

SMART Planning

Regional Coordination with Natural Resource Agencies; Tips & Lessons Learned

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**PLANNING SMART
BUILDING STRONG®**



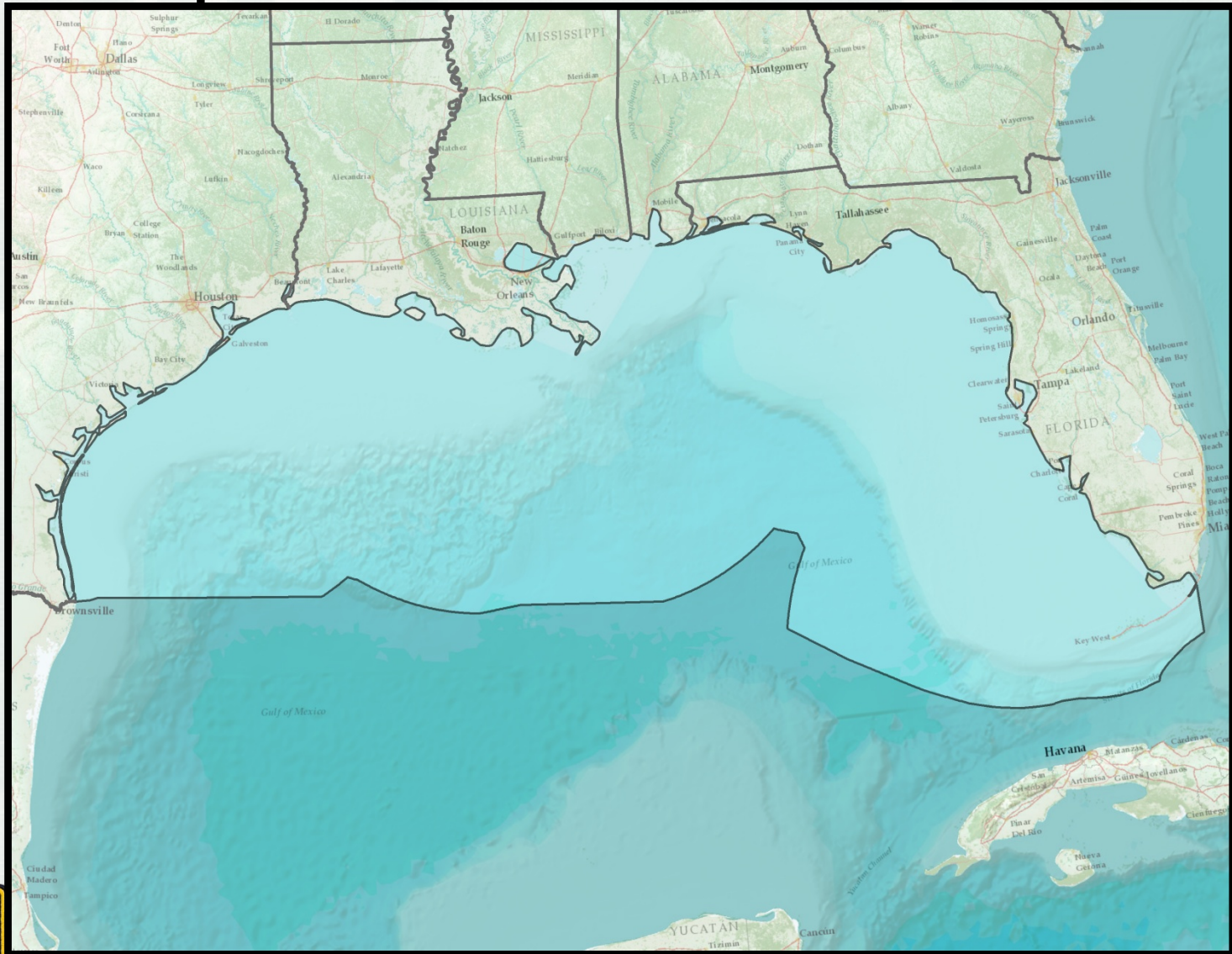
Tip #1: Use Regional or Programmatic Biological Opinions

Example #1:

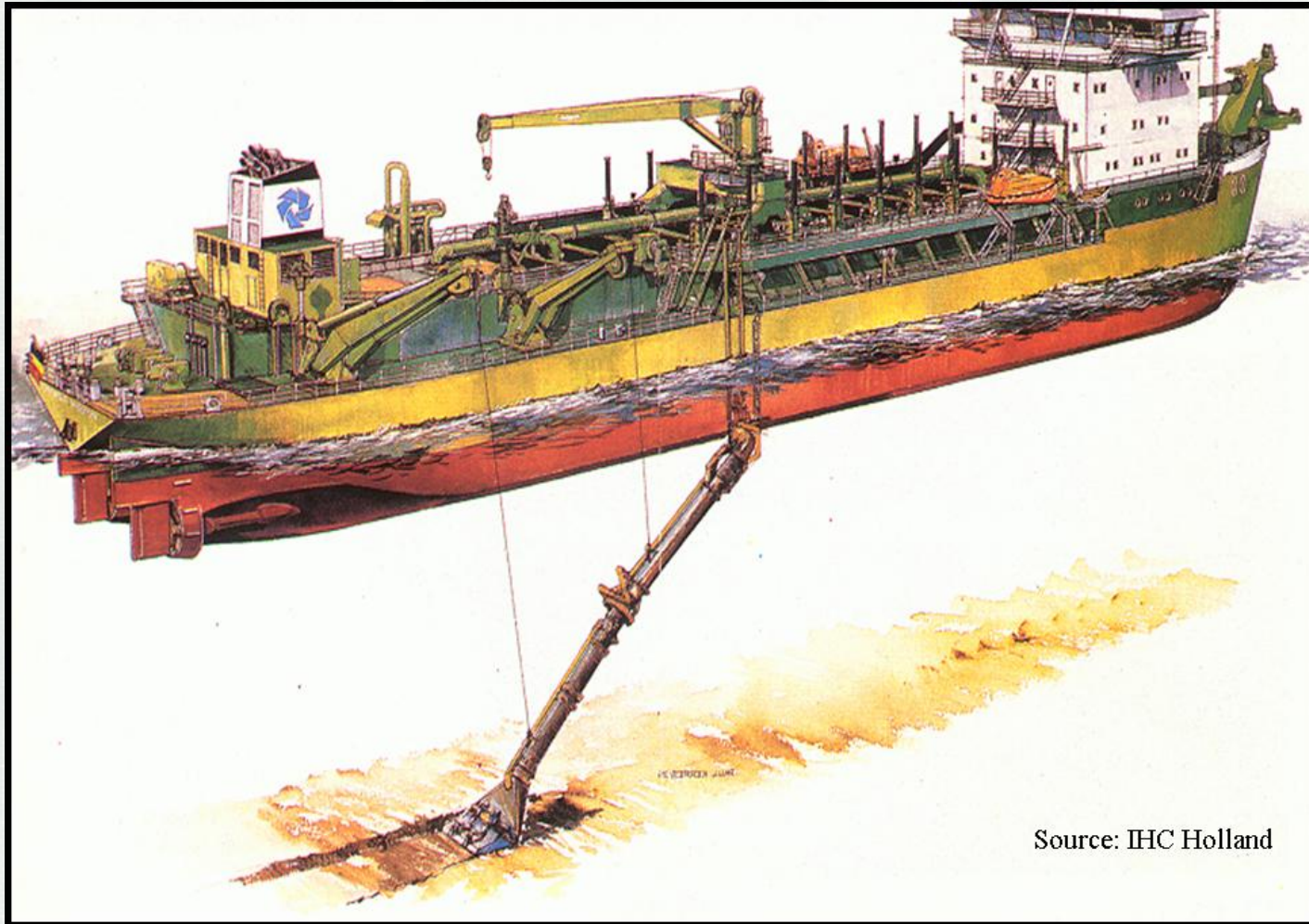
- Gulf Regional Biological Opinion (GRBO) issued by the National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS)
- Includes 3 MSCs (SWD, MVD & SAD) & 4 Districts (SWG, MVN, SAM & SAJ)
- Covers Navigation O&M dredging & beach sand placement ; Planning & Regulatory actions



Scope of GRBO – Gulf Coast



Hopper Dredge & Suction Dragarm



Source: IHC Holland



Loggerhead Sea Turtle



Gulf Sturgeon



Tip #1: Use Regional or Programmatic Biological Opinions

Example #2:

- South Atlantic Regional Biological Opinion (SARBO) issued by NMFS
- Within SAD, includes SAW, SAC, SAS & SAJ
- Covers Navigation O&M dredging & beach sand placement; Planning & Regulatory actions



