

## ABSTRACT

### THE COAST AS A VERNACULAR REGION

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The study of regions and regional identity is one of the cornerstones of the field of geography. Historically within regionally-based research, there has been interest in vernacular regions and the use of business names as a data source for mapping patterns in regional identity. However, few studies of regional identity and names have taken full advantage of digital methods and the use of powerful online databases and GIS/mapping software. *ReferenceUSA*, an electronic database was used to collect all business names in the United States that contain the term coast(al). Once data were collected and cleaned, two distinctive avenues of analysis were conducted.

The first was a quantitative mapping of coast(al) business name patterns, finding that even inland establishments identify themselves with the coast. Several maps were produced to visualize the distribution and frequency of coast(al) named businesses and to better understand the spatial patterns of people's identification with the coast as a vernacular region. The second avenue is more of a qualitative image analysis of place naming and branding. Analysis has been done to examine how the physical environment is incorporated into a people's sense of place and why the coast is such a popular and powerful symbol.



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## CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

The identification and mapping of regions represent one of the cornerstones of the field of geography. Historically within regionally-based research, there has been interest in vernacular regions. These regions are based on popular culture or a general population's perceptions, regional loyalties, and sense of place. A path-breaking work in the study of vernacular regions was Wilbur Zelinsky's (1980) article, *North America's Vernacular Regions*. Zelinsky delineated the vernacular regions of North America by using telephone directories for each of the metropolitan cities of the time (1975) and determining the frequency and spatial variation of cultural and regional terms in business names.

Zelinsky's focus of business naming practices reflects a belief that language use patterns are valuable cultural indicators of how people identify and express themselves publicly. Zelinsky's seminal study has been part of a broader literature that examines the cultural power and politics of place naming as a spatial and social practice (Alderman 2000, 2003, 2006; Azaryahu 1996, 1997; Berg & Kearns 1996; Breymaier 2003; Cerabino 2004a, 2004b; Cohen & Kloit 1992; Gill 2005; and Herman 1999). Zelinsky was the most prolific advocate of a traditional approach that collected, categorized, and mapped vast amounts of place name data in documenting and analyzing regional variation in culture. His map of North America's vernacular regions is still found in many introductory human and cultural geography textbooks, even though it has been 30 years since the map's publication.

The study of vernacular regions reached its peak during the mid-1970s and mid-1980s. Research on vernacular regions continues, but it is not as popular as in the past and continues on a smaller scale (Barker 2005; Colten 1997; Heath 1993; Lamme and Oldakowski 2007). This is unfortunate in light of recent electronic technological advances and tools, which could greatly accelerate up and enhance the collection and analysis of place name data that Zelinsky undertook

by hand. Scholars have recognized the benefits of applying computer technology to place name analysis (e.g. Zelinsky 1994, McArthur 1995, Alderman and Good 1996); however, few studies of regional identity and names have taken full advantage of digital methods. Instead of collecting place name data by hand, it can now be done using nationally comprehensive and easily searchable Internet and electronic databases. What was once drawn by hand can now be designed and visualized on the computer in less time and more effectively using specific mapping software, such as ESRI's *ArcMap*.

Most of the previous vernacular region scholarship has focused exclusively on the mapping and analysis of naming patterns. In addition to lacking a full engagement with geospatial technology and methods, traditional vernacular regional research has failed to adequately consider, from a qualitative perspective, the iconic meanings that these regions take on and how people express multiple and sometimes contradictory identifications with a common region. Not until recently has work on vernacular regions interpreted the specific contexts within which expressions of regional identity are made socially important through practices such as place branding and promotion. Place promotion and the creation of marketable brands for communities are an increasingly common and important part of the economic development process and the formation of civic identity (Burgess 1982, Agnew and Duncan 1989, Fleming and Roth 1991, Young and Lever 1997, Moilanen and Rainisto 2009). With this in mind, this thesis research seeks to advance the study of vernacular regional study by incorporating advanced geospatial technology and methods along with an interpretive analysis of place identity and marketing.

The purpose of this thesis is to analyze a popular yet under-analyzed vernacular region in the United States – the coast. Instead of relying on the traditional approach of searching printed telephone directories by hand, business name data will be collected using the Internet database

*ReferenceUSA*, which is a searchable, comprehensive electronic directory of U.S. business establishments. The spatial extent of the coast(al) vernacular region will be mapped and analyzed at the national level and specifically within North Carolina using these data in ESRI's *Arcmap* software. In addition to mapping the coast as a vernacular region, this thesis also reports a qualitative image analysis of place naming and place branding that surrounds online references to the coast, paying close attention to the various ways in which identification with the coast as a cultural idea is employed in crafting and selling a sense of place and place identity to the public.

### **Specific Research Questions**

This thesis carries out two distinctive avenues of analysis—a quantitative mapping of the spatial extent and pattern of the coast as a vernacular region as defined by collected business name data; and a qualitative description and interpretation of the various ways in which a coastal sense of place and place identity are employed for the purposes of online place promotion and branding.

The quantitative mapping of businesses named “coastal” will be used to answer the following questions:

1. What is the spatial extent and geographic patterns of U.S. and North Carolina businesses that use the word coast(al) in their names?
2. How does the frequency of these coastal businesses vary by distance from the physical coastline of the country and the state of North Carolina? How do these businesses vary by industry type?
3. Where in the U.S. do we see place name identification with the coast strongest (and weakest)?
4. To what extent and why is public vernacular identification with the coast found among inland located businesses?

The qualitative interpretation of coastal references in Internet-based place representations will be used to answer the following questions:

1. To what extent is there variation in how people express a connection or identification with the coast through place promotion and place representation?
2. What imagery and words are being employed to convert the coast, symbolically, into a sellable commodity and place brand?
3. What social purposes do these representations of the coast serve within different regions of the United States?
4. As way of case study, what prominent themes and activities are associated with North Carolina's popular Crystal Coast place brand?

### **Significance of Study**

The major significance of my thesis research is to illustrate that vernacular regions remain analytically interesting and place naming can still provide insight into major cultural patterns. It has been argued that place names are a reflection of how people identify and express themselves publicly. A business' name is the foundation of an establishment and is a key part of its public identity, a way of creating an image within the larger community. The owners of these businesses usually will choose a name that is an expression of them personally, which can be influenced by cultural aspects of the region they currently reside in or have a strong connection with their past, such as a childhood or place of previous residence.

The traditional approach of regional studies was to collect, categorize, and map large amounts of place name data by hand. However, with the development and availability of the Internet and electronic technology within recent years, researchers are now able to find and collect data much faster. Only a handful of the most recent studies have used electronic methods to collect their data. My research utilizes advanced data collection methods to assemble a comprehensive business name database.

One favorable aspect about using an Internet and electronic database, such as *ReferenceUSA*, is the ability to collect data using one source and inherent uniformity. Another beneficial aspect of this type of database is that it is nationally comprehensive and easily searchable. Most of the previous studies only examined a modest sample of urban areas.

Using an electronic database allows for the inclusion of all areas and may reveal different patterns than what would be found in selected urban areas.

Aside from Zelinsky, almost all of the previous studies concentrated on delineating regions only on a sub-national or state level. This research examines the spatial extent of the coast at the national level. Not only will an electronic database be utilized, cartographic visualization tools, that very few of previous studies have used, will also be employed. Maps that were once drawn by hand can now be created using mapping software, like ESRI's *ArcMap*, which significantly cuts down on the production time and enhances the precision and accuracy of the visualizations..

Another significant purpose of this research is to grasp an understanding of America's present cultural geography and identities with a popular yet under-analyzed vernacular region in the United States – “the coast.” This purpose is twofold because no other studies have examined the coast as a vernacular region and very few previous studies have explored vernacular regions from a qualitative analytic perspective. This is also true with studies involving the coast, most of which examine the physical and social aspects of the coast. My research explores the iconic imagery that the coast takes on in place identity and how people express this identity in different ways. Additionally examined is how these images are incorporated into daily life and are transformed into a commodity through the process of place branding.

### **Organization of Thesis**

The remainder of the thesis is organized into five chapters. Chapter 2 offers a review of the background literature for the thesis. Chapter 3 describes the research design of the thesis, data collection, visualization methods, and the online collection of promotional images associated with the coast. In Chapter 4, I present and discuss the results of my mapping of the

coast as a vernacular region, offering a national picture and North Carolina-specific perspective on the distribution of businesses that use coast(al) in their names. In Chapter Five, I offer a description and interpretation of the various ways in which people identity with and invoke images of the coast through the promotion and branding of places, paying close attention to the range of social meanings and interests associated with these images of the coast. Chapter 6 provides a conclusion to the thesis and discusses the larger implication of the research and where it should go in the future.



## CHAPTER 2: BACKGROUND

In providing background for the proposed thesis, I review much of the work done on vernacular regions over past several decades, leading to a focused discussion of Zelinsky's important study, which was the starting point for this research. I then go into a discussion about the physical environment and its role in serving as a symbol and the focus of sense of place. Additionally, there is also discussion on how place-naming evokes certain images and how these images are incorporated into everyday life and become a part of one's identity.

### **Vernacular Regions**

The study of vernacular regions reached its peak in the mid-1970s and mid-1980s, with several key studies from Reed (1976), Zelinsky (1980) and Shortridge (1985). Vernacular region studies have commonly utilized one of two different approaches: surveys/questionnaires or analysis of name frequency, specifically for businesses. One of the earliest vernacular region studies was conducted by Peeveril Meigs (1941). He saw the need to find and apply a quantitative way to map French culture in Louisiana. He believed that counting the occurrence of French names in telephone directories would be the best way to map the distribution of this cultural influence and source of identity.

There have been numerous studies since that have expanded upon Meigs' (1941) methodology. These studies have looked at naming patterns to define vernacular regions within the United States, both on a sub-national or state level. Sociologist John Shelton Reed (1976) expanded upon Meigs' (1941) methods when he mapped the terms "Dixie" and "South" to delineate the perceptual boundaries of the American South. Reed's study is considered a classic in the fields of cultural geography and southern studies (Alderman and Beavers 1999). Reed sought to address three questions: where is the South as perceived by ordinary people, where is Dixie, and what is the relation between the two? He searched through fairly recent

telephone directories of a sample of 100 American cities and counted the number of entries that began with the word “Southern”, “Dixie”, and “American”.

Reed’s study was restricted to fairly large cities, because of the availability of printed telephone directories, which he recorded by hand. Reed expressed concern in his concluding remarks that this ran the risk of implying that the results stood true for small towns and rural areas. Once Reed tabulated the number of entries of both Southern and Dixie, for each city he standardized them by dividing each number by the number of American entries, under the assumption that the number of American entries was roughly proportional to the total number of business entries.

Reed revisited and updated his original study 15 years later (Reed et al. 1990). He believed that a number of changes had taken place since the original study that would affect how Southerners viewed and identified with their region. The same methodology and sample of cities, except for one (Lincoln, NE), were used. As expected, the regional boundaries identified in 1976, had changed, especially with the core area of “Dixie”. Reed concluded that the boundary between the South and West may be moving and the South may be shrinking due to the diminishing sectional feelings among Southerners. This 1990 study has been subsequently revisited and updated by others, not including Reed (Alderman and Beavers 1999, Cooper and Knotts 2010), because of changes occurring in the southern landscape. Alderman and Beavers (1999) noted that three new movements, de-Confederatization, African Americanization, and re-Confederatization, were observable in the increasingly contested name geography of the South.

Alderman and Beavers (1999) also took advantage of technological resources that were not readily available when Reed (1976, 1990) first completed his study. Instead of counting through telephone directories by hand, they conducted a keyword search using an electronic

telephone directory database. At the conclusion of their study, Alderman and his colleague suggested that work should go beyond pattern analysis and also investigate the cultural politics of place naming and regional identity construction and the different ways, in which people identify with and use regionally based names. As they argued, this would require the use of qualitative methods as well as quantitative mapping, which would allow for a more humanistic examination of social and cultural context of vernacular regions.

As previously stated, using telephone directories and counting the frequency of selected name terms is not the only method that has been used in vernacular region studies. Other studies have used more qualitative methods, such as surveys or questionnaires. Some of the earliest studies using such methods employed the use of postcards (Brownell 1960, Hale 1971).

Brownell (1960) attempted to map the Midwest, as it existed in the mid-20<sup>th</sup> century, by looking at a sample of communities along several random radii that extended hundreds of miles in all directions from Chicago. He then sent a postcard to postmasters in these communities, asking if they thought their community was located in the Midwest. The respondents could only answer yes or no, but comments or qualifications were welcomed. The comments that were received were then analyzed to compile a list of factors that influenced the postmaster's spatial concept of the Midwest.

Ruth Hale (1971) also utilized a postcard survey in her doctoral dissertation. She sent postcards to three representative groups of people from each of the 3,066 (at the time) counties and parishes in the contiguous United States. These three groups consisted of county agricultural and extension agents, weekly newspaper editors, and postmasters. She chose these specific people because she believed they would provide accurate and reliable information about regional names commonly used in their areas.

Other studies have administered questionnaires to college students (Jordan 1978, Good 1981, Shortridge 1985). Like Brownell (1960), Shortridge (1985) explored the popular image of the Midwest. He used mixed methods, providing both a questionnaire and a map of the United States to undergraduates at universities in different states. He asked for background information on residential history and asked two questions about student perceptions of the Midwest. He also asked students to delineate where they believed the Midwest was located on a map of the United States.

Shortridge (1985) did not choose to analyze all completed questionnaires in his study. Instead, he focused on students who he thought would best represent the views of their region and those attending school in the same state they called “home.” Responses from international students and those who had lived in several different states were also excluded. The final products of the study were composite views of the delineated maps and a list of terms provided by respondents regarding the question about characteristics of “the Mid West and its people.”

Jordan (1978) explored the perceptual regions of Texas and also distributed a survey to classrooms at universities across the state. Most respondents were college students who were young, above average education, and wealthier than the norm. In addition, to account for counties that received no responses, questionnaires were issued to non-students (county farm agents, postmasters, etc.). He noted that his sample was biased, but believed the regional patterns shown were basically accurate. In contrast to these examples of survey-based vernacular region research, studies using place name data are arguably more comprehensive (spatially) and less biased. There is perhaps no figure more identified with this methodology than Wilbur Zelinsky.

### *Zelinsky's Vernacular Regions*

Wilbur Zelinsky's (1980) work on the vernacular regions of North America is considered a classic piece of literature in traditional cultural geography and the importance of examining how everyday people define and identify with regions. He defines a vernacular region as "the shared spontaneous image of territorial reality, local or not so local, hovering in the minds of the untutored" (Zelinsky 1980, p. 1). Building on Reed's (1976) work, Zelinsky used a similar methodology to map several vernacular regions of North America, including the United States and parts of Canada. Zelinsky argued that new, perhaps qualitatively distinct regions were sprouting up around the United States during the time of his study. He believed if he could delineate these regions, then he would be able to contribute something of relevance to the rising scholarly and public interest in not only regional study, but also questions of history and ethnicity.

Zelinsky chose to examine the largest vernacular regions on the subnational level. This included regions that had previously been cartographically delineated, such as the South and Midwest, and also new areas such as the Gulf and the Middle Atlantic. He believed that previous studies that used both quantitative and qualitative methods, such as immersion within the area and supplemental personal observation and interviews, could only be applied at the state level and would be too time consuming to apply at the subnational level (Dunbar 1961, Crisler 1948).

Zelinsky was attracted to Reed's (1976) methodology because it examined the name patterns of a city's non-residential enterprises and analyzed a supposedly larger cross section of the public than using surveys. Zelinsky admitted that he shamelessly borrowed from Reed's methodology of using telephone directories to map vernacular regions. Zelinsky's goal was to determine the frequency of certain cultural and regional terms found in business names listed in

recent telephone directories for the major cities of both the United States and Canada. Once this was accomplished, he identified the territorial extent and spatial intensity of vernacular regions at the subnational level. Zelinsky chose to look at metropolitan cities in the United States and cities of comparable size (i.e. population of 50,000 or more) in Canada. Because some states do not have a metropolitan area, four nonmetropolitan places were included from Alaska, Vermont, Prince Edward Island, and Wyoming, so the entire country would be fairly represented.

It can be argued that Zelinsky may have missed a part of the so-called general population's view, which he was trying to account for, by not including smaller cities in his study. Reed's (1976) study was also restricted to fairly large cities, which in effect controlled for size and he admitted ran the risk of implying that the results stood true for small towns and rural areas. However, Zelinsky more ardently defended his choice for not consulting directories for smaller towns and rural areas. He believed that it would take an enormous amount of effort and that there would be a relatively small number of terms to be accounted for in smaller areas. Zelinsky, like Reed made a critical assumption that the names of businesses reflected the views of ordinary people. In reality, these patterns reflected the regional views of an elite sub-group of society and the influence of corporations on place identity. This in one of the limitations of using business names as a reflection of regional views because not everyone has the benefit of ownership.

The most important and difficult part of Zelinsky's study was assembling a list of acceptable cultural and regional terms whose frequency and spatial variation could be examined through telephone directories. Reed (1976) concluded at the end of his study that the method he used could easily be extended to the study of other regions, such as the ones that Zelinsky was looking to delineate, using both directional (i.e. Southeastern) and folk terms (i.e. Yankee).

Zelinsky used a mix of both directional and folk terms when compiling his list. He even admitted that he could not resist the opportunity to include a number of terms that were not solely geographic in nature, but which could lead to the discovery of other cultural regional dimensions.

Terms were selected based on two different criteria. First, the term had to occur often enough and in enough places to be deemed acceptable. The second condition was based on Zelinsky's own personal judgment. The term had to suggest that there was interesting information about the United States' and Canada's conceptual worlds at the relatively macroscopic scale of the study.

A list of 400 terms was compiled by Zelinsky. Through a process of test trials, he narrowed the list down to 73. Zelinsky went through each city's telephone directory and counted the frequency of all 73 terms on the list (Table 1). He did not count entries that were names of government agencies, personal surnames, branch or local offices of businesses that had multiple locations (unless the main office could be identified), or names that referred to local streets, neighborhoods, landmarks, or state/local political jurisdictions. After recording the frequency of each term for all of the cities, Zelinsky delineated 14 vernacular regions in North America in a series of seven maps. Two of these regions, the Middle Atlantic and Gulf regions, Zelinsky claimed had never been mapped prior to his study. Each map was comprised of two zones of frequency: leading regional term and second/third regional terms. The leading regional term was defined as the term that outnumbered all other regional vernacular labels for each metropolitan area. Accordingly, the second/third regional terms were those ranked second and third in frequency

Acadia	Colonial, Colony	Global, Globe	National, Nationwide	Southeast (ern)
American	Columbia	Gulf	New England	Southern, Southland
Apache	Community	Holiday	North American	Southwest (ern)
Apollo	Continental	International	North Star	Star
Argo, Argonaut, Argosy	Country (side)	Maple Leaf	Northeast (ern)	Sun(beam) (light) (shine)
Atlantic	Crown	Mayfair	Northern	Sunset
Atlas	Delta	Metro (politan)	Northland	Town & Country
Aztec(a)	Dixie	Mid-America(n)	Northwest (ern)	United States, U.S.
Canada, Canandia	Dominon	Mid-Atlantic (Middle	Olympia (ic)	Universal
Centennial	Downtown (er)	Middle West, Midwest	Pacific	Victoria
Central	Eagle	Midland	Phoenix	Viking
Century	Eastern	Midway	Pilgrim	Village
City(wide)	Empire, Imperial	Mission	Pioneer	Western
Classic	Federal	Modern(e)	Regal, Royal(e)	
Coast(al)	Frontier	Monarch	Regency, Regent	

Table 1: Terms Counted and Analyzed in the Study of Cultural Significance of Names of Metropolitan Enterprises (Zelinsky 1980)



Zelinsky also produced an eighth map, which identified the metropolitan areas that lacked a core regional identity. These areas were defined on the basis that no single regional term or cluster of closely related terms occurred five or more times. He commented that he could not give a reasonable hypothesis as to why this may have been the case in these areas other than these regions may have been indifferent to the areas around them or did not feel the need to attach regional labels to their businesses.

Once the regions were delineated, Zelinsky made several other maps to compare the spatial extent of different regions. This included a map that delineated all 14 popular regions of North America (Figure 1). In my opinion, this map is somewhat confusing in some areas, as lines run together and are not clearly labeled. North vs. South and East vs. West, both including zones of indifference, were also mapped. The last map produced delineated the regional terms as a percent of all terms tallied.

Zelinsky concluded his article with two main observations. First, he noted that his study had shed light on the continued importance of place name geography and how different insights into society and culture can be gathered from it. Second, Zelinsky's essay had demonstrated how the current knowledge was lacking on vernacular regions, which was a topic he believed would grow in theoretical and practical importance. Even though Zelinsky's article was published at the height of vernacular regional studies, the fundamental ideas behind these studies are still very important in today's world. My study seeks to replicate aspects of Zelinsky's methodology using current, electronically accessible data. I examine the spatial distribution and meaning of the coast as a vernacular region. Surprisingly, Zelinsky and other scholars have neglected to study coastal name patterns, despite the nation's large amount of shoreline and the historical importance that the coast has played in the U.S. and the development of its economy and culture.

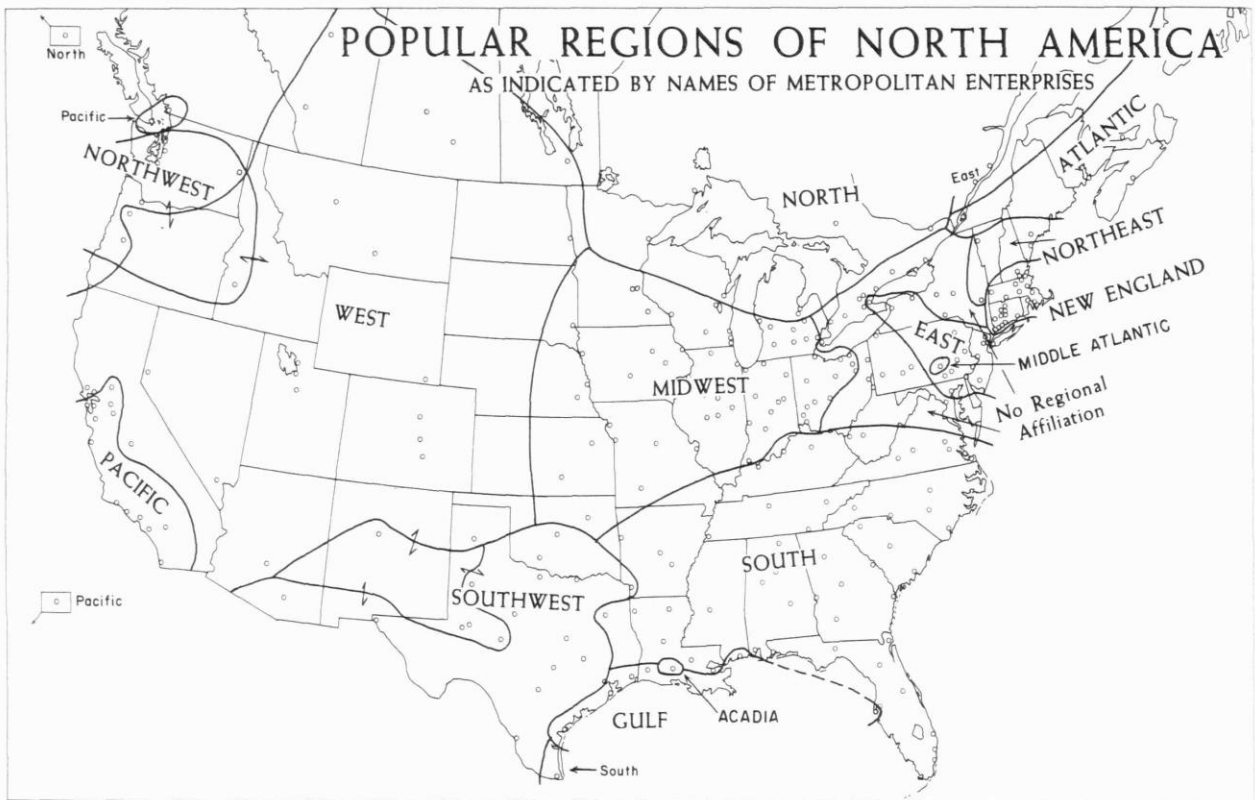


Figure 1: The popular regions of North America as indicated by names of metropolitan enterprises (Zelinsky 1980)

### *Physical Environment Becoming a Popular Region*

Very few studies have looked at how elements or features of the physical environment serve as popular or vernacular regional identifiers. Two noted exceptions are by Mayfield and Morgan (2005) and Rice and Urban (2006), who examined vernacular regional formation around rivers. Blake (2002) examined the identity and promotion that surrounds mountains as symbolic constructs.

Mayfield and Morgan (2005) examined the New River's nickname as "The Oldest River" as a popular region in Appalachia. The New River flows across North Carolina, Virginia, and West Virginia. During the 1970s, there were efforts to construct dams on the northwestern North Carolina area of the New River. There were protests from concerned locals, environmental groups, and some elected officials. In 1972, a bill to prevent construction was defeated in the House of Representatives. The "oldest river" reference came about through related congressional hearings. The New River was described as being located in one of the oldest valleys on earth. Opponents of the dam construction began to "describe the river as the oldest river in North America and the second-oldest in the world, behind the Nile" (Mayfield and Morgan 2005, p.60).

Press releases were sent to hundreds of newspapers across the United States, which resulted in numerous articles about the river's new designation as the oldest waterway. This proactive media campaign helped preserve the river. In 1976, a 26.6 mile section of the New River in North Carolina was declared a Wild and Scenic River, which prohibited the obstruction of the natural flow of the river. These efforts transformed what was just an "old" river into being the "second-oldest river in the world," although there was no way to authenticate this claim.

Most of the imagery and representation of Appalachia is often negative and this is why Mayfield and his colleague believe residents embraced the "oldest river" designation

wholeheartedly. This positive place image became a part of the region's sense of place and pride and almost everything written about the New River after the late 1970s mentioned the river's ancient age. Since this designation was unique to the area, tourism, economic development, and local agencies incorporated it into their advertising and place promotional campaigns.

