



Gulf of Mexico WRA Impacts



Map Info

NOTAM



Airspace Reservation Activated

Jun 29, 12:10 PM - 4:00 PM CDT

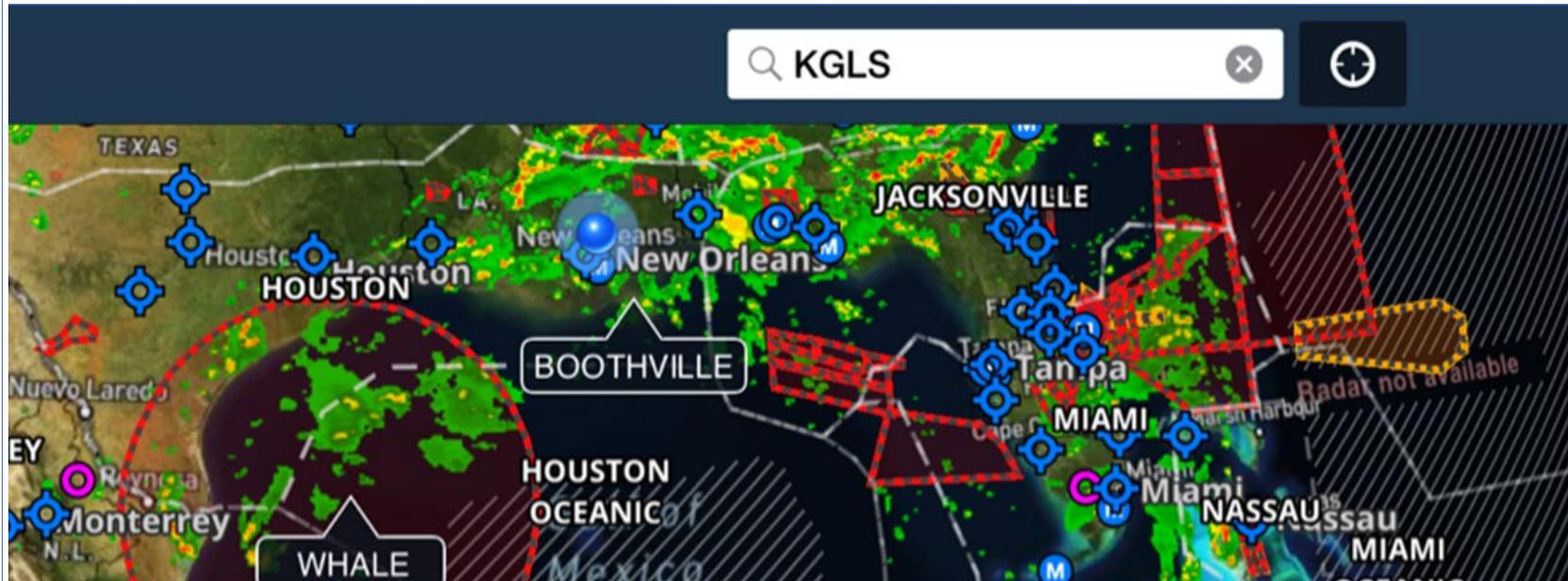
Active, SEE TEXT - SEE TEXT

(TROPICAL DEPRESSION L95) WX
 RECONNAISSANCE AREA (WRA) WI AN AREA DEFINED AS
 200NM
 RADIUS OF 2600N09500W EXCLUDING UNDERLYING APP AND
 TERRITORIAL WATERS WI 12NM SFC-15000FT. AVOIDANCE ADZ.
 WX
 RECONNAISSANCE FLT WITH VER MANEUVERING AND
 RELEASE OF
 DROPSONDES ARE EXP. NONPARTICIPATING ACFT SHOULD
 AVOID THE WRA. IFR
 ACFT CAN EXP RERTE.

