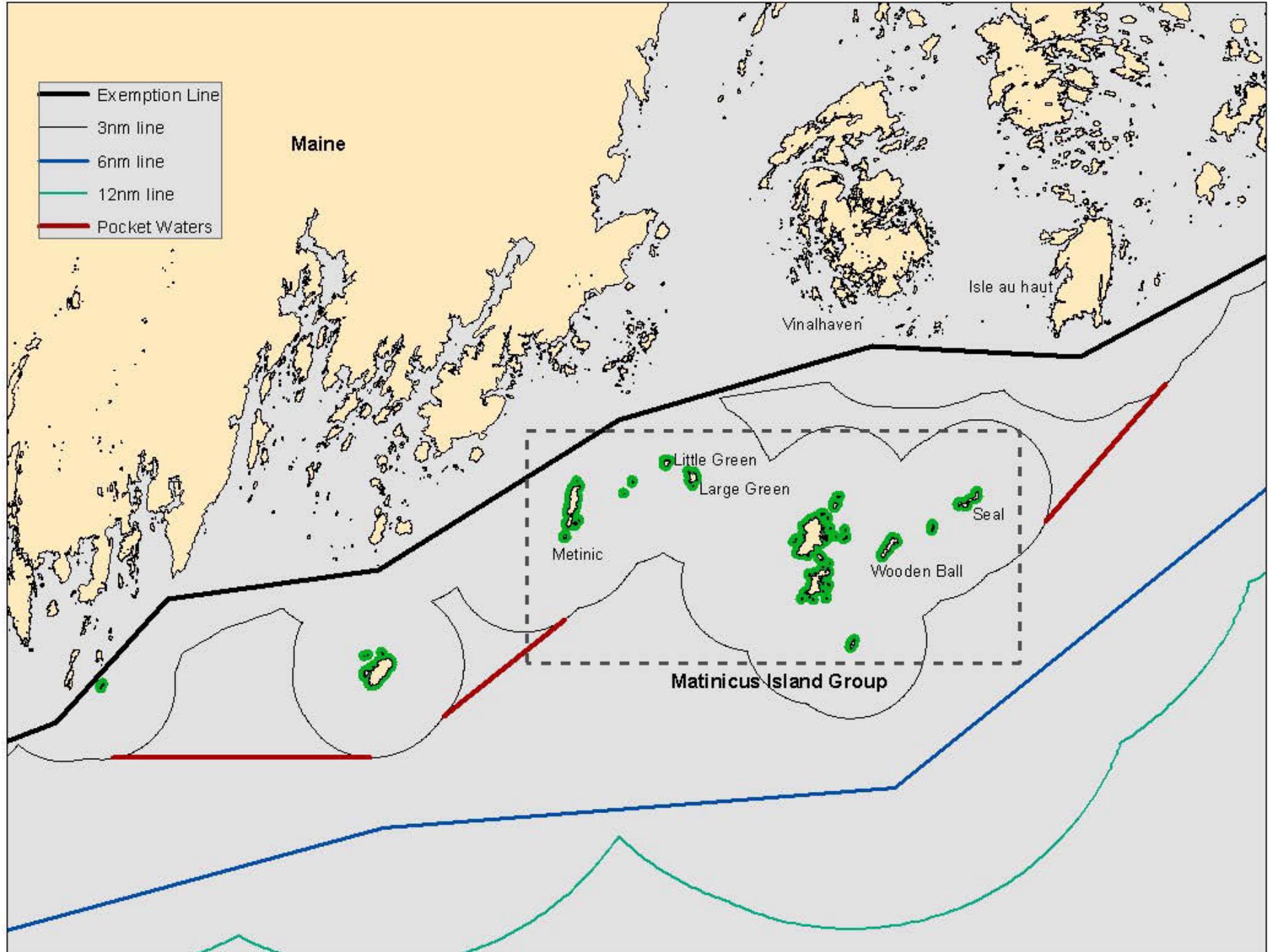


Maine Island Exemption Request

Atlantic Large Whale Take Reduction
Team 2015

Request

- Expand the quarter mile exemption buffer that was approved for inhabited islands in the Final Rule to additional islands, including the Matinicus Island Group (Metinic, Little Green, Large Green, Wooden Ball, and Seal Islands) and the Isle of Shoals chain.
- Exemption from the trawl minimums would apply year round.
- No additional marking requirements