Using the term river by itself is not very unique, but the transformation of the New River into the second-oldest river converted it into a marketable commodity. Arguably, this can also be said about the term "coast." Using the word coast by itself is not very unique, but adding an adjective in front of it transforms the name into a marketable idea. This is evident in the variety of coasts found in the United States, including the Gold Coast, First Coast, Space Coast, Sun Coast, etc. A few of these coast names will be analyzed in a following chapter.

When determining a method by which to explore the identification of the New River area as a popular region, Mayfield and Morgan (2005) believed that turning to cyberspace was a viable approach. They looked at the electronic promotion of the "Oldest River." They conducted Internet searches for any information on "New River" and some form of the "oldest river" designation. The majority of the references to "New River" and "oldest river" were classified as promoting or selling services or products, followed by informational references. A small amount was classified as references associated with personal or family web pages.

The most common occurrence for references to "New River" involved the selling or promoting of whitewater rafting activities, followed by advertisements for lodging in the New River Valley area, regional and state agency promotional material for tourism recreational activities, and economic development. References to the "oldest river" were used to promote economic development and tourism by local governments, chambers of commerce, and other local agencies.

The informational references were most frequently associated with educational organizations, environmental organizations, and government agencies. Other sources included organizational newsletters, travel-related articles in magazines and newspapers, and activity reports from outdoor organizations. Mayfield and Morgan (2005) believed that the broad assortment of Internet references to the “New River” and “oldest river” terms demonstrated that the “oldest river” designation possessed a positive place image in people’s perceptions.

Rice and Urban (2006) conducted another study that looked at how a feature of the physical environment can take on symbolic importance. The study attempted to identify “River Cities” by measuring relative levels of river-oriented community attachment as found in business naming patterns. They measured the frequency of river-related terms in business names located in counties along both the Mississippi and Missouri Rivers.

In order to be considered a “River City”, Rice and Urban (2006, p.2), believed that “the river must be a part of the self-imposed identity of the community and not just present as an environmental landform in the physical backdrop of a location.” Therefore, a “River City” must have close proximity to a river, but there must also be an ongoing interaction with the river that affects the town residents’ experiences and perceptions, both individually and combined. This is how sense of place is established. People create the landscapes they live in, but the meaning and cultural importance of these landscapes varies based on individual perceptions and the desires that people attach to them.

Place names help contribute to a sense of shared self-identity among residents. Additionally, a nickname can reassure residents that their town is unique or special based on the use of the name. This is why several previous studies have analyzed business names when attempting to delineate vernacular regions. Generally, most businesses are named by the owner(s) with the exception of a few, such as government agencies or schools. Rice and Urban

(2006) believed that the more important a feature of the physical environment is to a place, the more it will be reflected in the places' identity and naming patterns.

Rice and Urban (2006) used the common method of measuring and analyzing business names. Similar to this study, they used the electronic database, *ReferenceUSA*. They recorded counts of business names that contained different keywords: river, river city, river cities, river town, big river, great river, big muddy, Missouri River, and Mississippi River. Similar to Reed (1976), these counts were normalized by county population (per 1,000 residents) and resulted in five final variables that were joined to a GIS table for the study area, which contained geometry and demographic data. The results were subsequently mapped including a map of businesses using "River City" by state and maps for each of the individual variables.

Another method that has been used to measure community attachment to rivers is examining the frequency or prevalence of river-oriented fairs, festivals, and similar public events (Moline and Mahaffey 2004). Since some of these events are not listed online, this information was only used to support the business name data collected by Rice and his colleague. Information about planned, scheduled, or completed riverfront development projects in towns along both the Mississippi and Missouri River was used by Rice and Urban to qualitatively support their study.

Rice and Urban (2006) concluded that analyzing business name patterns at the national level instead of just those along two rivers could improve or disprove the concept of a "river city heartland." Additionally they found that the methods used to normalize the data did not work as well for smaller rural towns, as it did for urban areas. They also believe that better supporting qualitative data could help explain some of the questionable patterns revealed. The authors concluded that River City "is not a real location but an iconic symbol of collective

attachment to the physical landscape. It is the idea of River City that is important, not an actual location” (Rice and Urban, p. 29).

Blake (2002) also examined how the physical environment can become an iconic symbol of collective attachment for residents. The fifty-four Colorado Fourteeners – mountains that are more than 14,000 feet above sea level – have become potent symbols of westward expansion, mineral and timber wealth, and astounding scenery. They are increasingly popular as environmental icons in place attachment at various scales including national, region, state, and local. Severe environmental threats to the Fourteeners have developed due to the growing number of people who have hiked the mountains since the mid-1980s. The mountains are literally being loved to death.

Blake (2002) found that mountain geography literature, which mainly focuses on descriptions, exploration, mountaineering, and place naming patterns, was lacking when it came to the etymology of the name and the iconic symbolism of the Fourteeners. The term Fourteeners has only gained widespread use since the 1970s after it appeared in *The Fourteeners: Colorado's Great Mountains* (1970), which first contributed to creating the Fourteeners identity, *The Majestic Fourteeners* (1977), and *A Climbing Guide to Colorado's Fourteeners* (1978). Prior to the term Fourteeners, these mountains were referred to as “14,000s,” “14,000-foot peaks,” or “Fourteens.” *A Climbing Guide to Colorado's Fourteeners* was published the same year that the term Fourteens was last used by the Colorado Mountain Club in their journal and climbing guide.

Blake (2002) used qualitative methods by engaging in long conversations in offices and in the field with mountaineers, public land managers, and employees of mountain-related organizations. Blake (2002) also engaged in participant observation gathered from dozens of hikers about the mountains and on the Fourteeners themselves since 1966 and analysis of

archival materials. He also completed a visual interpretation of landscapes in a case study of several incorporated towns near the Sawatch Range, Colorado's highest uplift. He also had a personal involvement due to his lifelong attachment to hiking the Fourteeners even though he has never actually been a resident of the state.

For the purposes of this review of the literature, only the case study of incorporated towns near the Sawatch Range will be discussed, since it is most relevant to the goals of this thesis. Blake chose the Sawatch Range to analyze because it contains a barricade of fifteen Fourteeners, including four of five that are the highest peaks, and more than any of the other Colorado ranges. Due to the high elevation, the Sawatch have gained several nicknames: "Colorado's Rooftop," "Backbone of the Continent," and "Heart of the Rockies." The Sawatch Range dominates the iconography of nearby towns, even when other peaks are closer.

Unlike previous studies that have focused solely on business names, Blake (2002) believed that Fourteener iconography found in landscape features, such as welcome signs, business logos, chambers of commerce, and government offices, was also key to his interpretation of place identity. He also explored the concept through conversations and the examinations of newspaper mastheads, business names, postcards, actions toward land preservation, and tourist brochures.

Blake (2002) assessed four different towns near the Sawatch Range: Minturn, Leadville, Buena Vista, and Salida. Blake found mountain iconography of several different peaks in each town. The different peaks were represented in postcards, in the names of a local ranger districts, official town logos and signs, promotional brochures, newspaper masthead, and business names. Blake pointed out that "Forest Service Ranger District logos are high powered in the development of place identity, given their widespread visibility on forest literature, signs, and equipment and given the symbolic importance of how the public land-management agency



represents its land” (Bake 2002, p. 168). He also found that some of these items, such as postcards, misidentified peaks, but reasoned that this just proves the significant place that certain peaks hold in these towns and may indicate the powerful role their image plays in place attachment.

Blake (2002) concluded that even with the increasing popularity of climbing other Colorado mountains, the Fourteeners will not lose currency as a promotional symbol. If anything, he believes that their well-established image and marketability may rub off on the other mountains. As the popularity of the Fourteeners continues, they will be viewed not only a place of wondrous scenery, but also become symbols of “higher ideals regarding nature and the management of mountain land use” (Bake 2002, p. 175).

### **Summary**

In summary, the study of vernacular regions has long held a popular place in geographical and social scientific research, with several key studies coming from Reed (1976), Zelinsky (1980) and Shortridge (1985). Vernacular region studies have commonly utilized one of two different approaches: surveys/questionnaires or analysis of name term frequency, specifically for businesses. Few of these previous studies have utilized the advancement in technology with electronic databases or mapping software. Another aspect that many of these studies lack is a qualitative analysis of specific regions and their iconic dimensions within people’s sense of place. Their works have sought to simply delineate the regions, and have not thoroughly analyzed the meaning and imagery behind business names. This is where the work of Blake (2002), Mayfield and Morgan (2005), and Rice and Urban (2006) becomes significant. Not only do they examine how the physical environment can become a vernacular region, but also look at how elements of the physical environment are incorporated into place identity and place promotion. They also point to the importance of analyzing place naming patterns in the

context of other cultural products, texts, and expressions. Lastly and most important, no vernacular region studies have to date focused on the vernacular and iconic qualities of the coast. Most of the literature on the coast is generally concerned with the physical or natural dimensions of the coast as the manner in which the coast is used and abused by humans (Gares et. al 1994, Jackson et al. 2001, Crawford 2007).

## CHAPTER 3: DATA COLLECTION AND RESEARCH DESIGN

This research involves two distinctive avenues of analysis. The first is a quantitative mapping of coast(al) business name patterns, resulting in several maps to visualize the distribution and frequency of coast(al) named businesses both at the national level and within North Carolina. Doing so allows better understanding of the spatial patterns of people's identification with the coast as a vernacular region. The second avenue is a qualitative image analysis of place naming and branding. It involves analyzing how the physical environment is incorporated into people's expression of sense of place and promotion of place. A variety of images found online are analyzed to demonstrate the variety of cultural and social meanings attributed to the coast.

### **Collection of Business Name Data**

Rather than search through telephone directories by hand as Zelinsky (1980) and Reed (1976) did, I used *ReferenceUSA* to collect business name data. *ReferenceUSA* is an electronic database available online from the Library Division of *infoUSA*. The database contains detailed information on more than 14 million US businesses. Thus, I was able to collect the business name data utilizing just one central, nationally comprehensive database. An important aspect of using an Internet database, like *ReferenceUSA*, is that it significantly cuts down on the large amount of time that would normally be spent gathering and searching through separate telephone directories for individual cities.

*ReferenceUSA* compiles its database from "more than 5,600 Yellow Page and Business White Page telephone directories; annual reports, 10-Ks and other SEC information; Continuing Medical Education (CME) directories; federal, state, provincial and municipal government data; Chamber of Commerce information; leading business magazines, trade publications, newsletters, major newspapers, industry and specialty directories; and postal service information, including

both US and Canadian National Change of Address updates.” In addition, “250 employees make telephone calls to verify the information on each business and health care provider in the database” (ReferenceUSA, 2009). Therefore, it is safe to believe that *ReferenceUSA* is a reliable source for the data collection needs of this thesis.

In collecting business name data from *ReferenceUSA*, I sought to remain relatively consistent with the methods used by Zelinsky. He did not include entries in his analysis that were names of government agencies, personal surnames, branches or local offices of businesses that had multiple locations (unless the main office could be identified), or names that referred to local streets, neighborhoods, landmarks, or state/local political jurisdictions. Zelinsky followed these rules to make sure that he determined the number of truly “local” names. At times, during my data collection, it was difficult to determine whether a database entry should be included or not in tabulations. I found that on occasion I had to conduct web searches to determine if the entry fell within Zelinsky’s rules, which added to the time required for data collection.

Although this study adopts the same guidelines as Zelinsky (1980) and other scholars for excluding certain businesses, there is also another side to the argument, which is for including them. One must keep in mind that although vernacular identity can be claimed and expressed individually, it can also be imposed onto people. This is evident with the existence of franchises and chains, which are examples of both national and global capital at work. Including these types of businesses may reveal a different pattern, although it may not necessarily reflect true “local” naming.

Data for the thesis were collected using the U.S. businesses database published by *ReferenceUSA*. To aid my collection efforts, I choose to do a custom search in lieu of a quick search. A custom search allows the user to choose which search queries he or she would like to use. The “Company Name” and “Ownership” options were selected. The word “Coast” was

entered into the Company Name box. A separate search for the word Coastal did not need to be conducted because the search utility in *ReferenceUSA* identifies all businesses with the word Coast in them, including Coastal. No other related naming patterns, such as the prevalence of coast with seafood, coast(al) in other languages, or associated terms like beach or shore were examined or included. Under the “Ownership” tab, the “Headquarter/Branch” option was selected. Under the “Headquarter/Branch” tab, Headquarter and Single Location were both selected. These two fields were chosen to help eliminate multiple locations of businesses, except for the headquarters, from the initial search results, instead of spending extra time eliminating them later during data clean-up.

The aforementioned search specifications returned a count of 30,134 businesses. Due to subscription rights necessary to access the database, only 500 individual business records could be downloaded at one time. The chosen file format for each download was an Excel file and the level of detail selected was “detailed – includes all data.” Once all of the businesses were downloaded, the data were cleaned using Microsoft Excel. There were a total of 61 separate Excel files, which were manually combined into one master database.

Once the data were combined, certain variables were used to help clean the data. The Credit Rating variable was sorted for ease and the businesses that had a Credit Rating of “Branch” were removed. The next two columns sorted and examined were Primary SIC and NAICS. Any entries with the description that included government agencies, police/fire, insurance agencies, banks, schools, military branches, zoos, museum, gardens, etc. were removed. Churches and religious establishments were included because often the names are chosen by church members. The last step in cleaning the data was to delete duplicate entries. These entries were deleted based on the address, since there are entries that have the same name. Hawaiian and Alaskan businesses were also removed from the database since only the

contiguous United States is the area of analysis. Washington D.C. and Puerto Rico were also excluded because they are U.S. territories, not states. These steps were performed to adopt the same guidelines as Zelinsky (1980) and other scholars. After cleaning the data, the final number of coastal named businesses was 22,526. However, I must note that despite best efforts to thoroughly clean the data, there may be a chance that not all entries were removed.

### **Mapping the Coast**

Not only does technology allow for the widespread availability of certain electronic/digital data sources, such as *ReferenceUSA*, but it also provides for the use of GIS and mapping software to effectively visualize and analyze data. ESRI's *ArcMap* is a powerful geo-visualization and spatial analysis tool. The ArcToolbox and additional extensions can be utilized, allowing for various spatial analyses to be done within the same software package. ESRI's *ArcMap* software, PASW (SPSS), and GEODA were used to produce several map products that creatively visualize the data beyond simplistic point and line features. The visualizations seek to depict vernacular regions not as tightly bound areas, but as surfaces with transition zones, very similar to the way the coast is organized and realized physically.

In order to map the vernacular boundaries of the coast, several shapefiles were needed. Some of these were downloaded from external sources, such boundary features (North America) obtained from ESRI and Shoreline data obtained from the NOAA shoreline website. The medium-resolution digital vector shoreline data set was derived from NOAA National Ocean Service (NOS) nautical charts and comprises more than 75,000 nautical miles of coastline. Other shapefiles had to be created using tools within *ArcMap*. The creation of the different map types is described below.

*Business Location Point Map (Point Density Map)*

Maps were produced to simply show the location of every business with coast(al) in its' name in the nation and North Carolina. Two of the fields provided in the detailed download from *ReferenceUSA* are latitude and longitude. A point layer was created using the Add XY tool available in *ArcMap*. With this tool, the user must select a table containing X and Y coordinates that will be added to the map. The coordinates must be in decimal degrees. If the coordinates are in degrees, minutes, seconds, they must be converted in order to use this tool. Once the table is selected, the last step is to specify the fields for the coordinates and choose the coordinate system for those coordinates. A total of 22,537 businesses were added to the map of the nation and 1,167 for North Carolina.

Another national point map was produced. This map shows businesses with coast(al) in their name located in inland states. It was produced so the map reader could more easily view these locations. In order to separate these locations from the whole database of locations, a query was executed. This was done within the attribute table for the point location shapefile. Businesses were selected by attributes, in this case, by state name. All businesses in the states without coastline were selected. This included Colorado, Iowa, Idaho, Kansas, Kentucky, Missouri, Montana, North Dakota, Nebraska, New Mexico, Nevada, Oklahoma, South Dakota, Tennessee, Utah, Vermont, and West Virginia. Arizona and Kansas also do not have any coastline, however, neither of these states were found to have any businesses with coast(al) in their name. Once the locations were selected, they were exported into a new shapefile and mapped.

#### *Kernel Density Map*

The next maps produced were Kernel Density maps of the United States and North Carolina. The Kernel Density tool, located in the Spatial Analyst tool box, was utilized to estimate the number of businesses per unit area from the business point features using a kernel

function, which fits a smoothly tapered surface across points. Density mapping allows the user and viewer to see patterns of where features are concentrated. A common way to map density is through dots; however a continuous surface map may be a more appropriate way of visualizing the data because it is easier to perceive different patterns and intensities.

A popular method of creating a continuous surface is the kernel density estimation. The kernel density method aggregates points within a particular search radius or neighborhood to create a smooth surface, which then represents the density of the features across the landscape. The data were manually classified into seven classes. The cells with 0 (symbolized in white) were separated into their own class to better visualize the data. A yellow to dark red color scheme was chosen, since it is sequential data (i.e. small to large). This scheme was found on ColorBrewer, an online Flash-based tool, by Cynthia Brewer, to help users select appropriate color schemes for thematic maps and other graphics. To use ColorBrewer, the user selects the number of classes then the data type (sequential, diverging, or qualitative). After these steps are completed, 12 different color schemes were provided.

### *Thematic Maps*

Different thematic maps were produced to visualize different variables, particularly in terms of distance from the shoreline, coastal population, and the rate of businesses per 100,000 people. The use of a thematic map emphasizes the spatial variation and interrelationships of geographical distributions (physical, political, economic, or cultural) existing at different scales. The method chosen for these thematic maps is choropleth, which is the most popular type of thematic map. To produce these three maps, the distance and coastal population variables had to be obtained. The distance from the coastline for each business was calculated using the toolbox in *ArcMap* and the coastal population data was retrieved from NOAA. Once the data were obtained, the final step was to symbolize the variable. Since the type of data is sequential, a



graduated color symbology is used. To maintain uniformity, the same color ramp as the Kernel Density maps was also used for these maps.

### *Cartogram*

A cartogram was chosen as one way of visualizing the coastal business data because the regularities in the spatial distribution of the businesses could be viewed easily. Other common variables mapped with cartograms include electoral votes and population counts. The cartogram was created using a script downloaded from ESRI's ArcScripts website. A search for cartogram was conducted, which returned four different results. CartogramCreator is a visual basic script. An .MXT template is provided, which adds a cartogram button to the standard toolbar. Before clicking the button, a layer must first be selected; in this case it was states. Clicking the button causes the interface to pop up.

The first tab, "Method" allows the user to choose non-contiguous cartograms (feature shape), non-contiguous circular cartograms, and contiguous cartograms. The map is a contiguous cartogram, which uses the "rubber sheet" method. Under the "Attributes" tab, the user must select the new area value or variable, in this case count was selected. The next tab is "Output.", where the user selects how many iterations will be run. Ten iterations is the default, which was selected for this cartogram.

When first creating the cartogram, counties were used; however it was found that using the states produced a more effective cartogram. A cartogram substitutes a thematic variable, in this case, total number of businesses with coast(al) in their name for each state, for land area. The land area for each state was scaled in proportion to the total number of named businesses.

During the design process, Canada, Mexico, and the oceans were added for reference, however, it was decided that it would be best to show the cartogram by itself. A choropleth

symbology was applied using the same color scheme with the other maps. One aspect that a choropleth is able to show is that Arizona and Arkansas do not have any coast(al) businesses.

### **Determining the Coast as a Brand on the Internet**

While compiling and cleaning the coast(al) business name database, I noticed that there were several names that had an adjective in front of the word coast, such as “First Coast.” All such names that were part of 10 or more business names were compiled into a list (Table 2). After utilizing the Internet to conduct a brief associated imagery search, I concluded that many of these names were created as place brands and used as a way to market each area. It was then decided to further investigate three of these coastal brands: the Crystal Coast, Gold Coast, and Third Coast.

These three coastal brands were not selected randomly, but for specific reasons. The Crystal Coast was selected because I currently reside in North Carolina and it was one of two local names in the database. The Gold Coast was selected because it is found in the most states and also has the highest total count of named businesses. Most of the names on the list are only found in one or two states, but the Gold Coast is found in six states, five of which will be investigated in Chapter Five. The Third Coast was selected because during my initial search I found that the location of this coast was often contested and I wanted to delve further into this regional label.

To conduct this qualitative research, I decided to utilize the Internet, mainly the webpage results found through the search engine, Google. Since first being introduced, the Internet has rapidly grown to provide a wealth of accessible information. Not only is it used to interact socially, but it is also being used as a tool for research. However, with this ability come both advantages and disadvantages. Several researchers have examined the issues of online data

Name	Count	Predominantly Found In	Associated Imagery
Azalea Coast	10	NC (Wilmington area)	NC Azalea Festival - celebrating the local art, gardens, and history of the city since 1948, big event for tourists, community fundraising event that provides scholarships to local students, Queen (usually well known) and Belles serve as hostesses
Central Coast	541	CA, OR	Wine country, fertile farmland, long white sand beaches, rocky coastline, outdoor recreation
Crystal Coast	73	NC (S. Outer Banks)	Beaches, tourist destination, fishing, "wreck diver's dream", "Graveyard of the Atlantic", many second home residences
Emerald Coast	321	FL	Family destination, deep-sea fishing, seafood restaurants, several military bases, previously "Playground Area of the Gulf Coast"
First Coast	361	FL	First permanent European settlement in continental U.S. (St. Augustine) and stretch of coast within the state of FL traveling southbound along Atlantic seaboard, culturally relates more to the Deep South than much of the other areas in the state
Gold Coast	617	CA, CT, FL, IL, NJ, NY	Wealth, Affluent Society, Real Estate and Marketing, or Gold coins washing up on FL coast
Left Coast	41	CA, OR, WA	Refers to the idea that the West Coast (CA, OR, WA) is politically left-wing and its residents usually have a more liberal attitude when compared to the rest of the country.
Nature Coast	87	FL	Formally known as "Big Bend" of FL, however "Nature Coast" was devised as part of a marketing campaign. Outdoor recreational activities such as hunting, fishing, boating, snorkeling. Large number of State Parks and National Wildlife Refuges. Home to a variety of wildlife, as well as, at least 19 endangered species.
Orange Coast	132	CA (Orange County)	Noteworthy beach communities, surfing, popular tourist destination
Redwood Coast	39	CA (N.Coastal Counties)	Also known as the "North Coast", mostly rural areas, often inaccessible coastline due to rocky cliffs and hills, rugged mountains, river valleys and canyons, logging activity, dense redwood forests, "Redwood Curtain"
Space Coast	153	FL	Kennedy Space Center, Cape Canaveral Air Force Station, "Space Fanatic's Dream"
Sun Coast	174	FL	Promoted by local government and business to replace the name "Pirate Coast", prime beaches, sunny weather, popular retirement area ("snowbirds"), also swamp, salt marshes north of Tampa area
Third Coast	136	IL, TX	Coastal regions distinct from the East and West coasts (ie. Great Lakes and Gulf Coast), different states claim name in place promotional campaigns, leading to some debate
Treasure Coast	306	FL	Site where a fleet of Spanish galleons (Treasure Fleets) sank off the coast during a hurricane in 1715. Numerous artifacts have since been recovered and many believe that gold treasures are still buried deep below the ocean floor. Not as developed as the "Gold Coast" in FL. Unspoiled beaches, swimming, boating, diving, surfing.

Table 2: Different coastal brands found in the United States

collection; however most of these studies concern collecting data through online surveys and questionnaires and not through the use and interpretation of actual websites. (Topp and Pawloski 2002, Duffy 2002, Granello and Wheaton 2004, Lefever et. al 2007).

Duffy (2002, p.83) states that “before 1996, researchers used the Internet primarily to gain access to information for traditional research purposes, including e-mail, electronic mailing list, Usenet newsgroups, specialty search engines, metasearch engines, and directions on the World Wide Web.” In recent years, two of the primary ways the Internet is used by researchers is for web-based surveys and qualitative research. Many books, articles, and other scholarly material are available for online viewing and downloading. This reduces the amount of time spent tracking down and requesting material. There are also a number of official and unofficial web pages available to view and gather information. However, when using information online, one must keep in mind the author’s agenda and the reliability of the source, which is often not easily discernable.

For example, several of the web pages used for this research were official town/city and visitor and tourism bureau pages. Sources like these are generally considered to be creditable. Local town pages are created with the resident and very often, the visitor in mind. These types of websites will generally provide information about the town or city, its officials and departments, and helpful links and contact information. Larger cities will frequently have a portion of their site dedicated to information geared toward tourists. Information provided can include things to do (attractions, dining, shopping), places to stay, transportation, local events, and a link to the convention and visitor’s bureau. However, one must keep in mind that the authors of these web pages want to portray their area in a positive light and the viewer will rarely see any negative images or information.

When conducting search engine queries for each coastal brand, I employed the use of a Boolean operator to filter the results to specific states. For example, one of my search phrases was “Gold Coast + Florida,” which returned results referring to the Gold Coast in Florida. If I only used the search query “Gold Coast,” the search engine would have returned a greater number of results. Those results would have had to then be browsed through to locate the types of pages I was looking for. The use of Boolean operators aids in the search process because it reduces the time spent sifting through the results.

When on the results page, I first looked for official pages, such as those for state tourism and visitor bureaus. These pages were usually included in the first few links listed on the search results page. In most cases, state tourism and visitor bureaus were my first choice because they are generally the source for these place brands. After exploring and browsing these types of sites, a few more searches, were conducted to uncover additional information from other websites.

The power of the Internet goes beyond simply being an informational source. The Internet is also a system of representation that works with other forms of cultural expression to frame the identities of people and places. Alderman (1997) has discussed the representational power of web pages in making regions socially important points of identity. He has suggested that the Internet serves as a form of “electronic folklore” about places and where people fit within these places.

## CHAPTER 4: MAPPING AND VISUALIZING THE VERNACULAR COAST

### **National Patterns in Coastal Naming**

As expected, the majority of business locations that use coast(al) in their names are concentrated along the coast of the United States (Figure 2). There is a high concentration along the Eastern Seaboard, Gulf Coast, and along the West Coast. Additionally, what cannot be inferred from viewing the map is that only 3.33 percent (or 751) of the businesses with coast(al) in their name are located outside of a Metropolitan area. This number perhaps makes sense because there are fewer businesses in places that are sparsely populated than there are in high-density areas. The other 97 percent is located in a MSA, the top ten of which are listed in Table 3. All ten are located along a body of water, such as the Atlantic Ocean, Pacific Ocean, or the Gulf of Mexico.

