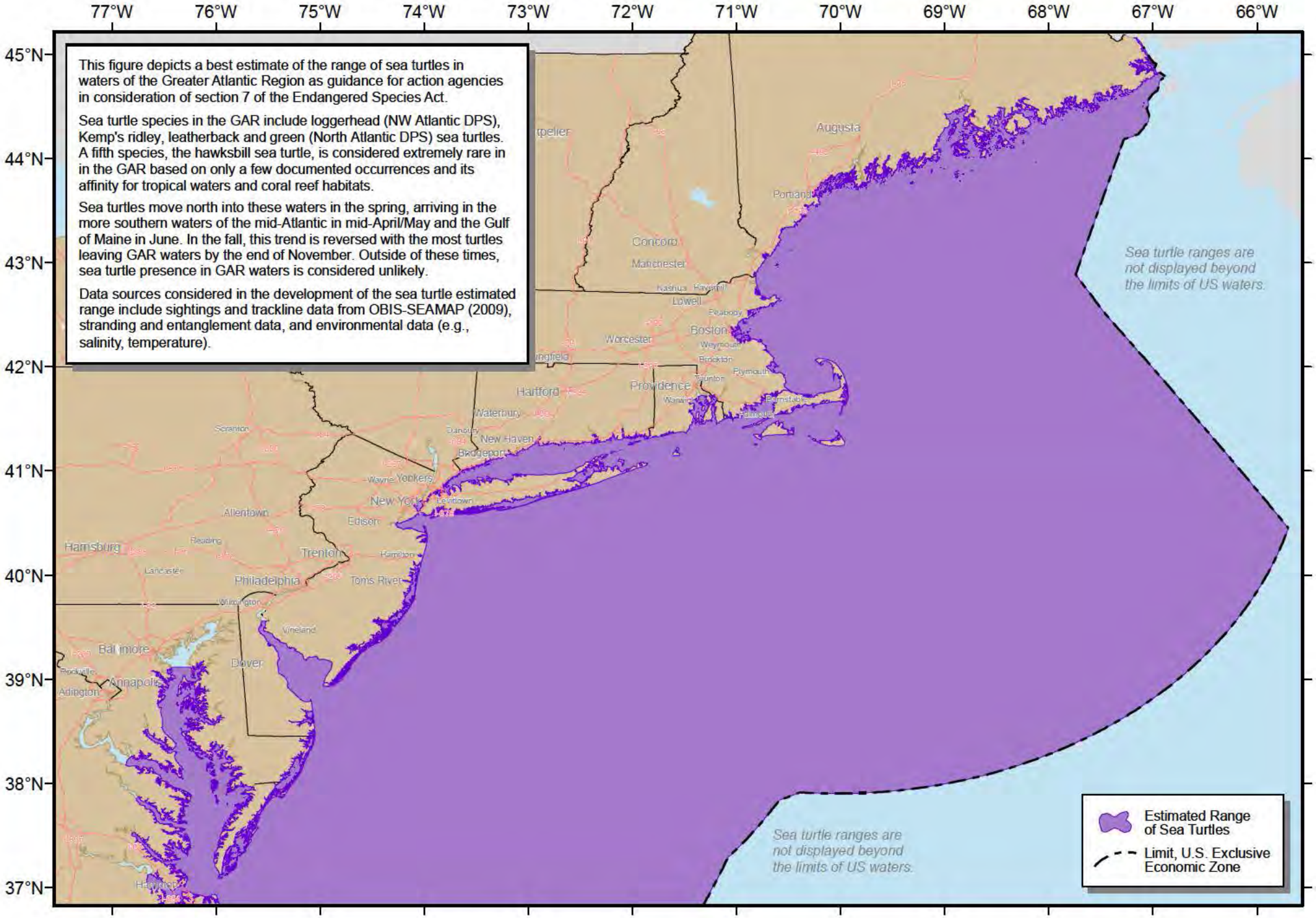
Estimated Range of Sea Turtles



This figure depicts a best estimate of the range of sea turtles in waters of the Greater Atlantic Region as guidance for action agencies in consideration of section 7 of the Endangered Species Act.

Sea turtle species in the GAR include loggerhead (NW Atlantic DPS), Kemp's ridley, leatherback and green (North Atlantic DPS) sea turtles. A fifth species, the hawksbill sea turtle, is considered extremely rare in in the GAR based on only a few documented occurrences and its affinity for tropical waters and coral reef habitats.

Sea turtles move north into these waters in the spring, arriving in the more southern waters of the mid-Atlantic in mid-April/May and the Gulf of Maine in June. In the fall, this trend is reversed with the most turtles leaving GAR waters by the end of November. Outside of these times, sea turtle presence in GAR waters is considered unlikely.

Data sources considered in the development of the sea turtle estimated range include sightings and trackline data from OBIS-SEAMAP (2009), stranding and entanglement data, and environmental data (e.g., salinity, temperature).