

Distance Sailing Races
Northeast United States
September 2015

Prepared for:
Northeast Regional Ocean Council
Northeast Ocean Data Portal
www.northeastoceandata.org

Prepared by:
Kate Longley-Wood
SeaPlan
89 South Street, Suite 202
Boston, MA 02111

1. INTRODUCTION

The Distance Sailing Races layer depicts activity areas mapped by participants in the [Northeast Coastal and Marine Recreational Use Characterization Study](#), which was conducted by [SeaPlan](#), the [Surfrider Foundation](#), and [Point 97](#) under the direction of the [Northeast Regional Planning Body](#) (NE RPB). In order to fill a regional need to better understand the spatial patterns of important recreational activities in New England, the study was focused on collecting information on a commercial whale watching, SCUBA diving, sailing races and regattas, competitive board and paddle events, beach going, wildlife viewing, surfing, and non-motorized boating sports. This document describes the processes for developing the long distance sailing race data component of the study. Additional information can be found in the study's [final report](#).

There are a number of long distance races along the Atlantic coast or in and out of Atlantic ports, which represent significant cultural, historical, and economic uses of coastal and offshore waters. Major offshore sailing races in the Northeast have taken place since the early 20th century and today can have a major impact on the local economy. As substantial contributors to coastal communities and economies in the Northeast, distance sailing races represent an important ocean use, making this a priority activity for inclusion in this project.

For the purpose of characterizing events for this dataset, a distance race is defined as 1) an offshore race starting at one port and ending in another, or 2) an offshore race which begins at a port, has a turning point at a single location, and ends at the same port.

The project team leveraged knowledge of existing data and the nature of sailing events and worked with industry experts on sailing races and regattas in the region to design a methodology for collecting data on the locations and characteristics of these events. Based on the input from industry leaders and guidance from an NE RPB project steering committee, initial data collection efforts began in the late winter and early spring of 2015.

Data collection

Because industry experts indicated that a small number of distance races take place in the region, the team collected data on these races through online research to generate a list of recurring Northeast distance races and created draft spatial data depicting lines between the start and end point of identified races.

The Rhode Island Ocean Special Area Management Plan (RI OSAMP) compiled spatial data on both recurring and non-recurring distance races that take place in the RI OSAMP planning area. RI OSAMP data on distance races informed and were added to this draft data product. However, one-time distance race events described in the RI OSAMP data were not included, as this study focused on characterizing recurring events. Distance race data from the RI OSAMP were considered authoritative and were not altered in the regional distance race dataset, except in a few cases where lines needed to be extended to represent the course's end elsewhere outside of the region.

The team refined distance race data products using GPS data provided by [Yellowbrick Tracking](#), which collects data on the locations of vessels participating in some of the target races. The raw data points helped to provide more refined information on typical routes taken by race participants during some of the races.

The team held a SeaSketch webinar with industry experts involved in distance races (including the Marion to Bermuda, Block Island, Vineyard, and Marblehead to Halifax races). SeaSketch is a web-based platform that allows registered users to view and interact with mapped ocean data. This online forum enabled industry experts to annotate or edit the existing draft data presented and to provide information on additional races. Industry representatives were given the opportunity to use SeaSketch to refine and add to the draft dataset both during the hosted webinar and at their convenience following the webinar.

In another component of the recreation study, an online survey tool was used to map the locations of smaller, localized races, known as buoy races. Some survey participants used this tool to map the locations of several distance races. These mapped distance race areas were removed from the buoy race data and added to the distance race data. More details on how buoy races were mapped can be found in the study's final report.

2. PURPOSE

This dataset fills a specific need identified by the Northeast Regional Planning Body to develop a better understanding of how and where humans use the ocean in the Northeast to inform regional ocean planning and minimize ocean use conflicts. This dataset can also be used by participants and organizers of distance sailing races to demonstrate the importance and location of the activity in the region.

