

**Experimental Gridded Marine Offshore and High Seas Forecasts in the
National Digital Forecast Database (NDFD)
Product Description Document
May 28, 2013**

Part I - Mission Connection

- a. Description of Product - The National Weather Service's National Hurricane Center's Tropical Analysis and Forecast Branch (TAFB), the National Centers for Environmental Prediction's (NCEP) Ocean Prediction Center (OPC) and the Honolulu Weather Forecast Office (HFO) will provide gridded forecasts of four marine weather elements to the National Digital Forecast Database (NDFD) on an experimental basis for their offshore waters and high seas forecast areas of responsibility for the Atlantic and Pacific basins. The Weather Forecast Offices (WFO's) in Fairbanks, Anchorage and Juneau Alaska will continue to supply on an experimental basis to the National Digital Forecast Database (NDFD) gridded forecasts of five marine weather elements over their offshore waters in the Arctic basin.

TAFB will begin production to NDFD on March 20, 2013 for all of their offshore and high seas AOR. OPC will begin producing offshore grids on May 1, 2013; high seas forecasts grids are expected to be added during 2014. Offshore and high seas forecasts grids from HFO and will be added at a later date.

The gridded marine parameters to be included by TAFB, OPC and HFO include surface wind direction and speed, wind gusts, significant wave heights and marine hazards. The Alaska WFO's include these four parameters in addition to the weather grid.

- b. Purpose – In support of the mission described in the *National Weather Service Strategic Plan for FY2003 - FY 2008*, the NDFD is a "...national information database and infrastructure which can be used by other governmental agencies, the private sector, the public, and the global community." The NDFD is the primary means by which digital information will be made available to customers and partners. As part of this digital database, experimental offshore information has been made available in Alaska and will now expand in response to growing user needs for planning purposes and critical safety decisions. Future digital datasets will continue to be developed in accordance with growing user needs.
- c. Intended Audience – The current audience for the NDFD offshore and high seas grids include the marine transportation industry, emergency managers, commercial fisherman, government agencies and recreational users. It is also for anyone else who wishes to decode and explore various potential applications of the NWS digital data; or simply view, post, or distribute the graphic images.
- d. Presentation Method – The new offshore and high seas grid domain, hereafter referred to as the NDFD oceanic domain, covers the Atlantic, Pacific and Arctic basins for the offices issuing

offshore waters and high seas forecasts. The upper right lat, lon for this grid is: 79.99N, 10.71E. The lower left corner lies directly on an NCEP grid 204 point, which coincides with all other Pacific region NDFD grids. The lower left lat, lon for this grid is 30.42S, 129.91E. Specific information on the grid domain can be found at <http://graphical.weather.gov/docs/ndfdSRS.htm>.

Areas of the new offshore gridded forecasts that coincide with the NDFD CONUS grid will be included in the CONUS mosaic.

These elements are available at a spatial resolution of 10 km for TAFB and 5 km for OPC. The data have an initial temporal resolution of six (6) hours out to 144 hours or six (6) days for the domain. Plans are to eventually move toward a temporal resolution of 3 hours for all the marine centers contributing to the NDFD.

The domain of the NDFD 10-km oceanic grid is illustrated in Figure 1 below:

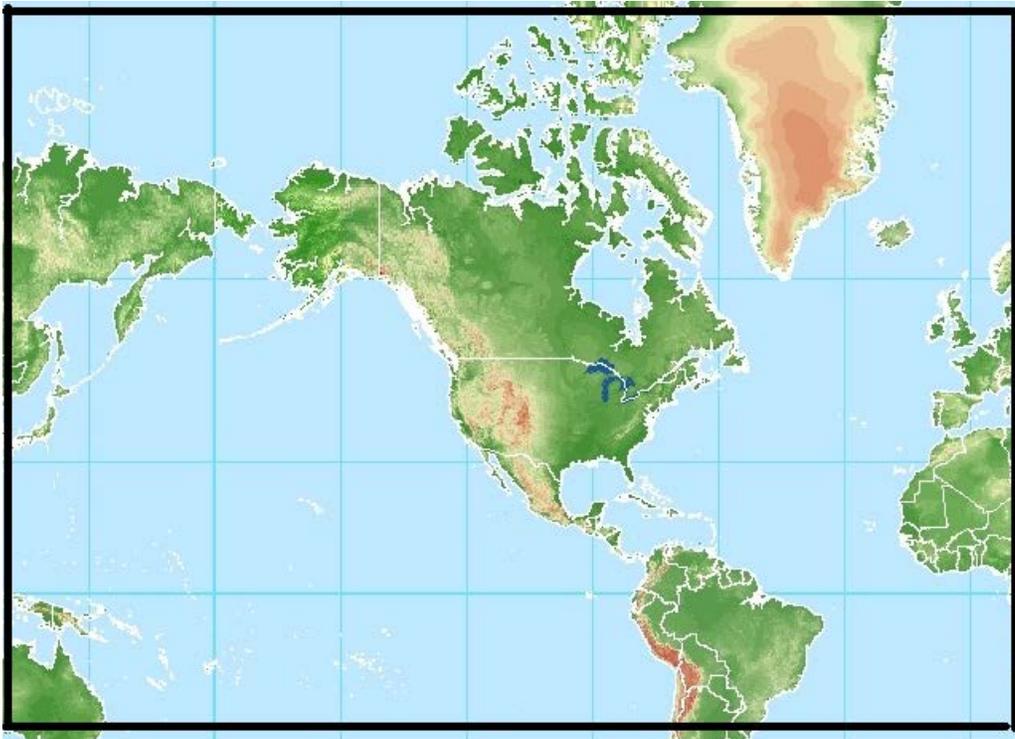


Figure 1: Domain (thick black line) of the new NDFD 10-km oceanic grid that will contain the NDFD Offshore and High Seas Grids from the four producers.

The Offshore and Atlantic High Seas Forecast Areas and their corresponding producing offices are shown in Figure 2 below:

Offshore & High Seas Atlantic Forecast Areas

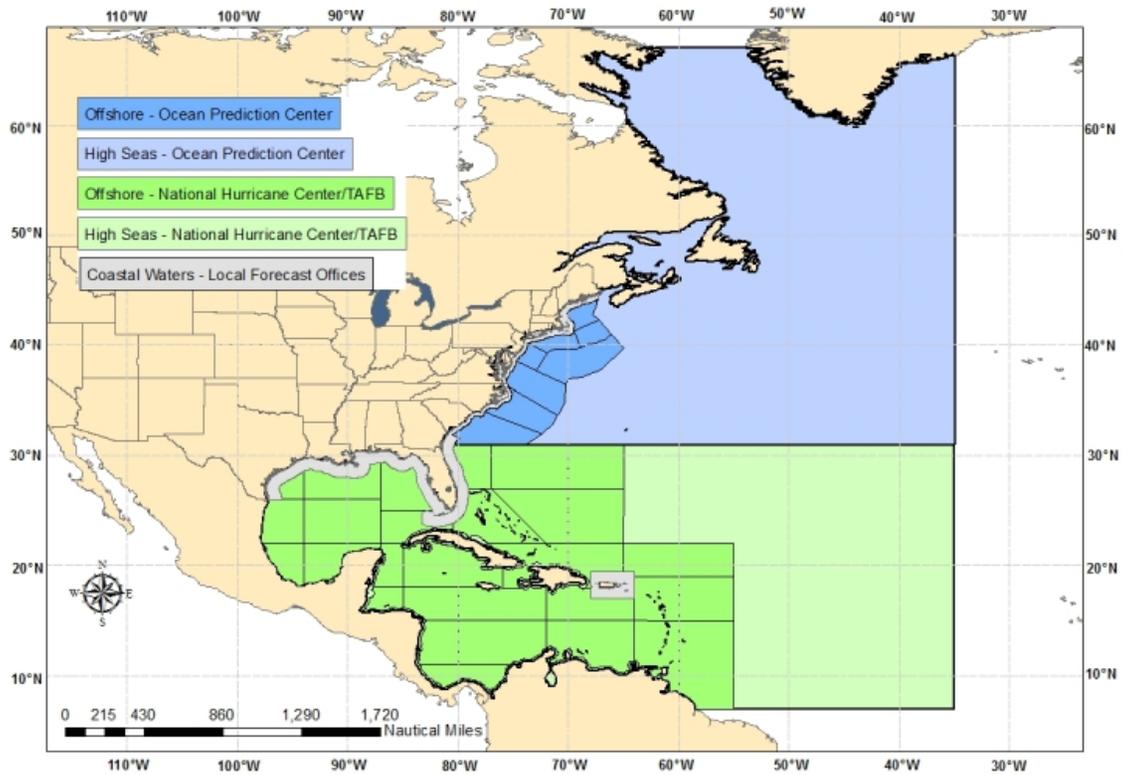


Figure 2: Offshore and High Seas Producers AOR's across the Atlantic

The Offshore Alaska Forecast Area and the Pacific Offshore and High Seas Forecast Areas and their corresponding producing offices are shown in Figure 3 below:

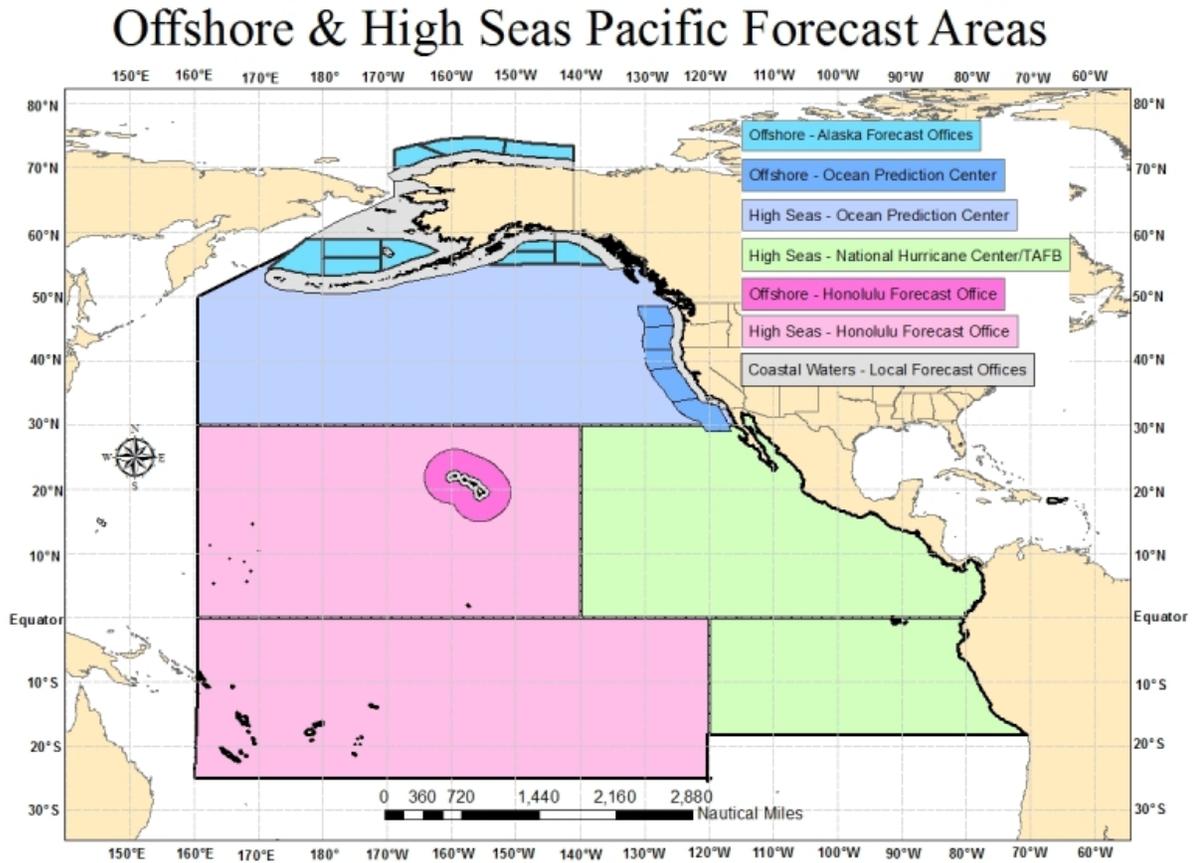


Figure 3: Offshore and High Seas Producers AOR's across the Pacific and Alaska Offshore AOR

The map viewer image below in Figure 4 shows oceanic domain forecasts that will be available via NDFD this summer. It includes the Weather Forecast Offices (WFO's) near shore waters, the Alaska Offices Offshore Waters, the TAFB offshore and high seas areas, and the OPC and Alaska offices offshore areas of responsibility.

