

**H13624**

U.S. Department of Commerce  
National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration  
National Ocean Service

**DESCRIPTIVE REPORT**

Type of Survey: Navigable Area

Registry Number: H13624

**LOCALITY**

State(s): Louisiana

General Locality: Northern Gulf of Mexico

Sub-locality: 45 NM South of Mobile Point

**2022**

**CHIEF OF PARTY**  
Michael Gonsalves, CDR/NOAA

**LIBRARY & ARCHIVES**

Date:

**HYDROGRAPHIC TITLE SHEET**

**H13624**

**INSTRUCTIONS:** The Hydrographic Sheet should be accompanied by this form, filled in as completely as possible, when the sheet is forwarded to the Office.

State(s): **Louisiana**

General Locality: **Northern Gulf of Mexico**

Sub-Locality: **45 NM South of Mobile Point**

Scale: **40000**

Dates of Survey: **05/23/2022 to 06/06/2022**

Instructions Dated: **03/29/2022**

Project Number: **OPR-J350-FH-22**

Field Unit: **NOAA Ship *Ferdinand R. Hassler***

Chief of Party: **Michael Gonsalves, CDR/NOAA**

Soundings by: **Kongsberg Maritime EM 2040 (MBES)**

Imagery by: **Kongsberg Maritime EM 2040 (MBES Backscatter)**

Verification by: **Atlantic Hydrographic Branch**

Soundings Acquired in: **meters at Mean Lower Low Water**

**Remarks:**

*Any revisions to the Descriptive Report (DR) applied during office processing are shown in red italic text. The DR is maintained as a field unit product, therefore all information and recommendations within this report are considered preliminary unless otherwise noted. The final disposition of survey data is represented in the NOAA nautical chart products. All pertinent records for this survey are archived at the National Centers for Environmental Information (NCEI) and can be retrieved via <https://www.ncei.noaa.gov/>. Products created during office processing were generated in NAD83 UTM 16N, MLLW. All references to other horizontal or vertical datums in this report are applicable to the processed hydrographic data provided by the field unit.*

## DESCRIPTIVE REPORT SUMMARY

### A. Area Surveyed

The survey area for H13624 was 45 NM south of Mobile Point in the northern Gulf of Mexico. Data were acquired to the survey limits in accordance with the requirements in the Project Instructions OPR-J350-FH-22 and the 2022 NOS Hydrographic Surveys Specifications and Deliverables (HSSD) as shown in Figure 1.

Data were acquired within the following survey limits:

Northwest Limit	Southeast Limit
29° 26' 43.77" N 87° 59' 50.04" W	29° 28' 56.62" N 87° 41' 14.4" W

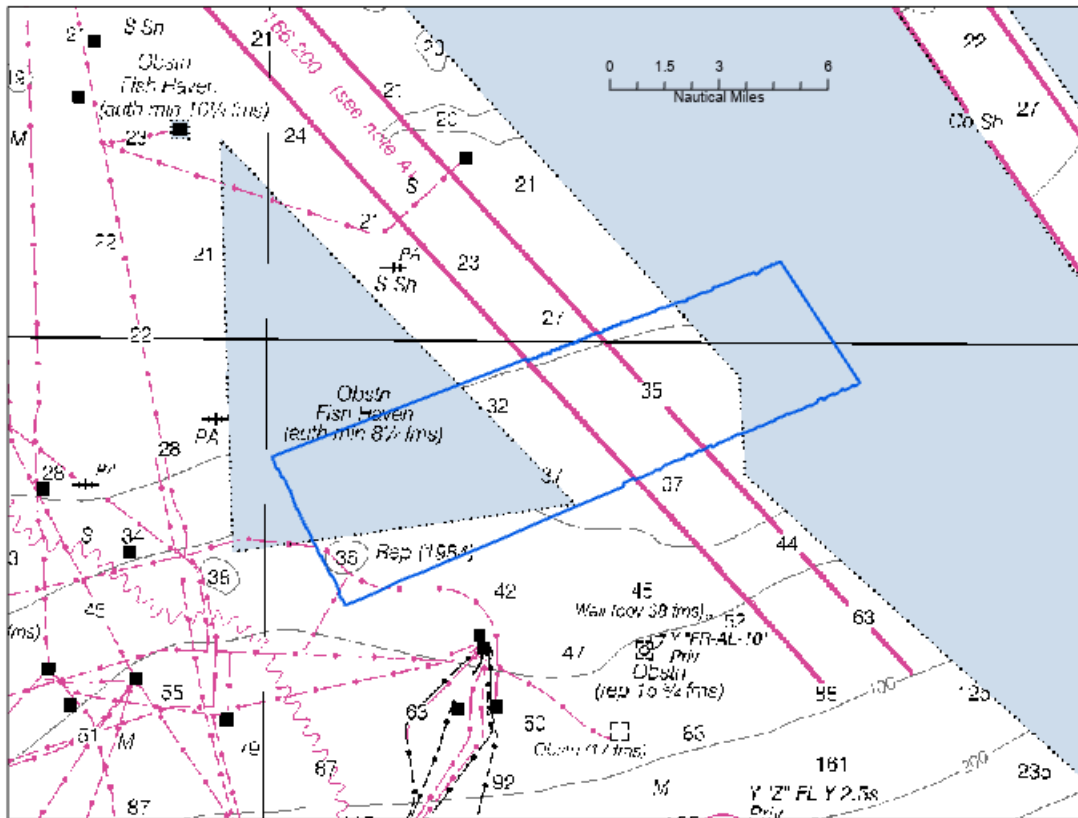


Figure 1: H13624 sheet limits (in blue) overlaid onto Chart 11360.

## **B. Survey Purpose**

The 2010 Deepwater Horizon oil spill released over three million barrels of oil in the Gulf of Mexico, by far the largest offshore oil spill in US history. In 2016, the Deepwater Horizon Trustees reached a settlement for natural resource injuries caused by the Deepwater Horizon oil spill. The Deepwater Horizon Trustees documented a footprint of over 770 square nautical miles of injury to mesophotic and deep benthic habitat surrounding the wellhead and extending up the continental slope. Accurate high-resolution bathymetric and habitat maps and data on the abundance and distribution of mesophotic and deep benthic habitats are needed to guide restoration.

Only a small portion of the mesophotic and deepwater habitats in the Gulf of Mexico have been surveyed, and with the collaboration and partnership of NOAA's Deepwater Horizon Program and the National Centers for Coastal and Ocean Science (NCCOS), the NOAA Ship *Ferdinand R. Hassler* collected bathymetry and backscatter data in the region. This work supports one of many projects selected by the Open Ocean Trustee Implementation Group to restore natural resources injured by the Deepwater Horizon oil spill. The data collected will be foundational for exploring mesophotic and deepwater habitats of the marine ecosystem by informing ground truthing locations for underwater camera footage, sediment cores, grab samples, ROV, and AUV work and for identifying future restoration sites. The data will also be used to update nautical charting products.

## **C. Intended Use of Survey**

The entire survey is adequate to supersede previous data.

