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REPORT TO CONGRESS: COASTAL BARRIER RESOURCES SYSTEM

Proposed Recommendations for Additions to or Deletions
from the Coastal Barrier Resources System



**VOLUME 13
GEORGIA**

U.S. Department of the Interior

February 1987



REPORT TO CONGRESS: COASTAL BARRIER RESOURCES SYSTEM

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**Proposed Recommendations for Additions to or Deletions from
the Coastal Barrier Resources System**

GEORGIA

Mapped, edited, and published by the Coastal Barriers Study Group

**United States Department of the Interior
William P. Horn, Assistant Secretary for Fish and Wildlife and Parks**

February 1987

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GEORGIA

INTRODUCTION

The Coastal Barrier Resources Act (CBRA) of 1982 (Public Law 97-348) established the Coastal Barrier Resources System (CBRS), a system of undeveloped coastal barriers along the Atlantic and Gulf of Mexico coasts. This atlas of coastal barriers in Georgia has been prepared in accordance with Section 10 of CBRA (16 U.S.C. 3509), which states:

Sec. 10. Reports to Congress.

(a) In General.--Before the close of the 3-year period beginning on the date of the enactment of this Act, the Secretary shall prepare and submit to the Committees a report regarding the System.

(b) Consultation in Preparing Report.--The Secretary shall prepare the report required under subsection (a) in consultation with the Governors of the States in which System units are located and with the coastal zone management agencies of the States in which System units are located and after providing opportunity for, and considering, public comment.

(c) Report Content.--The report required under subsection (a) shall contain--

(1) recommendations for the conservation of fish, wildlife, and other natural resources of the System based on an evaluation and comparison of all management alternatives, and combinations thereof, such as State and local actions (including management plans approved under the Coastal Zone Management Act of 1972 (16 U.S.C. 1451 et seq.)), Federal actions (including acquisition for administration as part of the National Wildlife Refuge System), and initiatives by private organizations and individuals;

(2) recommendations for additions to, or deletions from, the Coastal Barrier Resources System, and for modifications to the boundaries of System units;

(3) a summary of the comments received from the Governors of the States, State coastal zone management agencies, other government officials, and the public regarding the System; and

(4) an analysis of the effects, if any, that general revenue sharing grants made under section 102 of the State and Local Fiscal Assistance Amendments of 1972 (31 U.S.C. 1221) have had on undeveloped coastal barriers.

This atlas of Georgia includes delineations of the CBRS units designated by Congress in 1982 and delineations of proposed recommendations for additions and modifications to the CBRS that will be provided to Congress by the Department of the Interior following public review and comment.

Under the direction of the Assistant Secretary for Fish and Wildlife and Parks, this report has been prepared by the Coastal Barriers Study Group, a task force of professionals representing the National Park Service, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, U.S. Geological Survey, and other Departmental offices.

BACKGROUND

The Sea Islands of the Georgia coast are an interrelated system of relatively short and wide barrier islands and back barrier marshes, separated by tidal inlets and sounds. The 18 barrier islands protect extensive coastal marshlands located between the mainland and the barriers. The coast has approximately 94 miles of oceanfront beach and over 500,000 acres of adjacent marshlands.

The economy of the State, in general, is dominated by manufacturing, construction, agriculture, fisheries, retail trade, and service industries. The economy of coastal Georgia is based on the region's resources, namely forests, fisheries, waterways, and natural and historic features. Two major ports, Savannah and Brunswick, handle extensive cargo transportation in the region. Another industry prominent in the coastal area and related to forest products is paper and pulp processing. Several pulp mills are located in the Brunswick and Savannah regions.

The State has abundant natural resources because of its extensive back barrier salt marsh complexes and numerous rivers and sounds. Aquatic resources include oysters, clams, shrimp, crab, menhaden, spotted seatrout, kingfish, drum, bluefish, flounder, and sheepshead. Transient and wintering

waterfowl are found in coastal waters, and shorebirds and marshbirds on beaches and in marshes. Loggerhead turtles nest annually on most of the coastal barriers.