SARBO Scope – South Atlantic Coast



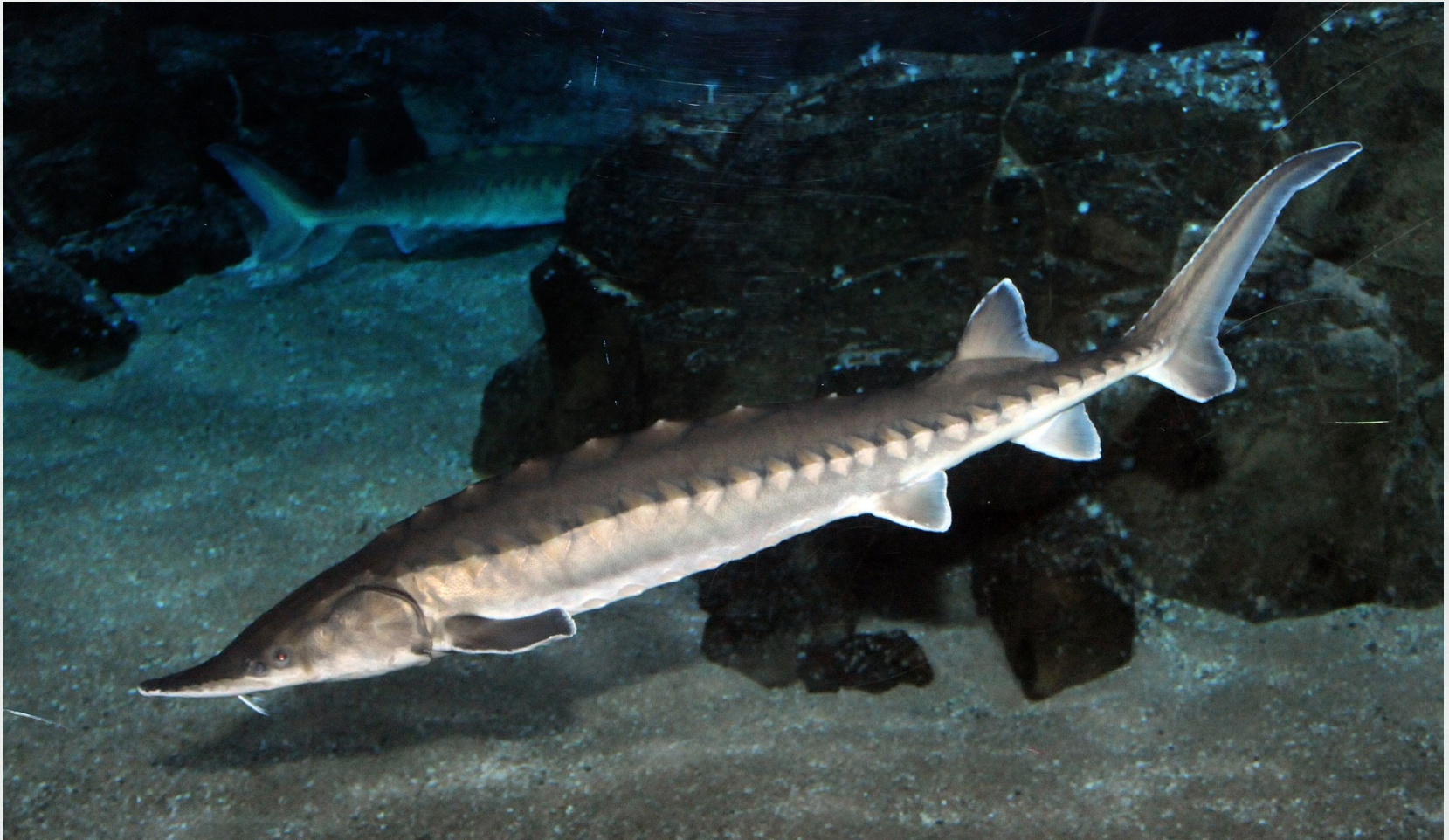
North Atlantic Right Whale & Calf



Green Sea Turtle



Atlantic Sturgeon



Staghorn Coral



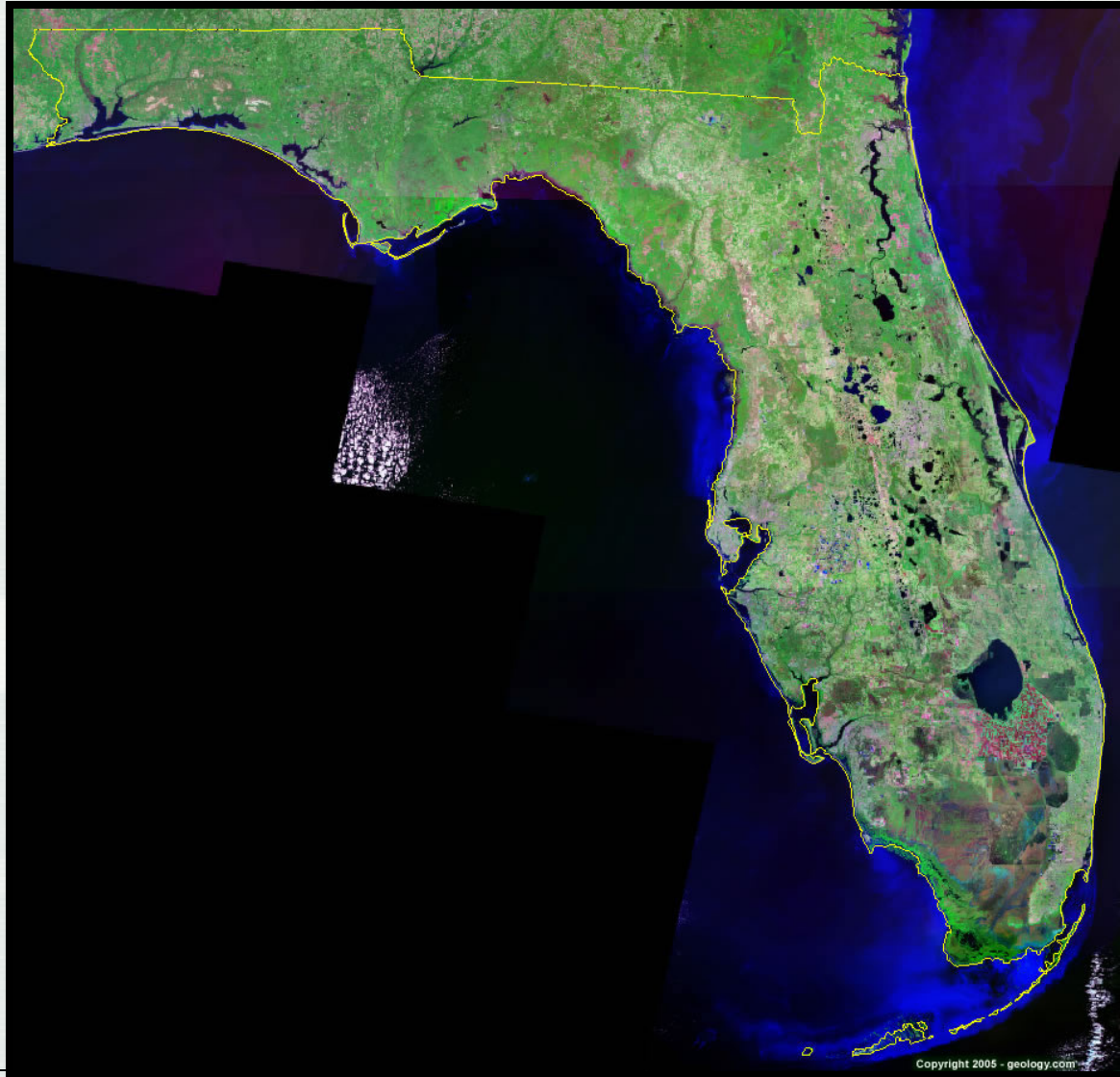
Tip #1: Use Regional or Programmatic Biological Opinions

Example #3:

- Florida Statewide Programmatic Biological Opinion (SPBO) issued by the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service (USFWS)
- Within SAD, includes SAJ & SAM
- Covers beach sand placement; Planning & Regulatory actions



Scope of Florida SPBO – FL Coast



Beach Nourishment



Beach Nourishment—Aerial View



Loggerhead Sea Turtle - Nesting



Loggerhead Nest with Eggs



Tip #1: Use Regional or Programmatic Biological Opinions

Benefits:

- Reduced workload for USACE & agencies
- Saves time & money for all
- Removes uncertainty about availability of the biological opinion



Tip #1: Use Regional or Programmatic Biological Opinions

Benefits (continued):

- Terms & Conditions clearly defined in biological opinion; avoids stress & conflicts
- Allows agency staff to focus on high priority SMART Planning studies