- Exemption Line
- 3nm line
- 6nm line
- 12nm line
- Pocket Waters

Maine

Vinalhaven

Isle au haut

Little Green

Large Green

Seal

Metinic

Wooden Ball

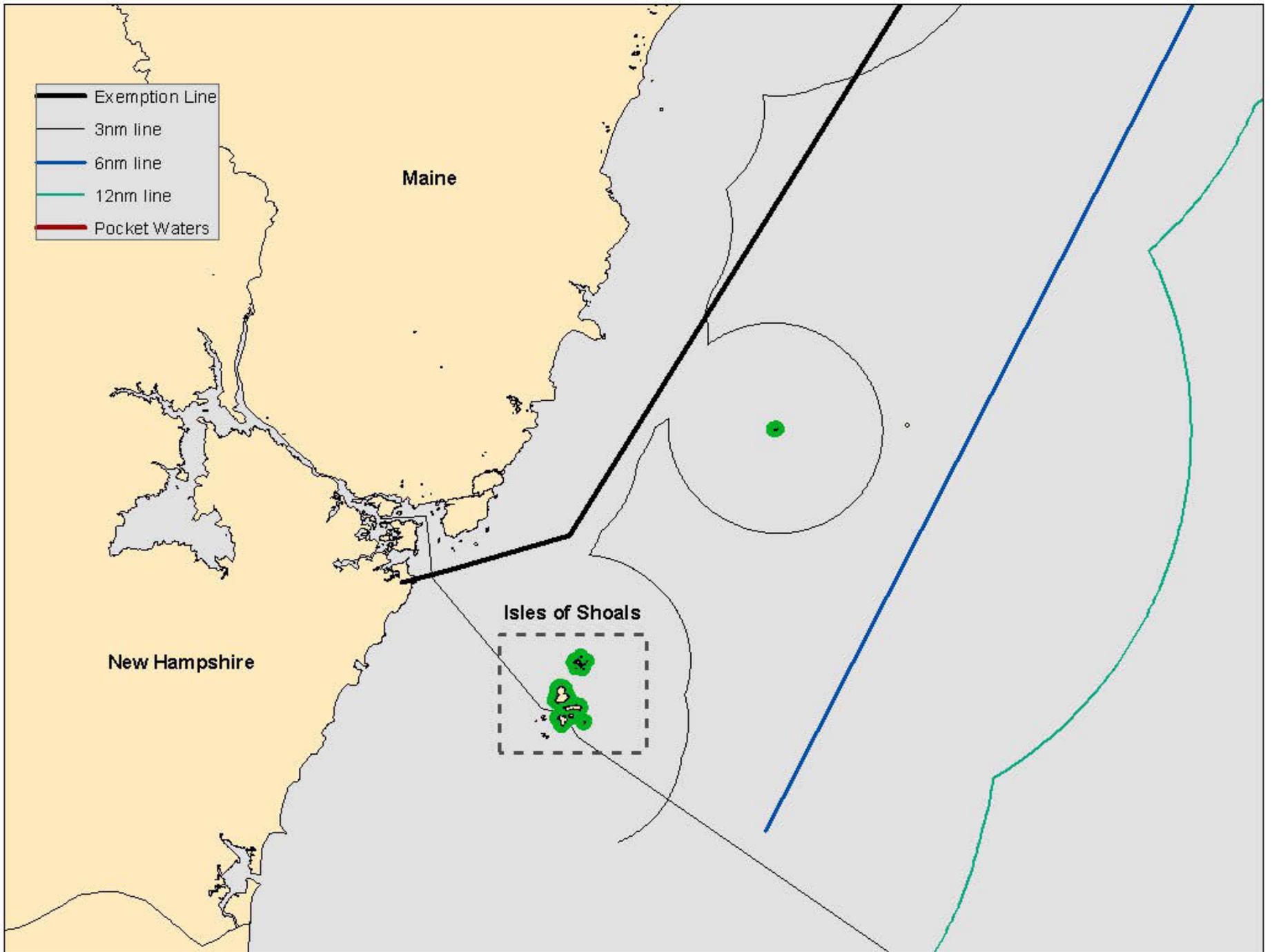
Matinicus Island Group

- Exemption Line
- 3nm line
- 6nm line
- 12nm line
- Pocket Waters

Maine

New Hampshire

Isles of Shoals



Rationale

- The ¼ mile buffer exemption in the Final Rule NMFS states “due to safety issues since these waters are generally less than 30 fathoms deep with rocky edges, and boats fishing close to shore are usually small. Whales are not likely to come this close to shore, so this change from the proposed rule does not lessen the conservation benefit of the Final Rule.”

Rationale

- The Final Rule covers only inhabited islands
- Uninhabited islands in the same area, as is the case in the Matinicus Island Group, are also utilized by island residents and face the same hazards as they do around inhabited islands
- Singles offer more safety for the crew, allow more efficient fishing given the bottom type and size of vessels, and decrease gear loss in shallow rugged bottom
- The Isle of Shoals chain crosses the border into NH's exempt waters. A buffer adds equity for these fishermen.

Tradeoff