COASTAL RESOURCE MANAGEMENT

Georgia Coastal Resource Management

The Georgia Department of Natural Resources and Coastal Resources Division (CRD) are the State's principal policy-making branches concerned with coastal resources. The CRD functions in three main areas: marine and estuarine fisheries; shore, beach, and tidal wetlands protection; and coastline management. Georgia has not joined the Coastal Zone Management Program at the Federal level. The Coastal Protection Section of CRD protects and manages the coastal marshlands, ocean beaches, and sand dune systems.

Permits

A three-member Coastal Marshlands Committee issues permits under the Coastal Marshlands Protection Act of 1970. A Shore Assistance Committee (SAC) similarly assures conservation and environmentally sound use of dunes, beaches, and offshore sandbars through permits mandated by the Shore Assistance Act of 1979. The State is considering amending this Act to include stronger language defining the State's jurisdiction in permitting procedures. Also, a tentative reevaluation is being made concerning possible participation in the Federal Coastal Resources Management Program.

Taxes

The Facade and Conservation Easement Act of 1976 establishes a legal framework for conservation easement of land in Georgia. The Act requires local tax assessors to reappraise the value of the property in which an easement has been established. Several agencies, such as the Georgia Conservancy and The Nature Conservancy, accept conservation easements.

The development of a coastal management program in Georgia has been relatively slow. This is partly due to limited development pressures in the coastal zone. The recent

establishment of a task force on Tybee Island, concerned principally with the effects of channel maintenance on the Savannah River ship channel and its subsequent impact on the beaches of Tybee Island, suggests willingness at the State level to deal more directly with coastal issues.

EXISTING CBRS UNITS

The existing CBRS units are all located on or within barrier islands and include some associated wetlands. The only unit likely to be affected by development pressure is Sea Island (N04) which is a spit on the southern end of Sea Island. It has some resort, home, and recreational development. The other units are accessible by boat only and are adjacent to, surrounded by, or in protected land ownership situations.

A brief description of each existing CBRS unit in Georgia is provided below. Each unit is identified by its number, name, and the county in which it is located.

N01-Little Tybee Island (Chatham). This unit is a low-lying barrier with maximum elevations of 10 ft. It is characterized by multiple dune ridges and extensive salt marshes. Large waterfowl populations winter on the island.

N01A-Wassaw Island (Chatham). This unit is an enclave within the boundaries of the Wassaw National Wildlife Refuge. The barrier island is characterized by multiple dune ridges with associated tidal wetlands. Over 200 species of birds are found in the habitats on Wassaw Island.

N03-Little St. Simons Island (Glynn). This privately owned island has 6.1 miles of beachfront which shelter extensive tidal marshlands and open water. A small development of a dozen buildings is located on the island. The island has been used as a hunting preserve and is reported to have the most diverse bird habitat in the State. Deer and cattle have caused some overgrazing in the dune areas. The island development is run as a private hotel for naturalists.

N04-Sea Island (Glynn). This unit is a sand spit located on the south end of

CBRS UNITS IN GEORGIA ESTABLISHED BY CONGRESS, 1982

Unit Name	Unit ID Code	County	Shoreline Length (miles)	Area (acres)
Little Tybee Island	N01	Chatham	5.0	7,888.6
Wassaw Island	N01A	Chatham	0.2	314.2
Little St. Simons Island	N03	Glynn	6.7	12,610.0
Sea Island	N04	Glynn	1.6	438.2
Little Cumberland Island	N05	Camden	0.3	1,639.7
Cumberland Island	N06	Camden	2.4	10,182.2
Totals:			16.2	33,072.9

Sea Island. No structures are located on the spit. Access is limited to pedestrian beach use from the developed area north of the unit. Future growth of the Cloister Resort complex on Sea Island could exert development pressure on this unit.

