



Evaluation of the Sensitivity of Inventory and Monitoring National Parks to Nutrient Enrichment Effects from Atmospheric Nitrogen Deposition

Gulf Coast Network (GULN)

Natural Resource Report NPS/NRPC/ARD/NRR—2011/310



ON THE COVER

Some ecosystems, such as arid shrublands, subalpine meadows, remote high elevation lakes, and wetlands, are sensitive to the effects of nutrient enrichment from atmospheric nitrogen deposition.

Photograph by: National Park Service

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This report received peer review by subject-matter experts who were not directly involved in the collection, analysis, or reporting of the data. Data in this report were collected and analyzed using methods based on established, peer-reviewed protocols and were analyzed and interpreted within the guidelines of the protocols.

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Gulf Coast Network (GULN)

National maps of atmospheric N emissions and deposition are provided in Maps A and B as context for subsequent network data presentations. Map A shows county level emissions of total N for the year 2002. Map B shows total N deposition, again for the year 2002.

There are three parks in the Gulf Coast Network that are larger than 100 square miles: Big Thicket (BITH), Gulf Islands (GUIS), and Padre Island (PAIS). In addition, there are five smaller parks.

Total annual N emissions, by county, are shown in Map C for lands in and surrounding the Gulf Coast Network. County-level emissions within the network ranged from less than 1 ton per square mile to greater than 50 tons per square mile. In general, county N annual emissions within the network were in the range of 1 to 20 tons per square mile. Point source emissions of oxidized (nitrogen oxides, NO_x) and reduced (ammonia, NH_3) N are shown in Map D. There are numerous N point sources throughout this network. Most of the larger sources (greater than 1,000 tons per year) emit oxidized N, but there are also some relatively large point sources of reduced N. Urban centers within the network and within a 300 mile buffer around the network are shown in Map E. Many large human population centers occur in or near the network, including San Antonio, Houston, Austin, Dallas, Fort Worth, Memphis, Nashville, and Jacksonville.

Total N deposition in and around the network is shown in Map F. Included in this analysis are both wet and dry forms of N deposition and both the oxidized and reduced N species. Total N deposition within the network ranged from as low as 2 to 5 kg N/ha/yr near the border with Mexico to more than 15 kg N/ha/yr at some locations. Throughout most of the network, total N deposition was estimated to range from 5 to 15 kg N/ha/yr.

Land cover in and around the network is shown in Map G. There are a wide variety of cover types within this network, including forest, pasture/hay, row crops, wetlands, shrublands, and grassland/herbaceous, with scattered areas of developed land around the population centers.

Map H showing the distribution within the parks that occur in this network of the five vegetation types thought to be most responsive to nutrient N enrichment effects (arctic, alpine, grassland and meadow, wetland, and arid and semi-arid) is not shown for this network. The parks in this network are too small to see the vegetation patterns at the network scale.

Map I, which shows park lands requiring special protection against potential adverse impacts associated with nutrient N enrichment from atmospheric N deposition, is not shown for this network. There are no wilderness or Class I lands within this network.

Network rankings are given in Figures A through C as the average ranking of the Pollutant Exposure, Ecosystem Sensitivity, and Park Protection metrics, respectively. Figure D shows the overall network Summary Risk ranking. In each figure, the rank for this particular network is highlighted to show its relative position compared with the ranks of the other 31 networks.

The Gulf Coast Network ranks slightly above the median, among networks, in N Pollutant Exposure (Figure A). Nitrogen emissions and N deposition within the network are both near average. The network Ecosystem Sensitivity ranking is relatively low, near the bottom of the second lowest quintile among networks (Figure B). This is because there is limited vegetation coverage in this network that includes the vegetation types that are among those expected to be especially sensitive to nutrient enrichment effects from N deposition, and there are no high elevation lakes. This network ranks in the lowest quintile in Park Protection (Figure C), having few protected lands.

In combination, the network rankings for Pollutant Exposure, Ecosystem Sensitivity, and Park Protection yield an overall Network Risk ranking that is near the bottom among all networks. The overall level of concern for nutrient N enrichment effects on I&M parks within this network is considered Very Low (Figure D).

Similarly, park rankings are given in Figures E through H for the same metrics. In the case of the park rankings, we only show in the figures the parks that are larger than 100 square miles. Relative ranks for all parks, including the smaller parks, are given in Table A and Appendix B. As for the network ranking figures, the park ranking figures highlight those parks that occur in this network to show their relative position compared with parks in the other 31 networks. Note that the rankings shown in Figures E through H reflect the rank of a given park compared with all other parks, irrespective of size.

Two of the three I&M parks in the Gulf Coast Network that are larger than 100 square miles (BITH and GUIIS) ranked High among parks in Pollutant Exposure; PAIS is ranked Moderate (Figure E). None of the large parks, but two smaller parks (Jean Lafitte, JELA and San Antonio Missions, SAAN) are ranked High in Ecosystem Sensitivity (Figure F, Table A). Other parks in this network are ranked Moderate (BITH; PAIS; and Palo Alto Battlefield, PAAL), Low, or Very Low for this theme. All parks in the network except GUIIS are ranked Moderate in Park Protection; GUIIS is ranked High (Figure G). The overall Summary Park Risk is ranked High (BITH) to Very High (GUIIS) for two of the larger parks, but Moderate for PAIS. For the smaller parks, the overall Summary Risk ranking is quite variable, from Very Low in Vicksburg (VICK) to High in JELA and SAAN (Table A).

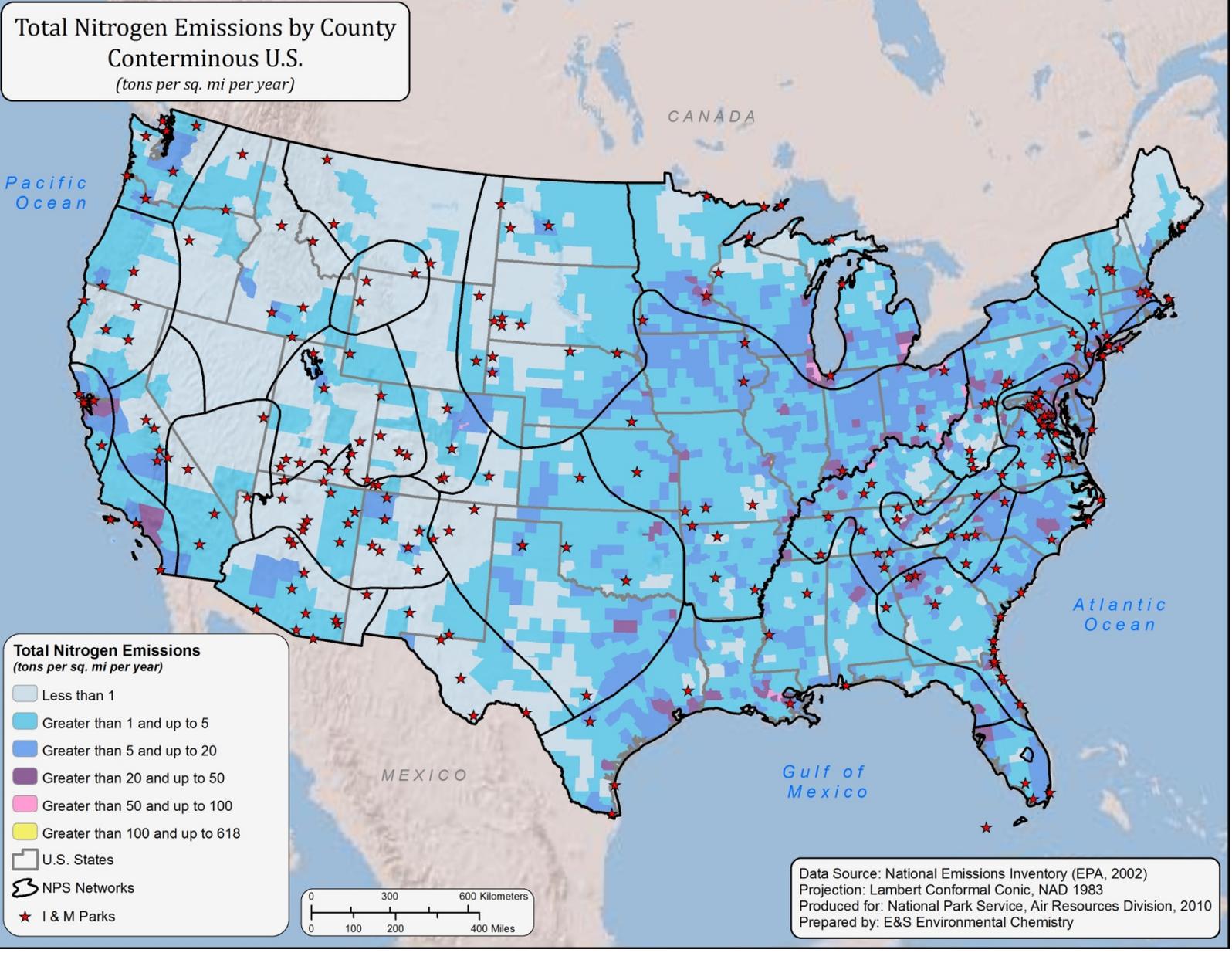
Table A. Relative rankings of individual I&M parks within the network for Pollutant Exposure, Ecosystem Sensitivity, Park Protection, and Summary Risk from atmospheric nutrient N enrichment.