Another pattern found on the business location map is that most of the businesses with coast(al) in their names are located near large bodies of water, such as an ocean, gulf, or lake. However, there are several businesses that are also found along rivers across the United States. Some people may associate the banks of a river with the term coastal, which may help explain this pattern. Many of these businesses are found on major rivers, such as the Mississippi, Missouri, Tennessee, Brazos, Ohio, Chattahoochee, and Sacramento. The Missouri and Mississippi are the two longest rivers in the United States. Furthermore, business are also found on smaller but important rivers, such as the Hudson River (New York), Connecticut River (Vermont, New Hampshire, Massachusetts, and Connecticut), Potomac River (Maryland, Virginia, and West Virginia), Pee Dee River (North and South Carolina), St. Johns River (Florida), and the Willamette River (Oregon).

Figure 3 provides a kernel density map of coastal business naming for the entire nation. This map further supports what was revealed on the point density map. This map shows that

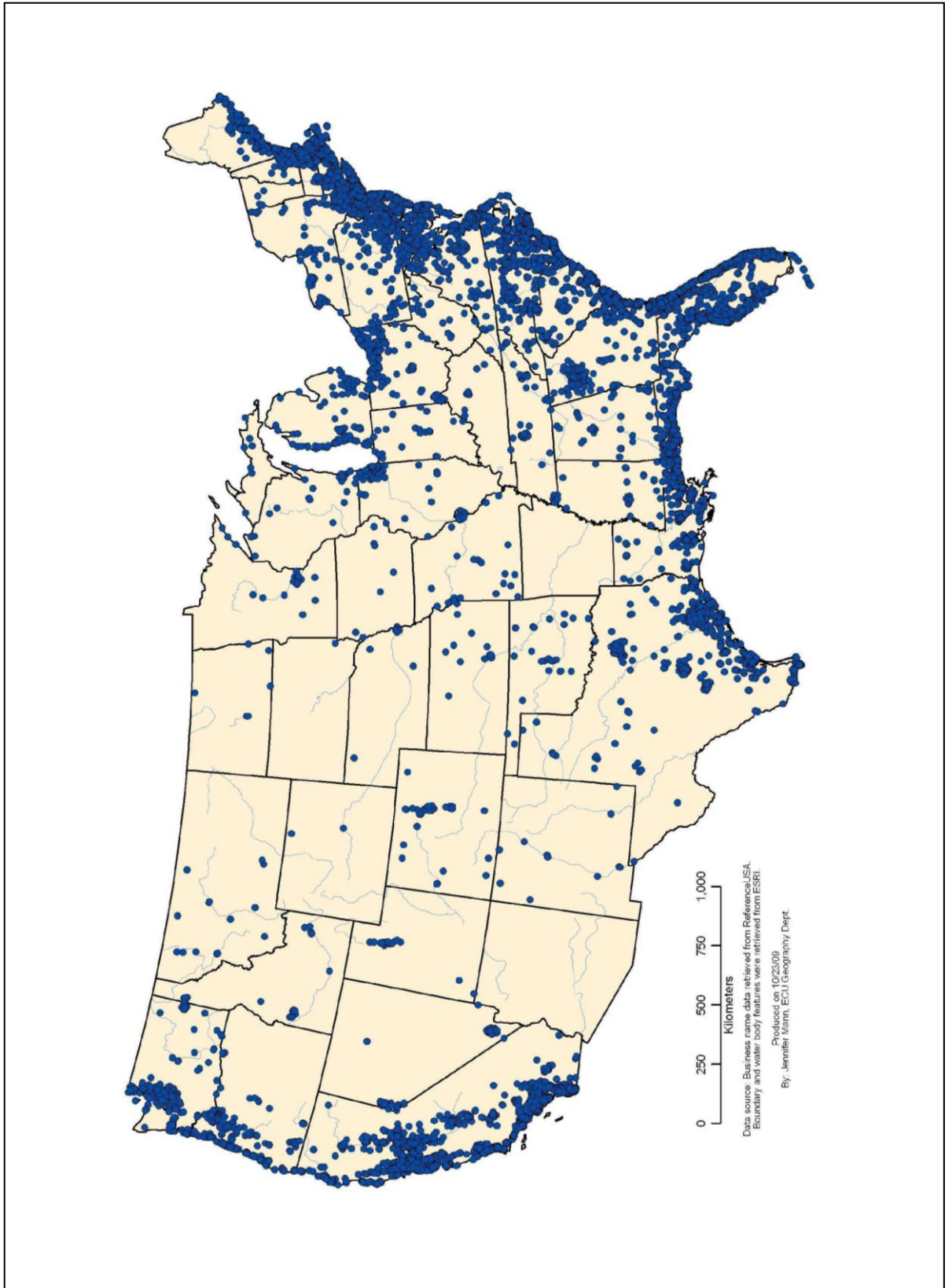


Figure 2: Locations of U.S. businesses with Coast(al) in their name

<b>MSA</b>	<b>Count</b>
LA-Long Bch, CA	2343
Nw Yrk, NY-NJ-PA	980
Miami-Ft Ldr, FL	833
Houston, TX	803
San Diego, CA	686
Tampa, FL	605
Jacksonville, FL	560
San Luis Obsp, CA	444
San Francisco, CA	436
Wilmington, NC	388

Table 3: Top Ten Metropolitan Statistical Areas with businesses that have coast(al) in their name



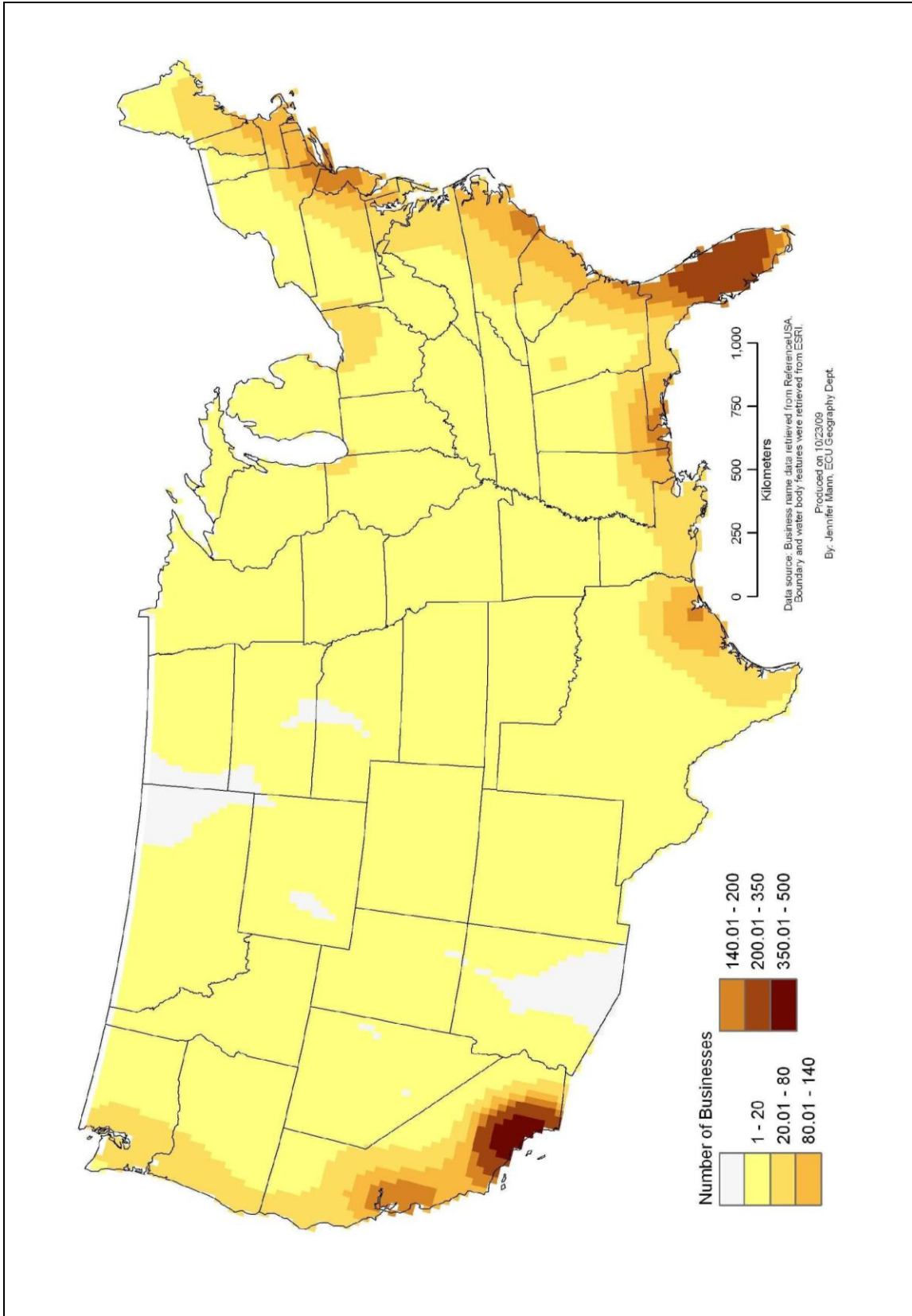


Figure 3: Density of businesses with Coast(al) in their name

there are higher densities of coastal naming along the coast rather than further inland. It also further illustrates the fact that most of the named businesses are located in California, Texas, California, and the Tri-State area and that there is a density of businesses located along the Great Lakes. These areas will be discussed in more detail in the regional sections of this thesis.

Figures 4 and 5 illustrate two variables. Figure 4 depicts the number of coast(al) named businesses for every ten miles of total coastline for each state. Illinois has ~20 businesses for every ten miles of coast; however it only has 63 miles of coastline, most of it Chicago. Therefore there is a higher frequency of coast(al) named businesses per mileage of coast. In comparison, California has more coastline, 3,427 miles, and ~18 businesses for every ten miles of its coastline. Figure 5 illustrates the number of businesses with Coast(al) in their name for every 10,000 people living on the coast (2000). The coast makes up 17 percent of the nation's contiguous land area. More than half of the total U.S. population lives in these coastal area.

This map reveals that the states in the southeast have more coast(al) named businesses for every 10,000 people living on the coast than the rest of the country. This may be explained by the increased population growth these southern coastal regions have experienced over the past 20 years. NOAA reports that between 1980 and 2003 "the Southeast region exhibited the largest rate of [population] change with a 58 percent increase. The Southeast has increasingly become a leading destination for retirees and job-seekers. Between the years 1995 and 2000, the Census Bureau reported that the highest levels of migration were to states that fall within the Southeast region and the Gulf of Mexico region, particularly to Florida, Georgia and North Carolina," ("National Oceanic," 2005). As seen on the map (Figure 5), two of these states, North Carolina and Georgia, are included in the highest symbolization class, 8.459 to 14.128 businesses per every 10,000 of coastal population. Florida is included in the next lower class, 4.601-8.458.

Figure 6 is similar to Figure 5, however it is at the county level and is total population,

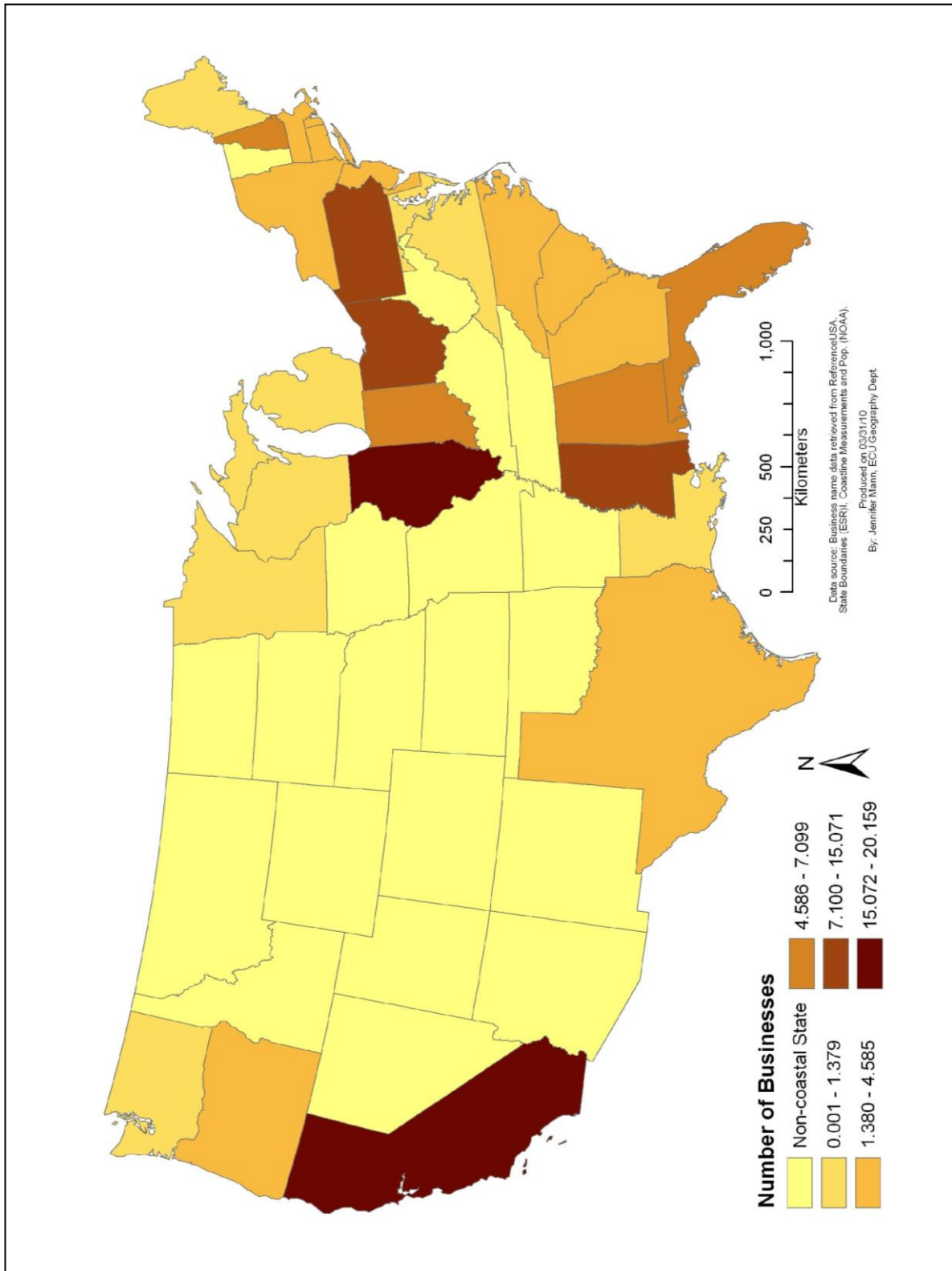


Figure 4: Number of Businesses with Coast(al) in Name for Every 10 Miles of Coastline

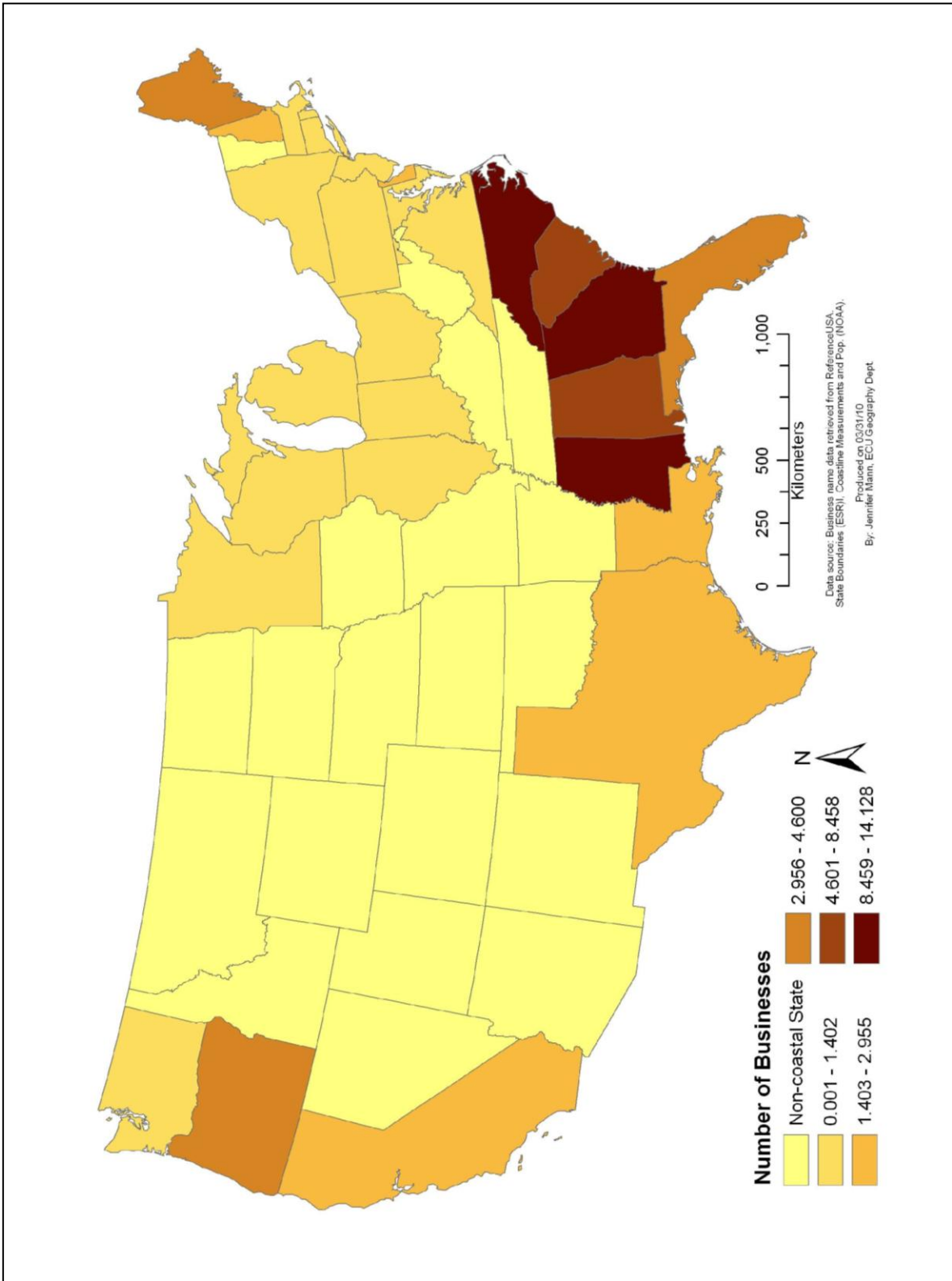


Figure 5: Number of Businesses with Coast(al) in Name per 10,000 Coastal Population (2000)

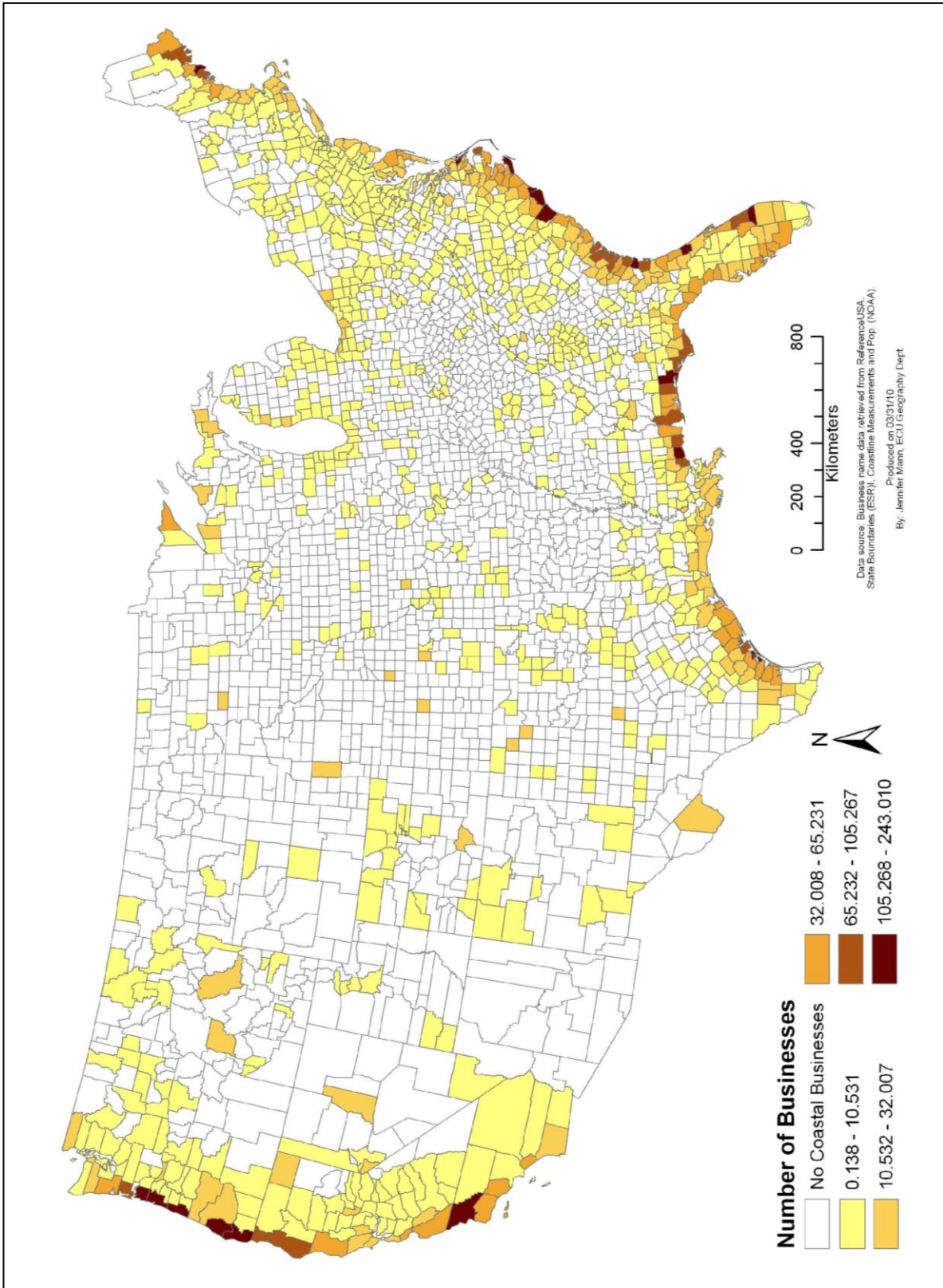


Figure 6: Number of Businesses with Coast(al) in Name per 100,000 County Population (2004)

not just coastal population. This map is at a more finer scale than the other state level maps and reveals more in-depth information about where the concentration of businesses are within the state based on population. As one can see on the map, the higher rates of coastal named businesses are located in coastal counties. Historically people have settled along the coast and have migrated inland, so it makes sense that a majority of the higher rates are located along the coast. According to the Census Bureau, a few of the counties in dark red were the fastest growing counties with populations over 10,000 in the United States at the time, such as Flagler County, Florida, Currituck County, NC (U.S. Census Bureau). Additionally what cannot be inferred from solely viewing the map is that Flagler County, Florida, which is the dark red county, located along the northeastern Florida is the county with the highest number of coastal named businesses (243) for every 100,000 people.