N05-Little Cumberland Island (Camden). This unit is primarily vegetated dune ridges, tidal creeks, and marshlands. Some private homes are located on Little Cumberland Island but access is strictly limited to boats.

N06-Cumberland Island (Camden). This unit is surrounded by the Cumberland Island National Seashore. It includes beachfront and associated dune environments, saltwater and brackish water marshlands, and open water. Large waterfowl populations inhabit the island. Wild horses on the island cause some trampling of dune vegetation and promote dune migrations.

PROPOSED ADDITIONS AND MODIFICATIONS

This section identifies proposed additions to and deletions from the Coastal Barrier Resources System in Georgia. The Secretary of the Interior, as directed by Section 10 of the Coastal Barrier Resources Act, will make his final recommendations to the Congress after a 90-day public comment period. The following proposed recommendations have been developed in response to public, State and Federal agency, and Congressional comments on the Coastal Barrier Draft Inventory developed

by the Study Group. The inventory maps were available for public comment between March 4, 1985, and September 30, 1985. The process and criteria used in the inventory were described on March 4, 1985, in the Federal Register (Vol. 50, No. 42).

The State of Georgia is opposed to any changes in the Coastal Barrier Resources System in that State. The Department received 21 other comments concerning Georgia; all but three of these opposed the CBRS expansion.

The Department of the Interior proposes to recommend that all undeveloped, unprotected coastal barriers and associated aquatic habitat identified in the inventory be added to the Coastal Barrier Resources System. Drum Point Island, part of the Cumberland Island unit (N06), is managed by the Navy; therefore, the Department recommends that it be deleted from the unit. A table presenting the Department's current position on each unit identified in the inventory follows this discussion.

Public comment on the proposed recommendations is solicited.

Comments should be directed to:

The Coastal Barriers Study Group
Department of the Interior
National Park Service
P.O. Box 37127
Washington, DC 20013-7127.

SUMMARY OF PROPOSED RECOMMENDATIONS FOR COASTAL BARRIERS IN GEORGIA

Unit ID Code ^a	Unit Name ^b	County	Congress. Dist. ^c	Shoreline Length (miles) ^d	Area (acres) ^e	Proposed Recommendation ^f
GA-01	Fort Pulaski	Chatham	1	—	—	Federally protected (NPS); no further consideration
N01	Little Tybee Island	Chatham	1	7.81	19,907	Add additional wetland to existing CBRS unit; no change from inventory
N01A	Wassaw Island	Chatham	1	0.20	314	Delete Federally protected (FWS) area from inventory; no change to existing CBRS unit
GA-02	Ossabaw Island	Chatham Bryan	1	—	—	State protected; no further consideration
GA-03	St. Catherines Island	Liberty McIntosh	1	—	—	Privately protected; no further consideration

(continued)

SUMMARY OF PROPOSED RECOMMENDATIONS FOR COASTAL BARRIERS IN GEORGIA (CONCLUDED)

Unit ID Code ^a	Unit Name ^b	County	Congress. Dist. ^c	Shoreline Length (miles) ^d	Area (acres) ^e	Proposed Recommendation ^f
GA-04	Sapelo Island	McIntosh	1	—	—	State/Federally (FWS) protected; no further consideration
GA-05	Wolf Island	McIntosh	1	—	—	Federally (FWS) protected; no further consideration
N03	Little St. Simons Island	Glynn	1	6.70	15,645	Add additional wetlands to existing CBRS unit
N04	Sea Island	Glynn	1	1.60	4,626	Northern segment delineated in inventory developed; no further consideration. Add wetlands to existing CBRS unit
GA-06	Jekyll Island	Glynn Camden	1	—	—	State protected; no further consideration
N05	Little Cumberland Island	Camden	1	0.00	10,873	Delete Federally protected (NPS) area from inventory; add wetlands to existing CBRS unit
N06	Cumberland Island	Camden	1	2.40	16,478	Delete Federally (NPS) protected and military (Navy) areas from inventory and existing unit; add wetlands to existing CBRS unit
Total - CBRS as Recommended				18.71	67,843	
Existing CBRS				16.2	33,073	
Net Change in CBRS				+2.51	+34,770	

^aUNIT ID CODE - State initials (GA) plus a number identify a proposed new unit. An existing unit is identified by the legal code letter (N) and number established by Congress in 1982.