I&M Parks ² in Network	Relative Ranking of Individual Parks ¹			
	Pollutant Exposure	Ecosystem Sensitivity	Park Protection	Summary Risk
<i>Big Thicket</i>	High	Moderate	Moderate	High
<i>Gulf Islands</i>	High	Low	High	Very High
Jean Lafitte	High	High	Moderate	High
Natchez Trace Parkway and National Scenic Trail	High	Low	Moderate	Low
<i>Padre Island</i>	Moderate	Moderate	Moderate	Moderate
Palo Alto Battlefield	Moderate	Moderate	Moderate	Low
San Antonio Missions	Moderate	High	Moderate	High
Vicksburg	Moderate	Very Low	Moderate	Very Low

¹ Relative park rankings are designated according to quintile ranking, among all I&M Parks, from the lowest quintile (very low risk) to the highest quintile (very high risk).
² Park name is printed in bold italic for parks larger than 100 square miles.

- Map A. National map of total N emissions by county for the year 2002. Both oxidized (nitrogen oxides, NO_x) and reduced (ammonia, NH₃) forms of N are included. The total is expressed in tons per square mile per year. (Source of data: EPA National Emissions Inventory, <http://www.epa.gov/ttn/chief/net/2002inventory.html>)
- Map B. Total N deposition for the conterminous United States for the year 2002, expressed in units of kilograms of N deposited from the atmosphere to the earth surface per hectare per year. Wet and dry forms of both oxidized (nitrogen oxides, NO_x) and reduced (ammonia, NH₃) N are included. For the eastern half of the country, wet deposition values were derived from interpolated measured values from NADP (three-year average centered on 2002) and dry deposition values were derived from 12-km CMAQ model projections for 2002. For the western half of the country, both wet and dry deposition values were derived from 36-km CMAQ model projections for 2002. NADP interpolations were performed using the approach of Grimm and Lynch (1997). CMAQ model projections were provided by Robin Dennis, U.S. EPA.
- Map C. Total N emissions by county for lands surrounding the network, expressed as tons of N emitted into the atmosphere per square mile per year. The total includes both oxidized (nitrogen oxides, NO_x) and reduced (ammonia, NH₃) N. (Source of data: EPA National Emissions Inventory, <http://www.epa.gov/ttn/chief/net/2002inventory.html>)
- Map D. Major point source emissions of oxidized (nitrogen oxides, NO_x) and reduced (ammonia, NH₃) N in and around the network. The base of each vertical bar is positioned in the map at the approximate location of the source. The height of the bar is proportional to the magnitude of the source. (Source of data: EPA National Emissions Inventory, <http://www.epa.gov/ttn/chief/net/2002inventory.html>)

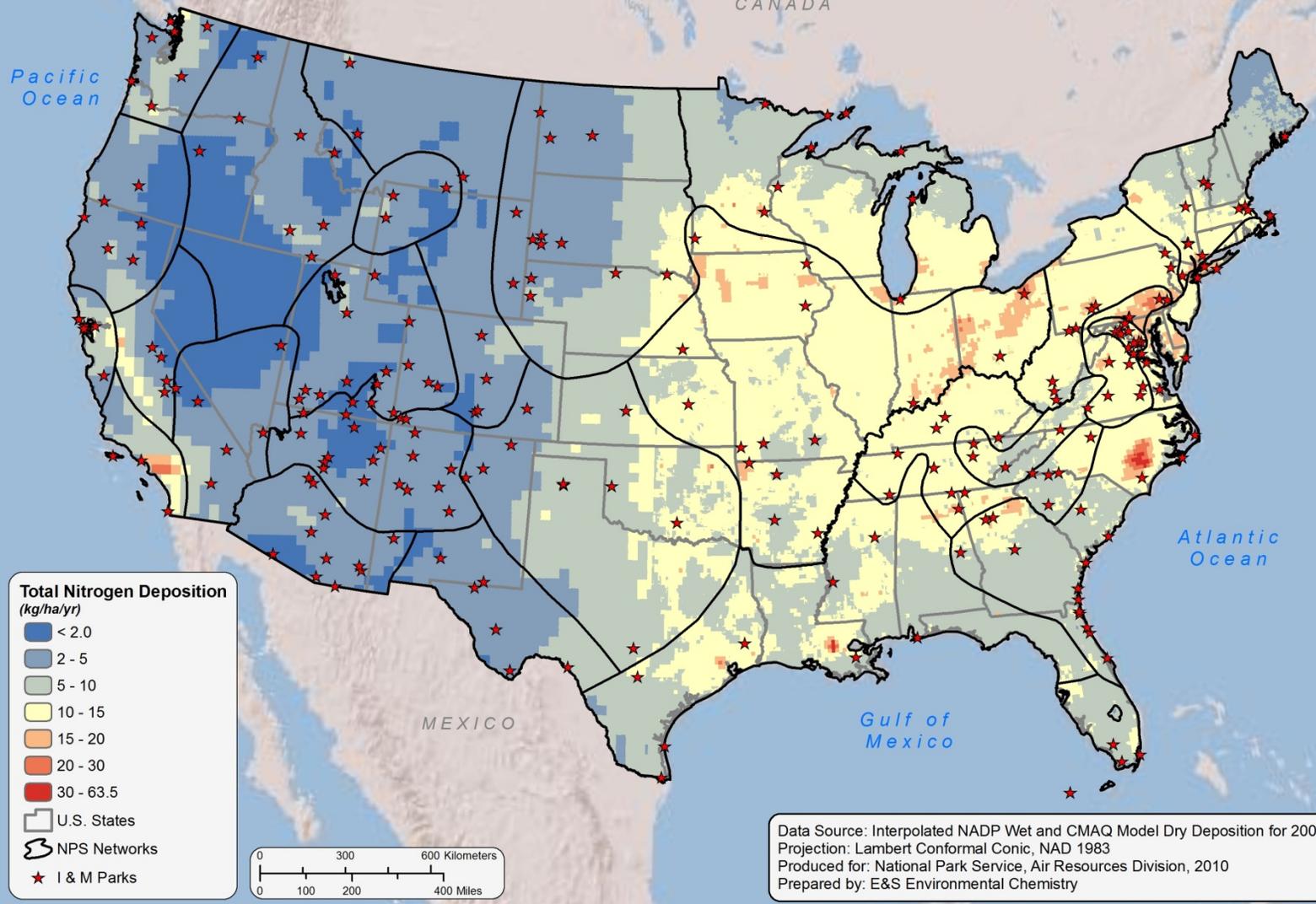
- Map E. Urban centers having more than 10,000 people within the network and within a 300-mile buffer around the perimeter of the network. (Source of data: U.S. Census 2000)
- Map F. Total N deposition in and around the network. Included in the total are wet plus dry forms of both oxidized (nitrogen oxides, NO_x) and reduced (ammonia, NH₃) N. Values are expressed as kilograms of N deposited per hectare per year. (Source of data: Interpolated NADP wet and CMAQ Model dry deposition data for 2002; see information for Map B above for details)
- Map G. Land cover types in and around the network, based on the National Land Cover dataset. (Source of data: National Land Cover Dataset, http://www.mrlc.gov/nlcd_multizone_map.php)
- Figure A. Network rankings for Pollutant Exposure, calculated as the average of scores for all Pollutant Exposure variables.
- Figure B. Network rankings for Ecosystem Sensitivity, calculated as the average of scores for all Ecosystem Sensitivity variables.
- Figure C. Network rankings for Park Protection, calculated as the average of scores for all Park Protection variables.
- Figure D. Network Summary Risk ranking, calculated as the sum of the averages of the scores for Pollutant Exposure, Ecosystem Sensitivity, and Park Protection.
- Figure E. Park rankings for Pollutant Exposure for all parks larger than 100 square miles. Ranks for each park were calculated relative to all parks, regardless of size, as the average of scores for all Pollutant Exposure variables.
- Figure F. Park rankings for Ecosystem Sensitivity for all parks larger than 100 square miles. Ranks for each park were calculated relative to all parks, regardless of size, as the average of scores for all Ecosystem Sensitivity variables.
- Figure G. Park rankings for Park Protection for all parks larger than 100 square miles. Ranks for each park were calculated relative to all parks, regardless of size, as the average of scores for all Park Protection variables.
- Figure H. Park rankings for Summary Risk for all parks larger than 100 square miles. Ranks for each park were calculated relative to all parks, regardless of size, as the average of scores for all Summary Risk variables.