Tip #1: Use Regional or Programmatic Biological Opinions

Constraints:

- Biological opinions apply to reoccurring, similar activities; not likely to apply to new construction or new SMART Planning study
- Section 7 consultation may require a considerable investment of time & effort to prepare the biological assessment and negotiate the biological opinion



North Atlantic Right Whale



Tip # 2: Assist Agencies with Prioritization of USACE Workload

Example:

- SAD/NMFS Biological Opinion Tracking Spreadsheet for formal Sec. 7 consultations
- Clearly defines SAD priorities for NMFS
- Allows for prioritization of SMART Planning studies



Example of a page from the NMFS Biop Tracking Sheet

Priority Number	District or Division	USACE Action	Biological Assessment (BA) Description	USACE Requested Draft BO Date/ NMFS BO Issuance Date	Issues/Challenges/Comments	Critical Milestones & Effects of Delayed BO Issuance
1	SAM	MsCIP Barrier Island Restoration	BA request for sand mining and placement activities in Camille Cut and along East Ship Island - occurs within Gulf sturgeon critical habitat.	SAM: NMFS: Draft Bio. Op. in internal review	Mobile District received \$439 million for construction. The proposed Sand Island borrow source is not available, but construction may proceed with other available borrow sources. Mobile District coordinating potential alternative borrow sources with NMFS. The alternative borrow sources, if suitable, would potentially be lower cost.	Critical Milestone: Complete draft of Final SEIS Date: 5 Nov. 2014 Construction scheduled for Spring 2015 would be delayed.
2	SAD	Update of the South Atlantic Regional Biological Opinion (SARBO)	Regional BA that covers all maintenance dredging (to include beach renourishment) and disposal activities for the South Atlantic.	SAD: Target: Summer 2015 NMFS: Target: Summer 2015	(1) Proposed programmatic consultation process; (2) Beach sand placement and potential for effects on near-shore hard-bottom habitat; (3) Proposed right whale 10-knot speed restriction for hopper dredges	Critical Milestone: Need coverage for items of potential legal liability Date: Need ASAP Note: 21 Mar 14 letter from NMFS and SAD 25 Apr 14 letter provide temp coverage for Atlantic sturgeon.
3	SAM	Bayou Casotte (USACE assumption of maintenance for channel widening)	BA evaluates effects on Gulf sturgeon critical habitat of future Federal assumption of maintenance of widened navigation channel.	SAM: 12 Dec. 2014 NMFS: Draft Bio. Op in internal review	NMFS has issued a Biological Opinion to USACE Regulatory evaluating the effects of project construction.	Critical Milestone: Complete draft of Final Report and EIS Date: 12 Dec. 2014



Green Sea Turtle—Nesting



Tip #3: Engage Agencies at Leadership & Staff Levels

Example:

- SAD weekly coordination calls with NMFS
- Communicate regularly at staff & leadership levels, both in the Districts and at the MSC
- Meet periodically in person to discuss concerns and resolve problems



Green Sea Turtle—Juvenile



Tip #4: Hold Annual Inter-agency Meetings

Example:

- SAD's biannual Threatened & Endangered Species coordination meeting with NMFS & USFWS
- May hold meeting in conjunction with other meetings, e.g. ocean disposal & EPA
- Opportunity to explore new approaches, e.g. Section 7(a)(1) conservation process



Tip #5: Engage Agencies Early in the Planning Process

Example:

- Central Everglades Planning Project
- Involved Section 7 ESA consultations with NMFS & USFWS
- Facilitated resolution of complex threatened & endangered species issues
- Paved way for successful study



Cape Sable Seaside Sparrow



Everglades Snail Kite



Tip #6: Locate an Agency Liaison in a USACE Office

Example:

- Comprehensive Everglades Restoration Plan (CERP); USFWS liaison at SAJ
- For large programs, funding may be available for a USFWS or NMFS liaison to be located in a District office
- Facilitates open communication & builds trust