Data acquired in H13624 meet multibeam echo sounder (MBES) coverage requirements for complete coverage, as required by the HSSD. This includes crosslines, NOAA allowable uncertainty, and density requirements.

## **D. Data Acquisition and Processing**

Refer to the Data Acquisition and Processing Report (DAPR) for a complete description of data acquisition and processing systems, survey vessels, quality control procedures, and data processing methods. Additional information to supplement sounding and survey data, and any deviations from the DAPR are discussed in the following sections.

Data acquisition efforts were led by crew of the *Ferdinand Hassler* with on-board support of NCCOS personnel and NOAA physical scientists. After acquisition, data were transferred off the ship and to NCCOS offices for additional multibeam and backscatter processing. A Final Feature File was created by the ships survey team and submitted separately from this report.

Due to environmental considerations, the ship was excluded from working within certain portions of project OPR-J350-FH-22 during the evening hours. This resulted in the ship conducting a daily migration from the eastern side of the project to the western side of the project at sunset, then reversing the transit at sunrise. To

remain productive, the ship acquired a single strip of data during each transit across some of the intermediate survey sheets (e.g. H13622, H13624, H13625). To simplify the file management, the sound velocity casts were concatenated across the entire project (rather than being strictly assigned to a single survey sheet).

Due to the servicing of the ship's Moving Velocity Profiler (MVP), all data acquired between April 4 - 26 (DN094 - DN116) had the sound speed corrected via static CTD casts. In conjunction with the aforementioned transits, a CTD cast was taken at each sheet boundary

During processing, NCCOS followed procedures outlined in the Ferdinand Hassler DAPR and additional processing SOP's. Backscatter processing was completed by NCCOS using FMGT 7.10 software package. The raw (.all) data files were paired with post processed HDCS CARIS files resulting in a gsf file used to create the 2m intensity (-db) mosaic. Sensor characteristics and survey metadata within the .all and HDCS files are preserved in the .gsf files. The intensity mosaic was normalized and exported as a floating point GeoTIFF.

## **E. Uncertainty**

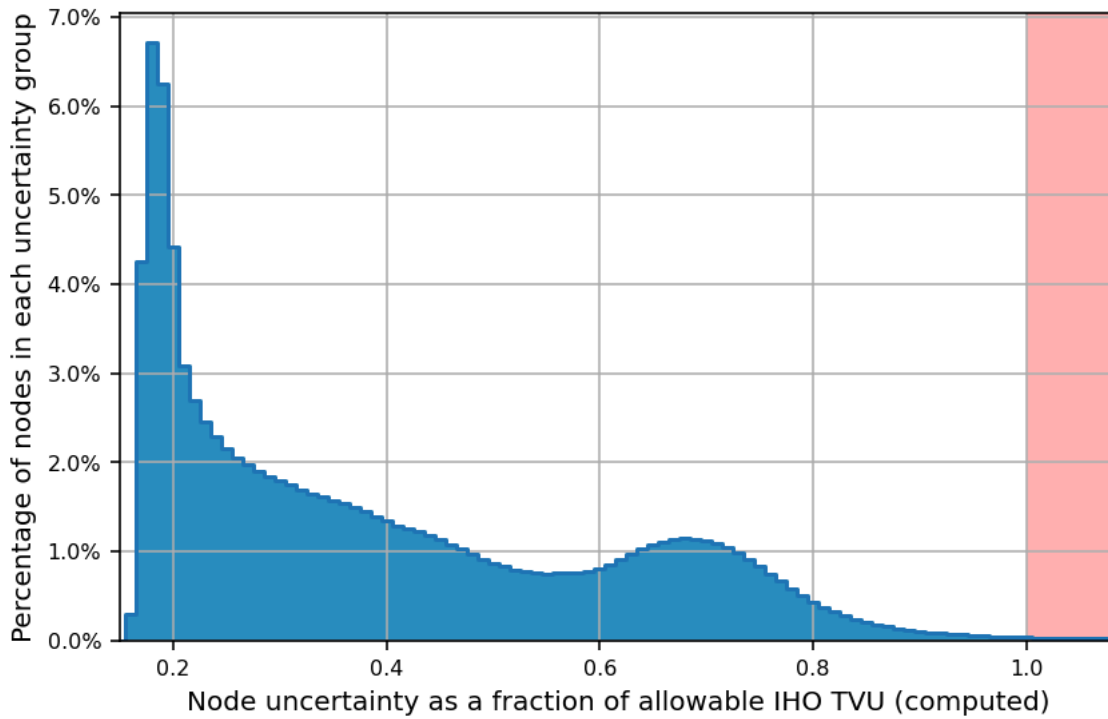
Final surfaces were analyzed using the HydrOffice QC Tools Grid QA feature to determine compliance with specifications. Overall, 99% of nodes meet NOAA Allowable Uncertainty and Data Density specification with grid nodes containing five or more soundings as required by HSSD Section 5.2.2.3 (Figures 2-5). Crosslines were collected in accordance with the NOAA HSSD, and are included as part of the finalized grids.