GULN-5

Map A

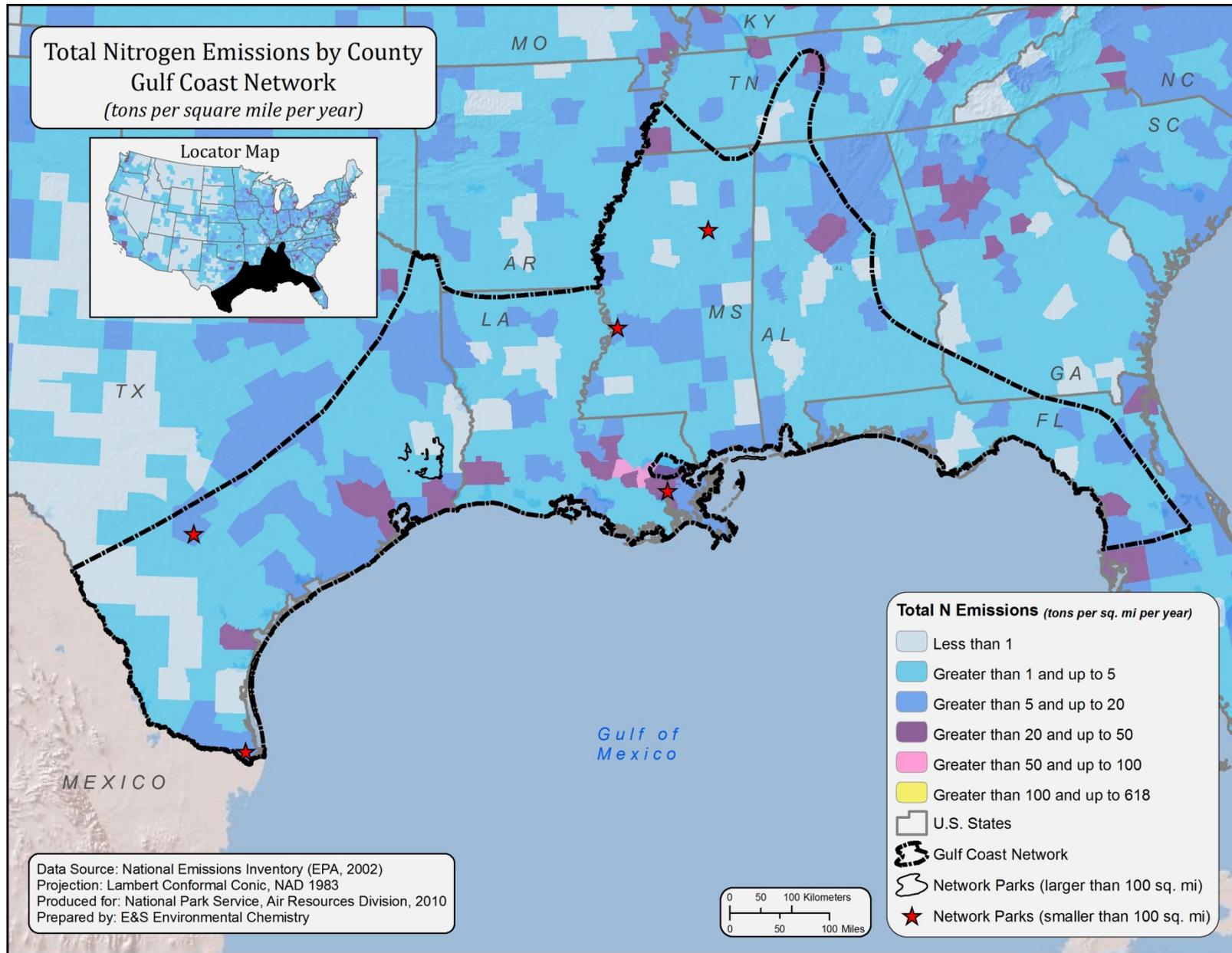
Total Nitrogen Deposition
Conterminous U.S.
(kg/ha/yr)



