



New ocean floor maps help anglers find best fishing holes

NOAA maps seafloor off our coast

By Mark Collins - Meteorologist

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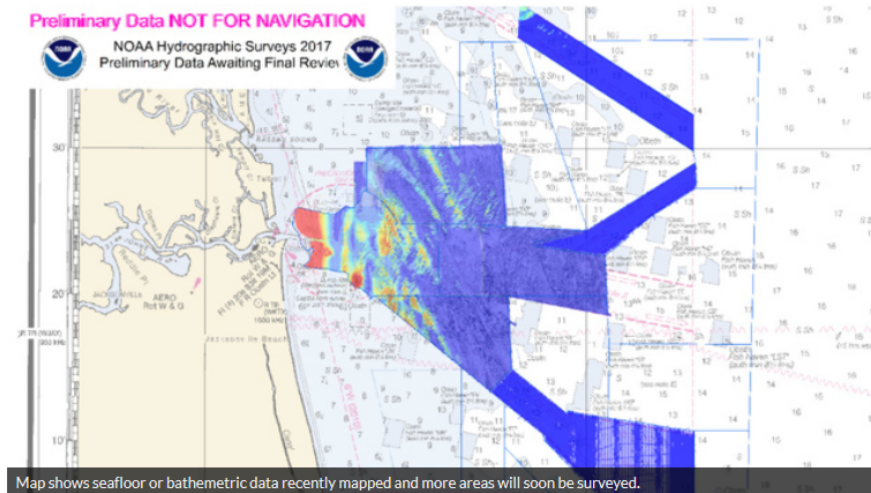
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JACKSONVILLE, Fla. - Boaters are always on the lookout for shallow areas and anglers love to find the perfect fishing hole. There are now new ocean bottom maps available to help with that.

Last summer, the [National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration](#) (NOAA) surveyed shoal spots near the St. Johns River mouth. Over the next few months, a second mapping mission will chart the seafloor terrain farther offshore.

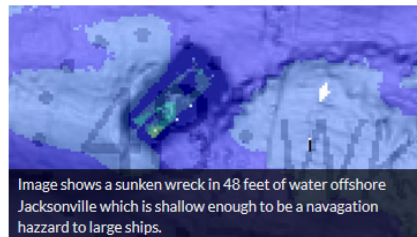
The dynamic seafloor surrounding Jacksonville has many fish havens, NOAA's Southeast Navigation Manager Kyle Ward told News4Jax. Input from local shipping captains are considered in focusing future mapping locations.

About every 15 to 20 years, NOAA's funded map survey updates navigation charts on a rotational basis, but the Jacksonville Harbor Deepening project helped push our area to the top of the wait list.

Underwater obstructions or wrecks can be hazardous to ships entering JAXPORT, which is why the 124-foot NOAA ship *Ferdinand R. Hassler* first completed the more time-consuming shallow water hydrographic survey close to the river mouth.

This summer, the twin-hulled ship will target offshore areas using a series of sonar sounds waves to generate detailed imagery of objects on the seafloor.

The second phase will take less time to map deeper water. The ship's side scan sonar emits sounds waves in a swath that spreads wider in deeper water generating detailed images of objects on the seafloor quicker.



Multibeam echo sounder data can be converted into three-dimensional representations of seafloor terrain and resolve the structures of sunken wrecks with detailed precision.

Ports are closed after storms until underwater hazards that could pose a danger to ships are cleared.

After Hurricane Matthew, the catamaran-styled *Hassler* was sent to Brunswick to help restore port operations to its full capacity.