- NMFS own assessment of $\frac{1}{4}$ mile exemption buffers in the Final Rule find a negligible impact on the conservation benefit of the Plan
- DMR flew gear density flights to estimate vertical lines during peak fishing in the proposed areas
 - Plane was flown at roughly 500 feet in a $\frac{1}{4}$ mile circle around islands
 - Observers estimated buoys between the plane's flight line and the shore

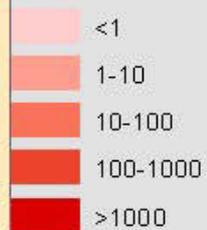
Island	Vertical Lines	Reduction under current plan
Matinicus Island Group		
Metinic	300	150
Small Green	200	100
Large Green	200	100
Seal	180	90
Woodenball	250	125
Matinicus	350	0
Ragged	400	0
Total	1880	565
Isles of Shoals		
Duck	125	63
Appledore	130	65
Cedar	50	25
Smuttynose	50	25
Total	355	178
Total Proposed Areas	2235	743

Tradeoff

- 743 total lines stay in the water column under this exemption request
 - Equal to 0.3% of total lines in the Northeast
 - A small number of lines in an area determined by NMFS as unlikely to see whale presence
 - In the right whale only model there is a minimum amount of co-occurrence in these areas
 - When humpbacks are added there is some overlap in increased co-occurrence scores around the Isle of Shoals, but this same area is exempt in NH state waters