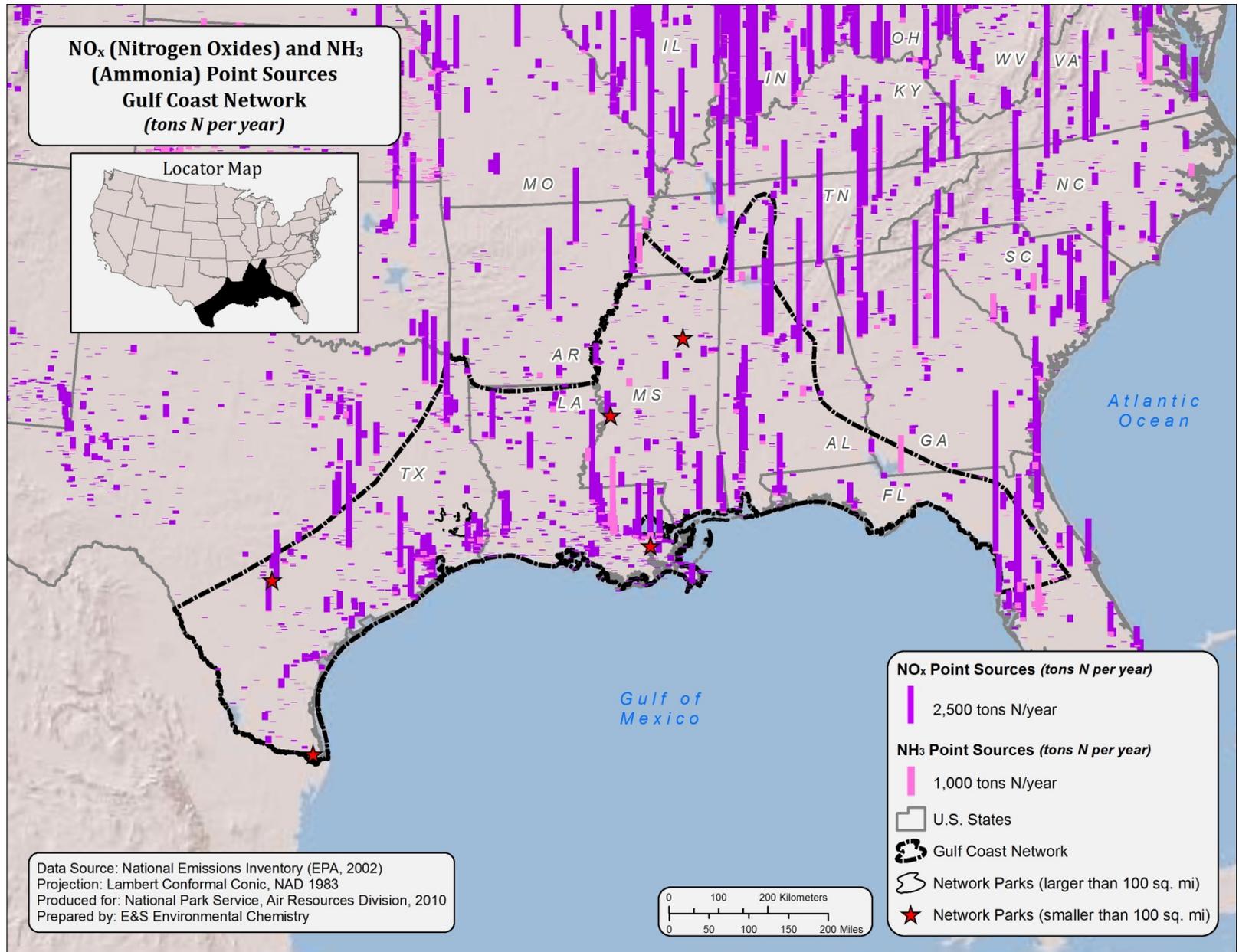
GULN-6

Map B

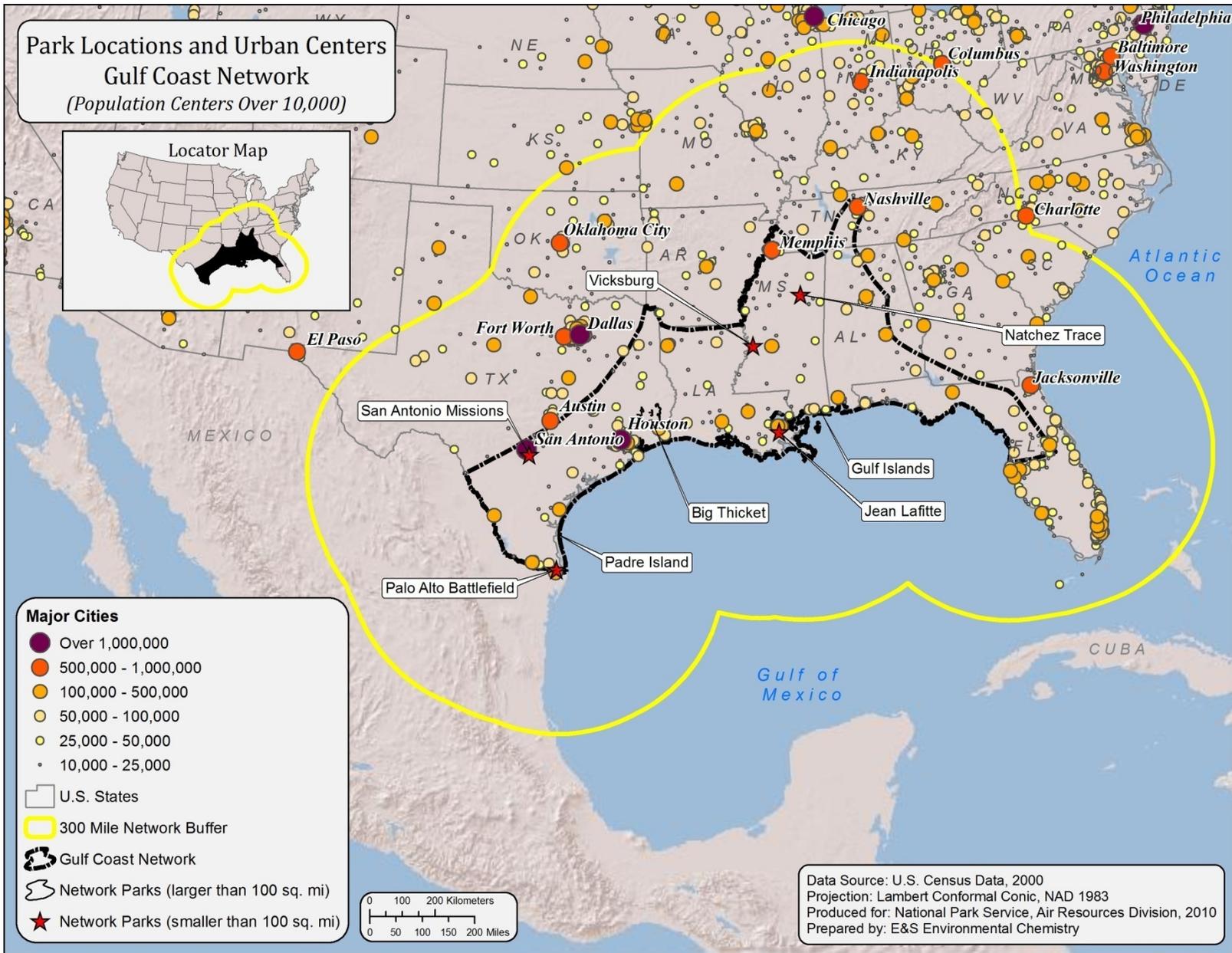
GULN-7



Map C

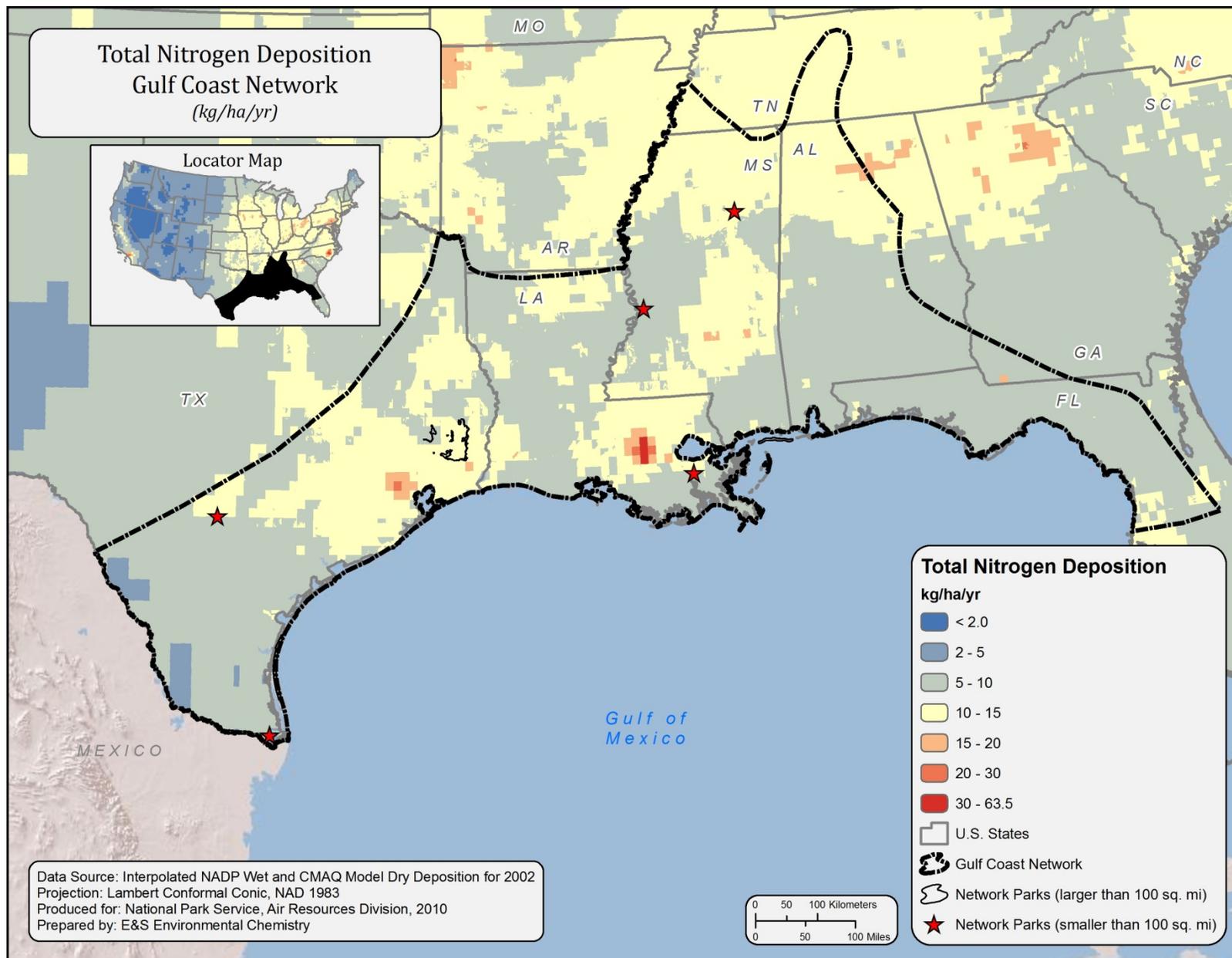


Map D



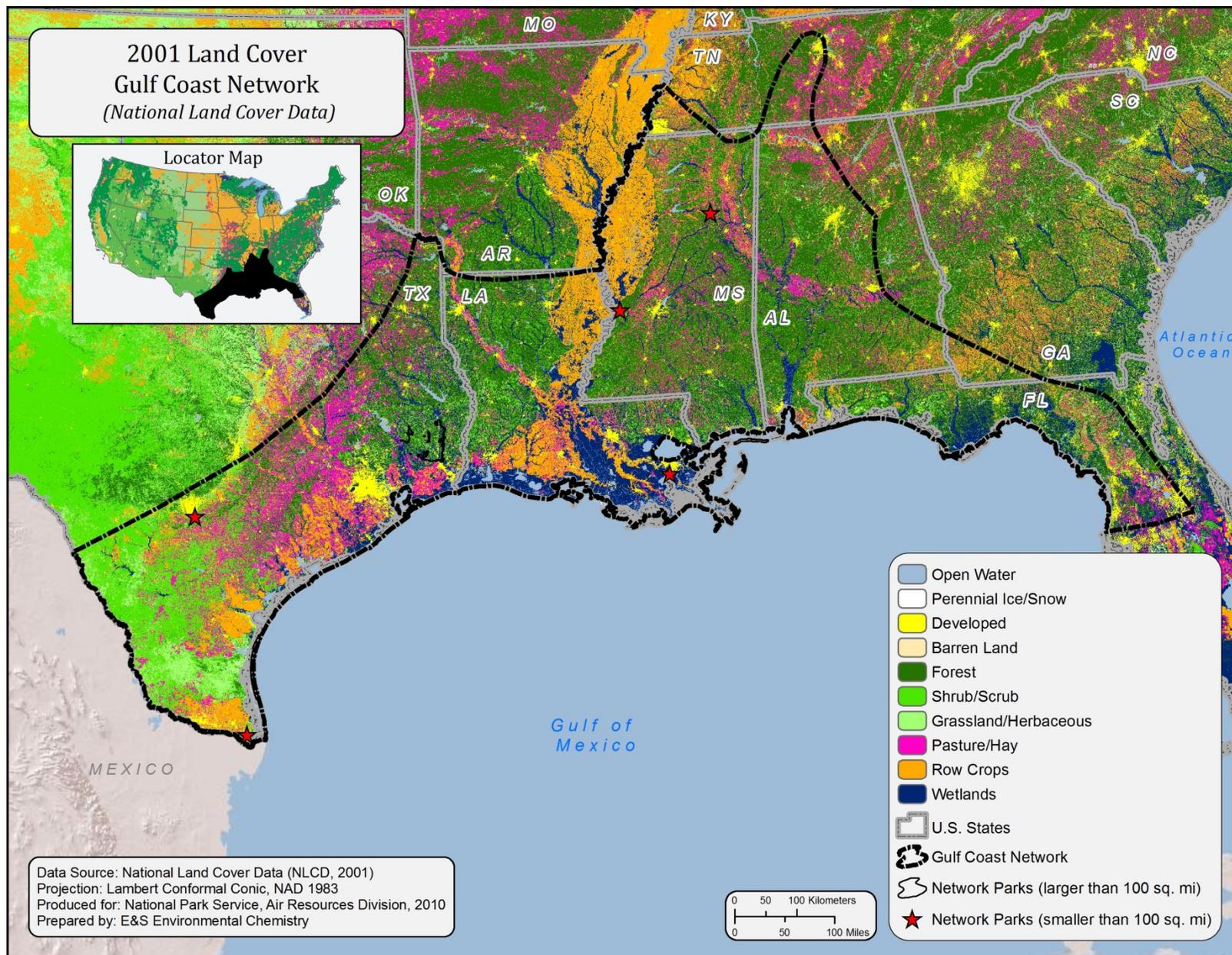