## Uncertainty Standards - NOAA HSSD

Grid source: H13624\_MB\_4m\_MLLW\_Final

99.5+% pass (13,621,669 of 13,689,026 nodes), min=0.15, mode=0.18, max=4.12

Percentiles: 2.5%=0.17, Q1=0.21, median=0.34, Q3=0.56, 97.5%=0.83



*Figure 2: H13624 4m grid allowable uncertainty statistics.*

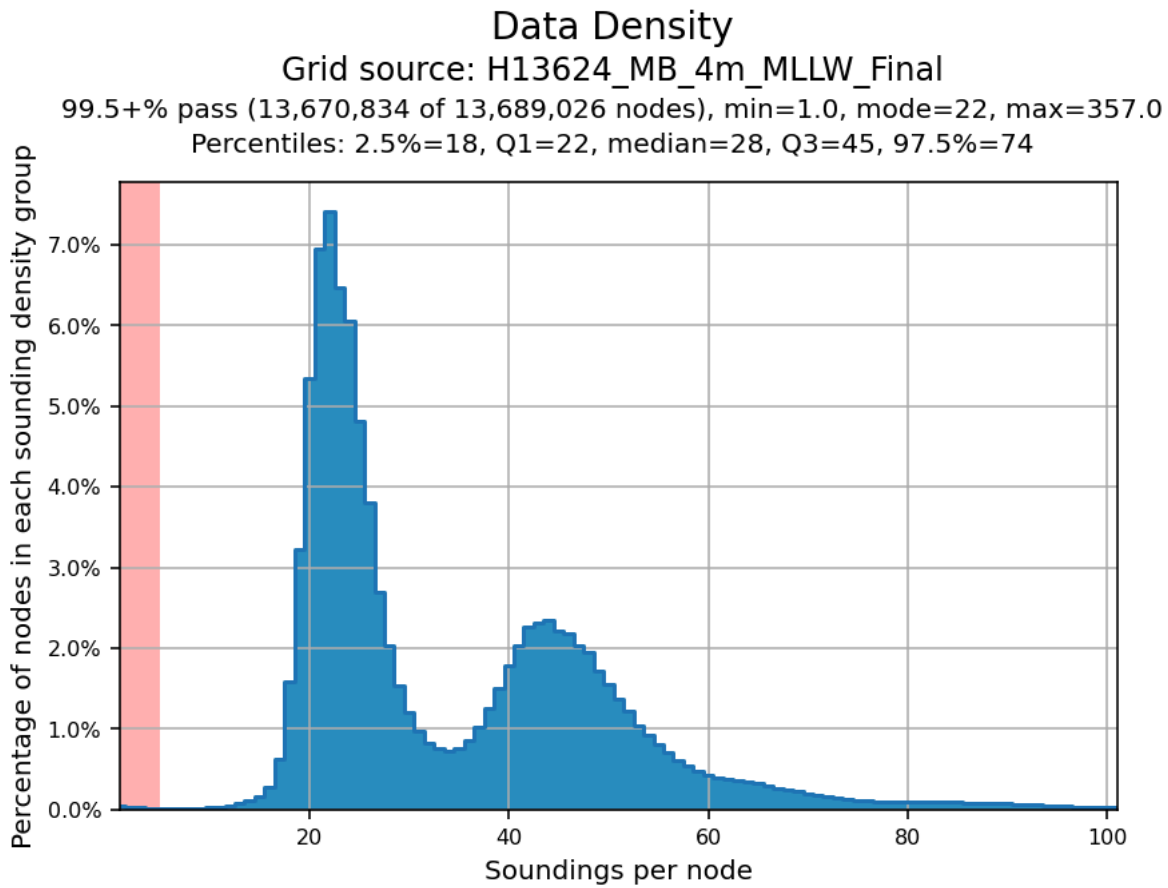
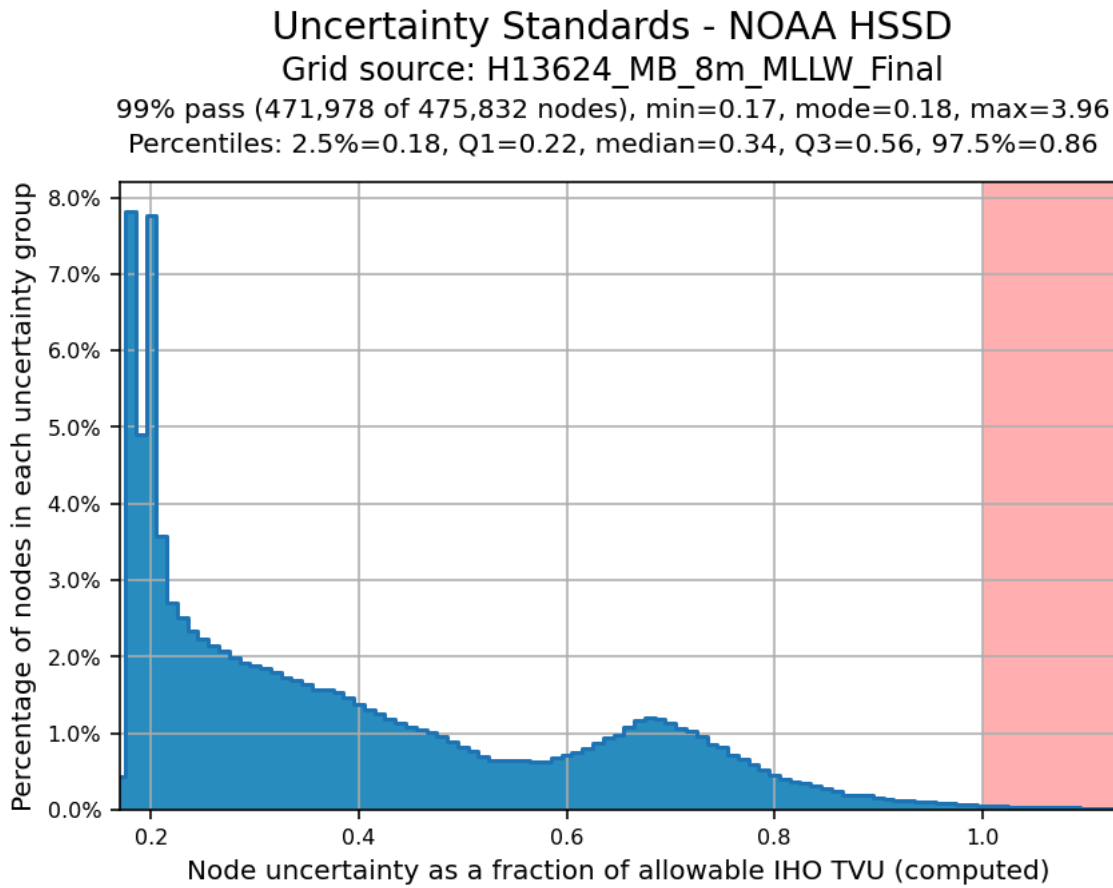


Figure 3: H13624 4m grid data density statistics.



