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PNSWSH

Service Change Notice 22-114  
National Weather Service Headquarters Silver Spring MD  
500 PM EST Wed Dec 14 2022

To:           Subscribers:  
              -NOAA Weather Wire Service  
              -Emergency Managers Weather Information Network  
              -NOAAPort  
              Other NWS Partners, Users and Employees

From:        Greg Schoor, Chief  
              Marine, Tropical and Tsunami Services Branch

Subject: Changes to Marine Zones for Weather Forecast Office Lake  
Charles, LA: Effective March 8, 2023

Reference: Service Change Notice (SCN) 22-121: Changes to Public and Fire  
Weather Zones for NWS Lake Charles, LA: Effective March 8, 2023

[https://www.weather.gov/media/notification/pdf2/scn22-121\\_public\\_fire\\_lch.pdf](https://www.weather.gov/media/notification/pdf2/scn22-121_public_fire_lch.pdf)

Effective March 8, 2023, by 300 PM Central Standard Time (CST), 2100 Coordinated Universal Time (UTC), the NWS Weather Forecast Office in Lake Charles, LA (LCH) will complete changes to Marine Forecast Zones encompassing Vermilion, West Cote Blanche Bay, East Cote Blanche Bay and Atchafalaya Bay. After this change, all marine forecasts and related products will use the zone numbers and names shown below.

If March 8, 2023 is declared a Critical Weather Day, this implementation will be postponed to March 9, 2023.

These changes are intended to provide increased flexibility and improved accuracy of forecast, watch, warning and advisory products in the marine weather program.

Marine Zone for GMZ435-Vermilion Bay will be renamed GMZ435-Vermilion and West Cote Blanche Bays to reflect the names of both bays this marine zone covers. The zone boundary will remain the same.

A new marine zone, GMZ436-Atchafalaya and East Cote Blanche Bays, will be created. This area is currently within the northeastern extent of marine zone GMZ455-Lower Atchafalaya River to Intracoastal City out 20 Nautical Miles.

The main justifications for the creation of GMZ436-Atchafalaya and East Cote Blanche Bays marine zone are:

Marine Fog. This area has much colder water temperatures being emptied from the Atchafalaya River in the winter and spring months, which often leads to persistent marine fog lasting much longer than the remainder of

GMZ455-Lower Atchafalaya River to Intracoastal City out 20 Nautical Miles marine zone.

Wave Height Differences. The shallow waters in the Atchafalaya and East Cote Blanche Bays have lower wave heights than the remainder of GMZ455-Lower Atchafalaya River to Intracoastal City out 20 Nautical Miles marine zone. This area would benefit from the bay waters wave height wording that the Vermilion Bay zone is currently using.

Low Water Advisories. The shallow waters in the Atchafalaya and East Cote Blanche Bays need the ability for a Low Water Advisory to be issued during periods of strong offshore flow behind strong cold fronts. This is not advisable using the current zone configuration GMZ455-Lower Atchafalaya River to Intracoastal City out 20 Nautical Miles marine zone.

Table 1: Current Marine Zones and Corresponding Universal Geographic Codes (UGCs) for WFO Lake Charles:

UGC: Current Marine Zone Name

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GMZ435: Vermilion

Table 2: Marine Zones and Corresponding UGCs for which WFO Lake Charles Will Issue Forecasts and Warnings Effective March 8, 2023:

UGC: New Marine Zone Name

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GMZ435: Vermilion and West Cote Blanche Bays

GMZ436: Atchafalaya and East Cote Blanche Bays

Table 3: NWS Products Affected by the WFO Lake Charles, LA Marine Forecast Zone Changes:

Product Name	WMO Heading	AWIPS ID
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Tsunami Message	WEXX20 PAAQ	TSUAT1
Marine Weather Message	WHUS74 KLCH	MWWLCH
Special Marine Warning	WHUS54 KLCH	SMWLCH
Marine Weather Statement	FZUS74 KLCH	MWSLCH
Coastal Waters Forecast	FZUS54 KLCH	CWFLCH
Area Forecast Discussion	FXUS64 KLCH	AFDLCH
Hazardous Weather Outlook	FLUS44 KLCH	HWOLCH
Watch County Notification	WWUS64 KLCH	WCNLCH

NWS partners and users will need to make necessary changes to their communications systems to accommodate these weather forecast zone changes.

Preliminary shapefiles for marine zones are available online at:

<https://www.weather.gov/gis/MarineZones>

Final versions of these shapefiles will be available on January 17, 2023.

A written and graphical depiction of this change is online at:

<https://www.weather.gov/lch/2023MarineZoneChange>

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National Service Change Notices are online at:

<https://www.weather.gov/notification/>

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