NOTAM ID: A1029/22 (KZHU)

History

- National Hurricane Operations Plan (2013) – No mention of WRA
- Seems to first appear in NHOP in 2017
- Impacts to GOM offshore flights in 2022



Weather Reconnaissance Area

National Hurricane Operations Plan-2023

6.1.3.3. Weather Reconnaissance Area.

A Weather Reconnaissance Area (WRA) is airspace with defined dimensions and published by Notice to Airmen (NOTAM), which is established to support weather reconnaissance/research flights. **ATC services are not provided within WRAs.** **10 Only participating weather reconnaissance/research aircraft from NOAA AOC and 53 WRS are permitted to operate within a WRA.** A WRA may only be established in airspace within U. S. Flight Information Regions (FIRs) outside of U.S. territorial airspace.

6.2.3. NHOP Mission Operations in a WRA.

The procedures for participating aircraft operations in a WRA are in accordance with the MOA between the FAA, NOAA, and 53 WRS.

6.2.3.1. General Operations.

The airspace within a WRA is normally at or below FL150 with a radius of 200 NM around a set of center coordinates. An ATC facility prevents non-participating aircraft receiving ATC6-8 services from entering the WRA during the effective time of the WRA as published in the NOTAM. This area can include the terminal areas (Class D Airspace) depicted on the NHOP Operational Maps (see Appendix K), and any other airspace within 50 NM of the CONUS shoreline after radio contact is established with ATC. If not in radar contact within the area as shown on the NHOP Operational Maps (see Appendix K), the aircrew will make position reports in relation to designated navigational aids as requested by ATC along the coast. Any changes to the WRA will be coordinated with the primary ARTCC.

Aeronautical Information Manual- 3-5-8

Weather Reconnaissance Area (WRA)