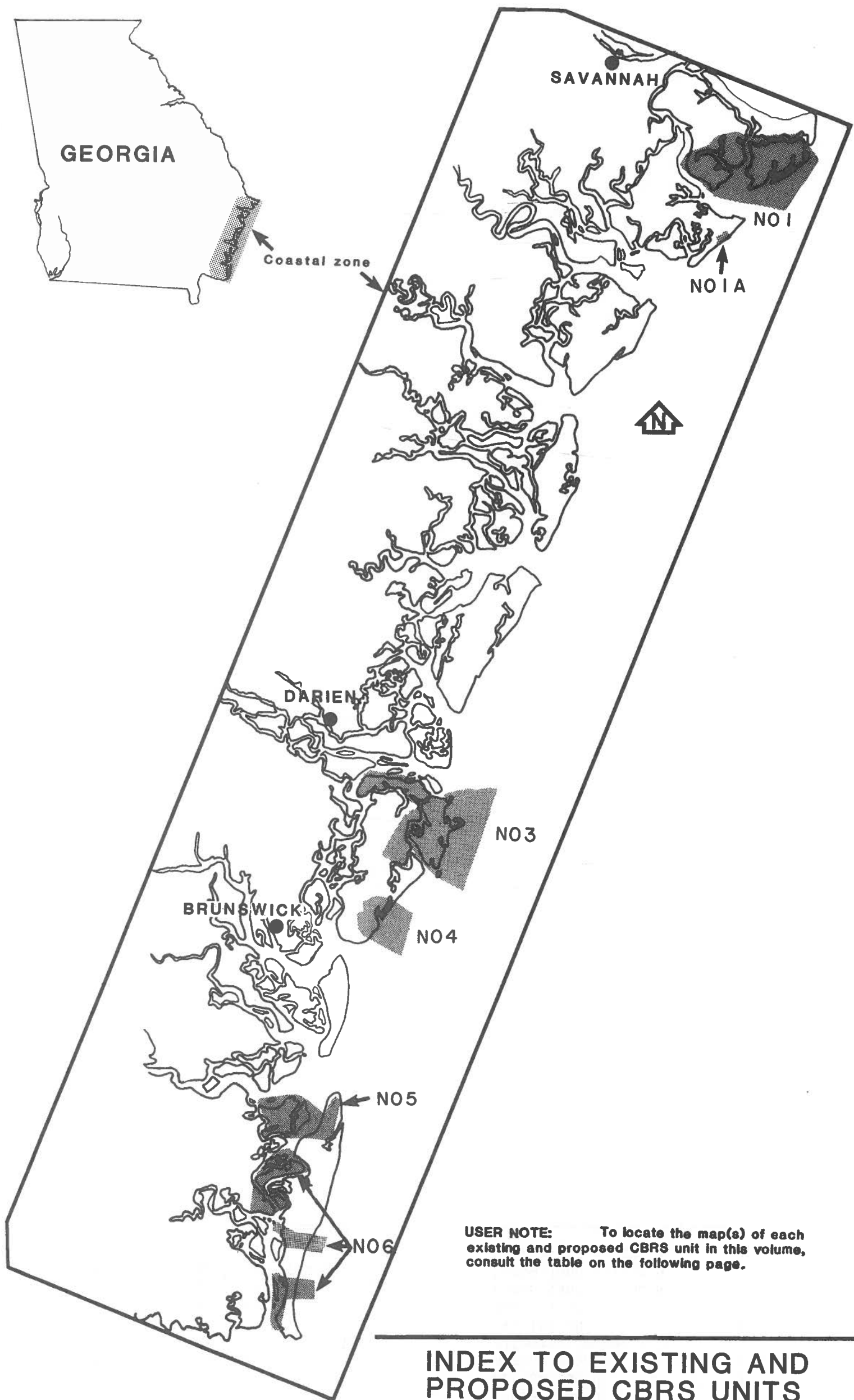
^bUNIT NAME - For proposed new units, this is a provisional name based on a prominent local feature. For existing CBRS units, this is the legal name.

^cCONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT - U.S. Congressional District in which unit is located.

^dSHORELINE LENGTH - For existing units with additions or deletions, this length is for the entire unit, as modified.

^eAREA - For existing units with additions or deletions, this area is for the entire unit, as modified.

^fPROPOSED RECOMMENDATION - A brief explanation of the differences between the 1985 inventory and the recommendations proposed in this revised inventory. For more detailed explanations, please contact the Study Group. Abbreviations: FWS = Fish and Wildlife Service, NPS = National Park Service, CBRS = Coastal Barrier Resources System. Barriers no longer under consideration are not mapped in this atlas.

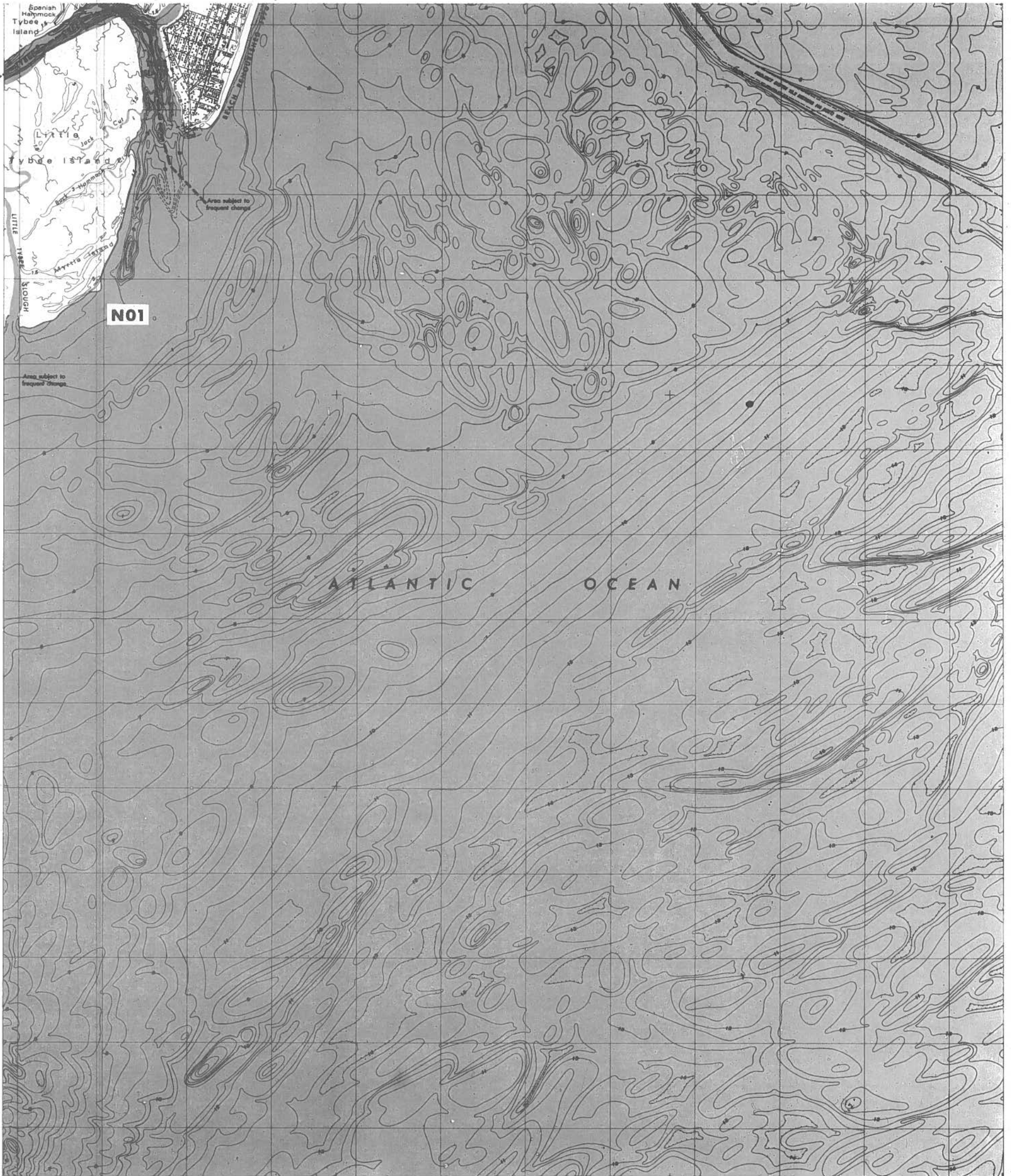


EXISTING AND PROPOSED CBRS UNITS AND THEIR LOCATION IN THIS VOLUME

Unit ID Code	Unit Name	USGS Topographic Map or Map Composite	Page
N01	Little Tybee Island	Tybee Island South	8
		Wassaw Sound	9
N01A	Wassaw Island	Wassaw Sound	9
N03	Little St. Simons Island	Altamaha Sound	10
		Sea Island	11
N04	Sea Island	Sea Island	11
N05	Little Cumberland Island	Cumberland Island N.	12
N06	Cumberland Island	Cumberland Island N.	12
		Cumberland Island S.	13

MAP KEY

-----	Existing CBRS units
_____	Proposed additions to or deletions from CBRS
ADD	Area recommended for addition to a CBRS unit
DELETE	Area recommended for deletion from the CBRS
EXCLUDED	Area excluded from an existing or proposed CBRS unit because it is developed or it is otherwise protected