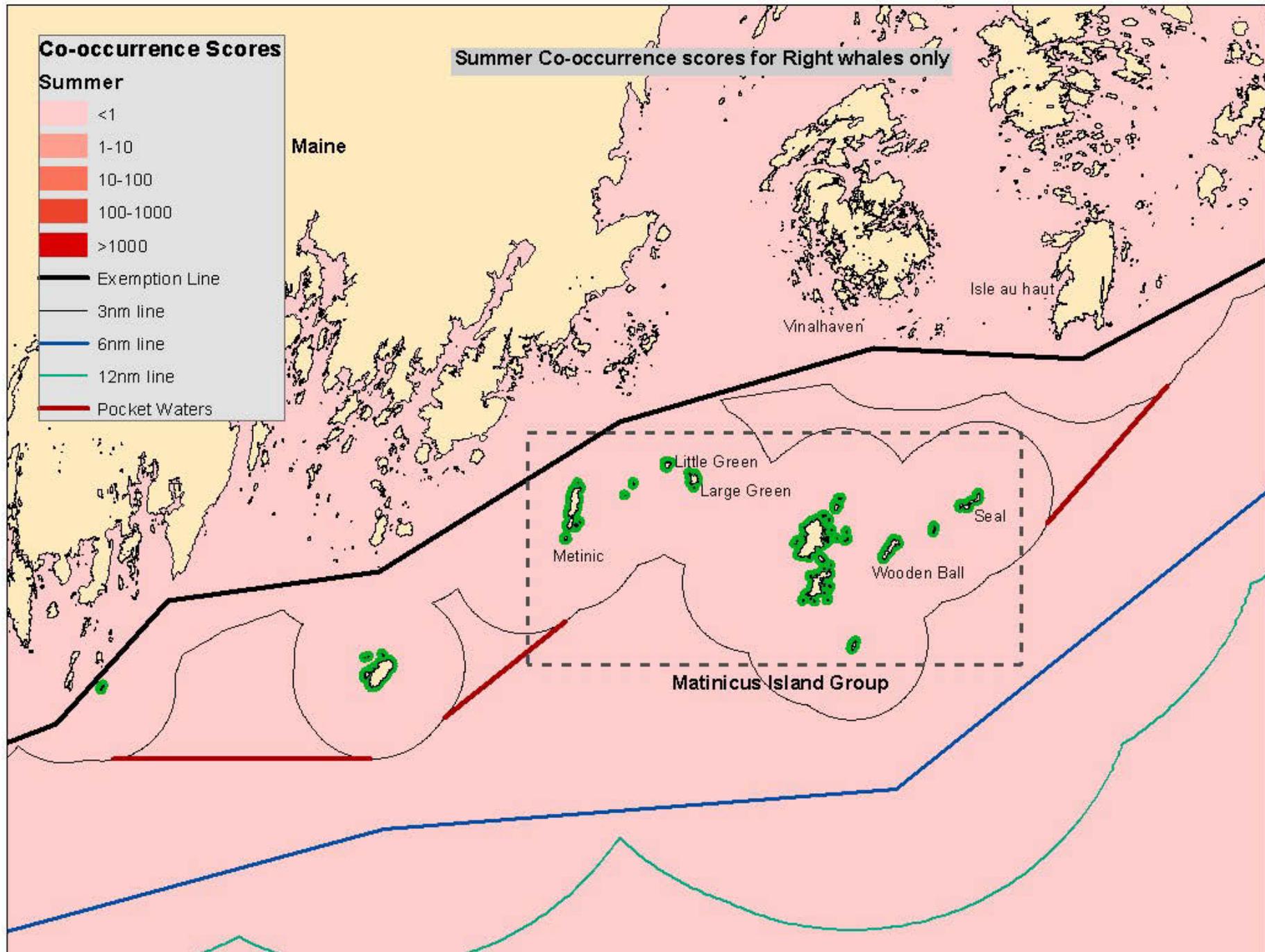
Co-occurrence Scores

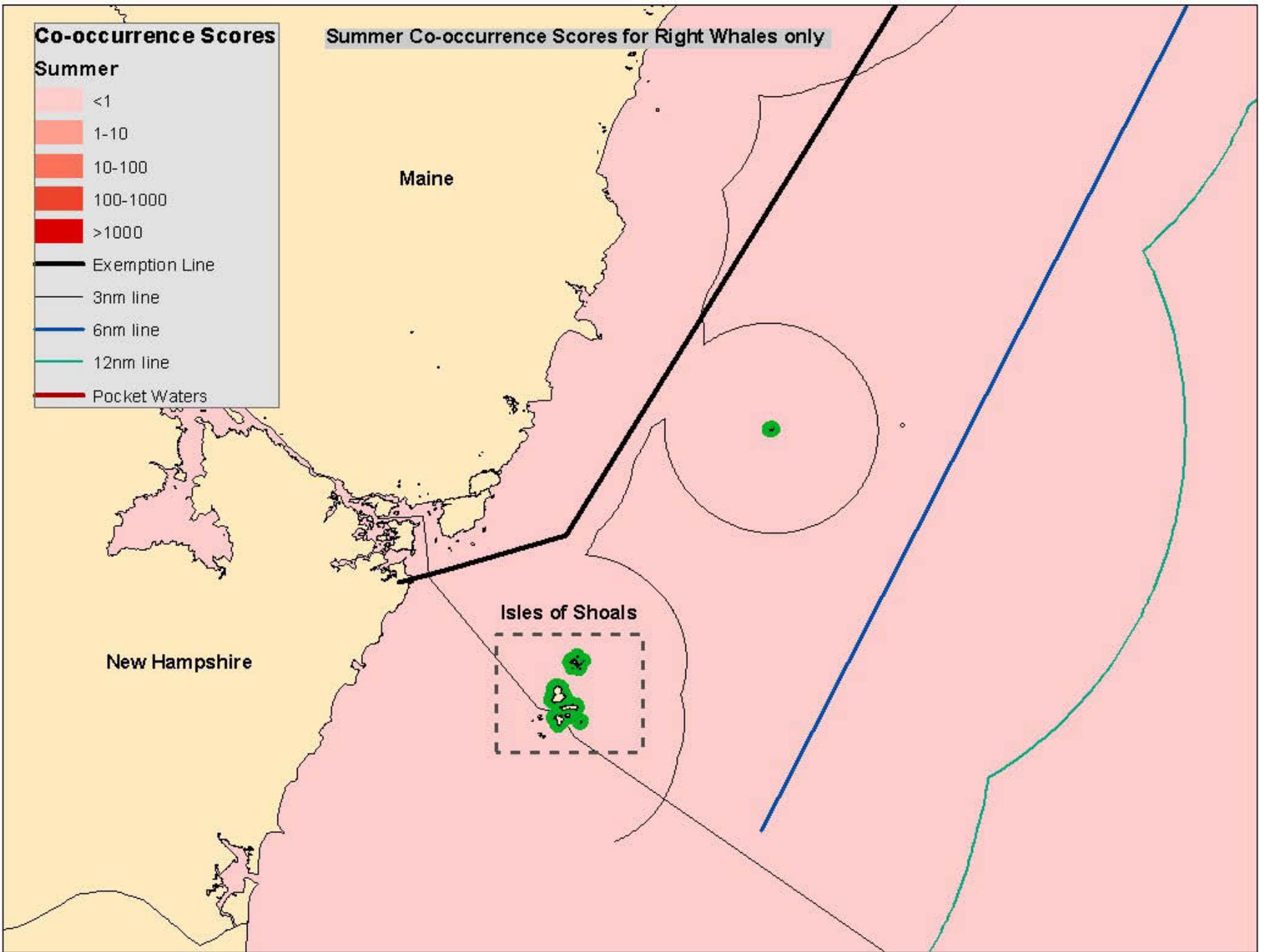
Summer



- Exemption Line
- 3nm line