*Figure 4: H13624 8m grid allowable uncertainty statistics.*

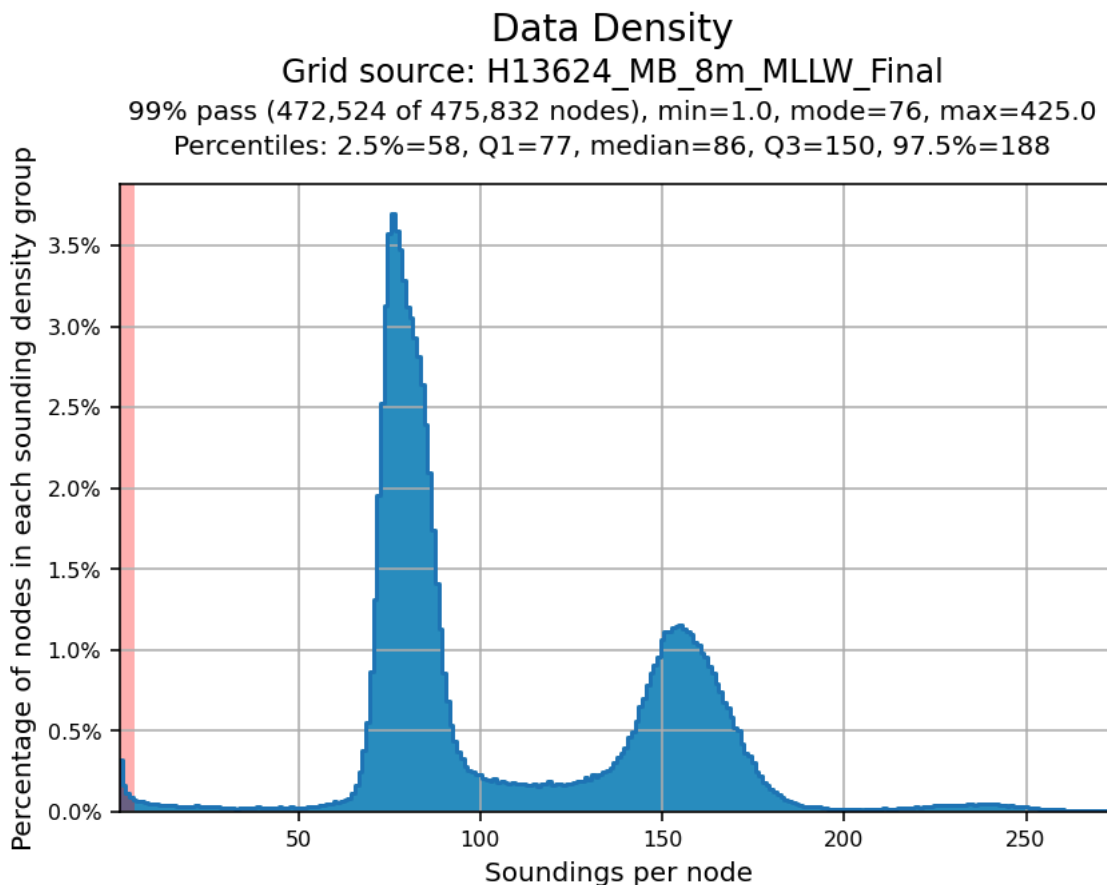


Figure 5: H13624 8m grid data density statistics.

**F. Results and Recommendations**

The following are the largest scale ENC's, which cover the survey area:

ENC	Scale	Edition	Update Application Date	Issue Date
US3GC05M	1:456394	60	06/09/2022	06/09/2022

The following surfaces and/or BAGs were submitted to the Processing Branch:

Surface Name	Surface Type	Resolution	Depth Range	Surface Parameter	Purpose
H13624_MB_4m_MLLW_Final	CARIS Raster Surface (CUBE)	4 m	47.7418 m - 80.0 m	NOAA_4m	Complete MBES
H13624_MB_8m_MLLW_Final	CARIS Raster Surface (CUBE)	8 m	72.0 m - 86.31 m	NOAA_8m	Complete MBES
H13624_MBAB_2m_S250_200kHz_1of1	MB Backscatter Mosaic	2 m	N/A	N/A	Complete MBES
Hassler_H13624_EM2040_Bathy_2m	CARIS Raster Surface (CUBE)	2 m	48.4 m - 85.6 m	NOAA_2m	Complete MBES

Three bathymetric and one backscatter surface were created for H13624 survey area. Two surfaces were created adhering to requirements of the HSSD, together these cover the survey area at 4m and 8m resolutions (Figure 6). Surfaces include crosslines and are broken up by HSSD depth requirements.

NCCOS created 2m resolution bathymetry and backscatter (Figure 7) surfaces for the entire survey area. These surfaces include mainscheme lines only, crosslines were excluded. These will be used for additional spatial analysis by NCCOS. The 2m bathymetric surface is included only as a working CSAR file, it was not finalized in CARIS.

Crosslines were collected, processed and compared in accordance with Section 5.2.4.2 of the HSSD for quality control. To evaluate crosslines, a surface generated via data strictly from mainscheme lines and a surface generated via data strictly from crosslines were created. From these two surfaces, a difference surface (mainscheme - crosslines = difference surface) was generated. Statistics show that the mean difference between depths derived from mainscheme data and crossline data was 0.01 meters and 95% of nodes falling within +/- 0.20 meters (Figure 8). For the respective depths, the difference surface was compared to the allowable NOAA uncertainty standards. In total, 99.5% of the depth differences between mainscheme and crossline data were within allowable NOAA uncertainties (Figure 9).

Contours from the survey were generated and visually compared with the charted contours from the largest scale Electronic Navigation Chart (US3GC04M & US3GC05M). Referencing Figure 10, the charted 30, 40, 50 and 100-fathom contours (shown in black) have good agreement with the survey-derived contours (shown in blue); where any discrepancy can largely be dismissed as the result of chart generalization.

Survey soundings were generated from an 8-meter single resolution CUBE surface in CARIS HIPS and compared with the soundings from the largest scale ENC using the CA Tools - SS vs. Chart comparison tool available in NOAA's Pydro Explorer suite. CA Tools will flag any surveyed sounding that is shoaler than what is expected from a chart-derived TIN surface - these could be potential Dangers to Navigation (DTON).

In all cases, these flagged soundings are significantly deeper than even the deepest draft vessels, and do not represent a hazard to surface navigation. It is worth observing that surveys H13620, H13621, H13622, H13623 and H13624 have a disproportionately large number of flagged soundings. This is an artifact due to the fact that these surveys intersect large fish havens which do not contain charted soundings. While an immediate update to the chart is not warranted, the hydrographer recommends the addition of these shoaler soundings to the ENC.