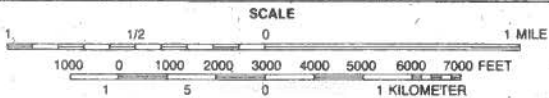


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DONALD P. HOEL, SECRETARY



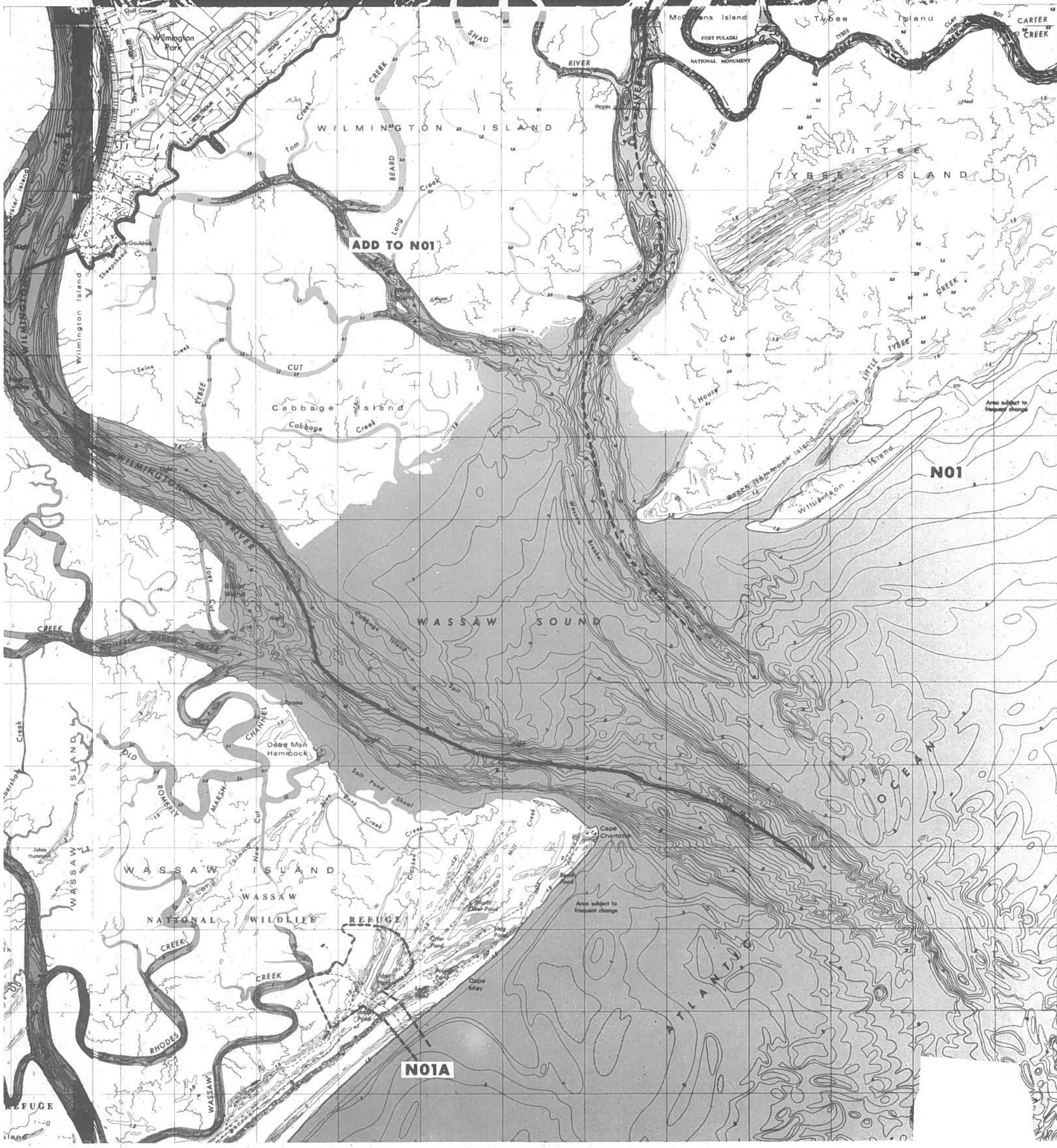
QUADRANGLE
TYBEE ISLAND SOUTH
GEORGIA



Solid lines depict proposed recommendations for additions or deletions to the Coastal Barrier Resources System. (Section 10 of P.L. 97 - 348.)
Dash lines depict approximate boundaries of existing units in the Coastal Barrier Resources System, for reference purposes only.

Mapped, edited and published
by the Coastal Barriers Study Group
U.S. Department of the Interior
Washington, D.C. 20240

Base Map is the U.S. Geological Survey 1:24,000 scale quadrangle.