- 6nm line
- 12nm line
- Pocket Waters

Summer Co-occurrence scores for Right whales only



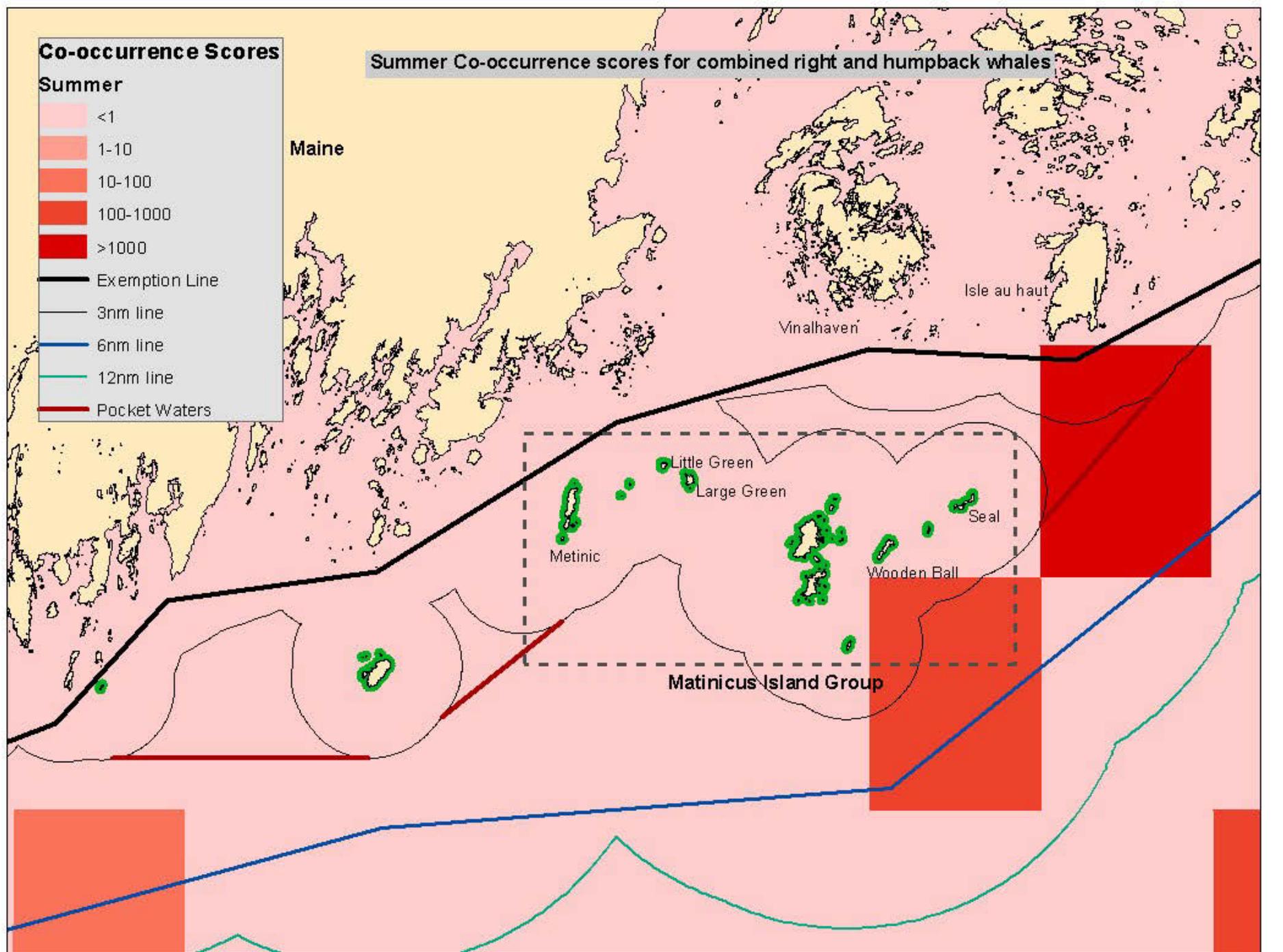


Co-occurrence Scores

Summer

- <1
- 1-10
- 10-100
- 100-1000
- >1000
- Exemption Line
- 3nm line
- 6nm line
- 12nm line
- Pocket Waters