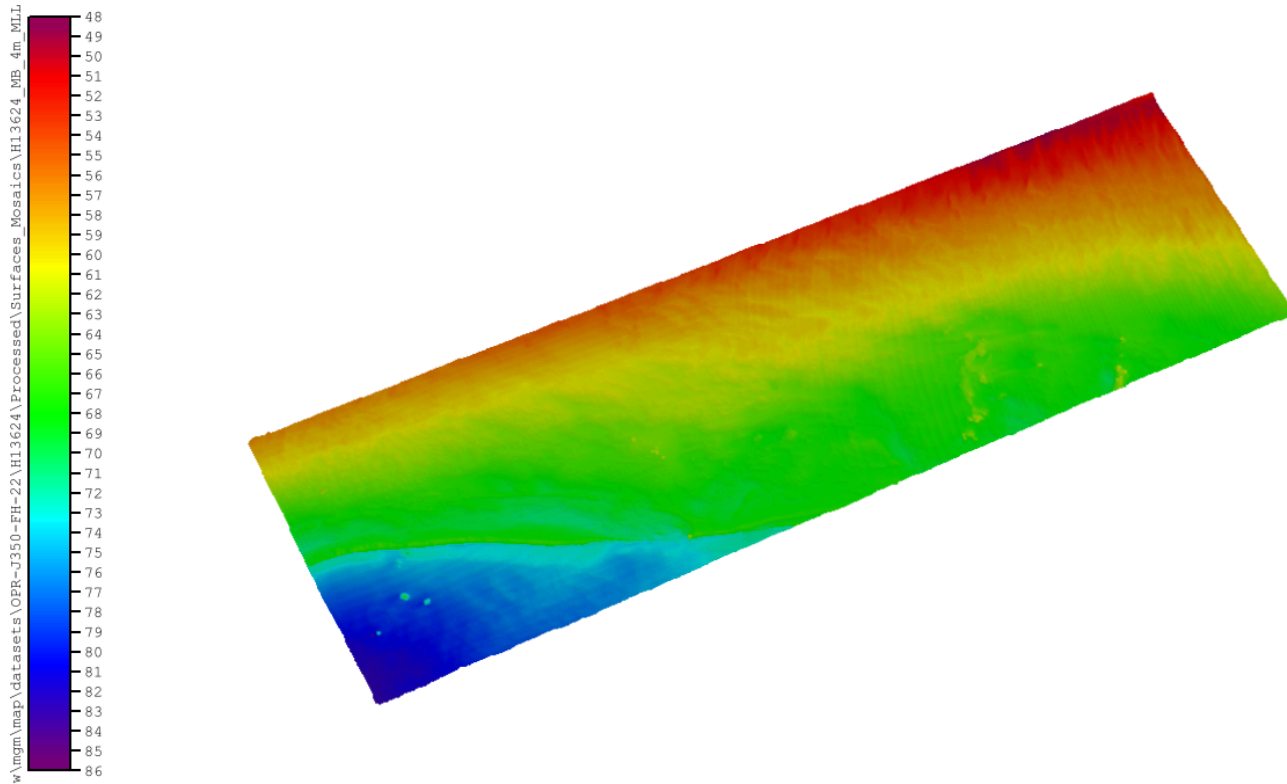
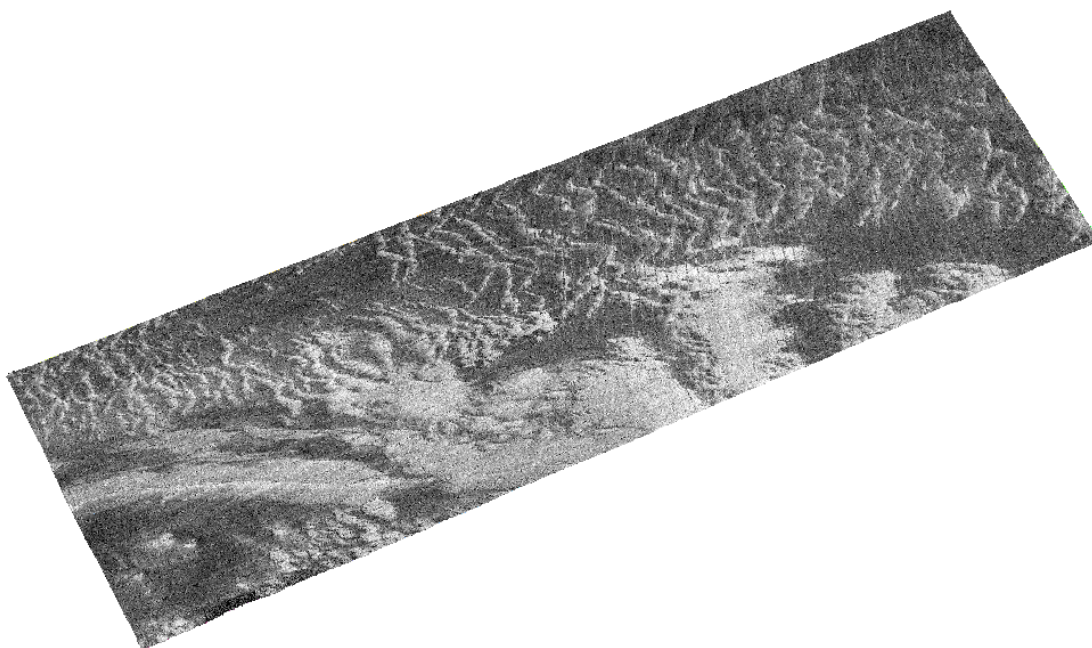
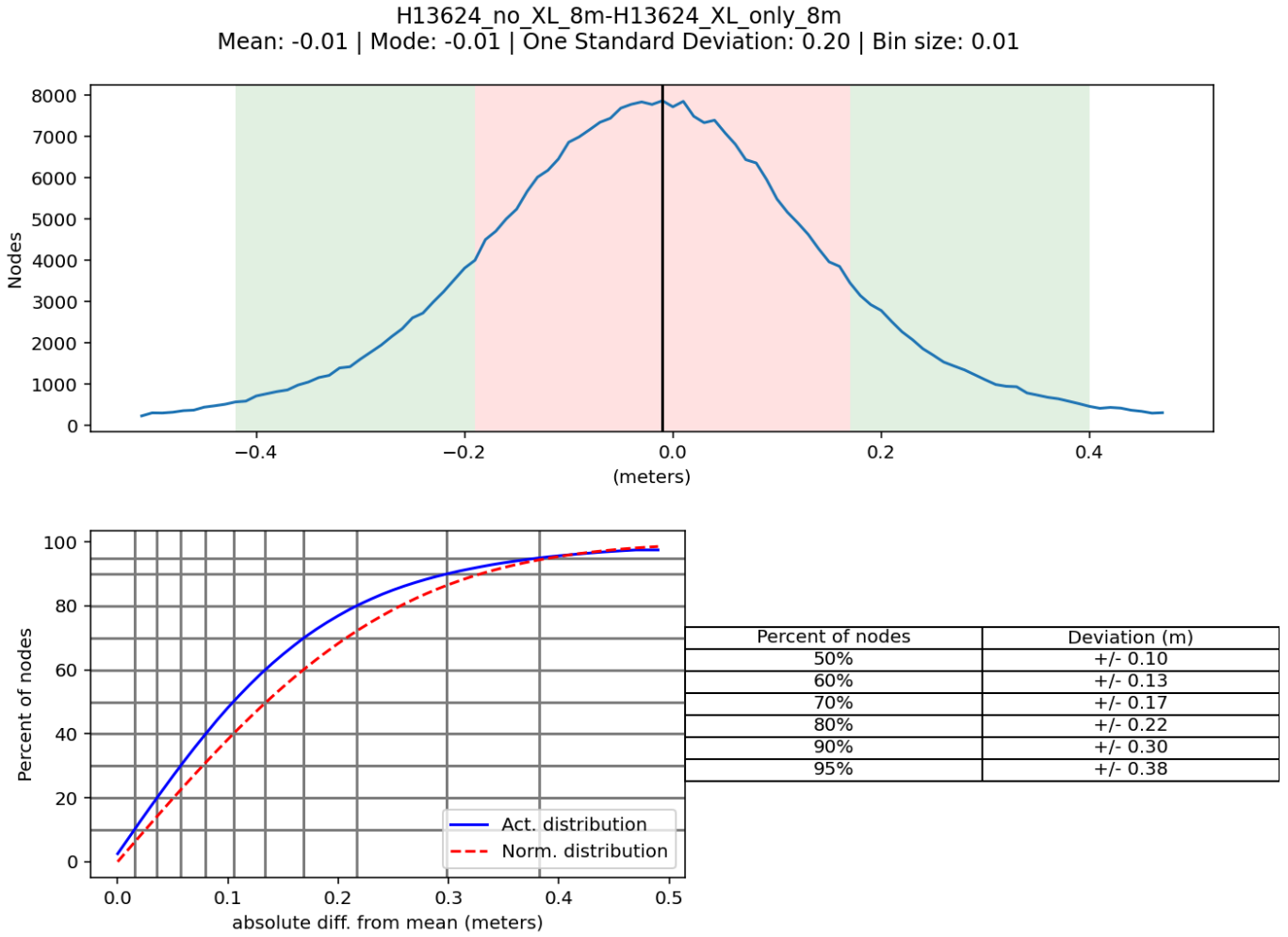


Figure 6: H13624 Coverage overview of combined 4m and 8m resolution CUBE grids



*Figure 7: Overview of backscatter data for H13624 at 2m resolution.*



*Figure 8: H13624 Distribution of depth difference values (m) calculated between crossline and mainscheme grids.*