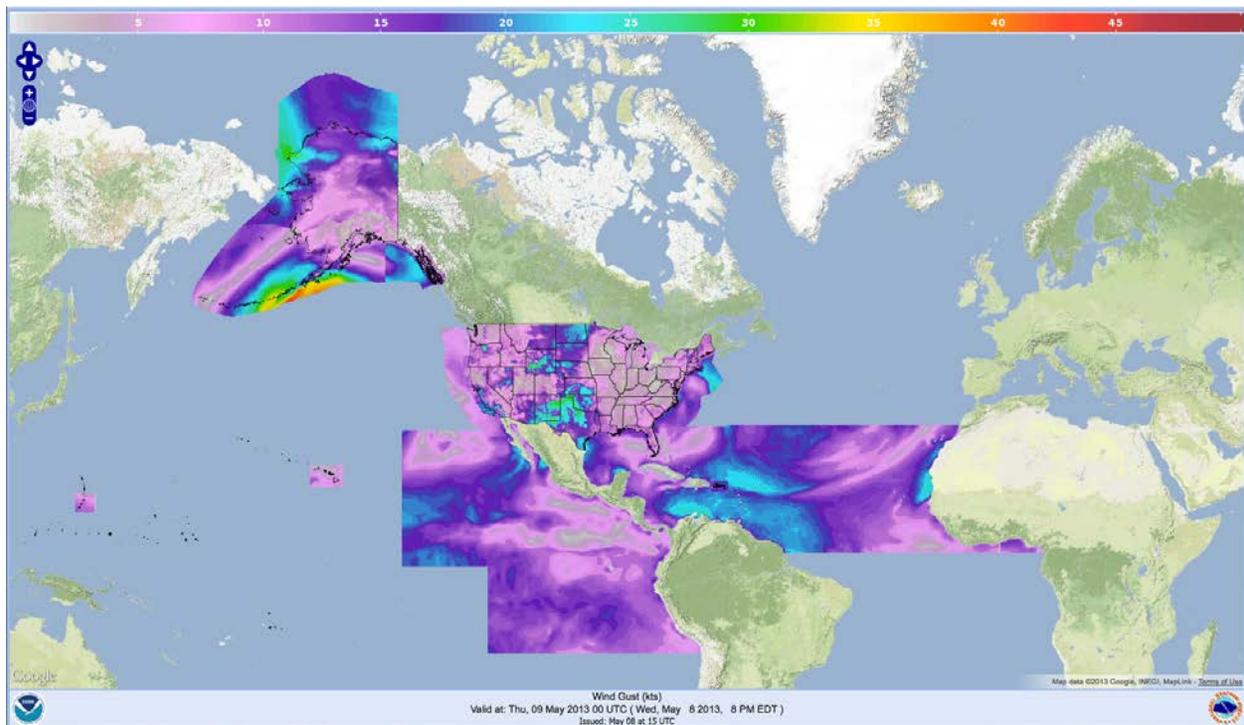


Figure 4: Coastal, Offshore and High Seas Grids Available during Summer 2013.

e. Feedback Mechanism –

Comments and feedback on these experimental TAFB Offshore and High Seas NDFD elements, as well as the OPC Offshore elements are being compiled here:

<http://www.nws.noaa.gov/survey/nws-survey.php?code=EGOSWHSMF>

Additional comments may also be provided to:

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Experimental Feedback Period: 20 March 2013 through 31 March 2014.

Part II - Technical Description

- a. Format & Science Basis - The gridded marine elements are produced by the forecasters utilizing the Graphical Forecast Editor (GFE) in AWIPS. These are value added grids with forecaster input based on marine forecast expertise over each centers' respective AORs. The forecasters also use GFE "smart tools" to take into account local marine effects and blend numerical model solutions as appropriate. This combination of tools and forecaster expertise allows gridded forecasts based on the best performing model(s), or an ensemble of model runs, in a given forecast scenario.
- b. Product Availability – Each contributing Marine Center will update their grids at least four times per day.

URLs to download the experimental marine grids:

<http://weather.noaa.gov/pub/SL.us008001/ST.expr/DF.gr2/DC.ndfd/AR.oceanic/VP.001-003/>

<http://weather.noaa.gov/pub/SL.us008001/ST.expr/DF.gr2/DC.ndfd/AR.oceanic/VP.004-007/>

<ftp://tgftp.nws.noaa.gov/SL.us008001/ST.expr/DF.gr2/DC.ndfd/AR.oceanic/VP.001-003/>

<ftp://tgftp.nws.noaa.gov/SL.us008001/ST.expr/DF.gr2/DC.ndfd/AR.oceanic/VP.004-007/>

URL to view the experimental marine grids:

<http://preview.weather.gov/graphical/>