Map E

GULN-10



Map F

GULN-11



Map G

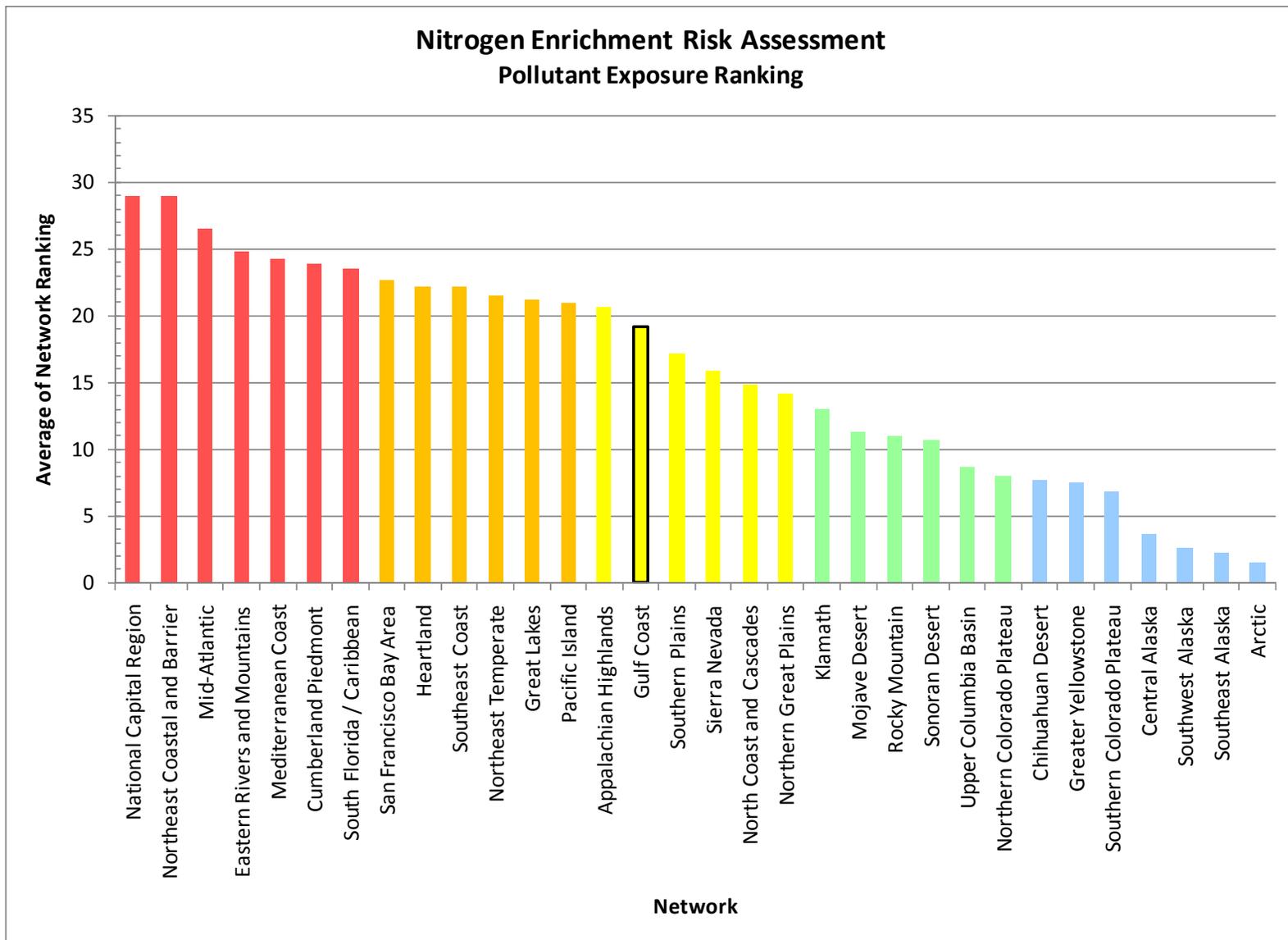


Figure A

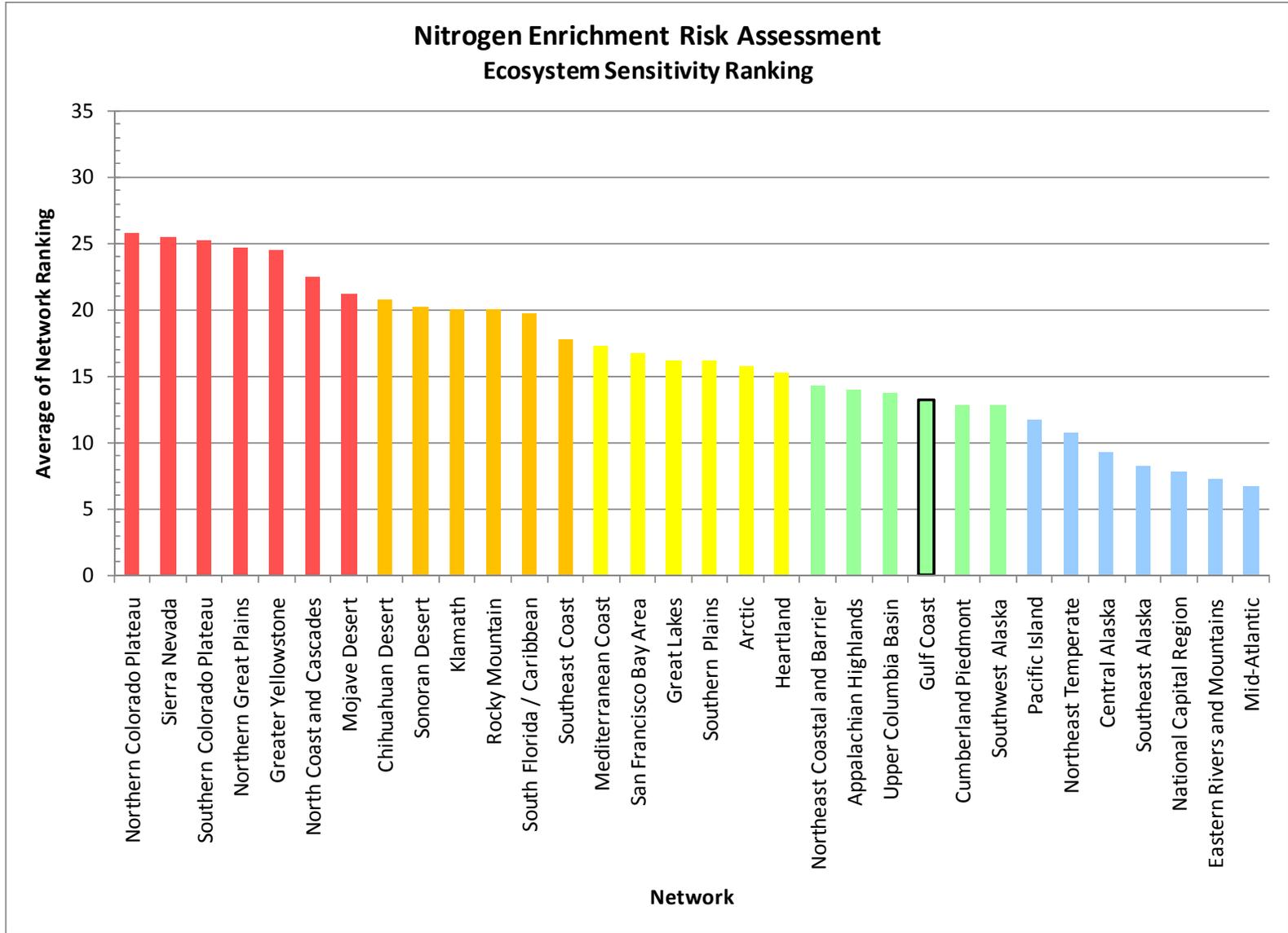


Figure B

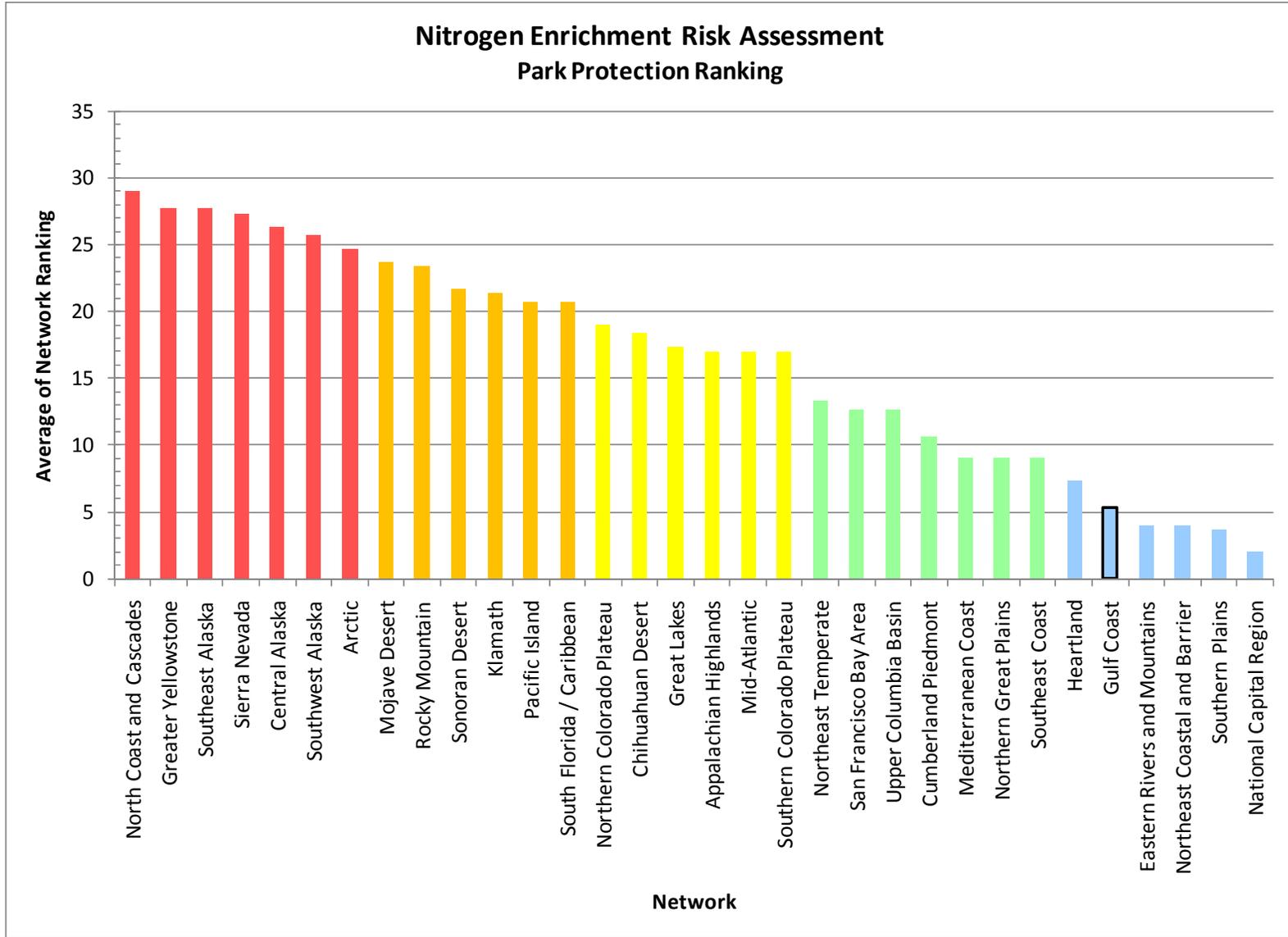


Figure C