One aspect that cannot be inferred from the simple point location map is that there is a distance decay in coastal names: 84.5 percent of collected coastal businesses are located 0-15 miles from the coastline, 8.79 percent are 16 to 60 miles, 2.78 percent are 61 to 120 miles, 1.93 percent is 121-215 miles, 1.45 percent is 216 to 450 miles, and 0.5 percent is 451-812 miles (Figure 6). Gold Coast Cleaners in Chicago, Illinois is the closest to the coast – 0.0001 miles. Coastal Mart in Littleton, Colorado is the farthest from the coast – 812 miles. Figure 7 illustrates the percentage of the total number of coastal named businesses for each state that are located within 15 miles of the coastline. It is important to note that different states may have different distance thresholds due to their location to the coast and size/shape. To test this notion, a location quotient analysis was conducted for both the states' population and area. However, no additional or different patterns were revealed than what was already discovered by Figure 7. Delaware is the state with the highest percentage of the total number of its coastal named businesses less than 15 miles from the coastline – 99 percent. The other one percent (one

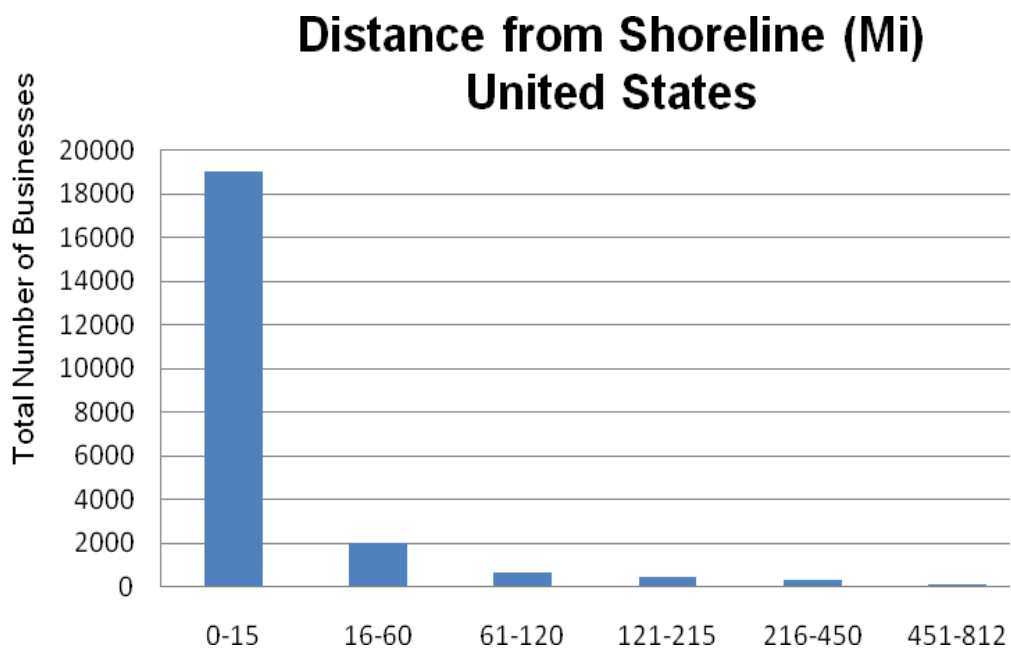


Figure 7: Distance of Coast(al) Named Businesses from the Shoreline (mi)

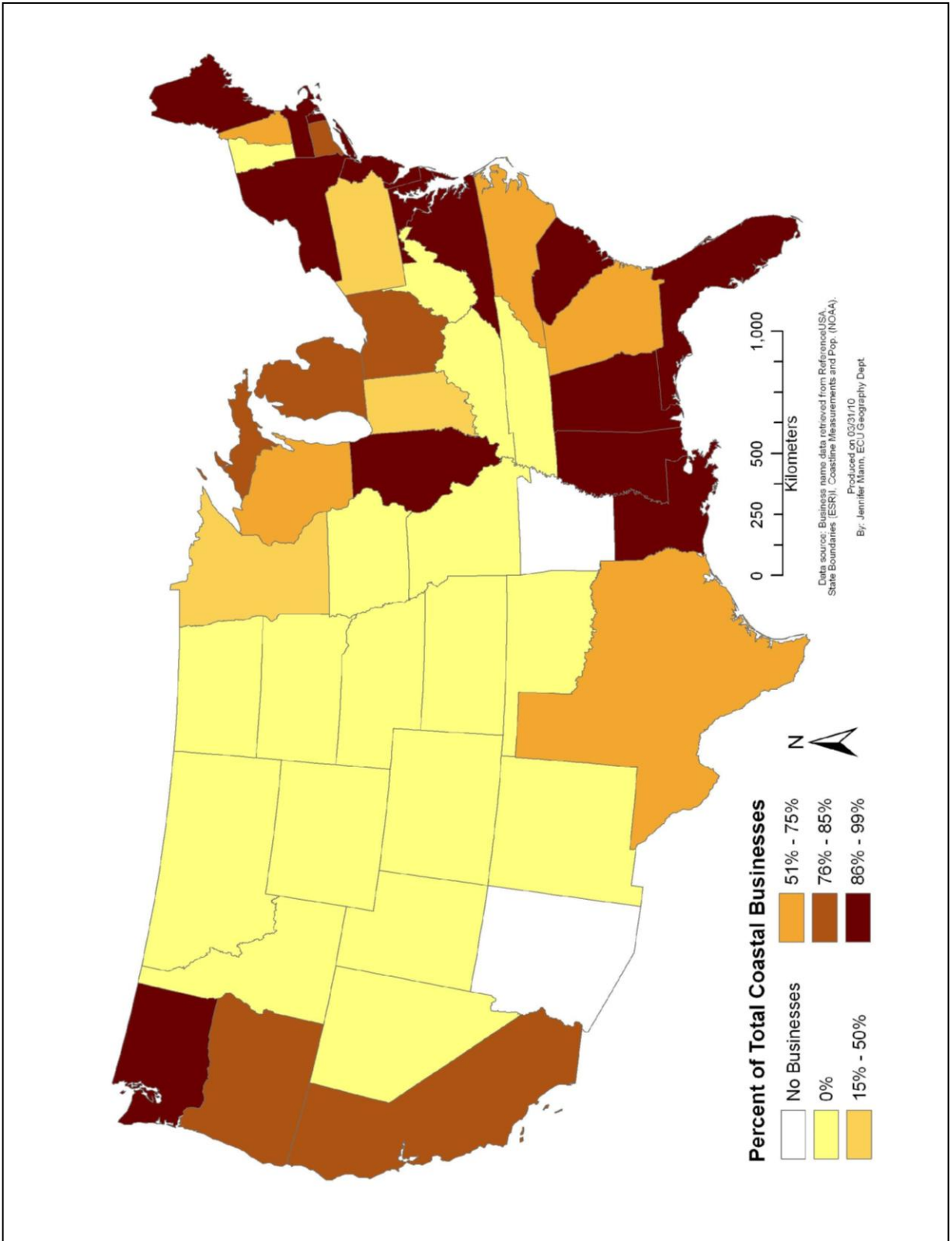


Figure 8: Percent of Coastal Businesses 0-15 Miles from the Coastline by State



business) is located 16 to 60 miles from the coastline. The count (by state) of coastal named businesses in each distance range is found in Table 4.

A cartogram of the nation was also produced as a unique way to visualize the data (Figure 9). A cartogram distorts the geometry of the map in order to visualize the data differently. Since a majority of the businesses are located along the coast, states with a higher number of businesses, like California, Florida, and Texas, are exaggerated. In contrast, since there are fewer businesses in the middle of the country, those states have shrunk in size.

Another aspect that is not apparent on the business location map is type of businesses that tend to use coastal in their names. Two bar graphs (Figures 10 & 11) were produced to compare the percentage of businesses by major industry groups for the coastal named businesses versus the total number of businesses in the nation. The first graph (Figure 10) compares the percent of total number of businesses with coast(al) in their name in the major industry groups versus their percentage share of total U.S. businesses in *ReferenceUSA's* database (14,566,208). This reveals that there is a higher percent of coast(al) named businesses in all major industry groups except for retail trade, services, and nonclassified establishments than total U.S. businesses. This makes sense because the United State's economy is service based, so there are a higher number of total businesses in the U.S. in the service type industries.

The second graph (Figure 11) compares the percent of total number of U.S. coastal businesses vs. major industry groups as a percent of total U.S. businesses for each major industry group. These values were derived by dividing the percent of total number of coast(al) businesses with the percent of major industry groups of the total number of U.S. businesses. This graph shows that Agriculture, Forestry, & Fishing, Mining, Construction, Manufacturing, Transportation, Wholesale/Distributors have a larger percentage share of coast(al) named businesses as compared to the national norm.

State	0-15	16-60	61-120	121-215	216-450	451-812	Total Count
Alabama	290	7	10	17	7	0	331
Arizona	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Arkansas	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
California	5168	802	206	2	0	0	6178
Colorado	0	0	0	0	0	42	42
Connecticut	190	43	0	0	0	0	233
Delaware	111	1	0	0	0	0	112
Florida	5017	214	0	0	0	0	5231
Georgia	448	52	37	110	0	0	647
Idaho	0	0	0	0	16	5	21
Illinois	109	7	3	6	2	0	127
Indiana	5	2	4	11	2	0	24
Iowa	0	0	0	4	5	0	9
Kansas	0	0	0	0	2	12	14
Kentucky	0	0	0	4	10	0	14
Louisiana	324	13	9	2	0	0	348
Maine	401	10	0	0	0	0	411
Maryland	221	23	0	0	0	0	244
Massachusetts	451	35	0	0	0	0	486
Michigan	101	22	0	0	0	0	123
Minnesota	3	0	2	15	0	0	20
Mississippi	437	25	13	9	2	0	486
Missouri	0	0	0	0	35	0	35
Montana	0	0	0	0	5	8	13
Nebraska	0	0	0	0	8	2	10
Nevada	0	0	34	1	68	0	103
New Hampshire	69	24	0	0	0	0	93
New Jersey	615	26	0	0	0	0	641
New Mexico	0	0	0	0	0	11	11
New York	582	34	8	0	0	0	624
North Carolina	807	138	90	132	0	0	1167
North Dakota	0	0	0	0	6	0	6
Ohio	260	52	15	8	0	0	335
Oklahoma	0	0	0	0	20	7	27
Oregon	513	72	18	7	0	0	610
Pennsylvania	91	65	42	13	0	0	211
Rhode Island	145	2	0	0	0	0	147
South Carolina	717	65	48	0	0	0	830
South Dakota	0	0	0	0	1	0	1
Tennessee	0	0	0	24	40	0	64
Texas	1161	198	64	33	77	7	1540
Utah	0	0	0	0	2	21	23
Vermont	0	0	4	1	0	0	5
Virginia	397	34	9	11	6	0	457
Washington	373	4	8	8	14	0	407
West Virginia	0	3	1	18	0	0	22
Wisconsin	22	8	3	0	0	0	33
Wyoming	0	0	0	0	0	2	2

Table 4: Counts of coastal name businesses for each distance interval by state (in miles)

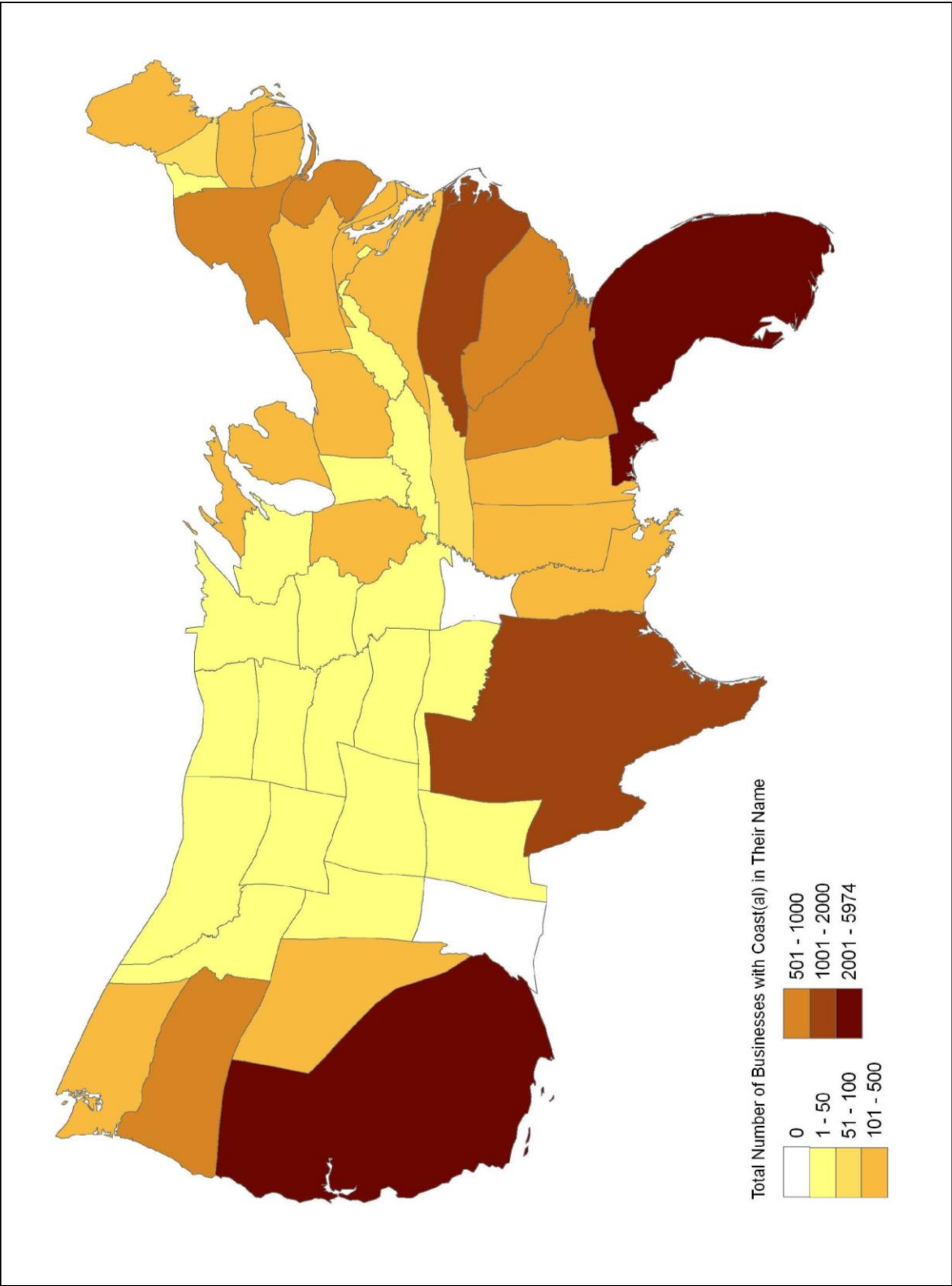


Figure 9: Cartogram of U.S. Business with Coast(al) in Their Name

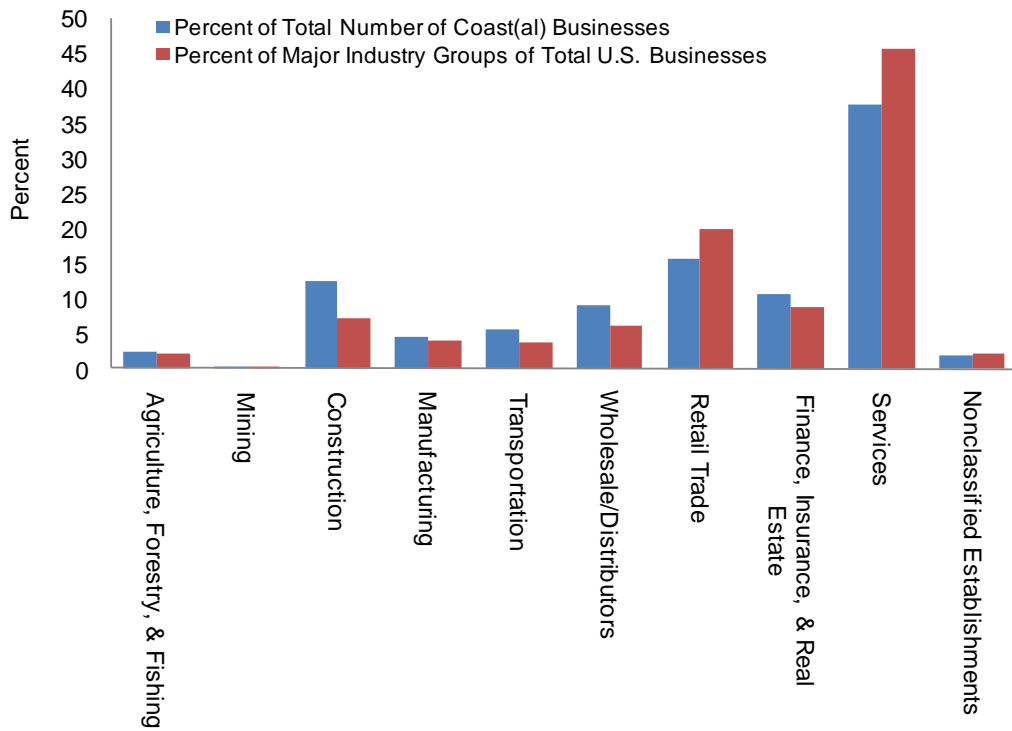


Figure 10: Major Industry Group Comparison, Coastal Businesses

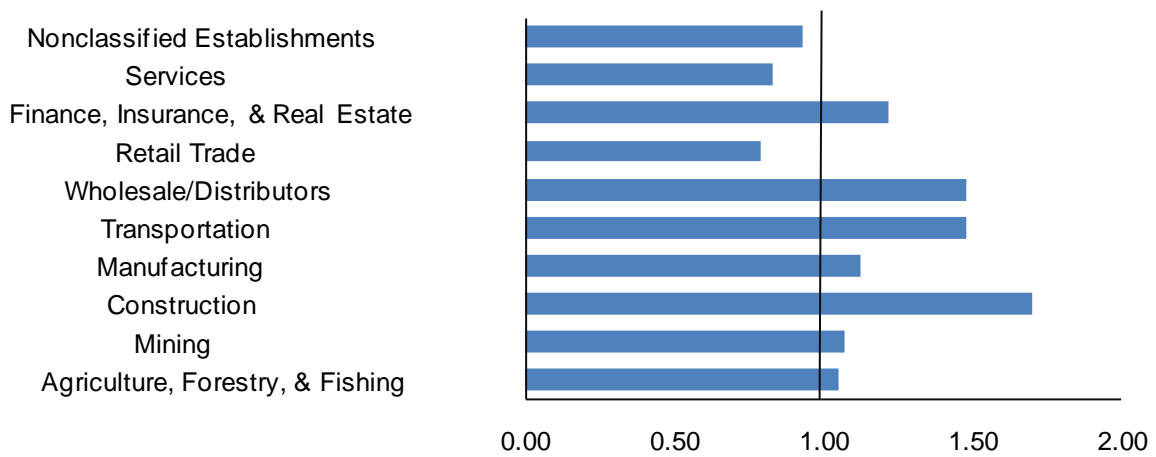


Figure 11: Major Industry Quotient, Coastal Businesses

## **Regional Patterns in Coastal Naming**

This next section discusses the patterns found in the different regions of the United States. The regions include: Pacific, Eastern Seaboard, American South, the Gulf, and the Great Lakes. The coastal business name patterns for each region are highlighted in Table 5. A business point location map for each region also is included to aid the reader in viewing the patterns from a closer scale than displayed on the location map of the nation. New York is included in two different regions, the Eastern Seaboard and the Great Lakes because of its location to the both the Atlantic Ocean and Great Lakes (Ontario and Erie). For purposes of calculating the data for the table, the numbers for New York are only included in the Eastern Seaboard, not the Great Lakes column. However, New York is included in both maps of the two regions.

### *The Pacific*

There are 7,188 businesses with coast(al) in their names located on the West Coast, which consists of the states of Washington, Oregon, California (Figure 12). Washington has 3,026 miles of coastline, Oregon has 1,410 miles of coastline, and California has 3,427 miles of coastline (“States and territories,” 2007). The majority of these businesses (6,178) are located in California. The Pacific has the second highest number of coastal named businesses; however it has the second lowest total amount of shoreline, 7863 miles. Even though it has one of the lowest amounts of total shoreline, the ratio between total number of businesses and shoreline mileage is almost one to one for the Pacific. There are 9.14 coastal named businesses for every 10 miles of shoreline in the Pacific. All of the other regions have much lower ratios like one to five or even one to ten.

### *The Eastern Seaboard*

As one can see on the map, the Eastern seaboard is heavily concentrated with coast(al) named businesses (Figure 13). There are a total of 3,202 coast(al) named businesses in the

	<b>The Pacific</b>	<b>The Eastern Seaboard</b>	<b>The South</b>	<b>The Gulf</b>	<b>The Great Lakes</b>
<b>Total Number of Coastal Named Businesses</b>	7,188	3,202	3,101	7,937	662
<b>Total Amount of Shoreline (mi)</b>	7,863	14,258	11,910	20,482	4,653
<b>Number of Businesses per 10 Miles of Shoreline</b>	9.14	2.25	2.60	3.88	1.42
<b>Percent of Businesses 0-15 Miles from Shoreline</b>	84.22	89.82	76.39	91.08	75.53
<b>Coastal Population (2000)</b>	29,656,686	39,094,035	6,786,535	24,142,548	16,199,924
<b>Number of Businesses per 10,000 Coastal Pop</b>	2.42	0.82	4.57	3.29	0.41

Table 5: Regional Comparison of Coastal Business Naming Patterns

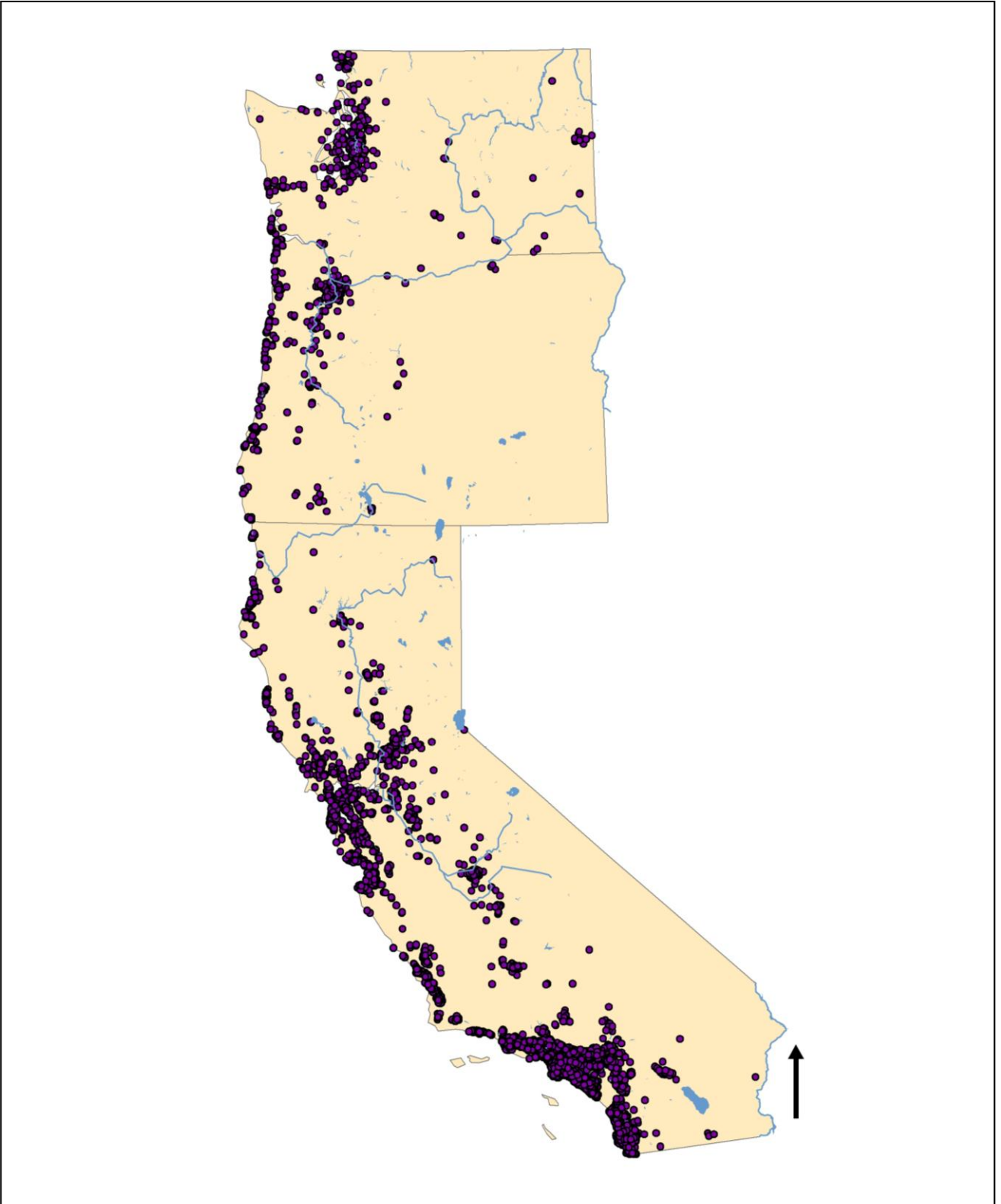


Figure 12: Business locations with coast(al) in their name in the Pacific Region (West Coast)

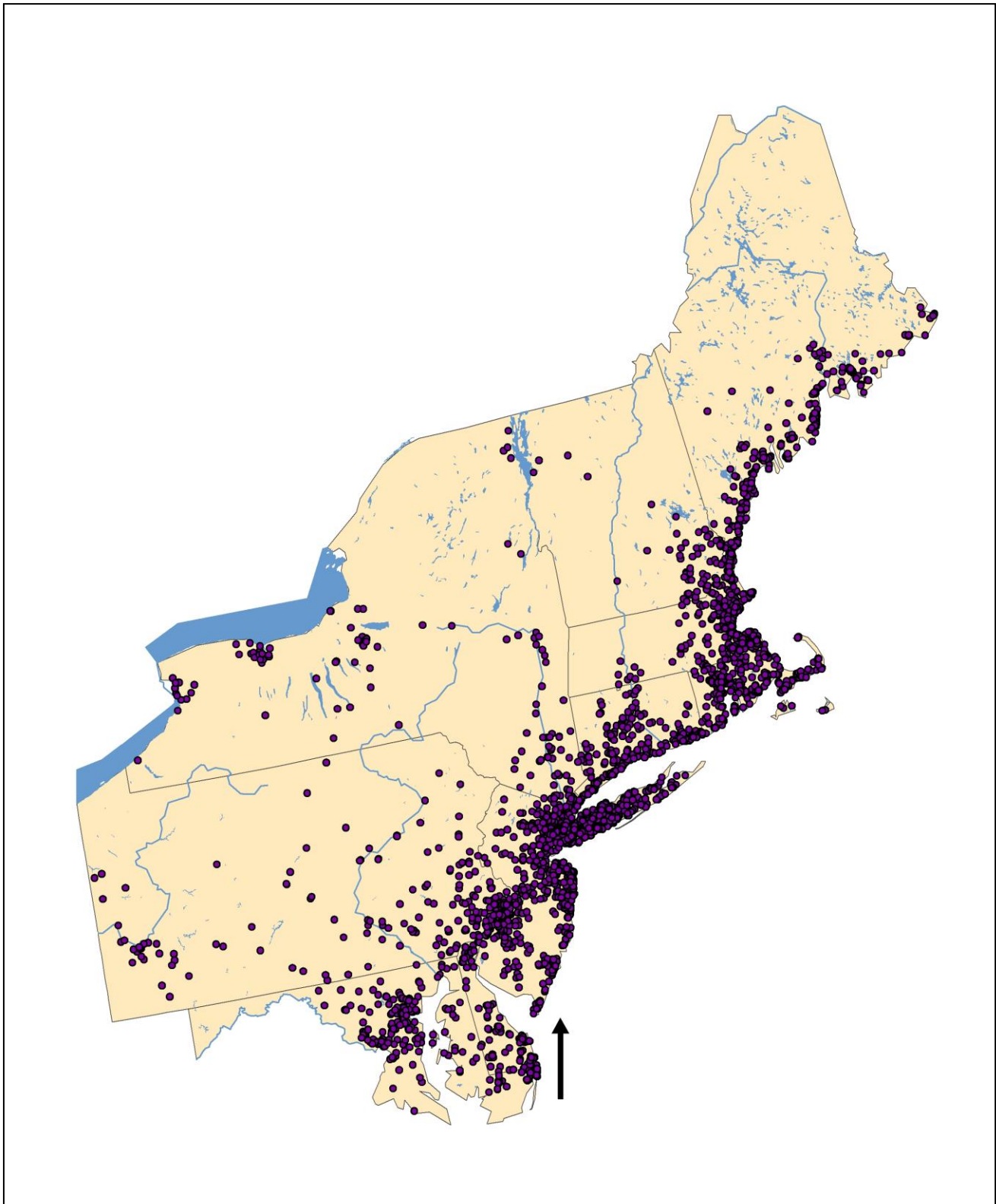


Figure 13: Business locations with coast(al) in their name in the Eastern Seaboard region



database that are located on the East Coast. Although there are more states on the East Coast than the West, the East Coast is more compact and highly urbanized. This region has the highest total coastal population, 39,094,035 people. Although the coastal population is the highest, the region has the second lowest number of businesses for every 10,000 people living along the coast.