## Comparison Distribution

Per Grid: H13624\_no\_XL\_8m-H13624\_XL\_only\_8m\_fracAllowErr.csar

99.5+% nodes pass (314496), min=0.0, mode=0.1 mean=0.1 max=5.8

Percentiles: 2.5%=0.0, Q1=0.0, median=0.1, Q3=0.1, 97.5%=0.3

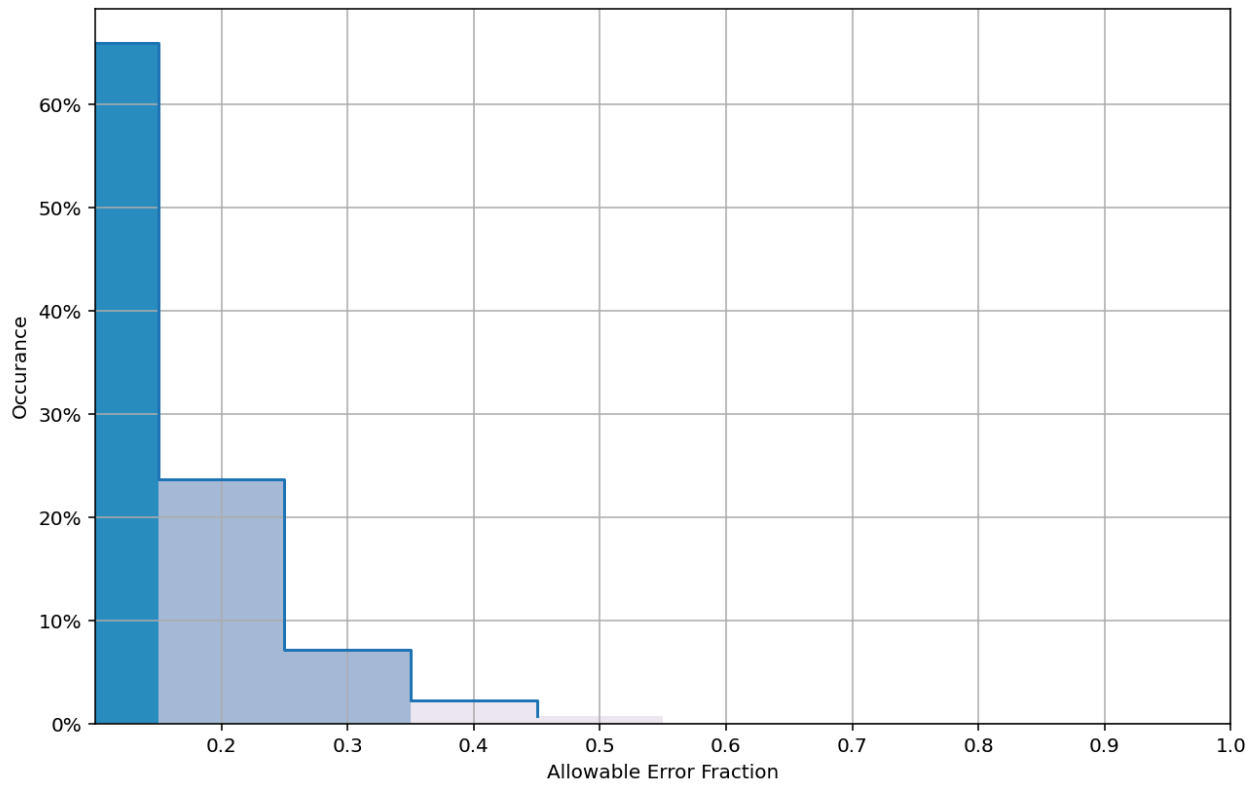


Figure 9: H13624 Crossline comparison distribution of nodes with an allowable error fraction.

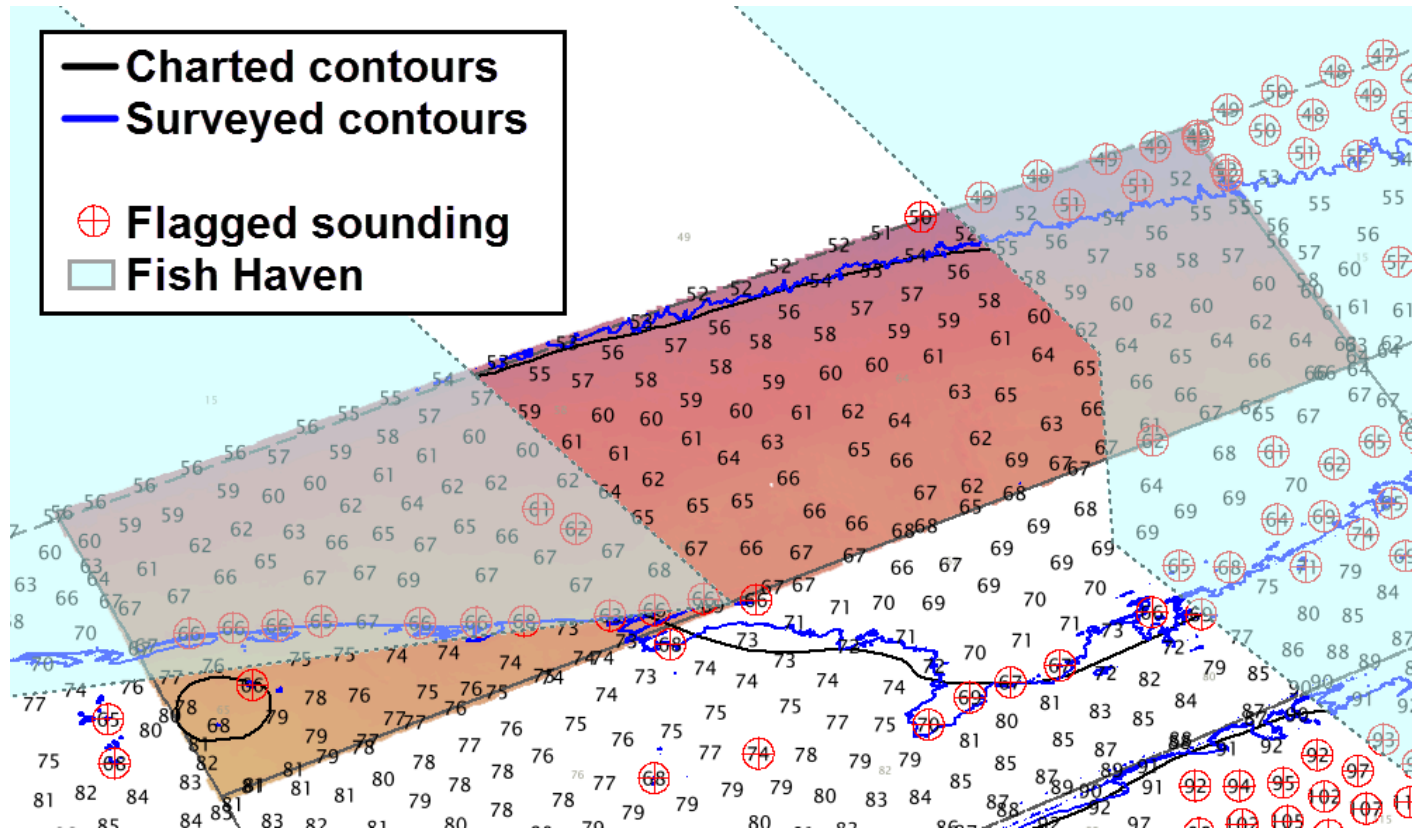


Figure 10: Comparison of charted vs. surveyed depths. Soundings in meters.