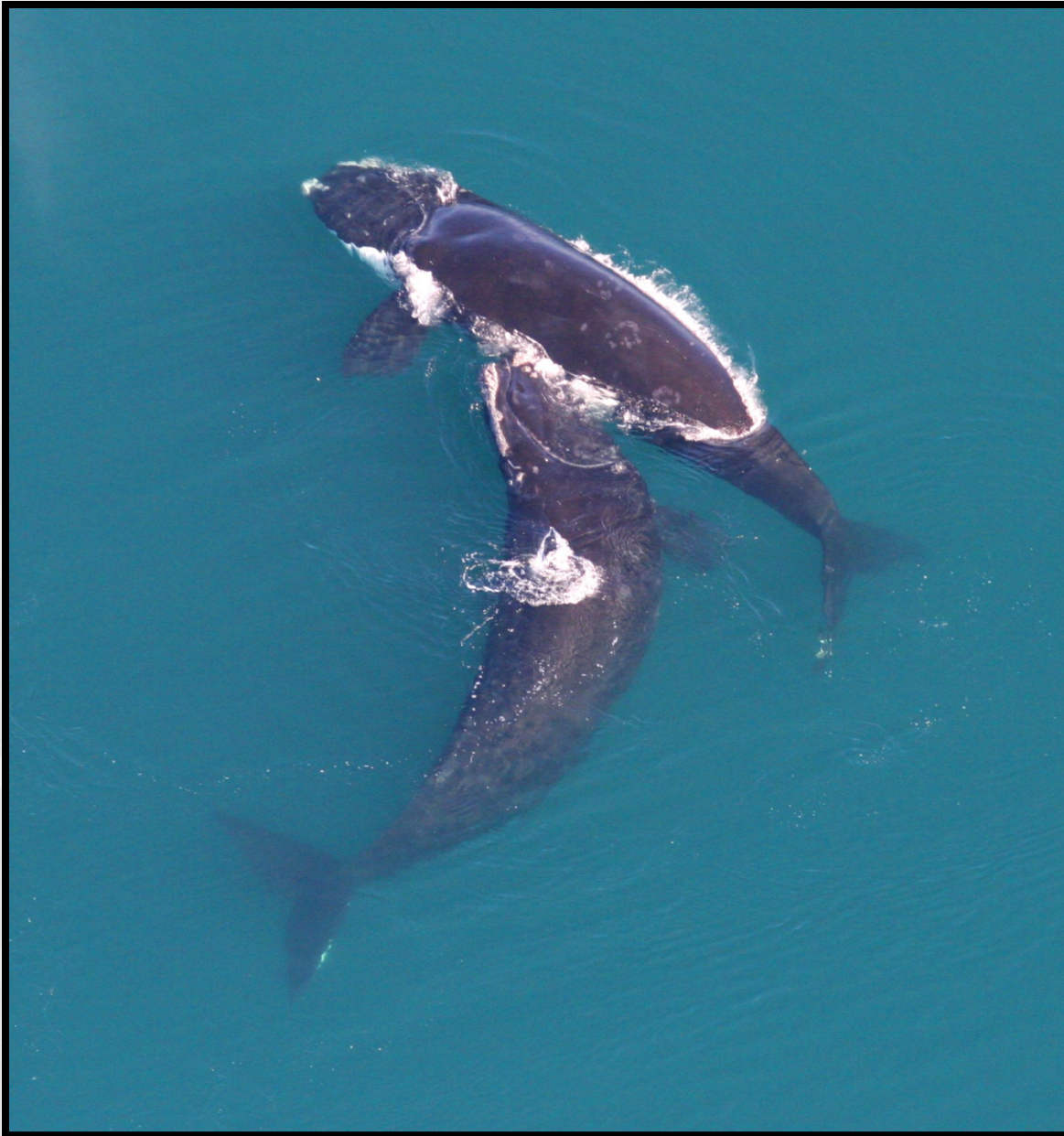


Tip #7: Locate USACE Staff in an Agency Office

Examples:

- Developmental assignments in the NMFS Southeast Region Office and USFWS North Florida Field Office
- Excellent training opportunity for USACE staff
- Assists the resource agency with workload





Tip #8: Participate in Joint, Inter-Agency Training

Example:

- USACE/USFWS Section 7 ESA Consultation Training
- Training hosted by USFWS
- Excellent training opportunity for USACE staff
- Allows USACE and agency staff to discuss consultation process, share interpretations



Summary

- Tip #1 – Use regional or programmatic biological opinions
- Tip #2 – Assist agencies with prioritization of USACE workload
- Tip #3 – Engage agencies at leadership & staff levels
- Tip #4 – Hold annual inter-agency meetings



Summary (continued)

- Tip #5 – Engage agencies early in the Planning process
- Tip #6 – Locate an agency liaison in a USACE office
- Tip #7 – Locate USACE staff in an agency office
- Tip #8 – Participate in joint, inter-agency training