New Jersey and New York, respectively, are the top two states with the highest number of coast(al) named businesses in this region. New Jersey has 641 coast(al) named businesses, 1,792 miles of coast, and a coastal population (2000) of 7.5 million. New York has 624 coast(al) named businesses, 2,625 miles of coast, and a coastal population (2000) of 15 million (“States and territories,” 2007).

### *The South*

The states of Virginia, North Carolina, South Carolina, and Georgia are referred to in this thesis as the American South (Figure 14). Other nearby states are often included in this designation, however for the purposes of this thesis they will not be included in the South. This area is unique because although there is a high concentration of businesses located on the coastline, there are also a significant number of businesses spread inland as well, especially in North Carolina and Georgia. This is evident in the percent of businesses 0-15 miles from the shoreline. The South has the second lowest value, 76.39 percent. This means that a little less than 25% are located further than 15 miles from the shoreline. It is interesting to note that this region has the highest number of businesses for every 10,000 people living along the coast (4.57), yet the lowest total coastal population (6,786,535).

North Carolina and South Carolina are the top two southern states with the highest number of coast(al) named businesses. North Carolina has 1,167 coast(al) named businesses,

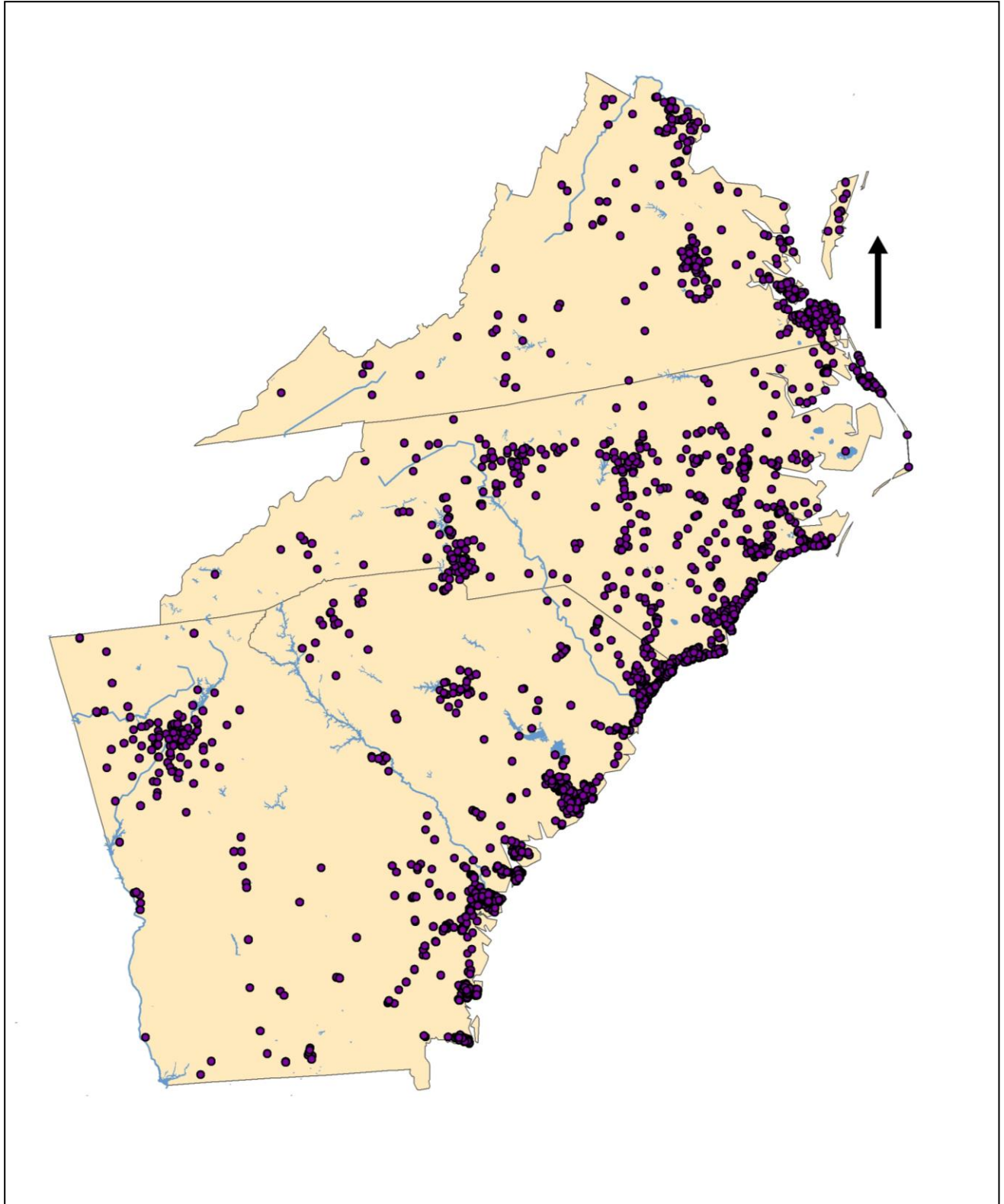


Figure 14: Business locations with coast(al) in their name in the Southern region

3,375 miles of coast, and a coastal population (2000) of 8 million. South Carolina has 830 coast(al) named businesses, 2,876 miles of coast, and a coastal population (2000) of 4 million (“States and territories,” 2007). North Carolina will be further discussed in the section immediately following the regional patterns. South Carolina has 830 businesses with coast(al) in their name.

### *The Gulf*

Florida is unique because even though it is located in the South, it is generally not included in traditional regional conceptions of the South due to the high number of transplants from the Northeast and large Hispanic population. The exclusion of Florida is perhaps worth rethinking given that many other parts of the traditional South show signs of changes similar to what has been seen in Florida. Florida is a part of the Gulf Coast of the United States, which also includes Texas, Louisiana, Mississippi, and Alabama (Figure 15). The Gulf is the region with the highest total number of coastal named businesses followed by the Pacific. The Gulf is also the region with the largest area, 465,422 square miles, and total amount of shoreline, 20,482 miles. This may help explain why there is a high occurrence of coastal named businesses in the region.

Florida and Texas, respectively, are the top two states with the highest number of coast(al) named businesses in the Gulf Coast. Florida has 5,231 coast(al) named businesses, 8,436 miles of coast (most of any state), and a coastal population (2000) of 16 million. Texas has 1,540 coast(al) named businesses, 3,359 miles of coast, and a coastal population (2000) of 5.2 million (“States and territories,” 2007).

### *The Great Lakes*

There is also a concentration of locations along the Great Lakes (Figure 16). Although these bodies of water are not an ocean, they are treated by many as “coastal.” There are a few businesses scattered around Lake Superior in Minnesota, Michigan, and Wisconsin. However a

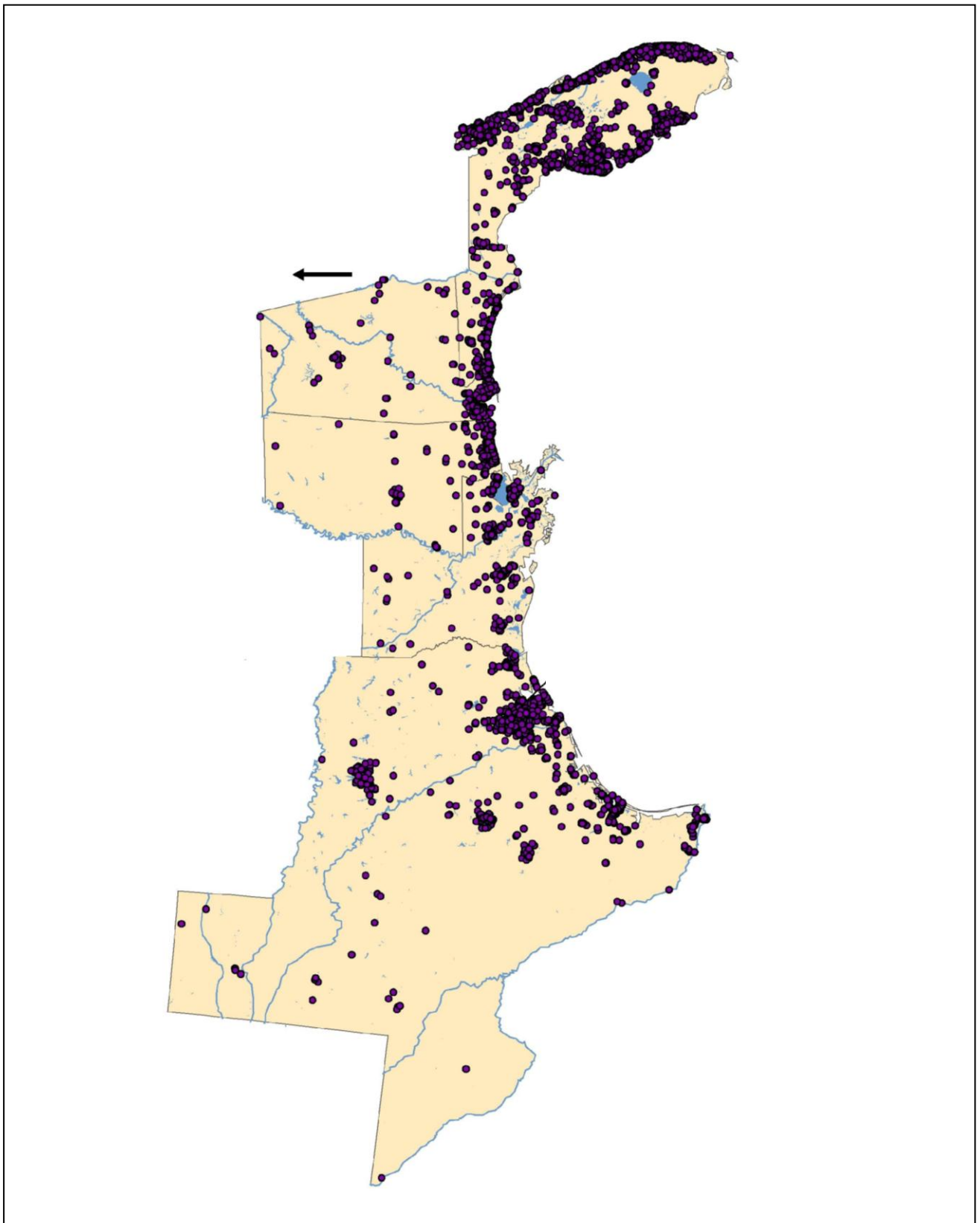


Figure 15: Business locations with coast(al) in their name in the Gulf Coast region

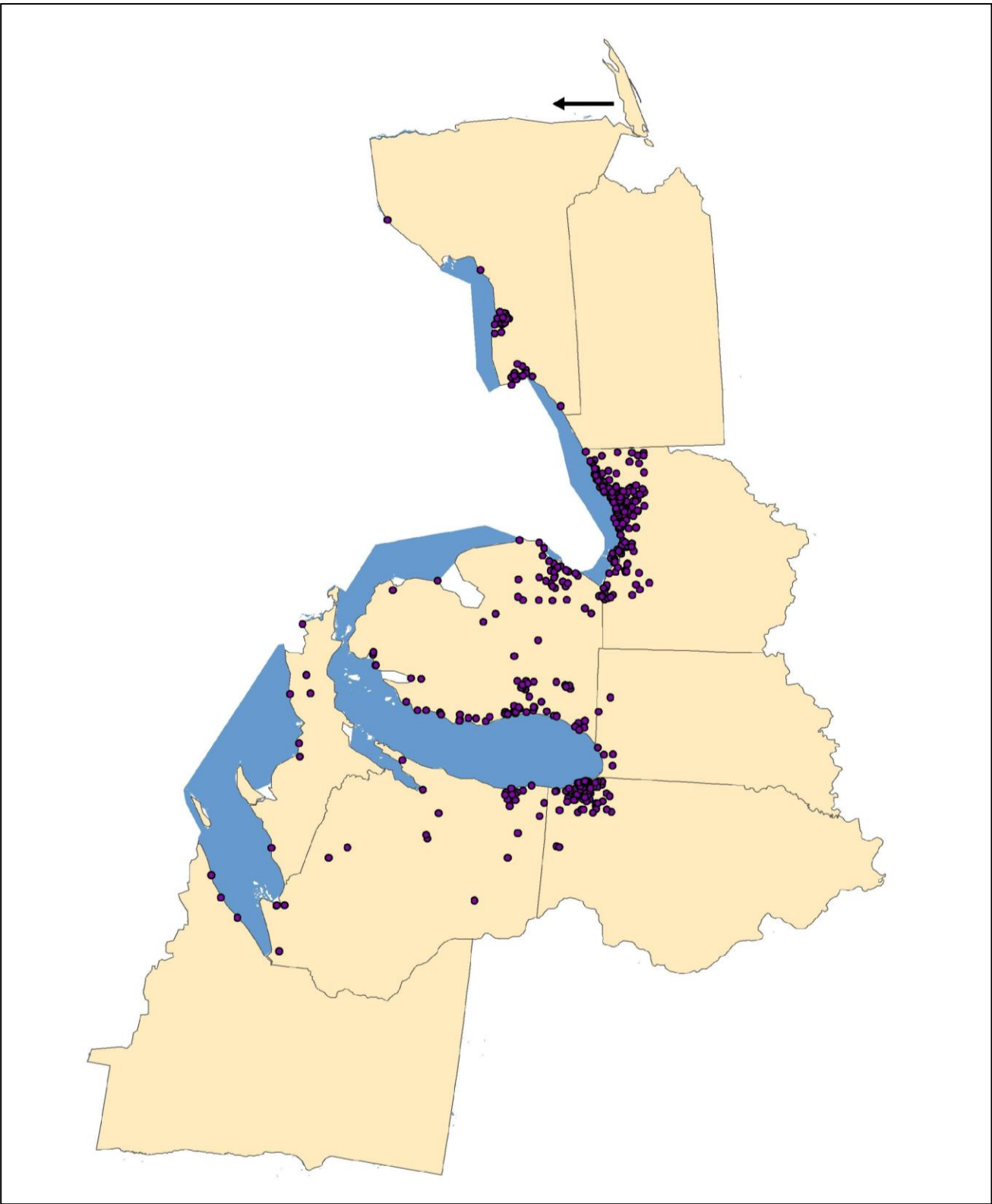


Figure 16: Business locations with coast(al) in their name in the Great Lakes Region

majority of coastal named businesses are found along Lake Erie, Lake Michigan, and Lake Ontario. Lake Ontario has one cluster of businesses located in Rochester, New York. Heading west, Buffalo, New York is located along the northern part of Lake Erie and the Niagara River and also has a cluster of coast(al) named businesses.

The Cleveland-Elyria-Mentor Metropolitan Statistical Area is located in Ohio on the south end of the Lake Erie and contains a cluster of coast(al) named businesses. It is better known as Greater Cleveland and a number of the business names in this area include the term “North Coast.” Even though Cleveland is not located on the north coast of the lake, it is located in Northeast Ohio. Detroit also has a number of businesses with coast(al) names. Moving west across the state, there are several other clusters of coastal businesses found in Michigan, including the areas of Grand Rapids and Kalamazoo.

Continuing to the western side of the state that borders Lake Michigan, there are a number of businesses with coast(al) in their name located in urban clusters located near the lake. On the southwestern shore of Lake Michigan, there is a large cluster of businesses located in the Chicago Metro area. A majority of these businesses contain the term “Gold Coast”. The Gold Coast is a historic district located in the Near North Side of Chicago and it is explored more in depth in the next chapter. There are also a number of businesses to the north located in Milwaukee, Wisconsin.

### **Coastal Naming in North Carolina**

The point location map of North Carolina exhibits an interesting pattern that is found in few other states (Figure 17). This pattern is unique because although there is a high concentration of coastal businesses located directly on the coast, there are also a significant number of these named businesses spread inland as well. In this section, I discuss the coastal naming pattern found in North Carolina.

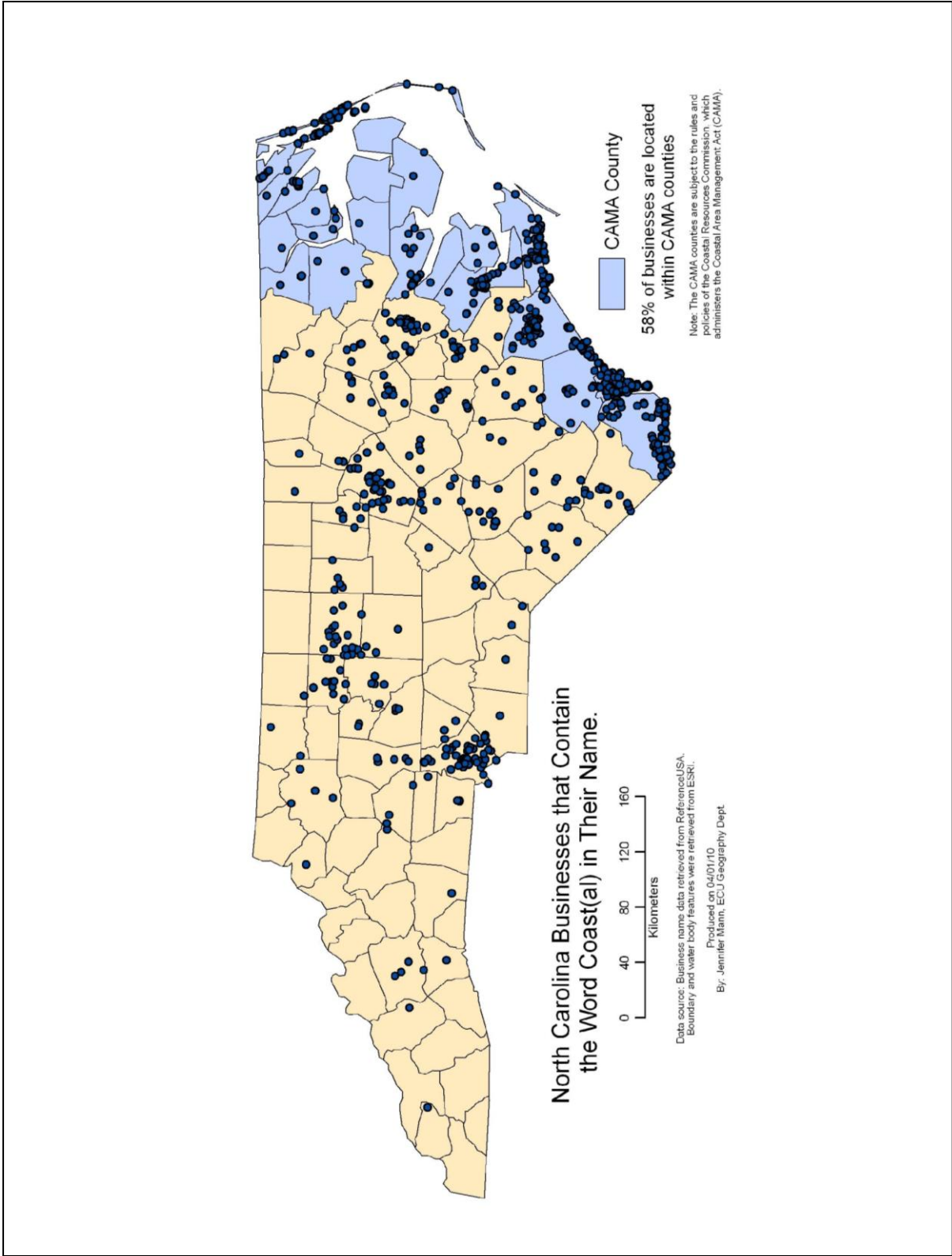


Figure 17: Locations of North Carolina businesses that contain the word coast(al)

The majority of North Carolina businesses using coast(al) in their name are located in a MSA, with the top four being Wilmington (388 businesses), Morehead City (104), Jacksonville (101), and New Bern (74). Sixty-six businesses (or 6%) of the 1,167 are not located in a metro area. The Wilmington MSA covers New Hanover, Brunswick, and Pender Counties and is known as the Cape Fear region. Much of the Cape Fear's population resides along the Atlantic beaches and Intracoastal Waterway, since the rural areas inland consist of farms and swampland. Although most of the population lives along the coast, these numbers swell during the summer months due to the seasonal tourism industry.

The Jacksonville MSA is located north of Wilmington and covers the county of Onslow. Jacksonville, the principal city, is located about 45 minutes north of Wilmington and it is part of the Inner Banks region of North Carolina. It is home to the Marine Corps Base, Camp Lejeune, and Marine Corps Air Station, New River. Prior to the construction of Camp Lejeune, Jacksonville was a small town of 800 residents. A population explosion occurred due to new workers migrating to the area and continued with the presence of both young military families and retirees. The draw for migration to the area continues today to be related to the U.S. Marine Corps.

Figure 17 highlights the CAMA counties in North Carolina along with the location and distribution of businesses using coast(al) in their name. The CAMA counties are subject to the rules and policies of the Coastal Resources Commission, which administers the Coastal Area Management Act ("CAMA Counties," 2007). More than half (58%) of the coast(al) named businesses in the state are located in these counties, meaning that 42% of these businesses are found outside the rigid CAMA definition of the coast, which is a surprisingly large number. One reason for this pattern may be the physiographical regions of the state. Many of these businesses locations are located in the coastal plain, which extends as far inland as the cities of



Roanoke Rapids, Smithfield, and Fayetteville, which are located along the Coastal Plain – Piedmont fall line. Additional regions may be the location of large cities like Charlotte and Raleigh, as well as the I-85 corridor, which is a region that follows I-85 across the Southeastern United States.

Eight and a half percent of the total number of businesses located in the CAMA counties have coast(al) in their name compared to only 0.12 percent of total businesses with coast(al) in their name located in non-CAMA counties. This means that the CAMA counties have 70 times more coast(al) named businesses for every one business than those located in the non-CAMA counties. There are also seven businesses with coast(al) in their name for every 100 square miles in the CAMA counties. In the non-CAMA counties there is only one business with coast(al) in its name for every 100 square miles.

Sixty-nine percent of North Carolina businesses with coast(al) in their name are located within 0-15 miles from the shoreline, as compared to the 85 percent of businesses for the nation (Figure 18). The graph for the nation illustrates a negative correlation between the total number of businesses and miles from shoreline. As expected, as the number of miles increases, the number of businesses decreases.

In comparison, North Carolina exhibits a bit different pattern. Instead of steadily decreasing in number of coastal businesses as distance increases, the number of businesses actually increases when one is 121 to 215 miles from the shoreline. In North Carolina 11.8 percent of the businesses are 16 to 60 miles from shoreline and 11.3 percent are 121 to 215 miles from shoreline. The shape of the state and the location of cities like Charlotte and Raleigh may help explain North Carolina's deviation from the national pattern. By looking at the map, one may assume that a business located in the far western mountain part of the state would be

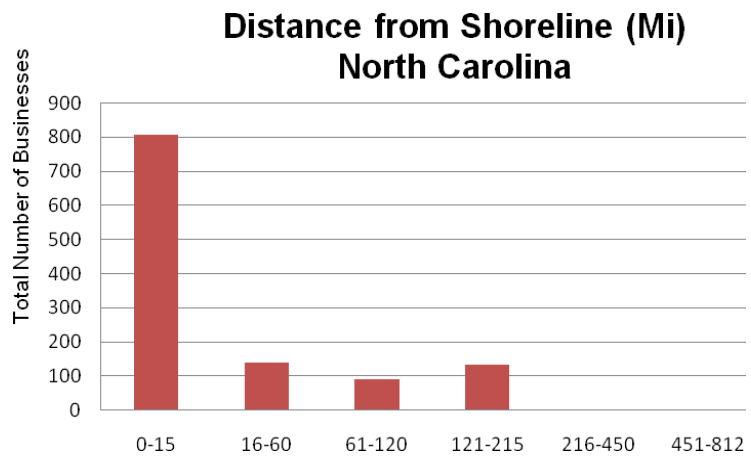
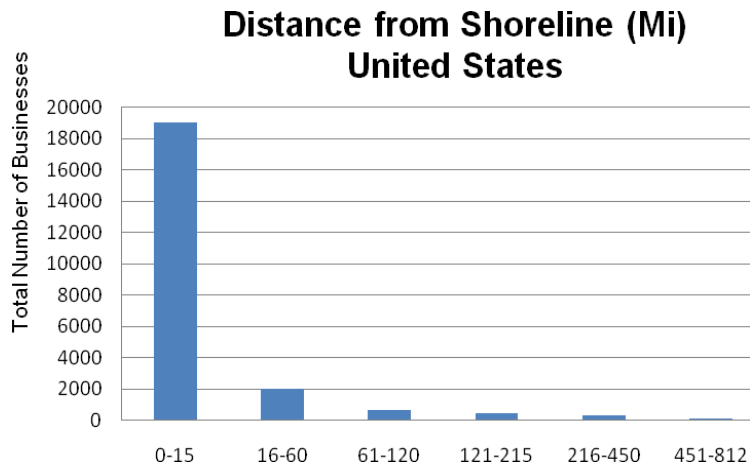


Figure 18: Bar graphs illustrating the distance in miles from the shoreline for all businesses with coast(al) in name for both the nation and the state of North Carolina

farthest from the shoreline. Coast Construction Inc. in Almond, NC is the most westward located business with coast(al) in its name in North Carolina. However, East Coast Millworks in Elkin, NC is the business located the farthest away from the coast line at 200 miles. This is because North Carolina's coastline is not a straight line.

