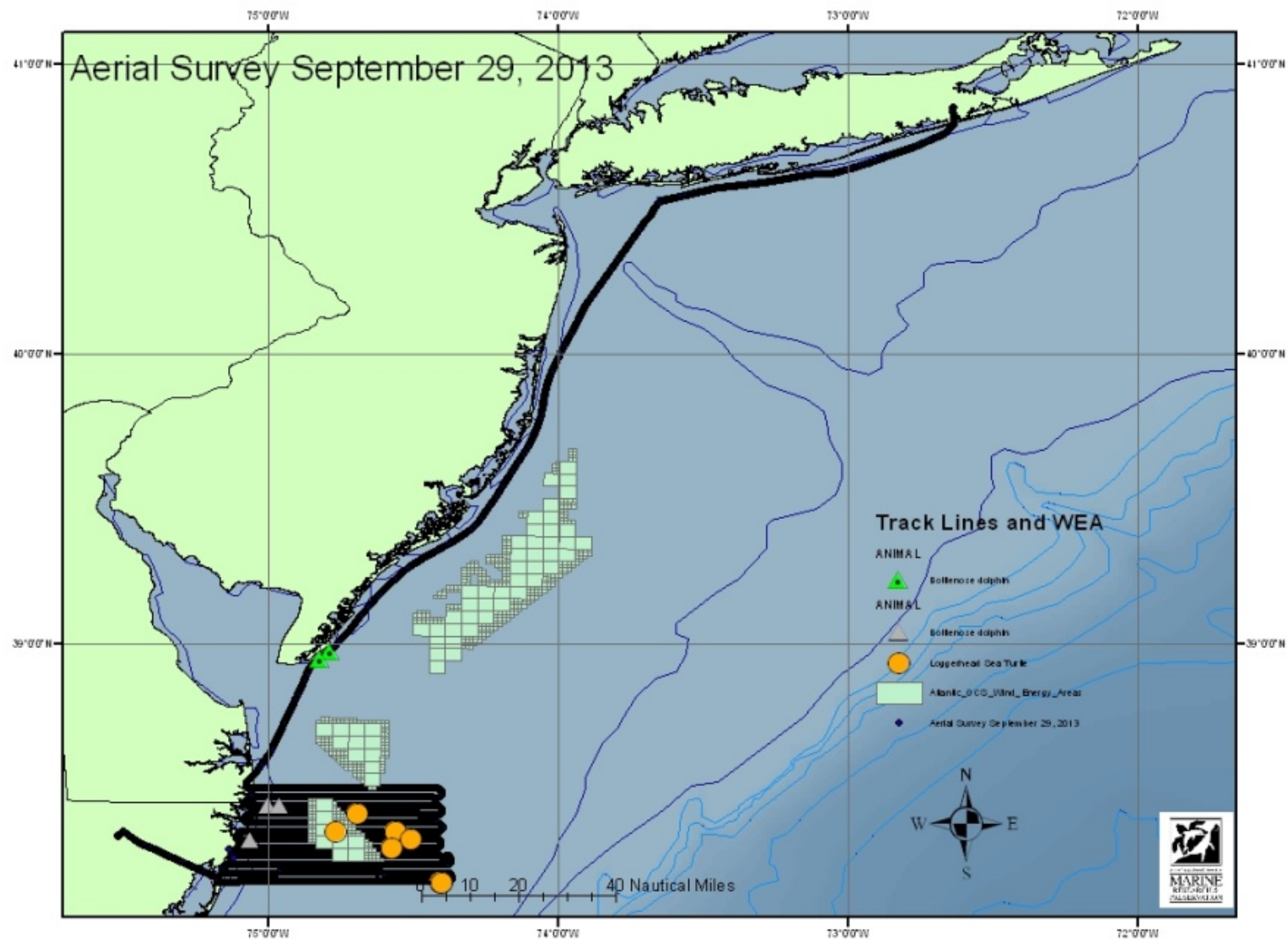
# Entanglements

NY4916-2013 *M.  
novaeangliae*

- Originally reported on 9/28/2013 to both RF and PCCS. PCCS report had images of entanglement. Observed off shore Fire Island. USCG NYDEC and SCPD unable to get on scene to further document.
- RFMRP survey team conducting survey on 9/29/13 and will attempt relocation.
- No sightings reported



Photo credit: Max Haspel





# Forensic examination









# Gear collected wounds documented



NY4270-2010  
*M. novaengliae*  
6/11/2010 Jones Beach State Park



Vessel Strike – Blunt force trauma



# Proposed survey structure

- A three year project which integrates many approaches
- First year Broad Scale surveys
  - Aerial
  - Acoustic
- Second year Broad Scale fine scale surveys
  - Aerial
  - Acoustic
  - Boat based
  - Prey density mapping
- Third year replicate of year two surveys
  - Aerial
  - Acoustic
  - Boat based
  - Active tagging
  - Prey density mapping

# Project objectives

## ■ First Year

- Determine distribution and occurrence of whales in the New York Bight

## ■ Second Year

- Monitor distribution and occurrence of whales in the New York Bight
- Collect data on seasonality of occurrences
- Collect baseline data on individual animals and work at residence time