## G. Vertical and Horizontal Control

The vertical datum for this project is Mean Lower Low Water. The vertical control method used was VDatum.

No Horizontal and Vertical Control Report has been generated in association with OPR-J350-FH-22. ERS methods were used as the final means of reducing the survey to MLLW for submission.

The horizontal datum for this project is North American Datum of 1983 (NAD 83). The projection used for this project is Universal Transverse Mercator (UTM) Zone 16.

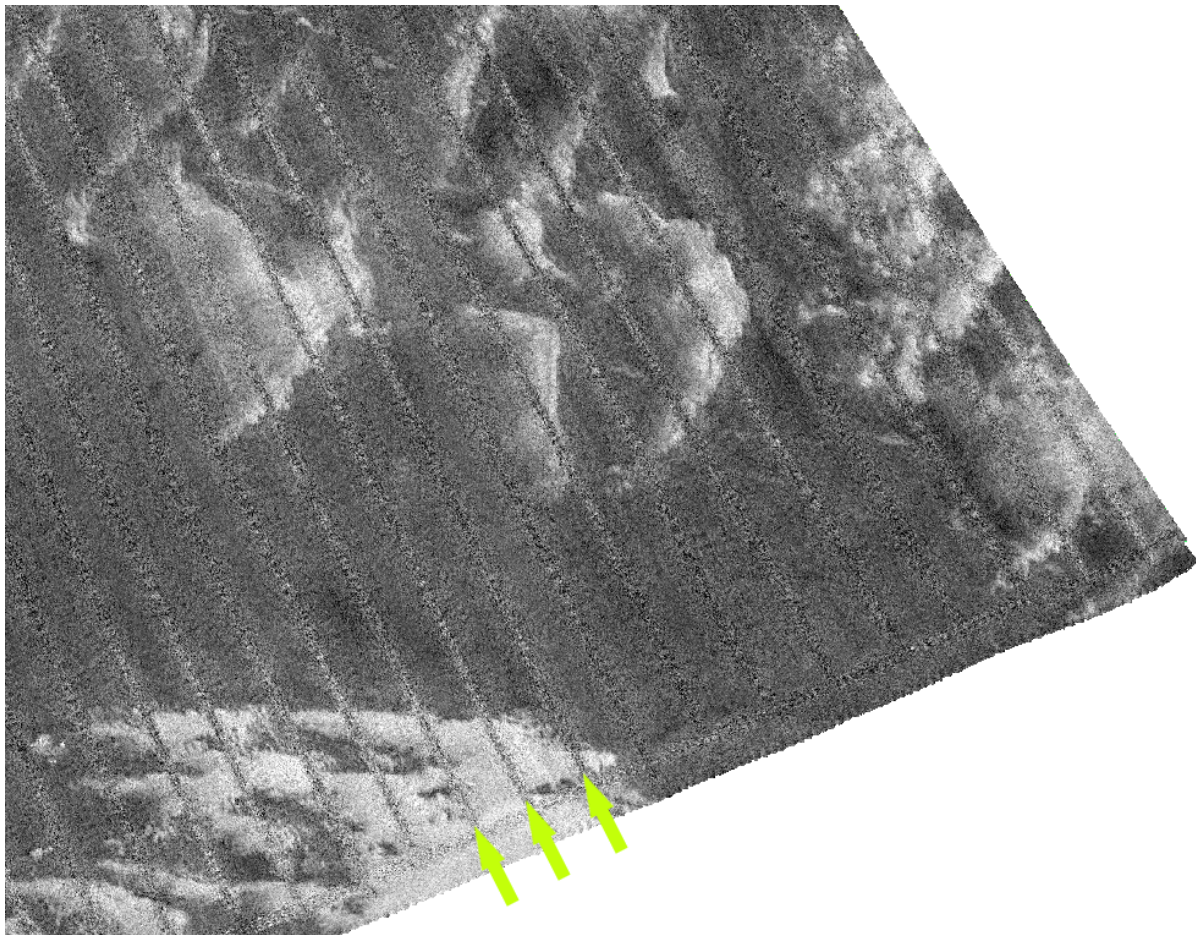
Vessel kinematic data were post-processed using Applanix POSPac MMS processing software and RTX positioning methods described in the DAPR. A Smoothed Best Estimate of Trajectory (SBET) and associated error (RMS) data were applied to all MBES data in CARIS HIPS and SIPS.

During real-time acquisition, all platforms received correctors from the Wide Area Augmentation System (WAAS) for increased accuracies similar to USCG DGPS stations. WAAS and SBETs were the sole methods of positioning for this survey as no DGPS stations were available for real-time horizontal control.

## H. Additional Results

### Swath Overlap Artifacts

Streaking between survey lines was visible in both backscatter and multibeam surfaces, though more obvious in the backscatter mosaic (Figure 11). Within multibeam surfaces, the small increase of standard deviation (Figure 12) and uncertainty of soundings toward outer edges of the swath is likely visibly enhanced due to the homogeneous nature of bathymetry for this survey. All data is adequate to supersede the chart.