In addition to the kernel density map of the nation, a map was also produced for North Carolina (Figure 19). Instead of using five classes as I did with the map of the nation, the North Carolina density map includes six classes. There are no cells with a value of 0, so there was no need to exclude any cells with the kernel density map of the nation. The white on the North Carolina map is a result of the output raster cells, which are square, and obviously the coastline is not a straight line. This map also supports what is found in the point density map of the state, which is that the highest density of businesses is located in the southeastern coastal area of the state. This also illustrates higher densities of coastal businesses across the entire coastal plain, which makes up a large portion of the eastern part of the state. The boundary of the coastal plain in North Carolina often varies depending on who is delineating it.

### **Coastal Businesses in States with no Coastline**

One question that arose through the mapping portion of the thesis is explanation of coastal named businesses located in states that do not have an actual coastline (Figure 20). The existence of these businesses may bother geographers and seem incorrect since they are not located along the coast. Some may see it as the massification of the term, which in return may devalue it. Although there may be some good arguments to this, but I believe there are several different reasons why these businesses exist. Historically, the U.S. population has a strong identification with the coast. Not only do people live along the coast or earn their income, but it has also been seen as a popular place for past time. Many people identify with the coast and may take this identification with them when they move to another area that may not be coastal.

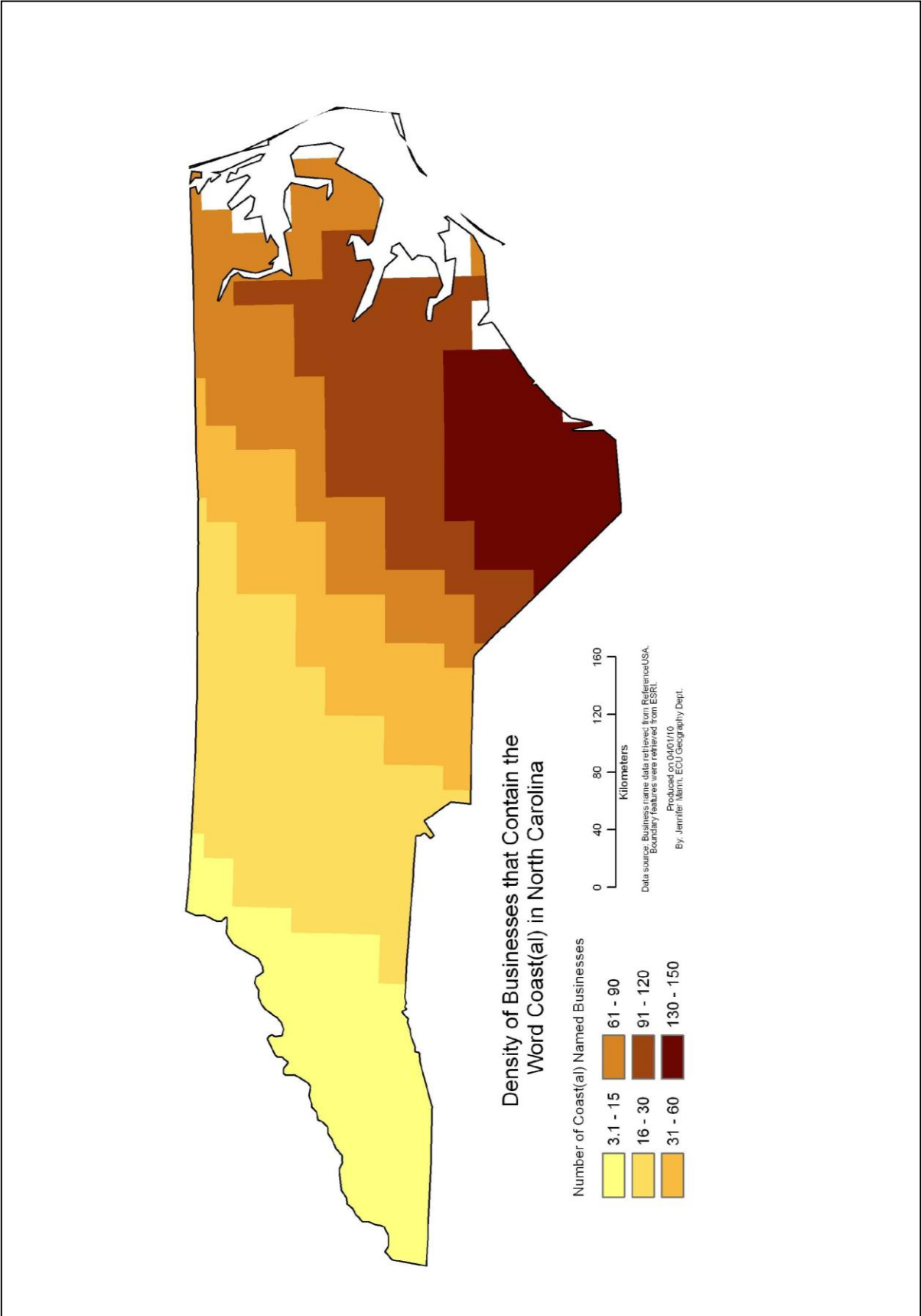


Figure 19: Density of NC businesses that contain the word coast(al)in their name

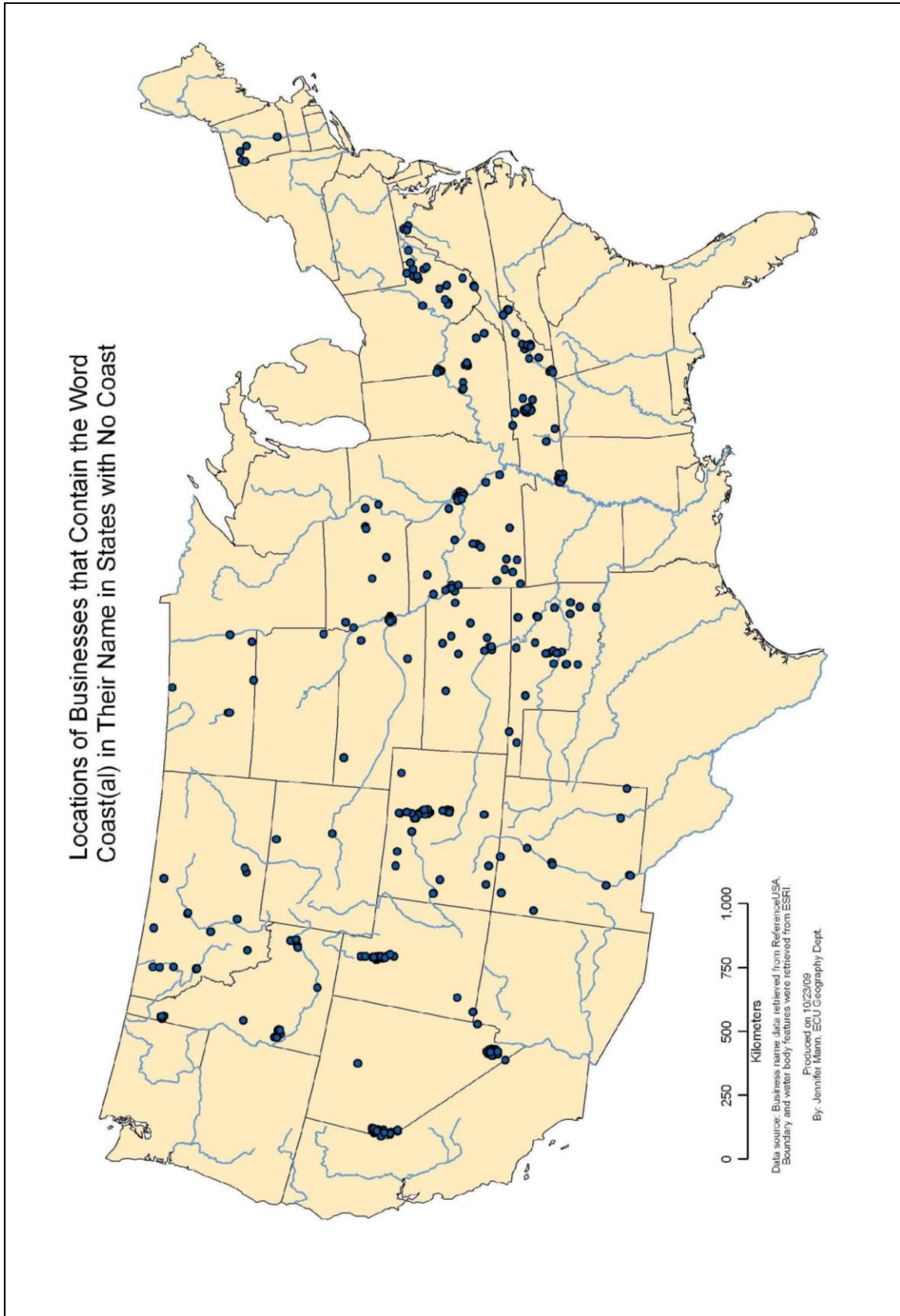


Figure 20: Locations of coast(a) named businesses in states with no coastline

To identify these businesses, an attribute table query was executed in *ArcMap*. Businesses in Colorado, Iowa, Idaho, Kansas, Kentucky, Missouri, Montana, North Dakota, Nebraska, New Mexico, Nevada, Oklahoma, South Dakota, Tennessee, Utah, Vermont, West Virginia, and Wyoming were selected and exported into a separate feature class.

A total of 235 businesses were identified in the new feature class. The next step was to attempt to contact, through email and telephone calls, a sample of businesses to gain insight into the naming of the business. When contacting the businesses, I provided my name and indicated that I was working on a thesis that examining "The Coast" as a vernacular region in the United States. I told them my data and methods involved the analysis of business names that contain the word coast(al). I indicated to the owners of these establishments that I was trying to explain why some coastal-named businesses are located in states that do not have a coastline, such as the state their business was located in.

A total of 18 businesses were contacted through email after their email contact information was found on a company website. Half of the businesses contacted responded to the email request for help. Five businesses were contacted by telephone. Only two responses were obtained through that method. Three of the businesses that did not provide contact emails, instead provided information about the name of their business in the "About Us" section of their websites. These businesses include Blue Coast Burrito, Coastal Connections Seafood, and West Coast Saloon.

My cursory exploration of coastal businesses in non-coastal states revealed a variety of reasons for this observed pattern. Blue Coast Burrito is a restaurant, whose headquarters is located in Brentwood, Tennessee, which is the location that was indicated in the database. On the main page of the Blue Coast website, the "about (blue coast)" section explains:

Drive north on Highway One from Cabo San Lucas and you'll come across a little stretch of white sand known as "Playa Costa Azul," a.k.a. "Blue Coast Beach." Here, where the Pacific meets the Gulf of California, people from all over gather to eat Baja's famous fish tacos, listen to the rhythms of Mexico and surf some of the best waves in the world!

At Blue Coast, we try to bring you as much of that experience as we possibly can. We can't bring you the sun and the surf, but we do our best to bring you the freshest, finest West Coast-style Mexican food available. ("About Blue Coast," 2006)

Blue Coast Burrito is an example of a business name reflecting the type of coastal experience and atmosphere entrepreneurs hope to create through their food and décor even if their business is not actually near the coastline. This is evident in the last line of the quote above: "We can't bring you the sun and the surf, but we do our best to bring you the freshest, finest West Coast-style Mexican food available." The restaurant cannot recreate the physical aspects of Blue Coast Beach, but they try their best to bring that experience to the customer through the food offered and place name association, in effect trying to transplant to place identification from an actual coast location to a non-coast location.

An example of a business with a material rather than a symbolic coastal connection is Coastal Connections Seafood located in Knoxville, Tennessee. This business uses the tag line "Your connection for fresh Gulf Coast seafood." The owner drives every week to the Florida-Alabama coast. Each Tuesday morning the owner contacts over a dozen boat captains from Bon Secour, Alabama to Pensacola, Florida to see what catches they have for purchase. Each week the owners of Coastal Connections retrieve a variety of seafood such as fish, shrimp, crab, etc. They return and are open to customers from Wednesday to Saturday. In addition to the fresh Gulf Coast seafood they offer, Coastal Connections also offers a large assortment of Cajun specialties, such as crawfish pie and corn soup, seafood gumbo, shrimp pie, and a variety of Cajun sausages. If there is an item that a customer would like, but which is not currently in the market, the owner will attempt to get it for the customer on the next trip to the coast. In this

regard, a coastal named business located in a non-coastal state reflects the flow of commodities and serves as an identification of a valuable market niche comprised of customers with limited access to the coastline.

Sometimes a business name may not reflect its current location, but business relocation. Several of the businesses that I contacted were either originally based in a state with a coastline or the owner was originally from a state with a coastal location. More than one business owner told me that one does not abandon a business name just because of relocating to another state. This was a statement expressed by Kenneth Jones, President of Coastal Office Systems, who started his business while living in Los Angeles County, California.

When Jones first started his enterprise, the businesses he wished to serve already had representation in Los Angeles. Therefore, in order to get contracts with desired manufactures Jones was forced to accept Ventura County, Santa Barbara County, and San Luis Obispo County as his sales territory. Since it seemed like every business in these three counties had the word coastal in their name and Jones wanted a name that was at the beginning of the alphabet, he decided that a name with Coastal would be a good fit.

Most of Coastal Office Systems sales for the next 20+ years came from California customers. Jones then began advertising nationwide and using the Internet for advertising. Currently nearly half of the company's sales now come from outside California. In 2006, the company was moved to Idaho because of two reasons: many of Jones' family members live there and the move reduced overhead expenses by half. Jones stated that "you do not promote a company name for 20+ years and then abandon it when you move. Also, most of our customers do not care where we are located as long as it doesn't cost them more and in actuality our prices are lower rather than higher." In this regard, maintaining identification with the coast – even



when it made no sense geographically – was seen as essential to ensuring the continued identity and profitability of a business.

Another example of a business that relocated and retained the same name is Pacific Coast Pattern. The owner was contacted by phone, since a website and email address was not available. Pacific Coast Pattern was started in Berkley, California 10 years ago. The owner moved the business to Iowa and decided to keep the name to remain familiar to his customers still in California. The owner stated that he believes the name actually still works in Iowa because it is unusual and people remember it. Indeed, memorability is one of the four tests that Berry et al. (1988) found useful for assessing the branding potential of an existing name.

Scott Post opened Coast Wide Promotions in August 1990 while living in Long Island, New York. When trying to think of a name for his business he wanted a name that was at the beginning of the alphabet for advertisement purposes, since the main form of customers finding businesses at that time was through the telephone book. He also wanted a name that made the company sound bigger than it really was. Mr. Post's friend, who was a graphic artist, designed the logo for the business. To tie in the word coast, the logo includes a wave feature. Mr. Post moved the company to its current location to Las Vegas, Nevada in February of 1992.

The owner of Coastline Enterprises Inc. named the company after a business in San Diego, which he had previously owned. The business in Las Vegas, Nevada is a second location of the business. The San Diego location is still in business, however, that store is under different ownership. So instead of a moving the business from a coastal state inland, this particular business naming was more of a transplant to another state.

Another reason why a business name may not necessarily make sense within the local vernacular culture is when owners are originally from another area and then decide to reflect this fact in the naming of their business. Several owners I contacted named their business after a

part of their own place identity, such as where they grew up. East Coast Pizza, located in Chesterfield, Missouri, is an example of this tendency. According to the East Coast Pizza's website, the owners are originally from Philadelphia and New York and lived in New Jersey for years. All three of those locations are located on the East Coast. The business states that it serves real New York style pizza, using hand tossed dough and homemade pizza sauce. East Coast Pizza also sells pizza by the slice, like they do in New York and use rolls from the famous Amoroso bakery in Philadelphia for their Philly cheese steaks. Not only is the family who runs this business from the East Coast of the U.S., but they also import ingredients and serve styles of food from those coastal areas.

When looking at East Coast Pizza's menu under pizza, Chicago style pizza is listed under New York style. I found it interesting that they make no mention of this on the front page of the website where they describe the family's personal connection to the East Coast and the style of food they serve. If this restaurant were located in New York, one would most likely not be able to order Chicago style pizza alongside the thin New York style slice. There has long been a heated debate between those two cities about which has the best style of pizza. The fact that East Coast Pizza serves Chicago pizza may be due to Missouri's location near Chicago. Missouri and Illinois do share a border and I am sure there are those who visit this restaurant with a preference for the Chicago style. This illustrates some of the geography and cultural contradictions that occur when using a vernacular regional identity outside the conventional locale of the region.

Two other examples of a business name reflecting the owner's original home region are: Jimmy D's East Coast Café and East Coast Al's Studio of Tattooing. Jimmy Duggan, owner of Jimmy D's East Coast Café, is originally from the East Coast, so he decided to incorporate that into the name of his business. According to him, his business is also reminiscent of the East

Coast deli he worked at when he was younger. Like East Coast Pizza, Jimmy D makes some of the food at his East Coast Cafe “like they do back on the East Coast.” He makes Reubens on flat-top grills and he also serves authentic Philadelphia cheese steaks. East Coast Al is originally from the East Coast and “East Coast Al” is a nickname he had been called for many years before opening his studio in Riverside, Missouri. The owner noted that when having a nickname as unique as “East Coast Al”, how could he not call his business anything different?

Sometimes a business name reflects the product or service the owner is selling or is inspired from another aspect of life. For example David Foppiano from Coastal Connection Cruises and Travel in Louisville, Kentucky said the name was chosen because of the travel services the business provides, mostly to the Caribbean. The Caribbean is, of course, comprised of coastal islands. In addition to the travel services that they provide, the name Coastal Connection Cruises was also inspired by a Jimmy Buffet song. This is an example of intertextuality.

Intertextuality is the shaping of a text’s meaning in relation to other texts, relying on pre-existing place meanings to help structure how people perceive a place. In other words, place representation is dependent on other representations that have come before it, particularly if these earlier images of popular media images. Using other texts does not have to be word for word, but can be about drawing a general connection between texts. Coastal Connection Cruises and Travel shaped the meaning of their business name drawing inspiration from a song. Jimmy Buffet is a popular singer-songwriter and author known for his “island escapism” lifestyle and easy-going beach bum persona. Coastal Connection Cruises is providing services which connect their guest not only to coastal areas, but to a lifestyle as well.

After moving to Key West, Florida, Buffet combined his country and folk music with lyrics about coastal and tropical themes. Buffet is a frequent visitor to the Caribbean islands,

where he finds inspiration for many of his songs and book characters. In 1977, he released the popular song, "Margaretville." Bowen (1997) examined the place and imagination in Buffet's "Margaretville." The name "Margaritaville" conjures up images of stretches of tropical paradise where one's worries and hassles of everyday life slip away. This song is a perfect example of how a name can shape people's perceptions and expectations. With regard to this thesis, people may have similar perceptions of a business with coast(al) in their name, interpreting the word coastal with Buffet's representation of a coastal and tropical lifestyle.

These perceptions also relate to what people consider to be the coast. Someone who is located on the East or West Coast may associate the ocean as being coast. However, those located along lakes and rivers also associate these areas as being coast as well. This is apparent to Tommy Evans, the owner of Central Coast Dive Center in Edgewood, Kentucky. He named the store, Central Coast Dive Center, because there is the East Coast and West Coast, but since he is in the middle of the country where the Ohio River is located, he believes he is on the Central Coast. He sees the name as somewhat funny and people seem to question it a lot. What is probably most important for marketing purposes is that they remember the unique name.

Sometimes a business name is chosen due to popular use, regardless of the geographic logic of its location. Sun Coast is a popular name found among Florida businesses. However, Sun Coast Carriers is located in Memphis, Tennessee. At the time the business was started, one of the owner's brothers lived in Tampa, Florida. In Tampa, many businesses use the name Sun Coast, as supported by data in this thesis. The owner was familiar with and liked the name Sun Coast, and decided to use it for the business in Tennessee. Sun Coast Carriers would be an example of what traditional place name scholars would call "transplant naming." The place name exists somewhere else and it is then transplanted to a different area. The European settlers transplanted many place names from Europe to the United States during colonial

settlements. There are numerous cities and towns throughout the country with names that are also found in Europe, either verbatim or slightly modified (Fischer 1989).

### **Summary**

As expected, the majority of the coastal named business locations were concentrated along the coastal areas of the United States with a few other clusters of businesses located in non-coastal areas. It was also revealed that many of people consider areas near lakes and rivers to be “the coast.” In addition, it was found that a majority, 84.5 percent, of the businesses were located relatively close (15 miles or less) to the coastline. In addition to being located close to the coastline, the majority of the businesses, (97 percent) were also located in metropolitan statistical areas. This number makes sense as well because there are going to be fewer businesses in places that are sparsely populated than there would be in high-density areas.

It was found that determining where the coast is located, where people would put that dividing line, actually depends on who is being asked. This is especially apparent in the state of North Carolina. North Carolina’s coastal business name pattern was unique because although there is a high concentration of businesses located on the coast, there were also a significant number of businesses located inland as well, departing from the more restrictive definitions of coasts used by government agencies like CAMA. This section also investigated an important question that arose through the mapping of coastal businesses – the occurrence of these named enterprises in states that do not have a coastline.

Several different reasons were uncovered to explain why these business names may seem out of place including: relocation from a coastal area, owner is originally from the coast, or a direction connection with the coast. Essentially the owner wants to be associated with the coast and the imagery that it can evoke in peoples’ minds, which can vary depending on who is being

asked. As discussed in the next chapter, the name coastal is a highly evocative term that is often used for place promotional purposes.

## CHAPTER 5: DOCUMENTING AND INTERPRETING THE COASTAL PLACE BRAND

As illustrated at the end of Chapter 4, the businesses that use coastal in their names occupy more than a position on a map as part of larger national and regional patterns. Vernacular naming patterns related to the coast provide windows into the stories of how people identify themselves, either as an extension of their place-based biography or as a strategic tool for attracting the attention of the consuming public as they sell and market their establishment. This chapter will present and interpret some examples of how identification with the coastal brand. Such brands are not simply forms of advertising, but work to construct a sense of place for the location in question.

The Sun Coast moniker mentioned at the end of Chapter 4 is an excellent example of using identification with the coastal concept for place marketing and branding. While browsing through the coast(al) business name database, I noticed that there were numerous names that had an adjective in front of the word coast, such as Sun Coast. A majority of these different coast monikers were located in Florida. Florida has 1200 miles of shoreline, which is identified by several coastal different names and brands that go well beyond splitting the state into the East/West or East/Gulf coasts (Figure 21).

Florida, however, is not the only state that uses the term as an important place market identity (see Table 2). Many of these names are creations of state or tourism agencies as a way to brand their localities. Tourism agencies are looking for ways to make their locations stand out from other establishments and naming represents a form of “symbolic capital” to help draw cultural distinctions and create a unique sense of place that can be presented to tourists and potential residents (Alderman 2008). This chapter in the thesis will examine three of these different coastal naming and branding patterns: Crystal Coast, Gold Coast, and the Third Coast.



Figure 21: Florida's Coasts (<http://www.floridasmart.com/facts/floridascoasts.htm>)



## **The Crystal Coast Brand**

Seventy-three businesses in the database assembled for this thesis were found containing the name “Crystal Coast” (Figure 22). The Crystal Coast is located in North Carolina and is also commonly referred to as the Southern Outer Banks. It is home to the towns of Atlantic Beach, Beaufort, Cape Carteret, Emerald Isle, Indian Beach, Morehead City, and Pine Knoll Shores. The Crystal Coast Tourism Authority, which exists to serve both visitors and residents, was contacted and asked several questions pertaining to the name.

1. When did the name "The Crystal Coast" come into use or what is the history behind the name?
2. Why the “crystal” in the Crystal Coast?
3. Does it relate to something specific to the area or was it created merely for place/brand marketing?

According to the response I received, the Carteret County Chamber of Commerce originated “Crystal Coast” in the late 1980s and the Carteret County Tourism Development Authority adopted the name beginning in 1990. The Tourism Authority also added the phrase “along the Southern Outer Banks” for a more specific geographical reference. The word “Crystal” supposedly comes from the area’s beautiful crystal clear sparkling waters. When conducting a Google search for “Crystal Coast”, the Carteret County Tourism Development Authority’s website ([www.crystalcoastnc.org](http://www.crystalcoastnc.org)) is the top listing on the Google results page, suggesting that this construction and interpretation of “Crystal Coast” is perhaps more influential than others.

The Tourism Development Authority webpage provides information about the Crystal Coast for visitors. The top of the main page includes an image banner that changes about every ten seconds. The banner images include images of children playing on beach, a scuba diver exploring ship wreckage, children running to beach from houses on dunes, wild horses and the Cape Lookout Light house, a charter fishing boat, Fort Macon, and a couple walking on beach.