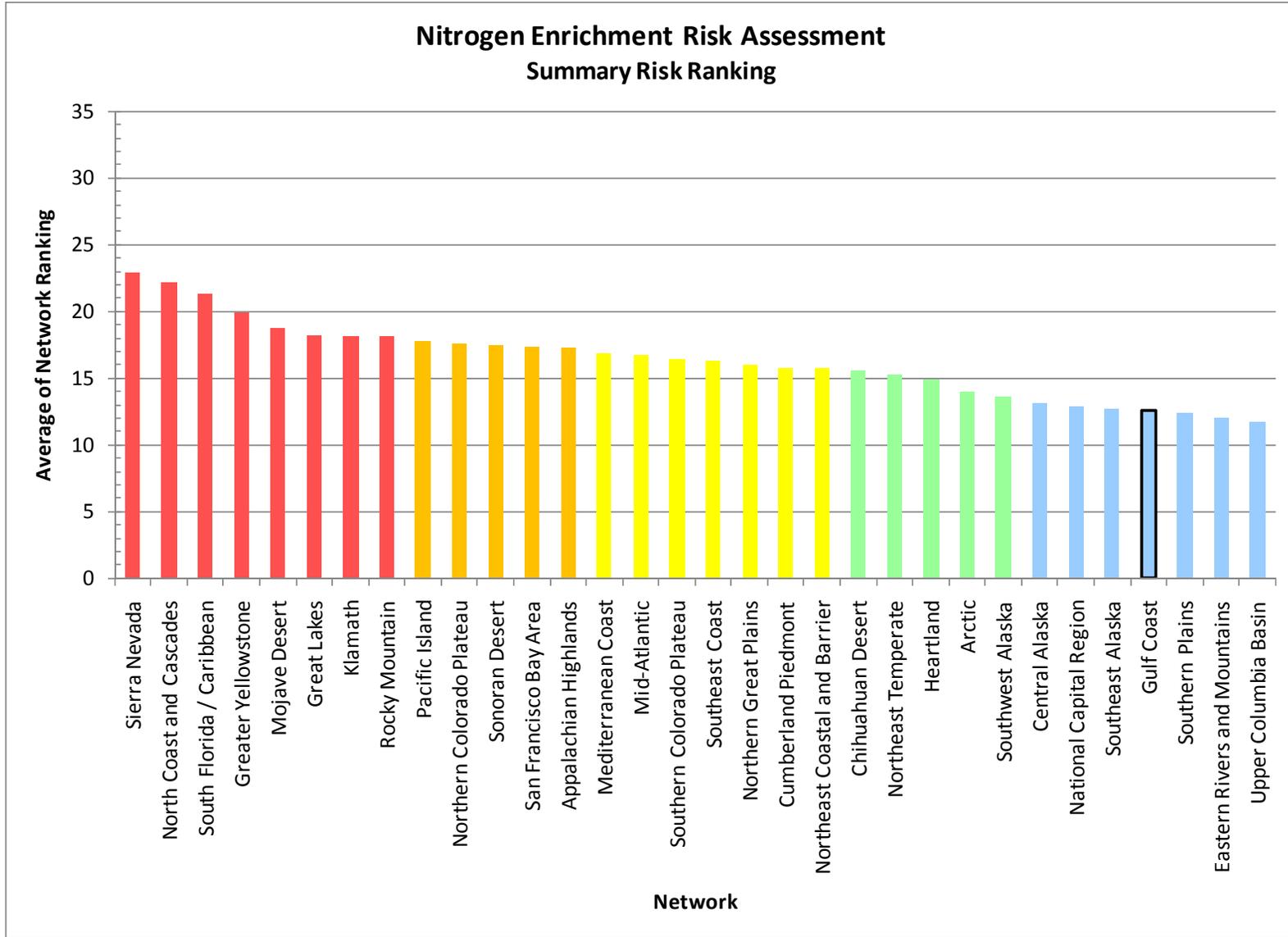


Figure D

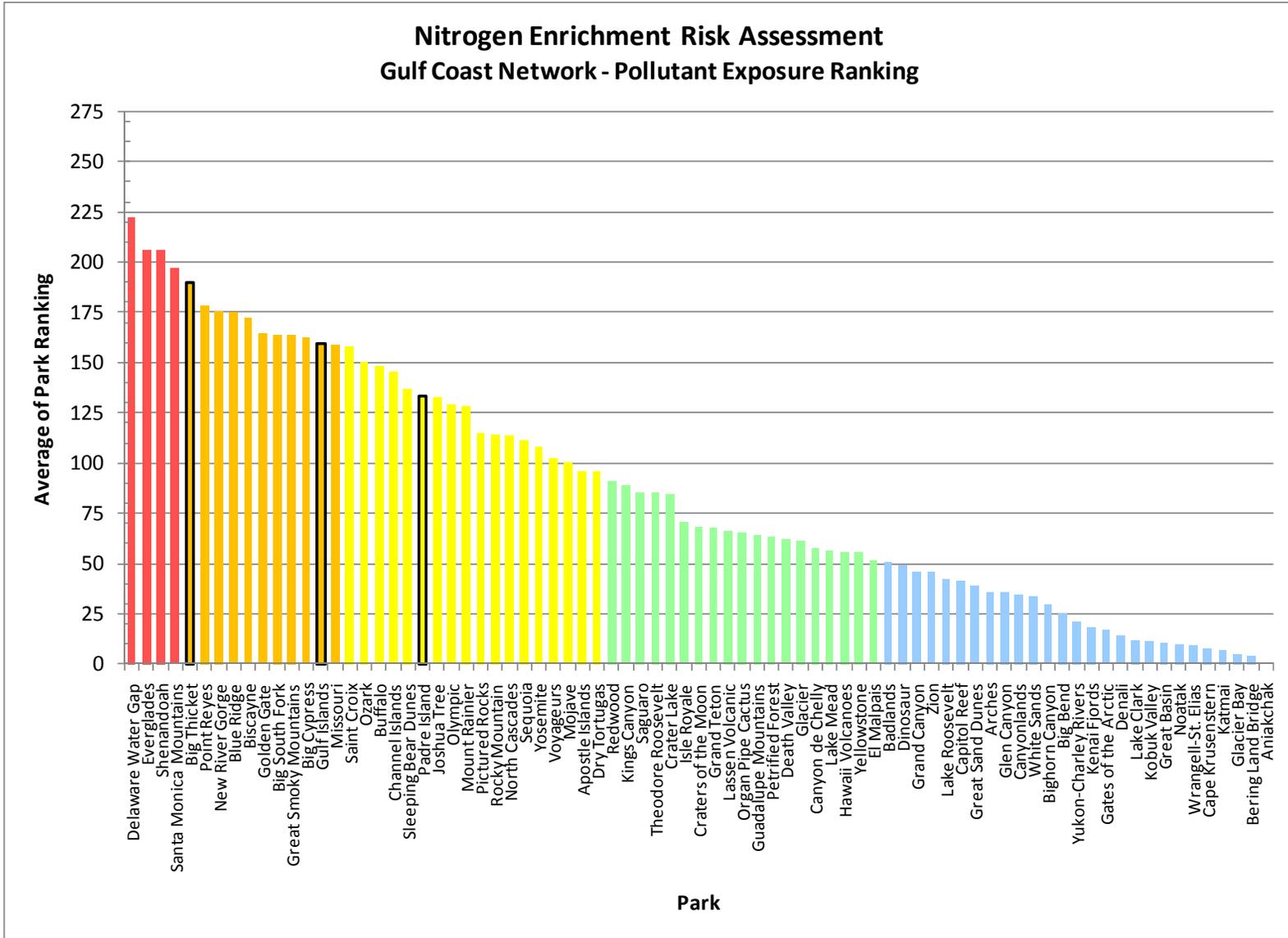


Figure E

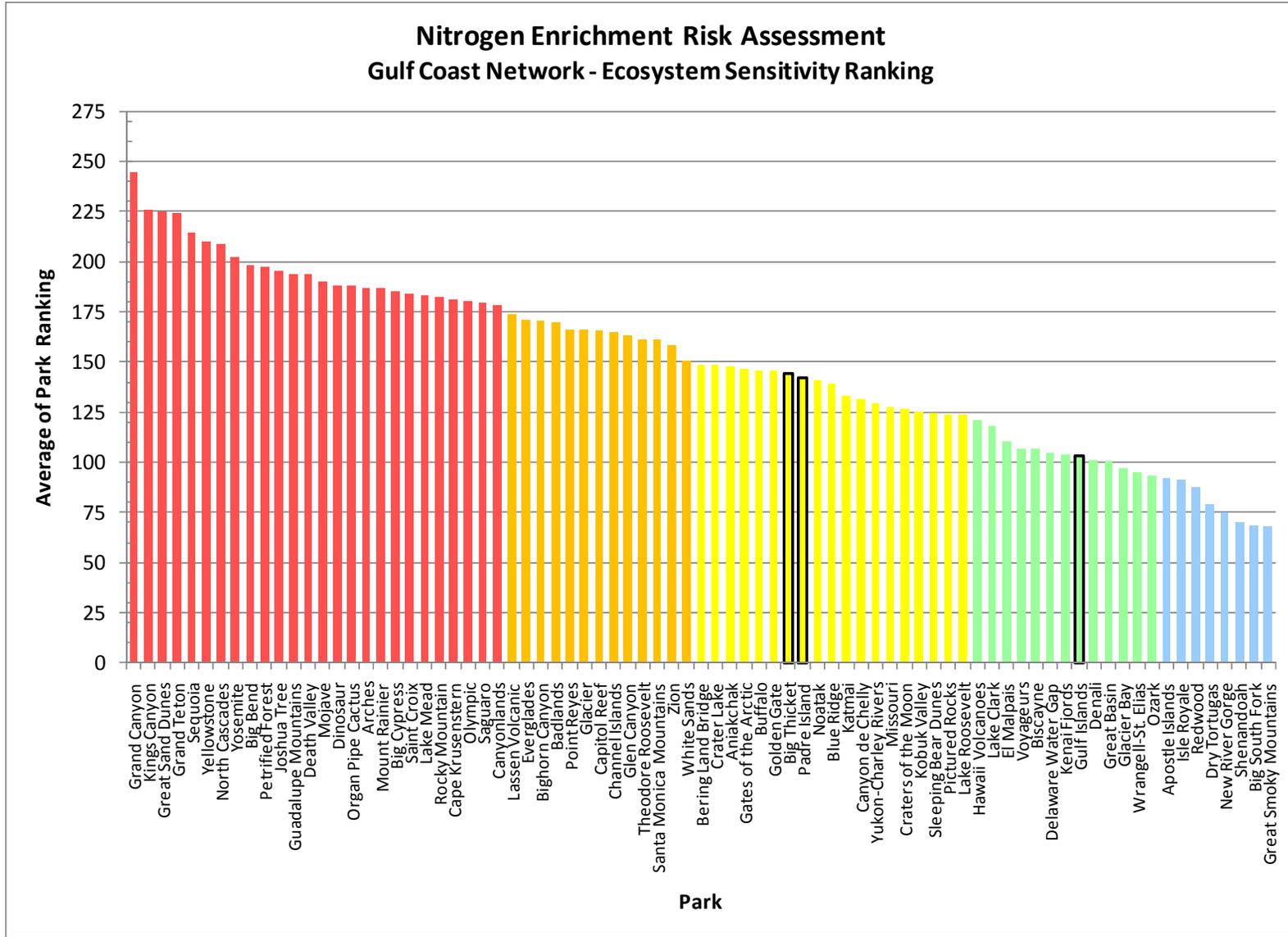


Figure F

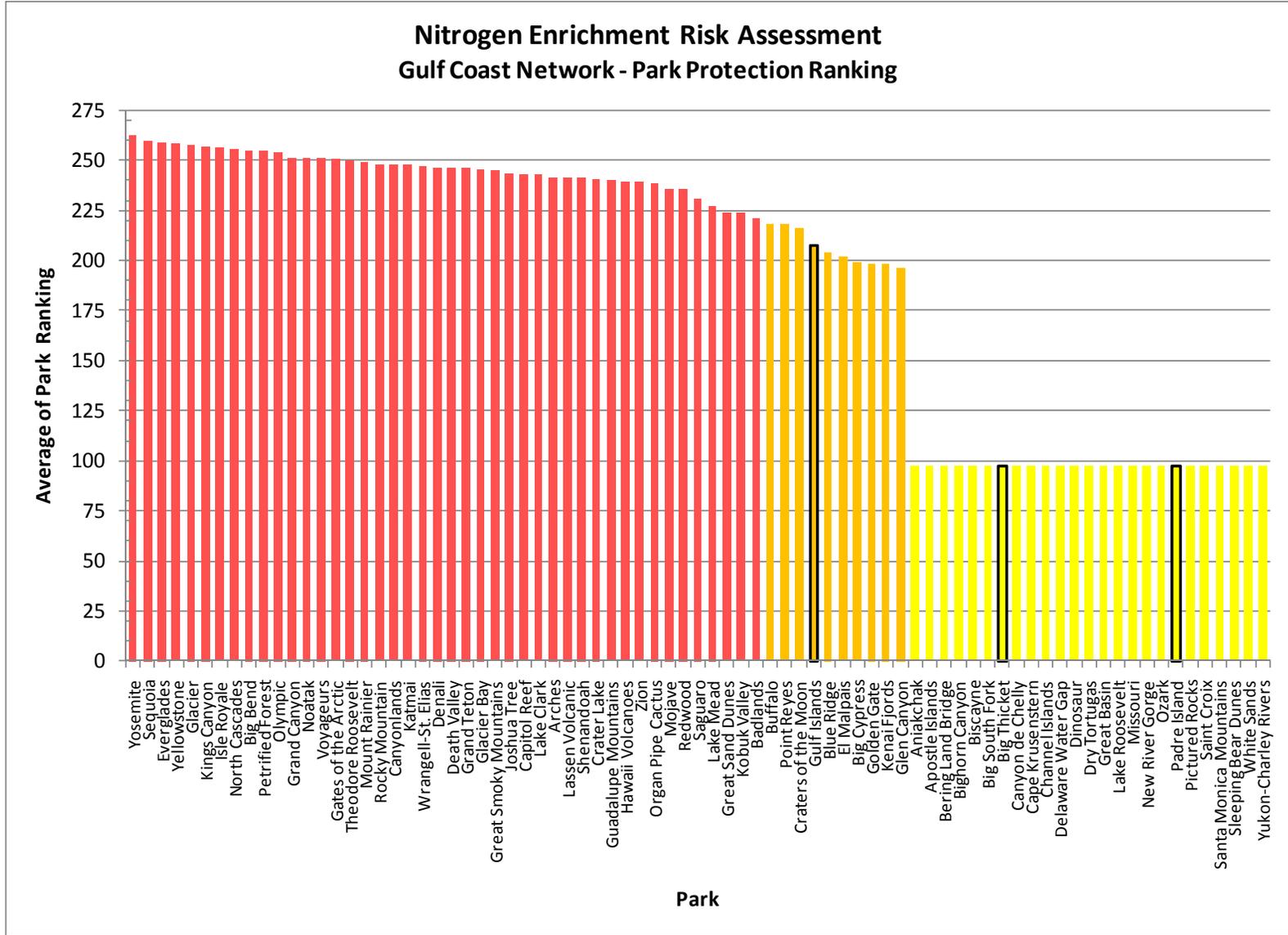