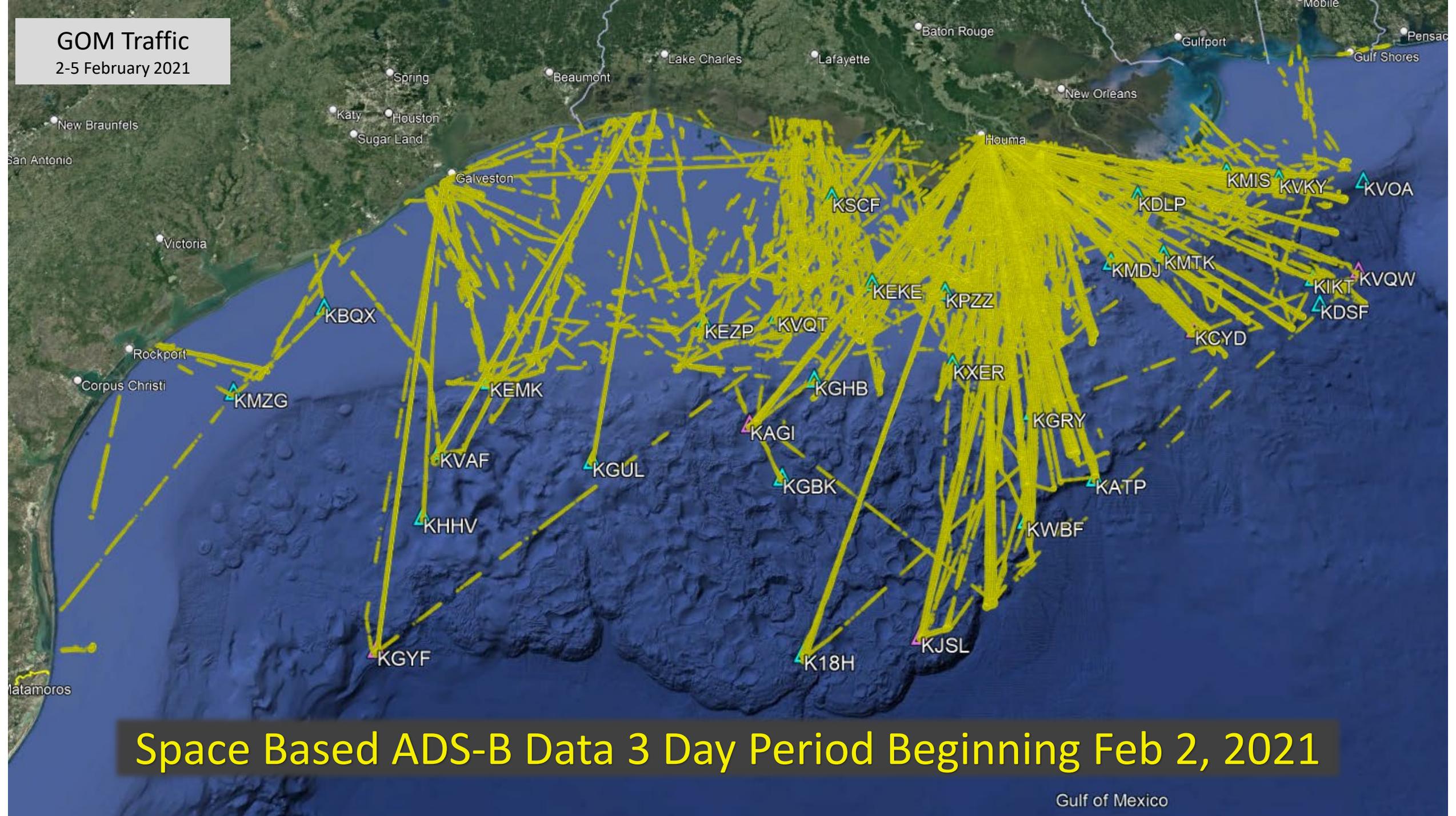
- a. General. Hurricane Hunters from the United States Air Force Reserve 53rd Weather Reconnaissance Squadron (WRS) and the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) Aircraft Operations Center (AOC) operate weather reconnaissance/research aircraft missions, in support of the National Hurricane Operations Plan (NHOP), to gather meteorological data on hurricanes and tropical cyclones. 53rd WRS and NOAA AOC aircraft normally conduct these missions in airspace identified in a published WRA Notice to Air Missions ([NOTAM](#)).
- b. WRAs. Airspace with defined dimensions and published by a [NOTAM](#), which is established to support weather reconnaissance/research flights. ATC services are not provided within WRAs. Only participating weather reconnaissance/research aircraft from the 53rd WRS and NOAA AOC are permitted to operate within a WRA. A WRA may only be established in airspace within U. S. Flight Information Regions ([FIR](#)) outside of U. S. territorial airspace.
- c. A published WRA NOTAM describes the airspace dimensions of the WRA and the expected activities within the WRA. WRAs may border adjacent foreign [FIRs](#), but are wholly contained within U.S. [FIRs](#). As ATC services are not provided within a WRA, non-participating aircraft should avoid WRAs, and IFR aircraft should expect to be rerouted to avoid WRAs.

GOM Operations Snapshot

- Average 20,000 POB offshore
 - Approximately 1,200 helidecks offshore (BSEE data)
 - FAR Part 135 Operators:
 - Bristow- 63 helicopters
 - Chevron- 14 helicopters
 - Metro Aviation- 5 helicopters
 - Panther Helicopters- 5 helicopters
 - PHI- 65 helicopters
 - Rotorcraft Leasing- 38 helicopters
 - Westwind Helicopters- 17 helicopters
- 207+ helicopters servicing the offshore energy market
- Daily average of 793 flights
- Number of crew change and life saving/SAR/medical transport missions occurring 24/7
 - US Coastguard
 - DoD (Army, Navy, Airforce)
 - FAR Part 91 General Aviation