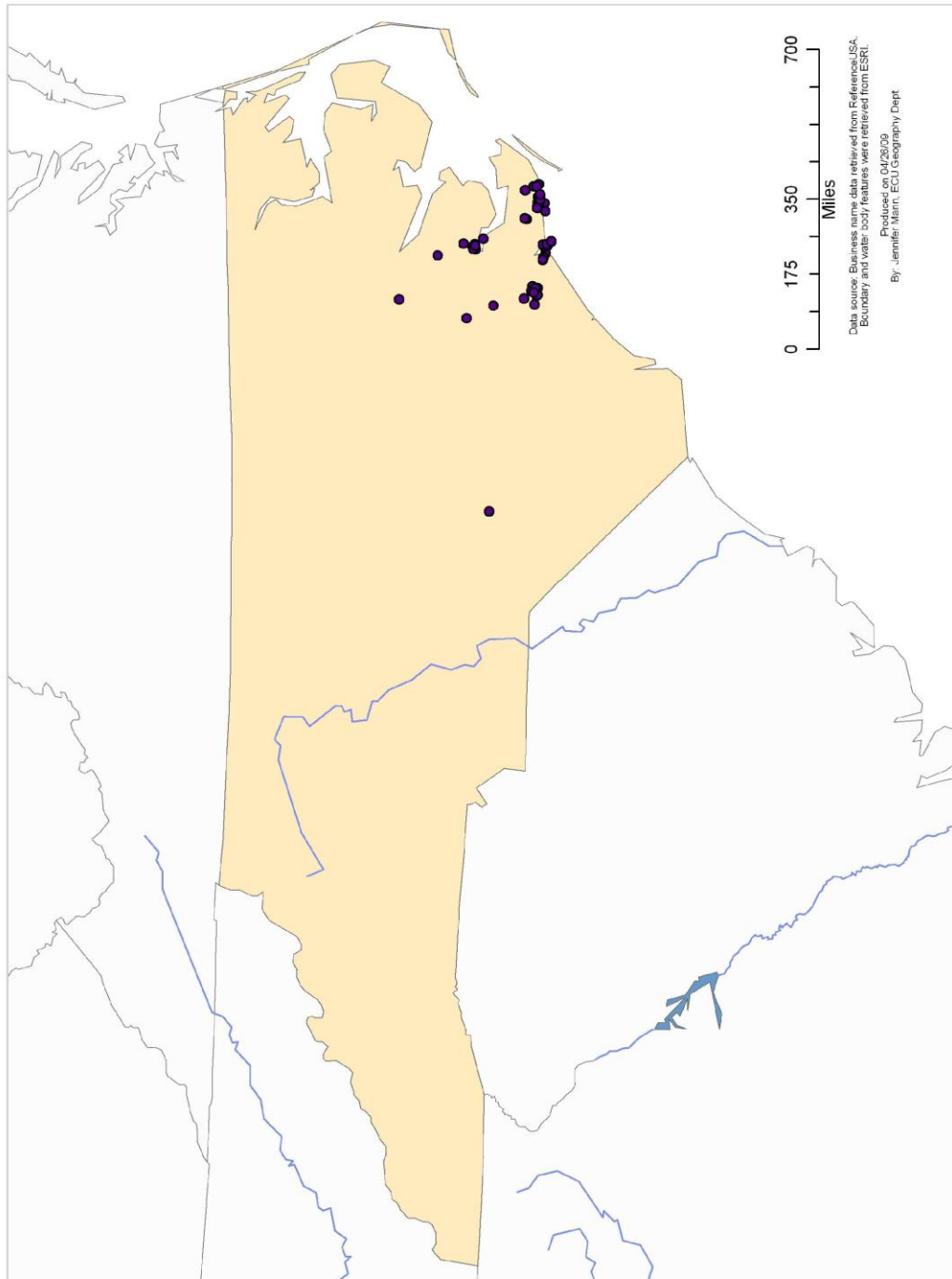


Figure 22: Locations of Crystal Coast named businesses found in North Carolina

Also included at the top of the Crystal Coast promotional web page is the current weather and a vacation planning banner in the upper left-hand corner. Under the main banner includes the quote “Where Imaginations Run Free”, informational links, an introduction about the area, a “Meet the Locals’ video, calendar of news and events, and links to four main types of experiences directly identified with the Crystal Coast. These include Beaches & Vacations (“family fun”), Outdoor Adventure (“back-to-nature experience”), History and Tours (“history coming to life”), and Eco-Exploration (“Nature amazing part of what makes NC CC great”).

Historically, recreation has been one of the main draws to the coast. Families, couples, and friends alike have traveled to the beach for fun and to create lasting memories. The images on the banners portray and further build on this theme. Four of the banner images contain people. Two portray children running carefree on or to the beach. The third portrays a couple enjoying each other’s company while walking along the beach at sunset. The fourth depicts one of the area’s most recognized recreation activities, scuba diving. Due to the area’s clear waters and many shipwrecks, the Crystal Coast has been recognized as a top diving destination in North America. These images represent two of the major themes of experiences: beaches & vacations and outdoor adventures, illustrating how identification with the coast takes on important social and symbolic meanings.

The Beach and Vacations tab of the Tourism Authority webpage says “Discover family fun for all ages at North Carolina's Crystal Coast.” Most of the beach communities of the Crystal Coast are located on Bogue Banks, which is a continuous barrier island that runs east to west. There are various public beach access points along NC Highway 58, which runs along most of the island’s length. There are some hotels, but most of the area consists of beach houses and maritime forest. Many of these homes are second homes for those who live farther inland in the state and they are frequently rented out during the summer months to vacationing

families. There are a variety of activities for families to enjoy including amusement places, golf courses, movie theatres, night life, and restaurants.

An example of one of the family-oriented businesses that identifies itself by name with the Crystal Coast is the Crystal Coast Jamboree Theatre located in Morehead City. The Crystal Coast Jamboree Theatre offers a Jamboree Variety Show and Christmas show, celebrity concerts, and “The Jamboree Good-Time Oldies Show”, which is new for 2010. They provide “year round family entertainment” and tout themselves as the “Hottest ticket at the beach” (Figure 23).

The Outdoor Adventure section of the Carteret Tourism Authority web page states that the “North Carolina's Crystal Coast has what you need for those who seek a back-to-nature experience.” Not surprisingly the most apparent appeal on the coast is the beach itself. Beach goers can sunbathe, swim, stroll along the shore, look for seashells, or build sandcastles. Beyond the beach, there are several other attractions in this area that draw visitors and residents alike. Fort Macon State Park, which is North Carolina’s most visited state park, was active during the Civil War. The fort is still standing and visitors are able to walk through and explore the fort, which has informational displays in several of the rooms. There is also a recreational area with beach, bath houses, and picnic tables. During the summer months, Civil War reenactments are performed.

The area offers other outdoor activities on both land and sea. Life in coastal areas often revolves around the waters where they are located. The Crystal Coast has a variety of activities found in, on, and around the Atlantic Ocean, the Intracoastal Waterway, and rivers. Tourists and residents alike are able to explore the waters through a variety of way including scuba diving, boat tours, cruises, ferry services, fishing piers, kayak/boat rentals, marinas, fishing, and surfing. The Crystal Coast brand represents a way of capturing a plethora of these activities under a single neat marketing image.

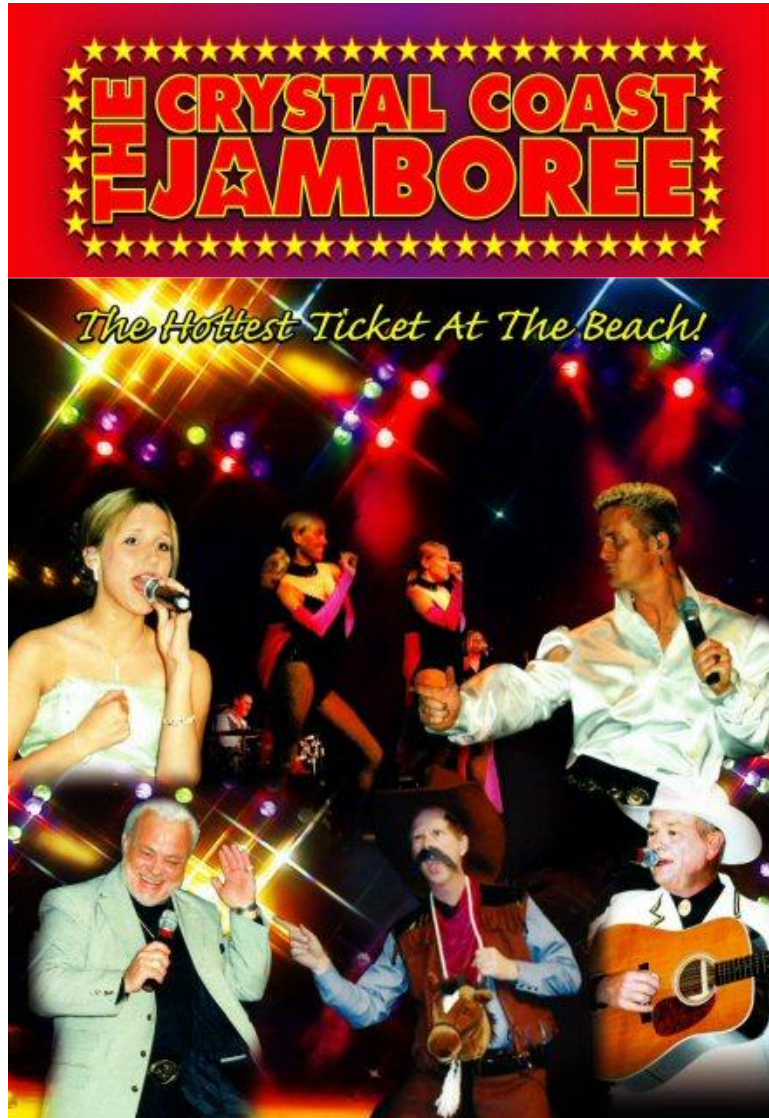


Figure 23: Crystal Coast Jamboree Theatre - "The Hottest Ticket at the Beach!"  
(<http://www.crystalcoastjamboree.com/>)

The Crystal Coast is part of the treacherous waters known as “The Graveyard of the Atlantic” due to the large number of lives lost and ships that have wrecked off the coast. The area is promoted as a “wreck diver’s dream” as there are plenty of these shipwreck remains for divers to explore. Boat tours are another option for exploring the waters off the coast. Area boat tours take passengers to various sites along the Crystal Coast such as the Cape Lookout Lighthouse, Beaufort’s historic waterfront, Fort Macon State Park, the Morehead City state port and more. Fishing is also a popular pastime and anglers can set up along the shoreline in the surf or charter a boat for deep sea fishing. In addition to exploring the crystal clear waters there are other activities available on land, including tours of the Crystal Coast, bicycle rentals, camp grounds, and horseback riding.

The last two major themes are History and Tours and Eco-Exploration. The tabs on the web page exclaim “Experience history coming to life at the Crystal Coast” and “Nature is an amazing part of what makes North Carolina's Crystal Coast great.” There are both guided and self-guided tours that will take visitors to historical landmarks and give them the ability to explore the nature that is found at the coast. As the web page touts, “History comes to life” through Beaufort Historic Site Tours where docents in period dress take guests through authentically restored dwellings. The North Carolina Maritime Museum also keeps the area’s maritime history preserved through exhibits of artifacts of the pirates who once sailed the waters, educational classes, boating programs, and a Watercraft center equipped with ship models and construction/restoration of wooden boats. These are all objects traditionally associated with the coast.

An example of one tour that especially identifies itself with the Crystal Coast name is Crystal Coast Ecotours, which operates out of Morehead City. Captain Jess Hawkins takes passengers aboard the Lucky Dog to discover what he calls the hidden natural treasures found

throughout the Crystal Coast. The company offers both full and half-day outdoor adventures to explore the area through birding, clamming, crabbing, dolphin watching, fishing, shelling, snorkeling, seining, and wild horse watching. The natural features found at the Crystal Coast can also be discovered at the North Carolina Aquarium located in Pine Knoll Shores, which is one of the three aquariums in the state. The exhibits include species found throughout the state in a variety of habitats: mountains, piedmont, coastal plain, tidal waters, and ocean. Visitors are also able to view some of these species and plant life in their natural state on the Crystal Coast.

Some of the best wildlife viewing areas on the Crystal Coast are only available by boat, such as Cape Lookout National Seashore, which includes Shackleford Banks, and the Rachel Carson National Estuarine Research Reserve. Both of these areas are protected by national government policies, are undeveloped compared to other nearby areas. On the main page of the Beaufort Tourism Authority website there is a “Meet the Locals” video that introduces people to the wild horses found on Shackleford Banks. Shackleford Banks is a nine mile island with a population of over 100 wild horses living on the island, which makes it a popular tourist destination. The wild horses are a part of the “living history” of the Crystal Coast. The horses are descendants of the horses brought by Spaniards centuries ago. The video discusses the measures in place to protect the horses to make sure the population continues into the future and the living history is preserved.

The Cape Lookout Lighthouse is another important point of identity for the Crystal Coast. Blake (2007) claims that “some Americans see their lighthouses as equivalent to European castles, structures of permanence worth preservation to tie together multiple generations and provide a focal point for cultural memory” (p. 9). The lighthouse, which is operated by the Coast Guard, was the first built on the Outer Banks and played an important role during the Civil War. The area was a military strong hold for confederate soldiers, who almost destroyed it

while trying to blow up the two light beacons to hinder the efforts of the arriving Union soldiers. The lighthouse itself is not open to the public, but the National Park service owns the surrounding land and there is a small museum and visitor center.

In addition to providing information on the plethora of activities available to both visitors and residents, the Crystal Coast Tourism Authority's website also provides a link to a Facebook fan page for The Crystal Coast ("The Crystal Coast," 2009). Facebook Fan pages are a way for businesses, brands, celebrities, and organizations to provide official information directly to their "fans" in a public manner, encouraging further public identification with a place and its associated meanings. There are three different types of categories of fan pages: Local; Brand, Product, or Organization; and Artist, Band, or Public Figure ("Facebook Pages," 2010). The Crystal Coast page is set up as a Brand, Product, or Organization page.

In addition to providing basic information such as a website or product overview, fan pages are able to access numerous Facebook applications that are available. These applications include events, polls, photo, links and posts that allow the Crystal Coast Tourism Authority to connect with visitors directly through the social networking site. Not only can the Crystal Coast Tourism Authority interact with fans, but fans are able to connect with each other. People who "fan" the Crystal Coast page are also able to post their own "Fan" photos and write on the page's wall. Other fans are able to view both of these items and can personally comment or respond.

Fans also can interact on the discussion board by asking questions or giving advice to other visitors. Some of the current threads on the board started by the Crystal Coast Tourism Authority include: "Favorite Crystal Coast Memory", "What is your favorite outdoor activity in the Crystal Coast?", and "What are the best historical spots to check out in the Crystal Coast?" These threads relate to the themes that the Tourism Authority markets on its webpage. These



threads, while serving a clear advertising or promotional role, also participate in framing the identity of the coast for people and contribute to creating a sense of place.

Even though the Crystal Coast is marketed as one entity, it actually consists of several different coastal communities. Inspired by the work of Blake (2002), I examine how the natural landscape, the coast, has been incorporated into the place identities of these specific towns. The Crystal Coast is home to a number of towns and communities. The official town websites for Atlantic Beach, Beaufort, Indian Beach, Morehead City, and Pine Knoll Shores were examined to reveal how vernacular identifications with the coast have been incorporated into town promotions through the use of text, imagery, or logos. Coastal imagery incorporated into these types of entities serve several different social purposes: tourism/development identities, civic identities for governments, and a sense of personal identity. The analysis of logos is especially pertinent because it represents civic identity and is usually placed on officially sponsored items.

The Towns of Atlantic Beach and Pine Knoll Shores are the only websites where the name The Crystal Coast is found on the main page. The banner at the top of Atlantic Beach's website displays an image of beach houses and dunes (Figure 24). This represents how humans have developed residences along the coastline and how their backyard has become a part of their daily life. The town seal (Figure 25) consists of several items that are associated with the coast including water, the shoreline, beach umbrellas, and sail boats. The beach umbrellas and sailboats are examples of objects that humans use to interact with the coast. People use sailboats for recreation and travel, as well as umbrellas during time spent relaxing on the beach.

The town of Pine Knoll Shores mentions the Crystal Coast in the main body of text in the welcome statement of its web page:

“Pine Knoll Shores is a planned residential community originally developed by the Roosevelt family. Located on the pristine Crystal Coast of North Carolina's southern



Figure 24: Crystal Coast reference on Town of Atlantic Beach website  
("Town of Atlantic," n.d.)



Figure 25: Town Seals - Atlantic Beach, Pine Knoll Shores, Indian Beach, and Beaufort.

outer banks, Pine Knoll Shores offers a quiet, friendly neighborhood surrounded by protected wetlands and maritime forest” (<http://www.townofpks.com/>).

In addition to the text, a slideshow of coastal images is available on the front web page of Pine Knoll Shores. The title “A Shoreline Community” is also included on the slideshow. The town is home to one of the three locations of the North Carolina Aquarium. Pine Knolls Shore is designated as a turtle and bird sanctuary, as well as a Tree City USA city. These designations illustrate how nature and the surrounding landscape are integral parts of the town’s identity and their dedication to preservation of the local wildlife and nature. This is even apparent in the town seal (Figure 25), which is comprised of three seagulls, one large and two smaller birds.

The town of Indian Beach makes one reference to the Crystal Coast, but not on its main web page. The mention of the Crystal Coast is located on the “Where Is It” page. It says “Indian Beach is located in the middle of Bogue Banks, the next to last island in a chain of barrier islands known as the Southern Outer Banks, *aka* Crystal Coast. The town is divided in the middle by the unincorporated community of Salter Path.” The town seal (Figure 25) also incorporates coastal items like the logo for Atlantic Beach. The images on the Indian Beach seal include the ocean with shoreline, as well as seabirds and the setting sun. Like the Atlantic Beach seal, there is also a human-related item – a boat. This is significant because humans use boats to interact with the ocean in a variety of ways: transportation of people or goods, recreation, or as an integral part of employment (i.e. shrimp boat). The other items on the seal are those that are naturally found at the beach: seashells and a starfish. However, humans do interact with these objects whenever people collect shells, which is a popular pastime at the beach.

The towns of Beaufort, Cape Carteret, Emerald Isle, and Morehead City make no mention of the name Crystal Coast on their town websites. These websites appear more geared

toward the residents and provide links and information for city services and news, prompting us to consider how Crystal Coast may be a place brand derived more for tourists.

Morehead City also includes a slideshow of images on the city's main page. Only a few of the images are water related: fishing boats on the water, boardwalk and pier along the water, and a photograph from the viewpoint of a pier looking back toward land at night. The other images include governmental buildings, cemetery, and a playground. However, the coast has been incorporated into the city's daily workings through several different avenues. Morehead City is home to one of two major seaports in North Carolina, as well as several marine-research facilities, such as the Institute of Marine Sciences and the North Carolina Division of Marine Fisheries. The city's economy is based on tourism, both commercial and sport fishing, and some light industry. The town has many restaurants, many of them waterfront, and is well known to have a variety of good places to eat. Additionally, there are numerous art galleries and gift shops to serve visitors to the area. The town is home to the Big Rock Blue Marlin Fishing tournament, which is one of the major "big money" fishing competitions on the East Coast. It draws hundreds of spectators and boats each year. This tournament is important to the area not only because it is a major draw for visitors, but also because it is a great way to get the town's name out to those in the competitive fishing community, who may possibly want to return to the area after their tournament experience.

The town of Beaufort does not mention Crystal Coast on its promotional website, but there is evidence of the construction of a coastal identity within the town. Beaufort was originally a port of entry and fishing village called Fish Town in the late 1800s. The town's rich maritime history can be explored through a tour of the North Carolina Maritime Museum. This is also apparent in the town seal (Figure 25). The seal includes a modified version of the Duke of Beaufort's crest. The bottom panel of Fleur de Lis was replaced with the three roses of

Lancaster, which was the ruling house at the time Beaufort was chartered. The bottom panel of three lions was also replaced with three fish to symbolize the 18<sup>th</sup> century town name, “Fish Town” (Warshaw 2010). While visitors dine and shop, the historic waterfront district offers views of feral horses on nearby Carrot Island and boats from locations all over at the Beaufort Docks. Even though the town is no longer a small fishing village, the maritime connection is still alive today through the marine environment conservation research conducted at Duke University’s Marine Laboratory.

In summary, the Crystal Coast identity is mainly publicized by the Carteret County Tourism Development Authority, which was the driving force in the development of the Crystal Coast as a place brand. The first images (or impressions) viewers see on the Tourism Development’s website include images of children playing on beach, a scuba diver exploring ship wreckage, wild horses, the Cape Lookout Lighthouse, charter fishing boats, Fort Macon, and a couple walking on the beach, which are all associated with the recreation, nature, and family fun the Crystal Coast has become known for. Although the Crystal Coast moniker has not been fully incorporated into the identities of all of the towns, several different images of the coast have been integrated into both the civic identities and daily life of the communities within the area. An analysis of town seals and promotional web sites shows that the civic identity images include the physicality of the coast (sand, water, sun), items that are found naturally at the coast (shells, birds, fish), or objects humans use to interact with the coast (umbrella, boat). The inclusions of these images are important because they represent items or objects that many people relate to the coast.

### **The Gold Coast Brand**

The next coastal brand examined is the Gold Coast. The Gold Coast is different from the Crystal Coast because it is found in more than one state. The Gold Coast is predominantly

found in California, Florida, Illinois, New Jersey, and New York, although only three will be discussed in further detail (Figure 26). There are a total of 617 businesses in the database with Gold Coast in their name. As the word “gold” in the name suggests, this coast is typically associated with wealth, social exclusivity, real estate, and its related marketing. Additionally, Florida is the only state where the name is also associated with actual gold. The following paragraphs will explore the Gold Coast in three of the five states listed above starting with Florida.

### *Florida’s Gold Coast*

The state of Florida claims 209 businesses that use the name Gold Coast. The Gold Coast of Florida is located on the southeastern coast of the state between the cities of Jupiter and Miami. This long cluster of urban cities covers the three most populous counties in the state: Palm Beach, Broward, and Miami-Dade. This area is also known as the South Florida Metropolitan or generally simply just South Florida. The Gold Coast of Florida acquired its name from the gold coins that occasionally wash up along the coast. This is due to a large number of sunken ships off the coast. Most of these ships are Spanish Galleons, which were carrying large amounts of gold and silver from the New World to the Old when they sank. Additionally, the name Gold Coast refers to the wealth that has accrued in parts of the region. The wealth is not apparent throughout the entire Gold Coast, just in certain areas such as Fort Lauderdale, Miami Beach, Boca Raton, Palm Beach. These wealthy areas have become somewhat of an urban playground for the rich and famous. There are many trendy restaurants and shops, as well as an active nightlife. In this regard, identification with the coast has come to symbolize a certain lavish way of life and not just a close proximity to the shoreline.

Boca Raton and Palm Beach are known for their country-club lifestyles and intensive shopping. One of the better known country clubs in Palm Beach is the Mar-A-Lago Club, the

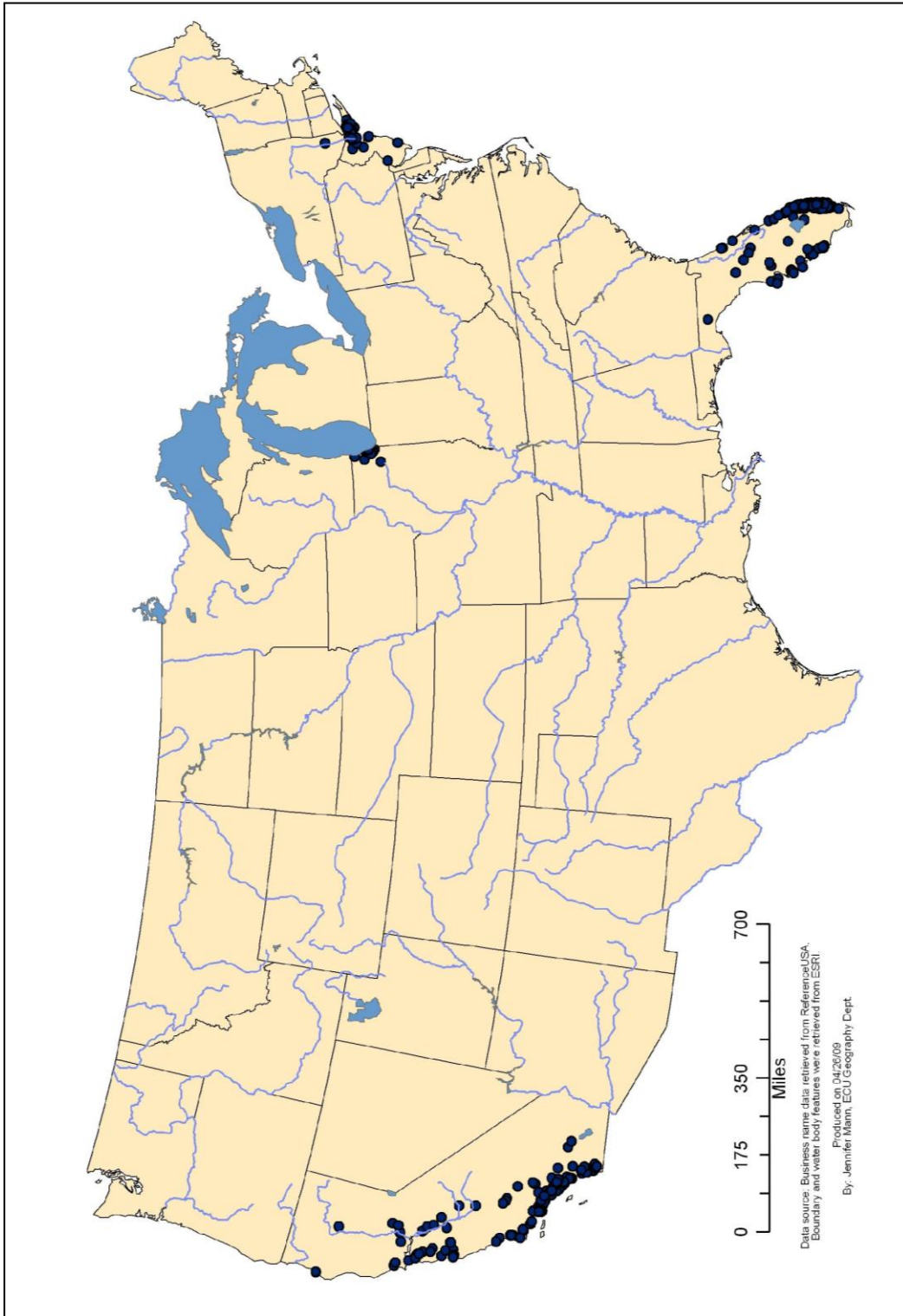


Figure 26: Gold Coast business locations found in California, Florida, Illinois, New Jersey and New York

former Marjorie Merriweather Post estate. Donald Trump acquired and renovated this property in 1985. He used it as a private residence until 1995, when it officially became Mar-A-Lago Club. The club's website discusses the social exclusiveness and luxurious lifestyle club members' experience:

The Mar-a-Lago Club sits royally amid 20 valuable acres of manicured lawns, vibrant gardens and sweeping sea-to-lake vistas. A National Historic Landmark, the former Marjorie Merriweather Post estate maintains its position as a charter member on the VIP list of places and people that established Palm Beach as a winter haven for the elite many decades ago...Naturally, membership at the club has its privileges. The use of world class formal and casual dining, bridge, croquet, tennis (Mar-a-Lago's 5 clay and one grass court complex is a recipient of the Court of the Year Award from the United States Tennis Court & Track Builders Association), The Trump Spa, The Beach Club and a calendar full of parties, wine tasting dinners, fashion shows and star-studded entertainment throughout the social season are all for the taking. ("The-Mar-a-Lago-Club," n.d.).