Figure G

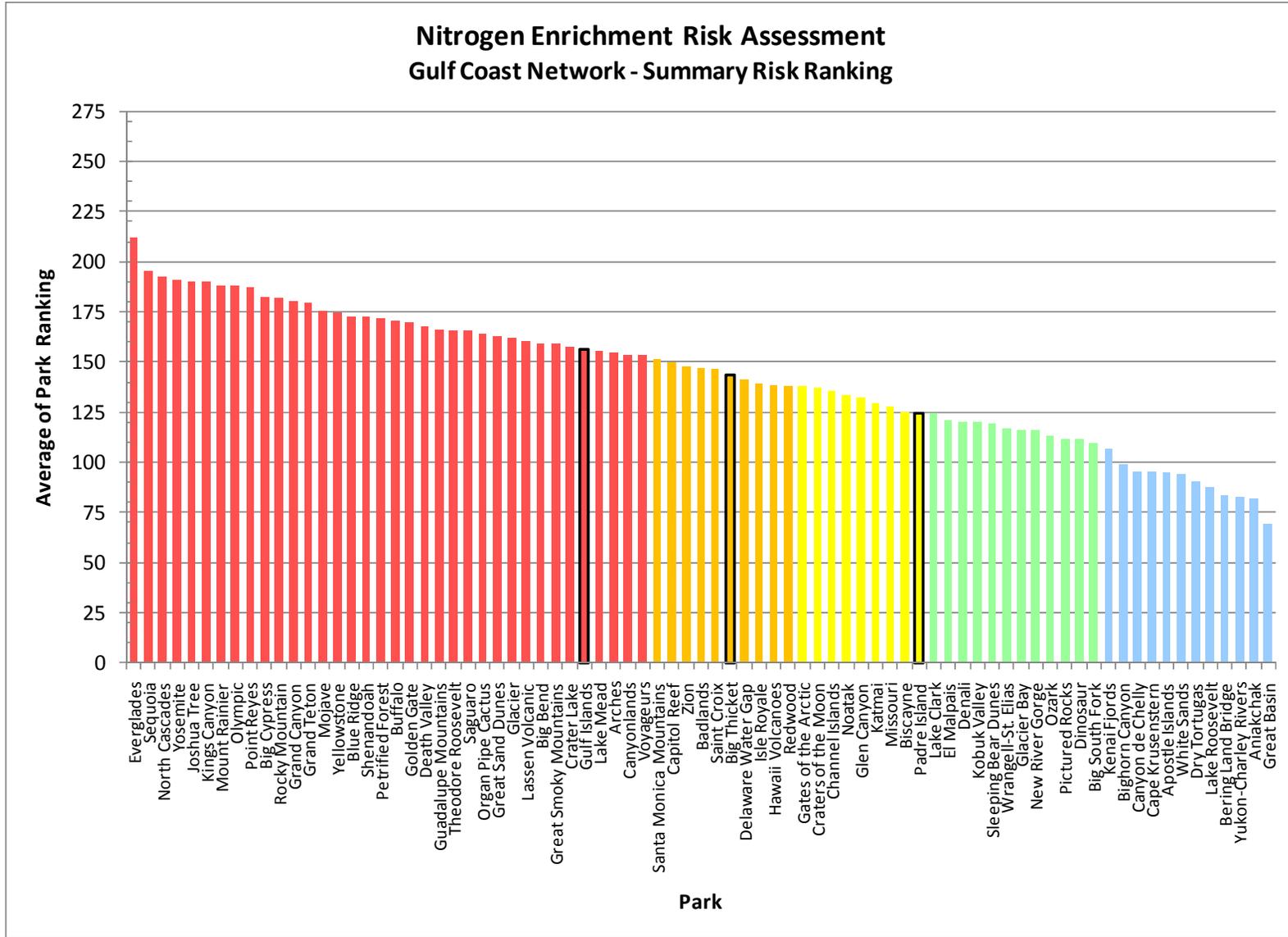


Figure H

The Department of the Interior protects and manages the nation's natural resources and cultural heritage; provides scientific and other information about those resources; and honors its special responsibilities to American Indians, Alaska Natives, and affiliated Island Communities.

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