Summer Co-occurrence scores for combined right and humpback whales



Summer Co-occurrence Scores for Combined Right and Humpback Whales

Co-occurrence Scores

Summer

- <1
- 1-10
- 10-100
- 100-1000
- >1000

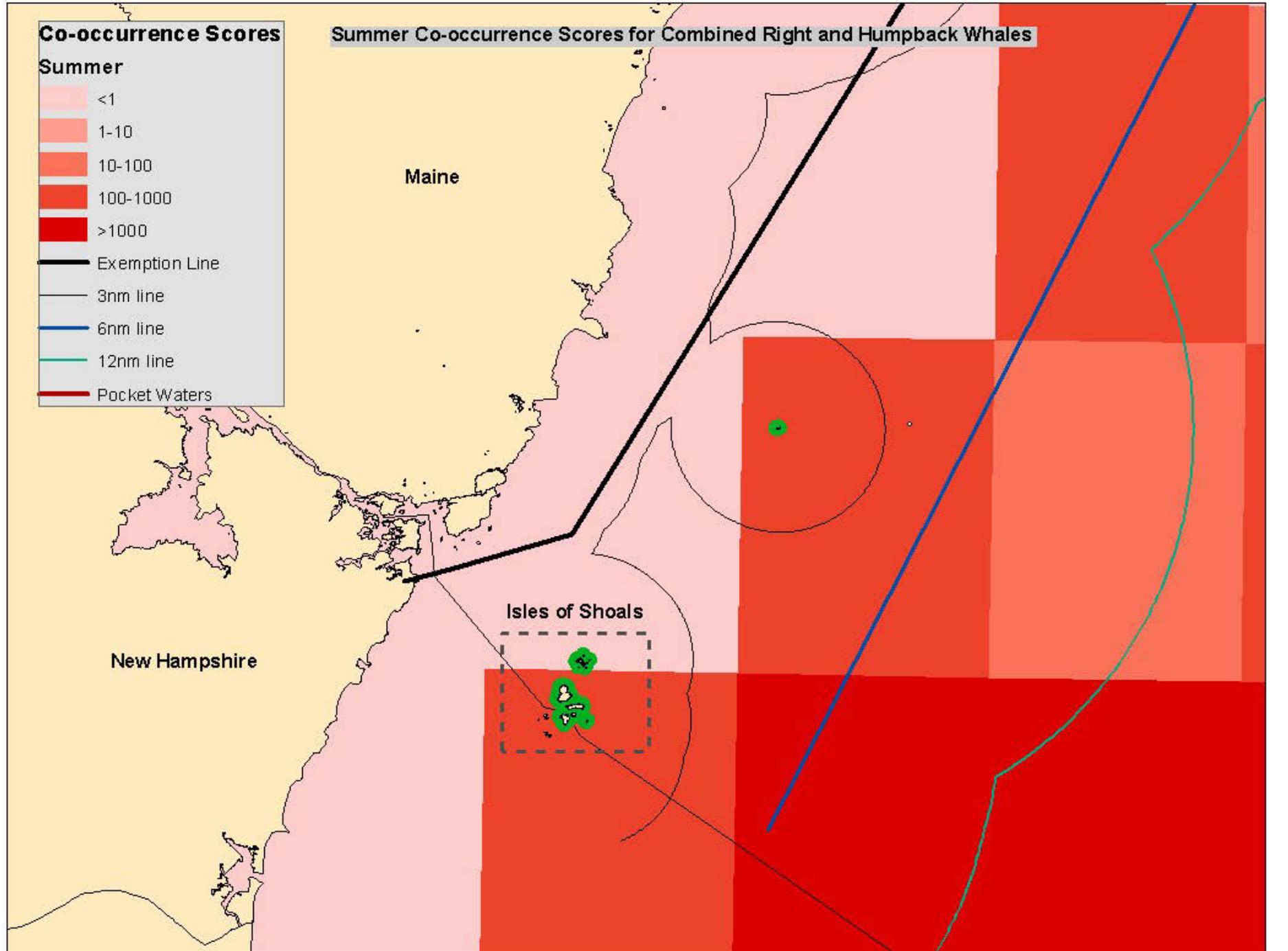
— Exemption Line

— 3nm line

— 6nm line

— 12nm line

— Pocket Waters



Expected Conservation Benefits

- Negligible impacts
 - 10-12 fishermen around Martinicus Group
 - 9 fishermen around Isle of Shoals
 - Subset of their gear
 - Area with low likelihood of whale occurrence

Implementation

- Same as Final Rule

Monitoring

- Maine Marine Patrol will enforce this based on where traps are set (distance from shore)
- JEA with NMFS
- Trying to fund aerial surveys that would cover whale distribution as well as gear density year round

Contingency Plan

- A confirmed entanglement in gear set within these areas will result in a return to the minimum trawl rules in the Final Rule

Strategic Research

- Pursuing funding for marine mammal and gear density surveys
- With additional funding DMR would work with industry to try alternative fishing practices in areas that are historically fished with singles