GOM Traffic

2-5 February 2021



Space Based ADS-B Data 3 Day Period Beginning Feb 2, 2021

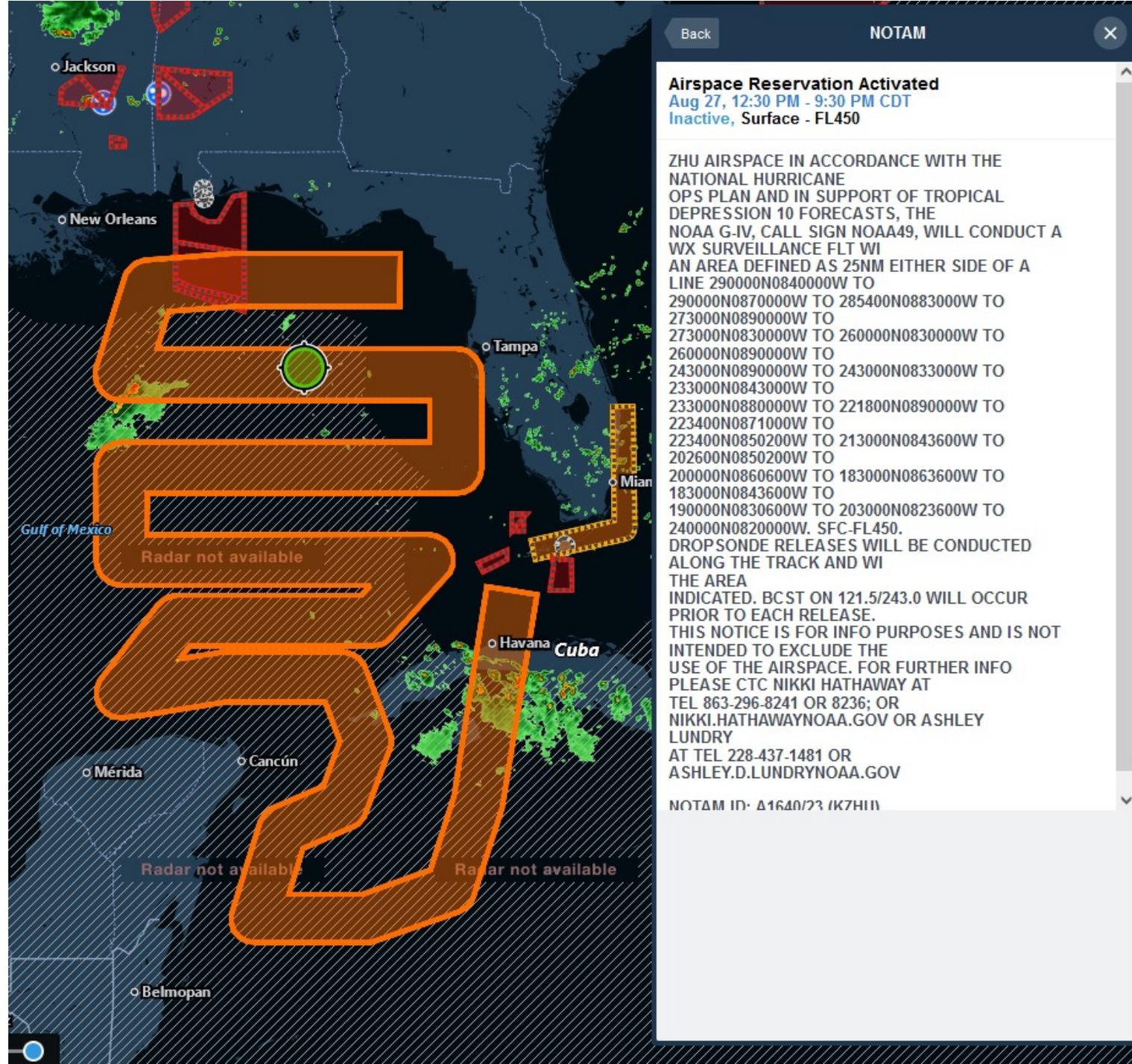
Gulf of Mexico

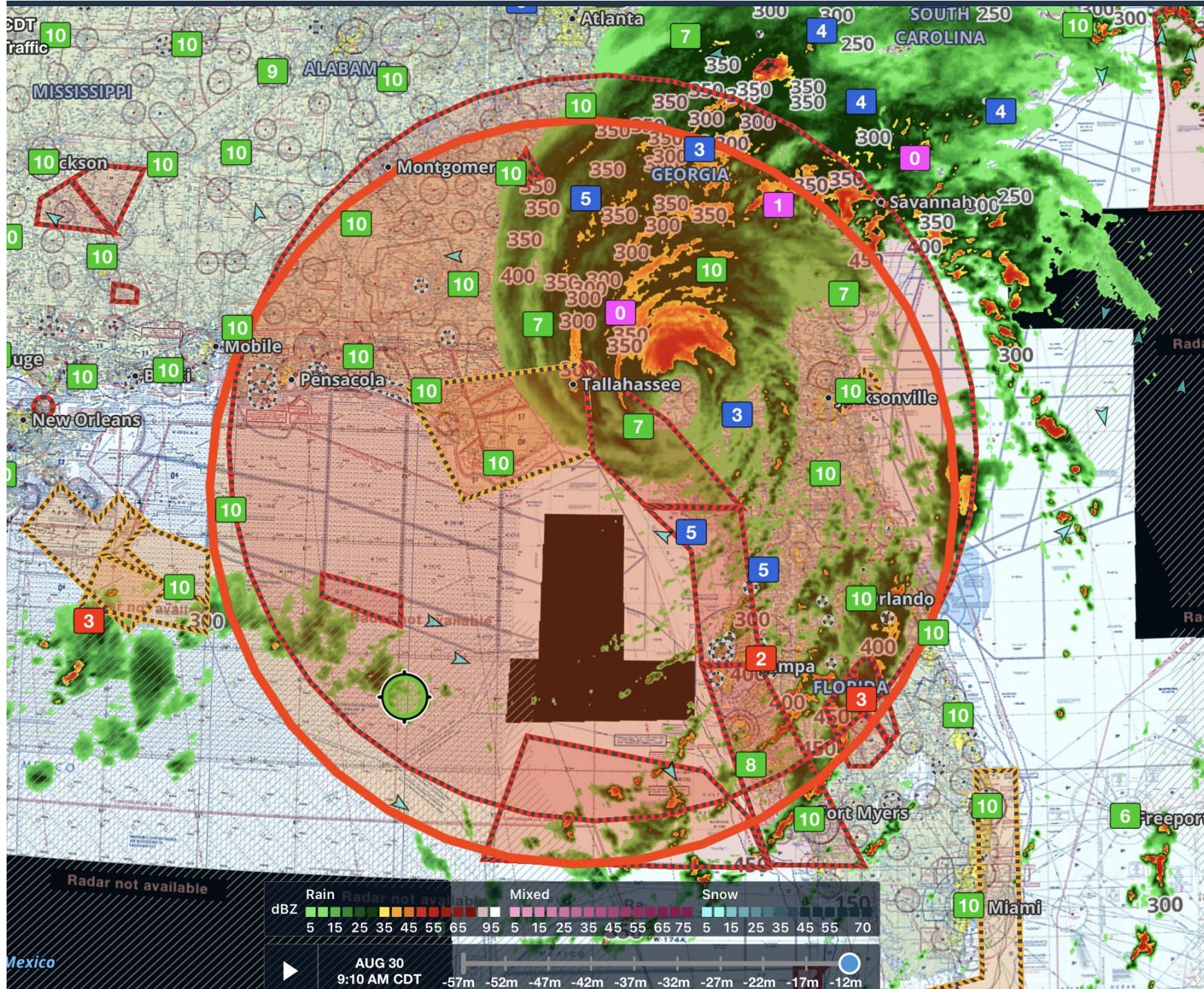
Hurricane Evac Operations

- Average between 2-4 days of de-manning operations
- Potentially a 2-3x OPTEMPO from normal operations
 - 1500+ flights daily
 - Only mechanism to evacuate those offshore in a timely fashion
 - Significant impacts to global petroleum economics and strategic reserves
- Helicopter operators must also evacuate their own personnel and assets ahead of approaching weather

