

Exclusive Economic Zone

Description - The zone or area beyond and adjacent to the territorial sea. In this area, the U.S., like other coastal nations, has sovereign rights and exclusive jurisdiction to protect and manage its natural resources, including any economic development. The seaward limit of the EEZ is generally 200 nautical miles from the baseline. The U.S. does not have sovereignty in the EEZ as it does in its territory. Foreign vessels and nationals maintain the high seas freedoms or rights of navigation and overflight in the EEZ, as well as the right to lay and maintain submarine cables and pipelines. However, such rights are still subject to regulation by the U.S. in accordance with international law, including UNCLOS.

Primary Agency – National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA), National Ocean Service, Office of the Coast Survey.

Spatial Extent - The EEZ is the maritime zone adjacent to the territorial sea and generally extends out to 200 nautical miles from the baseline, unless it would extend into or overlap with a 200 EEZ of an opposite or adjacent nation. In such cases, the states should achieve an equitable solution through an agreement on the delimitation of their respective EEZs. The 200 nm outer boundary line, like the baseline from which it is measured, is ambulatory.

Description - Presidential Proclamation 5030, March 10, 1983 (3 C.F.R. 22); the Magnuson Act, 16 U.S.C. § 1802 (11) (definition of EEZ); 60 F.R. 43825 (Aug. 23, 1995)(public notice of the limits of the U.S. EEZ - supercedes all previous public notices of any fishery conservation zone or EEZ)

Official Depiction – NOAA nautical charts

Known Digital Data Source - Information about these data are available on-line from NOAA's Office of Coast Survey at <http://chartmaker.ncd.noaa.gov/csdl/eez.htm>

Notes - Data and documentation inconsistencies exist.

Issues - Offshore boundary lines are measured along an arc over the earth's ellipsoidal surface (chord length); therefore, arc distance varies with latitude and azimuth corresponding to variations in the radius of the earth's surface. As a result, the arc length must be computed (in three-dimensional space) separately for each stretch of coastline, even though the projection distance remains unchanged (Ball 1997). Many boundaries have been created

using a buffer function in a geographic information system. This process does not take into account chord length or distortion due to projection and often may result in an inaccurate representation of the "envelope of arcs." Accordingly, the GIS boundary data may not accurately reflect the official or actual boundary.