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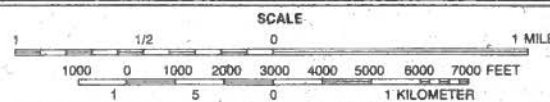
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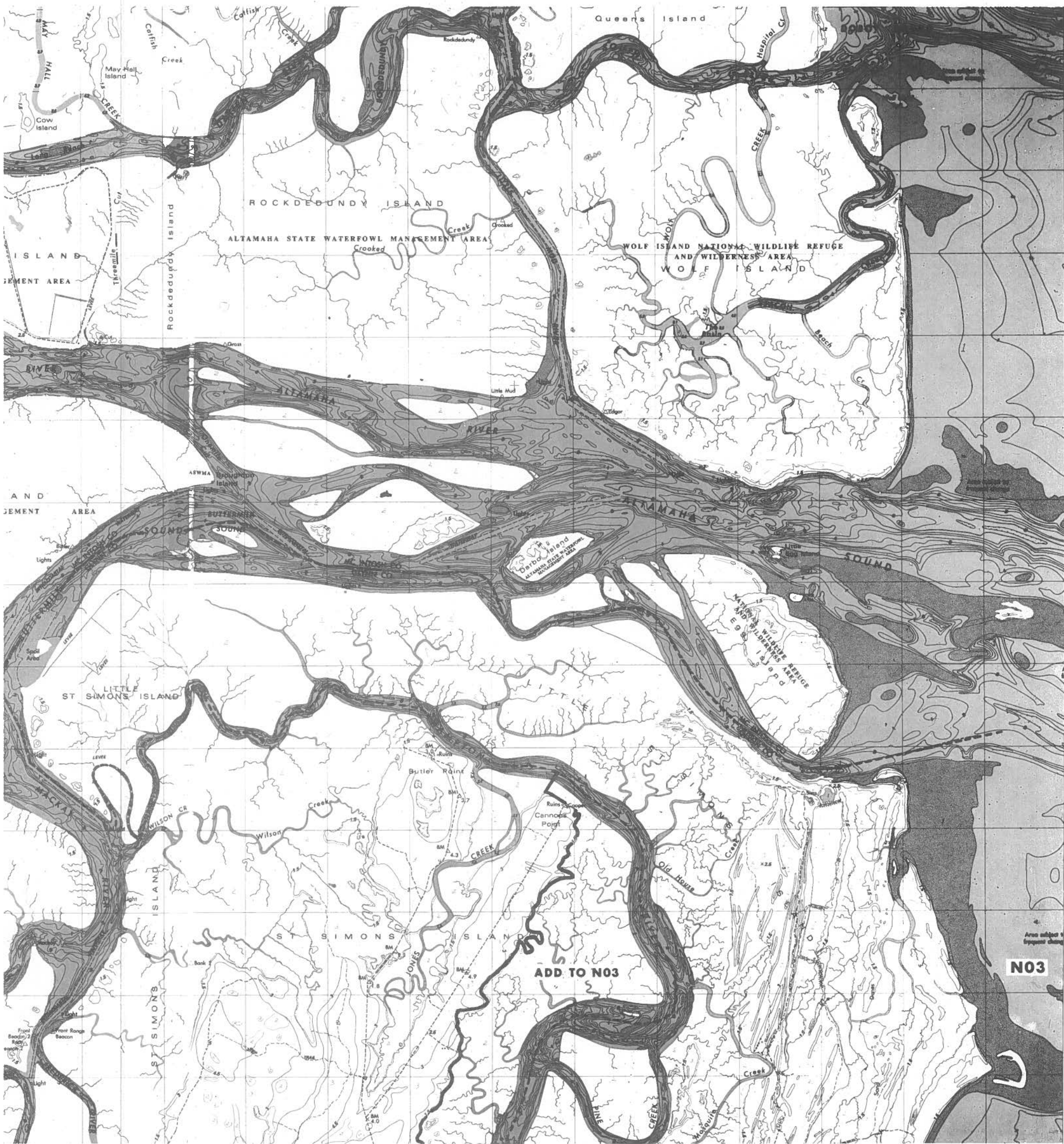
QUADRANGLE
WASSAW SOUND
GEORGIA



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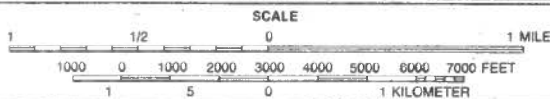
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QUADRANGLE
ALTAMAHA SOUND
GEORGIA



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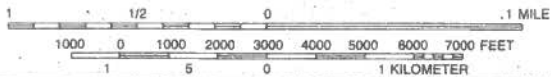


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Report to Congress on the Coastal Barrier Resources System

QUADRANGLE
SEA ISLAND
GEORGIA

SCALE



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