*Figure 11: Visible swath overlap artifact in backscatter mosaic.*

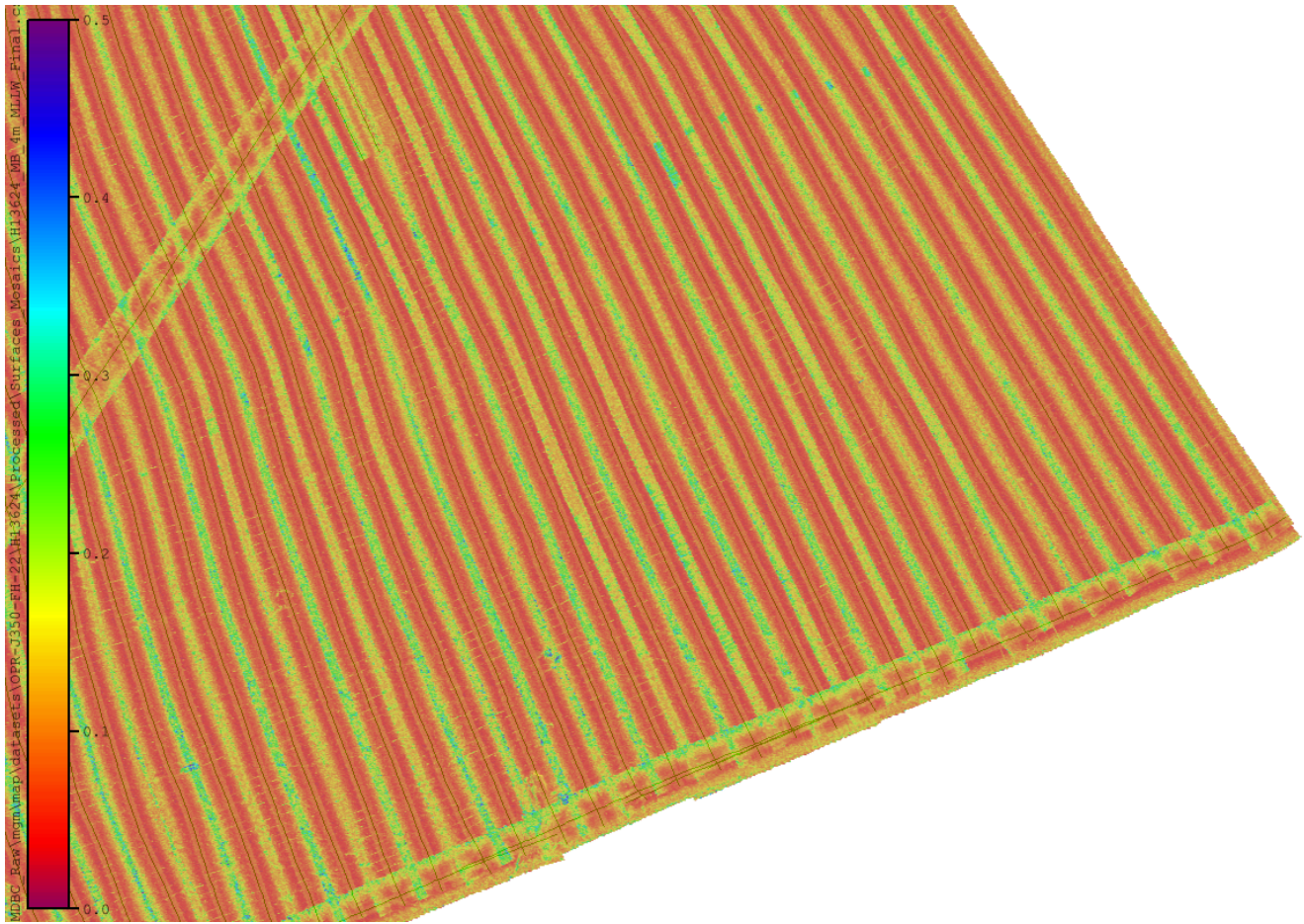
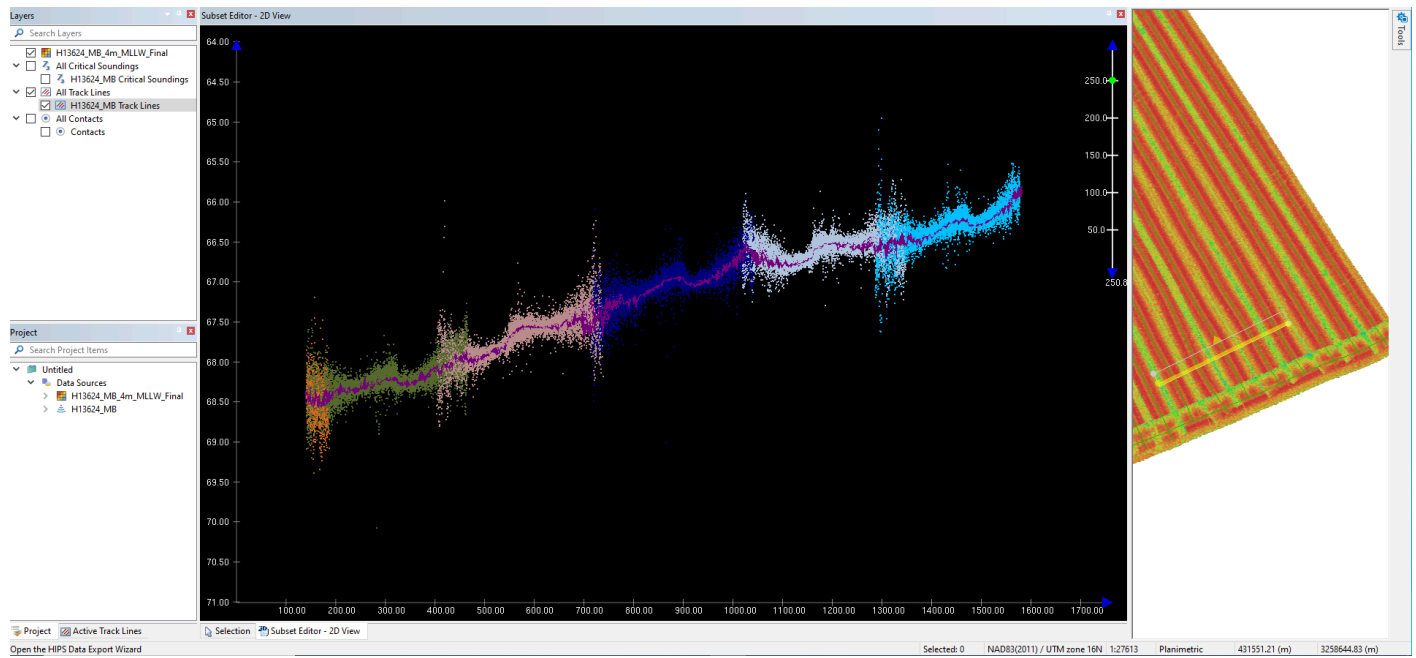


Figure 12: MBES standard deviation layer shown with a range of 0-0.5, overlaid on survey tracklines.





*Figure 13: Bathymetric profile colored by line with the depth layer reference surface for H13624\_MB\_4m\_MLLW\_Final CUBE grid loaded in dark purple.*

## I. Approval

As Chief of Party, field operations for this hydrographic survey were conducted under my direct supervision, with frequent personal checks of progress and adequacy. I have reviewed the attached survey data and reports.

All field sheets, this Survey Summary Report, and all accompanying records and data are approved. All records are forwarded for final review and processing to the Processing Branch.

The survey data meets or exceeds requirements as set forth in the NOS Hydrographic Surveys Specifications and Deliverables, Field Procedures Manual, Standing and Letter Instructions, and all HSD Technical Directives. These data are adequate to supersede charted data in their common areas. This survey is complete and no additional work is required with the exception of deficiencies noted in the Survey Summary Report.

Approver Name	Title	Date	Signature
Michael Gonsalves, CDR/NOAA	Chief of Party	12/06/2022	 Digitally signed by GONSALVES.MICHAEL.OLIVER.127 5635126 Date: 2022.12.08 09:27:13 -07'00'
Karina Urquhart, LTJG/NOAA/NCCOS	Sheet Manager	12/06/2022	URQUHART.KARINA.J ULIETTE.1554932629  Digitally signed by URQUHART.KARINA.JULIETTE.1554 932629 Date: 2022.12.08 13:37:27 -05'00'