

NOAA NATIONAL HURRICANE CENTER

National Hurricane Center's Revised Eastern North Pacific Offshore Forecast Zones and Web Interface

The National Hurricane Center has recently provided more detail in its Eastern North Pacific Offshore Zone forecast product, in order to provide better service for the Blue Water mariners.

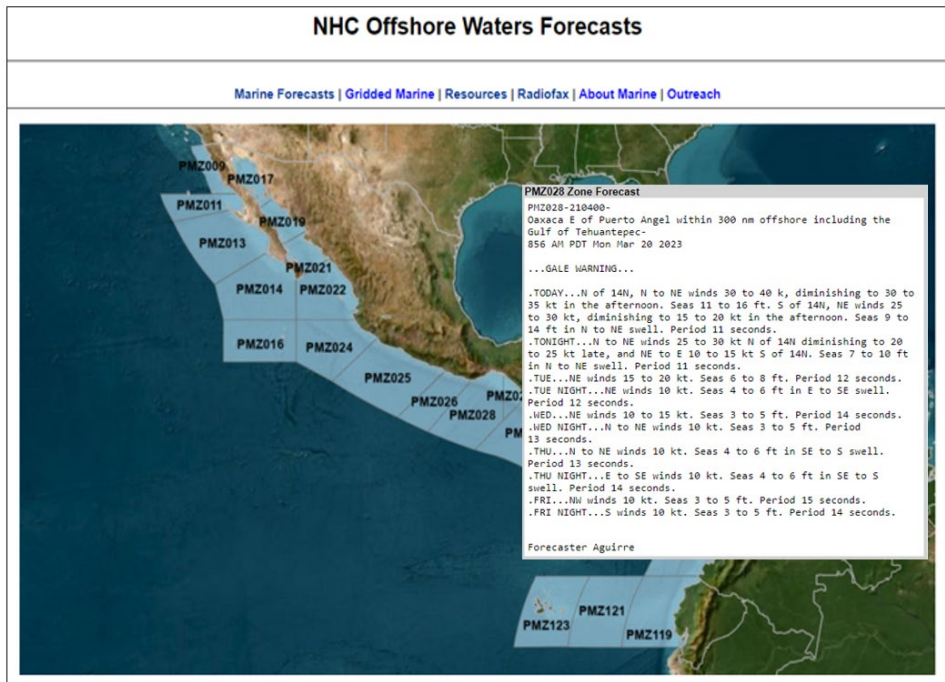
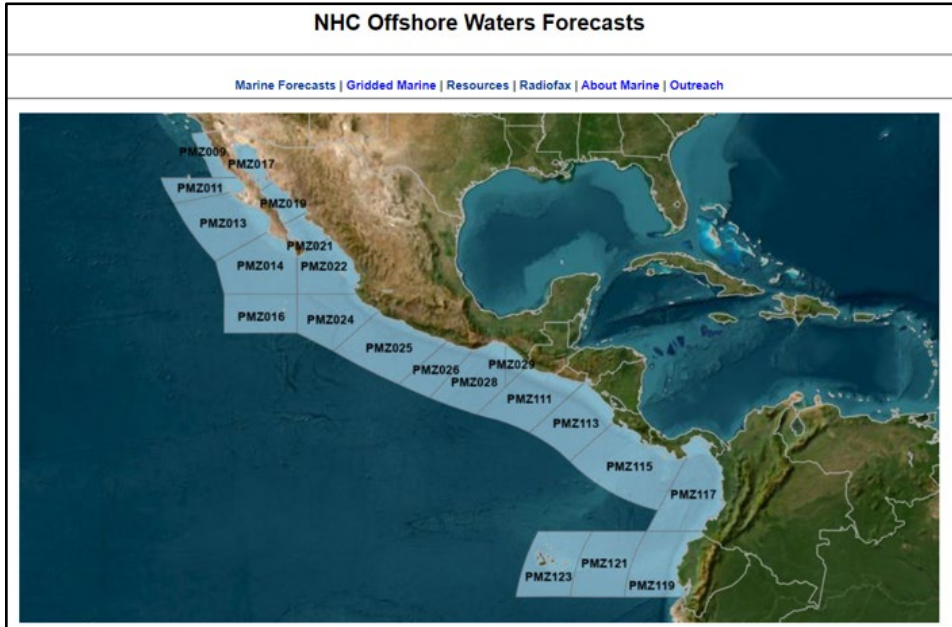
Overview: The Tropical Analysis and Forecast Branch of the National Hurricane Center (NHC/TAFB) issues forecasts for the Pacific offshore waters of Mexico. This is an active area for weather, with frequent hurricanes during the summer and fall. In addition, there are strong gap wind events in the Gulf of Tehuantepec in southern Mexico, primarily during the winter and spring. Three of the previous offshore zones were too large to adequately describe the variety of weather mariners experience in these zones. This revision remedies this problem and provides more concise wording in NHC/TAFB offshore zone text forecasts.

In the Gulf of Tehuantepec, a very large zone has been split into three separate offshore zones in order to better specify the extreme winds that can occur between Puerto Angel, Mexico and 94°W. Similarly, along the southern tip of Baja California and the entrance to the Gulf of California, two very large zones were split along 20°N in order to better differentiate areas to the south. These southern zones tend to get more tropical cyclone activity versus areas to the north which tend to get more winds/swell in the winter and spring.

Recently, the 10 existing zones over the Mexican Offshore waters have now become 14 zones, which continue to be available in the [OFFPZ7 text product](#). The 7 existing zones for the Central American/Equatorial Pacific Offshore waters have not changed and continue to be available in the [OFFPZ8 text product](#). ***A hover-over version of the new Offshore Zones is now available [here](#).***

Benefits to mariners: Forecast quality should improve by aligning the zone configuration more closely with the local wind and wave climatology. The new smaller zones should also result in more precise wording, thus better informing mariners about adverse conditions. Given that experienced mariners also understand the local weather patterns, these new zones result in enhanced forecast accuracy and better service to marine users.

For more information: A [video](#) has been developed that describes the motivation and the details for the changes to the Offshore Zones. For specifics about the new zone configurations, please see the [Service Change Notice](#).



Contact: NHC Public Affairs: nhc.public.affairs@noaa.gov

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