WRA displayed on ForeFlight

- Depicted image difficult to navigate by offshore aircraft

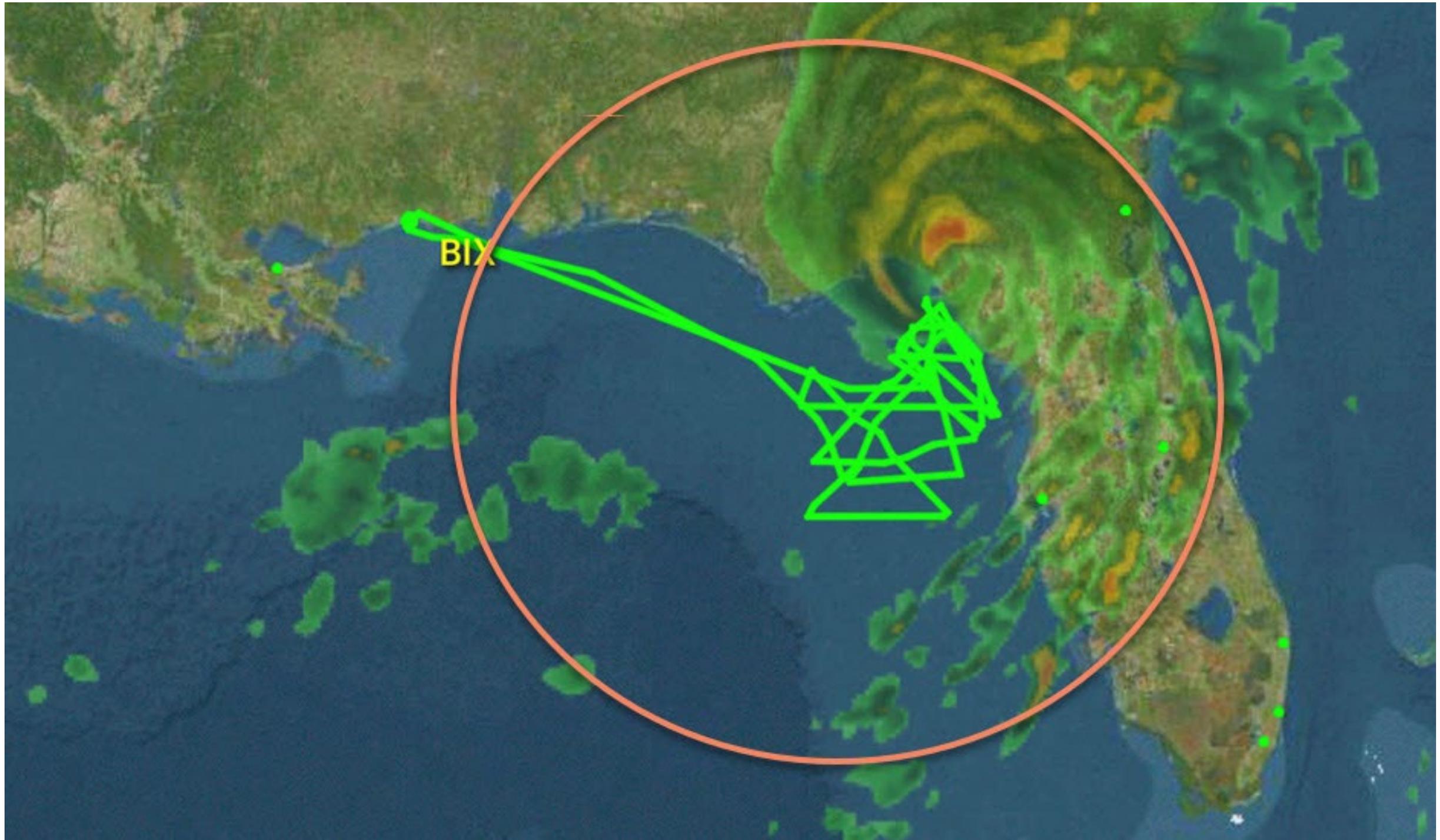





Airspace Reservation Activated
 Aug 30, 4:00 AM - 12:00 PM CDT
 Active, SEE TEXT - SEE TEXT

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NOTAM ID: A2057/23 (KZMA)



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