# Project objectives

## ■ Third year

- Monitor distribution and occurrence of whales in the New York Bight
- Collect data on seasonality of occurrences
- Collect baseline data on individual animals and work at residence time
- Monitor animal movements and identify areas of higher occurrence
- Integrate stranding data and survey data



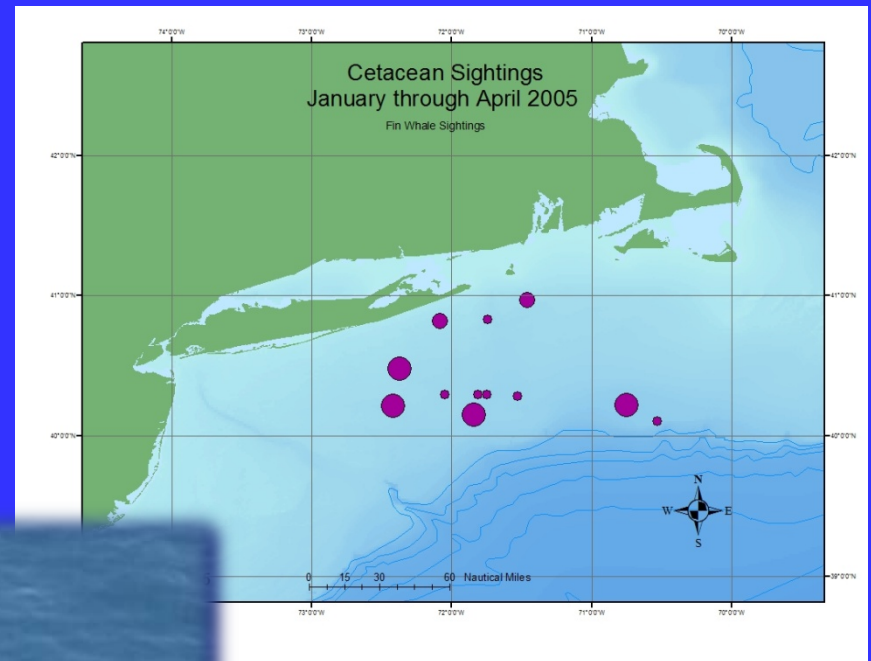
# Questions?



# Acknowledgements

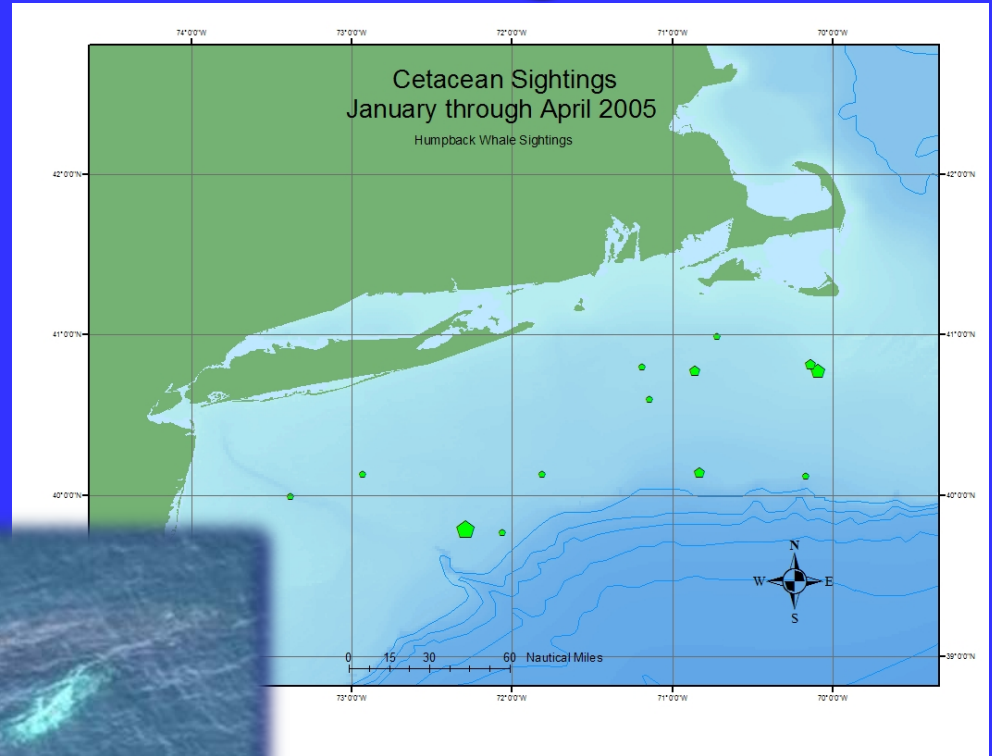
- This work conducted under research permit # 1036-1744-00 and permit #15575
- Staff and volunteers on the Riverhead Foundation especially, Allison DePerte, Kim Durham
- New York State Department of Environmental Conservation
  - National Fish and Wildlife Foundation
  - Right Whale grants program
  - NOAA, NEFSC
  - Virginia Aquarium and Marine Science Museum
  - Maryland Department of Natural Resources and the Maryland Energy Administration

# Fin whales Sighted





# Humpback whales Sighted



# Harbor Porpoise Sightings