3. SOURCES AND AUTHORITIES

- Bloeser, J., Chen, C., Gates, M., Lipsky, A., & Longley-Wood, K. 2015. Characterization of Coastal and Marine Recreational Activity in the U.S. Northeast. Point 97, SeaPlan, & Surfrider
- Rhode Island Ocean Special Area Management Plan (Ocean SAMP) Vol I, Rhode Island Coastal Resources Management Council, 2010
- Yellowbrick tracking (www.ybtracking.com). Accessed February 18, 2015

4. DATABASE DESIGN AND CONTENT

Native storage format: ArcGIS File Geodatabase – simple feature class

Feature Types:

Distance sailing race lines

Data Dictionary:

Line	Name	Definition	Type	Size
1	OBJECTID	Uniquely identifies a feature	OBJECTID	*
2	Shape	Geometric representation of the feature	geometry	*
3	name	Identifies the name of the race	text	80
4	month	Month during which the event takes place	Text	80
5	eventOrg	Identifies the organizers and or host organizations of the event	text	254
6	startLoc	Identifies the port where the event begins	text	80
7	endLoc	Identifies the port where the event ends	text	80
8	participants	The estimated number of vessels that typically take part in the event	text	80

9	recurrence	Identifies how often the event takes place	text	80
10	source	Identifies the source of the data	text	254
11	notes	Lists any additional details about the event	text	254
12	Shape_Length	Length of polyline in spherical coordinates	double	*

Feature Class Name: DistanceSailingRaces

Total Number of Unique Features: 15

Dataset Status: Complete

5. SPATIAL REPRESENTATION

Geometry Type: vector polyline

Reference System: GCS North American 1983

Horizontal Datum: North American Datum 1983

Ellipsoid: Geodetic Reference System 1980

XY Resolution: XY Scale is 1000000000.0000001

Tolerance: 0.0000000089831528411952117

Geographic extent: -76.04 to -9.29, -26.91 to 44.60

ISO 19115 Topic Category: environment, oceans, biota, economy, society

Place Names:

Atlantic Ocean; Block Island Sound; Buzzards Bay; Long Island Sound; Massachusetts Bay; Penobscot Bay; Rhode Island Sound

Recommended Cartographic Properties:

(Using ArcGIS ArcMap nomenclature)

Solid line, 2.0

Scale range for optimal visualization: 300,000 to 4,500,000

6. DATA PROCESSING

Processing environment: ArcGIS 10.2, Windows 7 Ultimate SP5, Intel Xeon CPU

	Process Steps Description
1	Polylines were drawn in an editing session by SeaPlan or imported from outside sources into ArcMap
2	In an editing session, attributes were edited for accuracy and consistency and supplemented by additional information from outside research or engagement with industry experts to improve route characterization

7. QUALITY PROCESS

Attribute Accuracy: Attribute information for the distance sailing races was provided by a combination of online survey participants, conversations with race organizers and other industry experts, and online research. While all effort was made to collect data from experts and authoritative sources, attribute information is dependent on the individual knowledge and experience of the data provider.

Logical Consistency: Short segments were repaired.

Completeness: This dataset is believed to represent all known, recurring offshore distance sailing races in the region, as defined by the scope of this study. This dataset is not intended to capture the spatial footprint of buoy races, which typically take place closer to shore and courses comprised of buoys or other navigational markers.

Positional Accuracy: The lines depicting these races are highly generalized to reflect an approximate route between the start and end locations, based on course instructions, information from industry experts, and data from race tracking software. As such, this dataset is intended to be depicted at a regional scale. Routes may vary depending on winds and other environmental conditions, meaning that race routes may not provide a precise depiction of the race activity.

Timeliness: This dataset represents data collected during winter and spring of 2015.

Use restrictions: Data are provided as is. NROC, the Northeast Regional Planning Body, Point 97, the Surfrider Foundation, and SeaPlan are not liable for any interpretations, assumptions, or conclusions based on these data. This data set must be cited on all electronic and hard copy products. This data set is not intended for navigation purposes.

Distribution Liability: All parties receiving these data must be informed of these restrictions.