Boca Raton is also home to several wealthy communities, where residents include some of the top chief executives and entrepreneurs found in the U.S. According to *Forbes*, in 2004 Boca Raton was home to three of the top ten most expensive gated communities in the United States: The Royal Palm Yacht and Country Club (#1), The Sanctuary (#6), and Le Lac (#8) (Clemence 2004). Residents pay tens of millions of dollars a year to reside in these exclusive communities.

For the significant amount of money paid to reside in these communities, a number of amenities are provided to the residents. The most basic service starts with the gate, which is a barrier to non-residents and a symbol of exclusiveness. Some communities offer 24 hour security, private golf course and beach access, yacht moorage, or social activities. Essentially residents are not just buying a house, but a total coastal lifestyle package including community services, facilities, and the right to exclusiveness.



The Royal Palm Yacht and Country Club is not affiliated with the subdivision, but the two share the same name and geographic location. The club is celebrating its 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary as “it remains one of the few private, by-invitation-only clubs in the country” (“Royal Palm,” 2009). This is supported by one of the club’s core values, which is “inclusion,” and membership process. Club membership is not mandatory for residents who live in the gated community and is only granted to those who make it through the rigor of high standards selection process. These high standards are in place to ensure that new members will be compatible with current members and uphold the Club’s values and traditions that sustain the “Royal Palms Experience. This is an example of the exclusiveness that is available for purchase in these areas that are closely identified with the Gold Coast brand.

#### *Illinois’ Gold Coast*

The next Gold Coast examined is located in Illinois. There are 44 businesses in the database located in Illinois that contain the name Gold Coast. Unlike the Gold Coast in Florida, which consisted of several cities, Illinois’ Gold Coast is actually a historic district located in Chicago. It is part of the Near North Side and is roughly bounded by North Avenue, Lake Shore Drive, and Clark and Oak Streets. The neighborhood developed in the wake of the Great Chicago Fire in October 1871. Eleven years after the fire, Potter Palmer moved into the area from a neighborhood on the city’s South Side. Palmer built a forty-two room, castle-like mansion. After the Palmer Mansion was constructed, many other elite Chicago residents moved into the area and established the Gold Coast neighborhood as one of the most affluent-neighborhoods in the city. The district was added to the National Register of Historic Places in January 1978. A *Chicago-Sun Times* article quoted sociologist Pierre DeVise, said the Gold Coast and Streeterville neighborhoods comprised some of the plushest neighborhoods in the United States, second only to the Upper East Side in Manhattan (DeBat & Meyers, 1989).

The Gold Coast is still Chicago's wealthiest neighborhood. Today, the Gold Coast neighborhood (Figure 27) is a mixture of high-rise condo buildings on Lake Shore Drive, which is opposite of Lake Michigan, and historic Brownstones, Graystones, Mid-rises, and mansions found inland.

Additionally, there are numerous boutiques and shops in Chicago's Gold Coast that are associated with high-end designers, such as Chanel, Gucci, Hermès, Prada, Versace, Louis Vuitton, Harry Winston, Ralph Lauren, Marc Jacobs, Vera Wang, and Jimmy Choo. There are also a number of posh car dealerships, such as Lamborghini, Ferrari, Bentley, and Porsche. Many of these dealerships include "Gold Coast" in their name (Figure 28). The dealership touts the showroom as a prime location in the heart of the Gold Coast combined with high style that creates a memorable experience for guests. This is an example of the wealthy and luxurious air that is present in the area and what one would expect to find on the Chicago's Gold Coast. The residents of the Gold Coast are extremely proud of where they live and expect businesses to reflect and facilitate their lifestyle.

Another characteristic that Chicago's Gold Coast is known for is dining and the high concentration of bars and restaurants in the area. Many of these establishments are located on Rush and Division Streets. Rush Street has been around since the original incorporation of Chicago in the 1830s. It is a densely-packed area known for its energetic nightlife and attracts both residents and visitors alike. It is also one block east of the Magnificent Mile. The Magnificent Mile is the portion of Michigan Avenue that extends from the Chicago River to Oak Street. It is also the main thoroughfare between the Loop, Chicago's central business district, and the Gold Coast.

Rush Street is considered the place to be seen. Establishments on Rush Street are still hopping long after those on the Loop have closed. Just like the coastal businesses, many



Figure 27: Chicago's Gold Coast (Blackburn, 2006)



Figure 28: Gold Coast Car Dealerships  
("Bentley Gold Coast," n.d.)

businesses on Rush Street have recognized the draw that the area has and have included the Rush Street moniker in their names. Several examples include Tavern on Rush, Rosebud on Rush, and Phil Stefani's 437 Rush. In this regard, place brands do not develop in a vacuum but become associated with each other intertextually. The Stefani name has been a fixture in the city since 1980 when Phil Stefani opened his flagship restaurant, Stefani's, with his uncle in the heart of Lincoln Park. The reputation of the Stefani name facilitated the opening of 10 other signature restaurants in the Chicago area, including both Tavern on Rush and Phil Stefani's 437 Rush. Tavern on Rush, which opened in March of 1998, is described as an upscale, contemporary steakhouse that is a "hot spot" for locals and visitors alike. The site refers to the restaurant as a Gold Coast destination, as well as, touts their location, which offers "guests a fabulous view of lively Rush Street while enjoying the award winning steaks. In the summer months, Tavern on Rush offers a great outdoor café which is great place to get a real feel for Rush Street" (<http://www.tavernonrush.com/>). This restaurant is an example of the fine dining located at the Gold Coast.

Kipp Blackburn, a real estate agent specializing in Lincoln Park and its nearby neighborhoods in the downtown Chicago area, captures the promotional character of Chicago's Gold Coast when he states that the "proximity to Chicago's best shopping, restaurants, and beaches means you'll pay a premium to claim a piece of the glory for yourself" (Blackburn, 2006). Like the gated communities located on the Gold Coast in Florida, one must pay high prices to be able to experience the luxury and exclusiveness these places have to offer.

#### *New York's Gold Coast*

Heading east, another Gold Coast can be found located in Long Island, New York. There are 49 Gold Coast named businesses in New York, the majority of which are on or near Long Island. The Gold Coast of Long Island is located along the northern coastline in Nassau

County and parts of western Suffolk County. This region is among the most affluent of Long Island and the New York metropolitan area. Just like Chicago's Gold Coast, the Long Island Gold Coast resulted from wealthy residents moving into the area. Widespread development began during the late 19<sup>th</sup> century with the establishment of private estates of "old money" families, such as the Vanderbilts, Roosevelts, Whitneys, J.P. Morgan and F.W. Woolworth. During this time hundreds of mansions were constructed. Many of these estates imported fixtures, materials, and art pieces from around the world, which symbolized the wealth they had accrued.

Most of these estates proved to be too stately to care for efficiently and were subsequently replaced with smaller homes. However, some of the more predominant estates still exist today. Although most are no longer used as private homes, several keep beautiful, substantial-sized gardens available for public tours. These include Castle Gould, the Oheka Castle, Philips Mansion, and the Vanderbilt Estate. The Oheka Castle (Figure 29) was and still remains the second largest private residence ever built in the United States, only behind the Biltmore Estate in Asheville, North Carolina. Oheka was originally built by Otto Kahn, a financier and philanthropist, between 1914 and 1919 to be used as his family's summer home and retreat. The 109,000 square foot mansion was comprised of 127 rooms. The estate grounds covered 443 acres and included a golf course, tennis courts, and an indoor swimming pool, one of the largest greenhouse complexes in the United States, a landing strip, orchards, and stables. ("Oheka History," 2009).

Five years after Kahn's death in 1934, his family sold the estate. Once it was sold, the estate served several different purposes over the years. During those years, other parts of the original estate were sold off as well and still remain intact today. Gary Melius, a Long Island developer, purchased the dilapidated estate and the remaining 23 acres in 1984. Melius



Figure 29: Oheka Castle and Hotel as it looks today in the present.  
("Estate & Gardens", 2009)

renovated the castle into a small luxury hotel, with 32 appointed guest rooms and suites. The Oheka Castle Hotel and Estate is part of the Small Luxury Hotels of the World brand and is one of the premiere venues in the country for exquisite weddings and has been featured in several different wedding television productions. The hotel and grounds are used for corporate events, gala celebrations, and available for tours of both the mansion and formal gardens. It has also been the backdrop to music, television, film and photo productions, including its first film, *Citizen Kane* (1941) and most recent *What Happens in Vegas* (2008). (“Film, TV & Still,” 2009).

These old mansions from the past are still a big tourist draw for the area. For example, the National Trust for Historic Preservation offers a travel tour called “Long Island’s Historic Gold Coast” (Figure 30). Participants stay for the entirety of the tour at the Oheka Castle and are treated to a gala welcome dinner on the first night. This five day tour also provides guests exclusive visits to several different homes on the Gold Coast including the “Guggenheim homes of Sands Point; Theodore Roosevelt’s Summer White House; Raynham Hall—dating back to the Revolution; 16th century Joseph Lloyd Manor; Greek-Revival Onderdonk House; and Coe estate’s Planting Fields Arboretum” (“Long Island’s,” 2009). This is an example of how visitors are able to experience the wealth the area is known for and how this affluence is marketed to the public and associated with the Gold Coast place brand.

In summary, the separate Gold Coasts located throughout the United States associate themselves with wealth, exclusiveness, and the finer things in life. These areas include aspects that are examples of what money can buy in this country, whether it’s property in a gated community, exclusive country club membership, designer clothing or cars, or seclusion (Wyckoff 2010). The Gold Coast brand also supports other complementary place brands.



Figure 30: “Long Island’s Historic Gold Coast” tour offered by the National Trust for Historic Preservation (“Long Island’s,” 2009).



## **The Third Coast**

The next coastal brand examined is the Third Coast. Third Coast is different from the other coastal brands because there is often debate about where this coast is located. There are three different areas in the nation that are associated with the moniker, Third Coast: the Great Lakes area, the Gulf Coast (especially Texas), and Nashville, Tennessee (Figure 31). While the term may be used geographically, it is also used in regards to a place's culture, especially in film and music. The term has been used to establish that the Third Coast culture differs from those cultures of the East and West Coasts, representing literally a "third space." This is especially true in Houston, Texas and Nashville, Tennessee, which will be discussed after the Great Lakes region.

Out of the 140 businesses that contain Third Coast in their names, 113 are located in two Gulf Coast states: Texas (104) and Louisiana (9). Twenty-six of the 140 are located in three Great Lake states: Illinois (11), Michigan (14), and Wisconsin (1). There are eight businesses located in Nashville and a scattering of four businesses in other states that are not associated with the nickname.

### *The Great Lakes*

The Great Lakes have been referred to as the Third Coast because they are not considered part of the major coasts in the United States (East and West), but they still have a significant amount of coastline. Barry Popik is an amateur etymologist, who is considered an expert on the origins of terms like the Big Apple, Windy City, and hot dog. On Popik's website he explains that the Great Lakes area was the "third coast" in the 1960s and 1970s. The term Third Coast is mostly prevalent in Illinois, Michigan, and Wisconsin and linked to the cities of Chicago, Milwaukee, Detroit, and Cleveland. As noted in the discussion of the Great Lakes in the

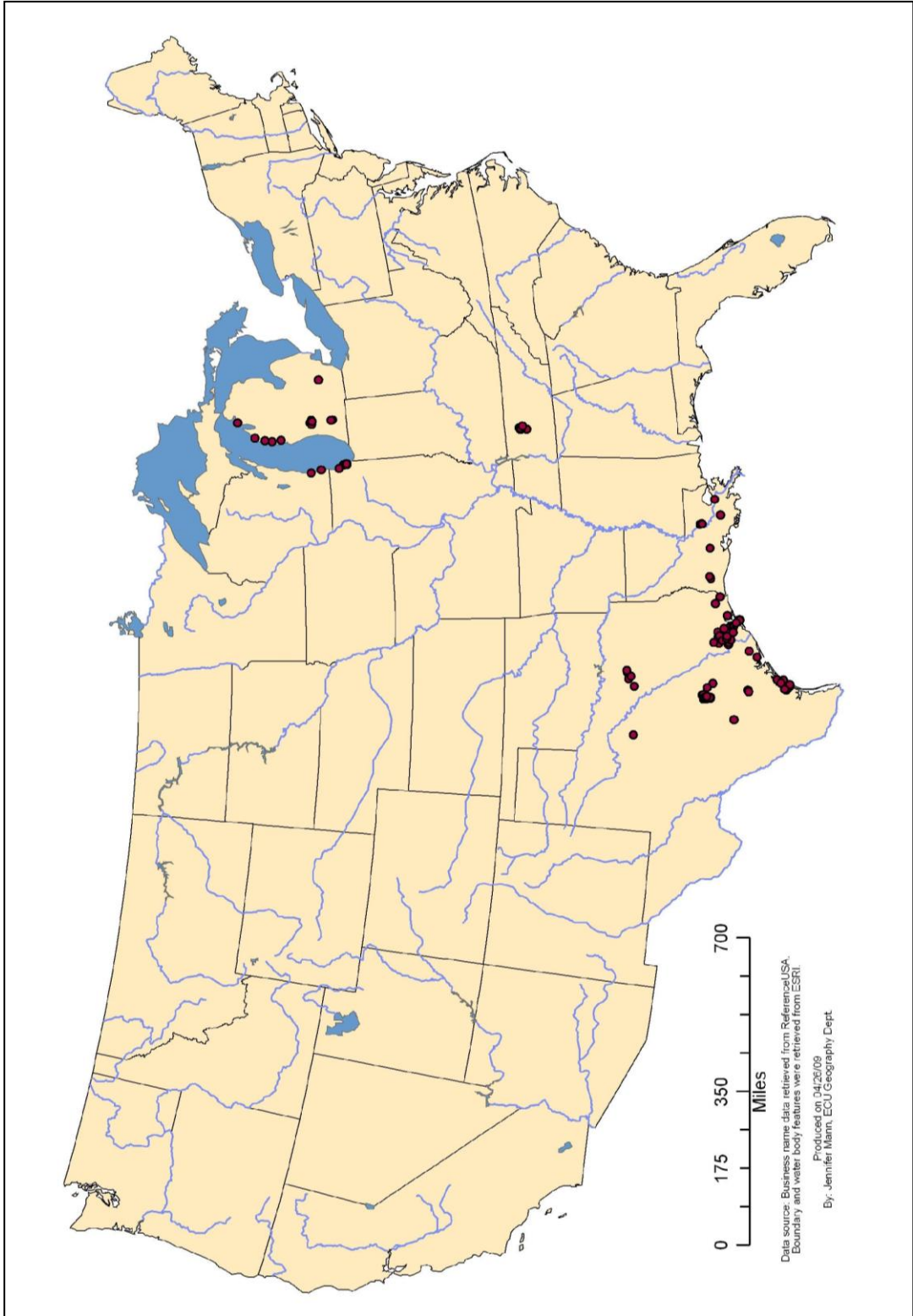


Figure 31: Third Coast named businesses found in the Great Lakes, Gulf Coast (particularly Texas), and Nashville, Tennessee

regional patterns section of chapter five, Cleveland prefers the term “North Coast.”

There are several examples of businesses and other events utilizing the term Third Coast in the Great Lakes region. Bell’s Brewery located in Kalamazoo, Michigan produces beers called Third Coast Beer and Third Coast Old Ale. Both the label and the packaging for Third Coast Beer (Figure 32) include a map of Loscos County in Michigan, which borders Lake Huron. Western Michigan University’s English Department also publishes “Third Coast”, “one of the nation’s premier literary magazines and one of only a handful of nationally distributed literary magazines to regularly include four genres” (“Third Coast,” n.d.).

Chicago is host to the Third Coast International Audio Festival (TCF), which celebrates the best audio stories produced around the world for both radio and internet. It started in 2000 and became its own non-profit arts organization in 2009. The TCF consists of eight different elements through both listening and participation. People can listen through an audio library, weekly radio show, national radio show, and a podcast or participate through public listening events, shortdocs challenge, competition, and a conference (“Third Coast – The Who,” – n.d).

#### *Houston, Texas*

While utilizing an Internet search for information pertaining to the Third Coast I found that the term is also popularly used among the rap scene, especially among artists from Houston, Texas. Third Coast describes artists who are not “East Coast” or “West Coast” rappers, but Houston native, named his debut album in 1999, “Third Coast Born,” which was re-released a year later as “Third Coast Born 2000.” It also contains a song featuring Fat Pat called “Third In the song, “Do U Like What U See”, on the album Ghetto Dreams by Fat Pat, a Houston Native, is the line, "We Third Coast born, that means we Texas raised". Rapper C-Note, also a from southern states. “Third Coast: Outkast, Timbaland, and How Hip-Hop Became a Southern Thing,” by Roni Sarig (2007), tells the story of the South’s entry into the modern rap scene.

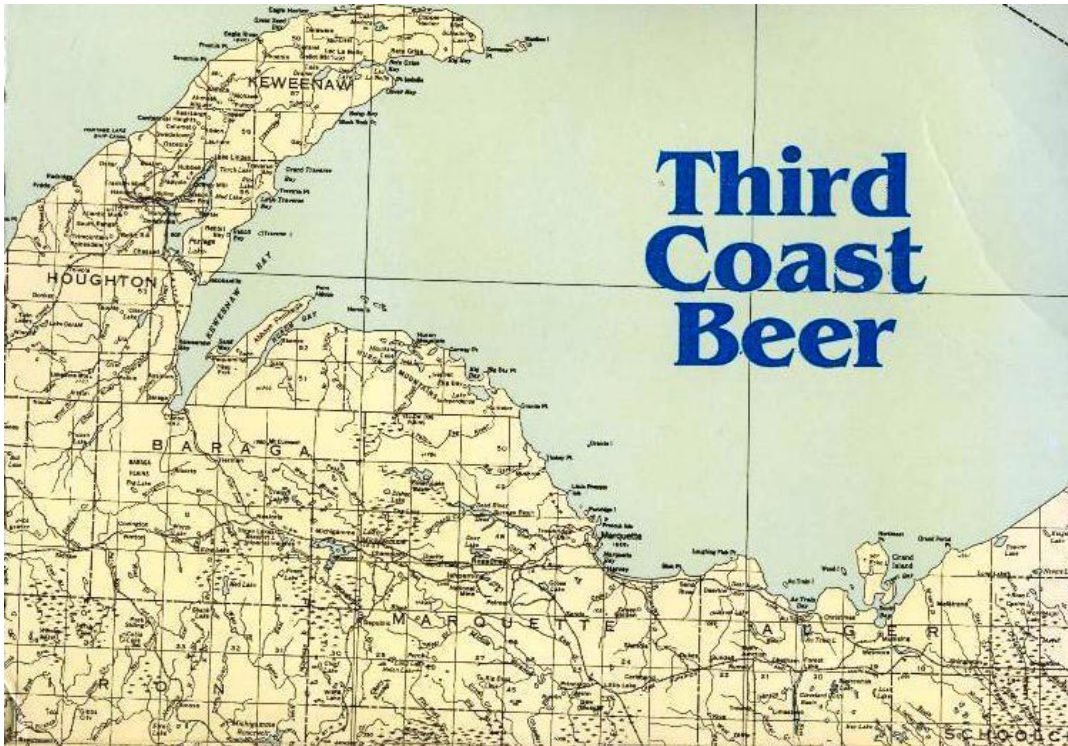


Figure 32: Third Coast Beer packaging.  
(Scanned from actual packaging)

Coast,” although lyrics could not be obtained online. Rapper Z-RO also has a song entitled “3<sup>rd</sup> Coast” and includes the lyrics:

“If you living shife, don't fuck with 3rd Coast  
These niggaz can't fade 3rd Coast, these niggaz can't fade 3rd Coast  
You could lose your life, don't fuck with 3rd Coast  
These niggaz can't fade 3rd Coast, these niggaz can't fade 3rd Coast”  
(Z-RO 2000,Track 7 )

The hook of the song essentially states that if someone is living shife (hardcore) to not mess with those from the “3<sup>rd</sup> Coast” because they could possibly do something to get themselves killed. The term fade has traditionally been slang for murder among the gang culture. If a gang member was killed, it meant one less member, essentially “fading” the color of the gang. Presently the term is used more flexibly to mean “to disgrace” or “to defeat”, which is probably how it is being used in this song. Therefore, Z-Rho is claiming that “hardcore” individuals cannot “disgrace” the 3<sup>rd</sup> Coast and if they do, he infers in the lyrics that there would be consequences, such as losing your life.

Houston is where the majority (43) of the 140 business names containing Third Coast are located. Barry Popik, the amateur etymologist, also explains that the Texas Gulf Coast was being called “America’s third coast” by the late 1970s. “Texas itself was soon being called the “third coast,” and several businesses in the capital city of Austin used the “third coast” name. The term “Third coast” has been used to describe both the Austin music scene (since the 1980s) and the Houston hip-hop scene (since the 1990s)” (Popik 2008).

Austin (1991) supports Popik’s notion that the term “Third Coast” has been used from the late 1970s in Houston, Texas. He states that the term originated in Houston to describe the increase in significant activity in the arts, particularly music, among the states in the Southern U.S. that border the Gulf of Mexico. He also suggests that new music, particularly live-electronic, is flourishing as well in the inland cities of San Antonio, Austin, and the

Dallas/Ft. Worth Metroplex. This is supported by the number of businesses in these cities that use the name Third Coast found in my database

Texas has also increasingly become known as a top venue for film entertainment. Weinstein (2000) discusses the emergence of the “Third Coast” in Texas in relation to film production. “Although Texas certainly has not achieved the stature of Hollywood or New York when it comes to moviemaking, the Lone Star State is becoming a more important venue for filmed entertainment as each year passes” (Weinstein 2000, p.2). This is due to the state offering preferential tax treatment and other incentives for production companies to select Texas as their filming locale. This is also apparent in the Great Lakes region

In 2008, Wisconsin also enacted several incentives in hopes to lure film and television production companies to their state. Some of the incentive package includes: film and television production companies to receive a 25 percent investment tax credit to be used on productions based in Wisconsin, as well as, credits for sales and use tax exceptions for machinery, equipment, wardrobes, clothing and visual effects (“Wisconsin Film,” 2010).

In addition to a production incentive package, according to “The Hollywood Reporter,” an American trade paper that covers the entertainment industry, Wisconsin is “taking its push to attract films to the next level by offering a guarantee that any movie shot in Wisconsin will receive theatrical exhibition. Wisconsin-based Marcus Theatres has made an arrangement with Film Wisconsin, the state's film office, to offer its almost 600 screens in six Midwestern states to filmmakers as a way to help build a film economy in the state” (Kit 2008).

Not only does film production bring money and jobs to local economies, but there is also evidence of film tourism after a production has been released to the public. Many people travel to locations where movies were filmed, which is one type of the growing form of film tourism. The other two types of film tourism are locations represented in the film (setting for the plot, but

not actually shot there) and simulated locations/attractions for movie tourists (i.e. Disney/MGM parks).

Riley et al. (1992, p. 270) examined movies as tourism promotion and describe the link between films and tourism:

Essentially, movies become “pull” factors (attraction) situated in “push” locations (tourism generating areas). The attractions of a destination are transferred to the locations of potential tourists as opposed to being firmly and immovably ensconced. “Pull” factors can be the classic tourist attractions of sun, sea and sand, or of cultural, social and activity based origins. “Push” factors are predispositions to travel implying physiological or psychological motivations. Consumers exposed to the constant bombarding of advertising become immune to it. When viewing movies, consumers are able to experience attractions vicariously without leaving the security of home and without the “hard sell” impressions inherent in paid advertising. Movies which create major interest are likely to reach wider audiences with less investment than specifically targeted tourism advertisements and promotion.

Although film tourism may be seen as a plus for many such as providing both an increase in revenue and potential job numbers, there are also some other aspects that must be taken into consideration. These include figuring out the extent of how sustainable film tourism will be, whether it may become a source of social tension between the local community and visitors, and how it may change the local landscape through reconstruction or physical damage from the tourist. An example of one of these issues occurring was in Savannah, Georgia. After “Midnight in the Garden of Good and Evil” was filmed there, tourists physically damaged Bonaventure cemetery while looking for the famous “bird girl” statue. In response, the city had to remove the statue and place it in a museum.

### *Nashville, Tennessee*

Although Nashville does not have a coastline, the nickname Third Coast alludes to the city’s cultural significance, especially as an important hub in the music industry. This is apparent when examining the types of the eight businesses in the database that are located in

Nashville. For example, the coastal brand is used by a commercial artist agency, entertainment bureau, marketing consultant, and talent agency/casting service.

Third Coast Artist Agency is a Christian music agency located in the Hillsboro-West End Neighborhood of Nashville that manages a combination of the most popular Christian music acts, such as MercyMe and Jeremy Camp, as well as, up and coming artists. As of late April 2009, TCAA was acquired by Paradigm and runs as a subsidiary of Lucy Stille & Associates, Inc. Third Coast Talent, LLC is another example of a talent agency in Nashville. Their tagline is “Your Classic Country Connection”. It is run by twin sisters, Carrie Moore-Reid and Debbie Moore, who made up the international country music duo, “Moore & Moore.” Carrie started the company in 1996 with Debbie joining her as the entertainment coordinator in 2002. According to its website, the company currently has “exclusive representation” of country legends: Bill Anderson, Jeannie Seely, Little Jimmy Dickens, Gene Watson, T.G. Sheppard, George "Goober" Lindsey, and the Country's Family Reunion Roadshow (“About Third Coast,” 2008).

In summary, the Third Coast is a vernacular region found in three different parts of the United States and developed after the term was used as a way to designation the varying forms of a place’s culture that differed from those found on the East and West Coasts. This is especially true when it comes to film and music in these areas. It was also found to be a form of personal identity, especially for rap artists in Houston, and reflects the way in which the same common regional identifier can have different meanings to different groups and places. This fact reinforces the observation that place naming study must move beyond simply mapping name patterns to include a qualitative analysis of how these names are branded and employed culturally in daily activities.



## CHAPTER 6: SUMMARY AND CONCLUDING REMARKS

In summary, the study of vernacular regions reached its peak in the mid-1970s and mid-1980s, with several key studies from Reed (1976), Zelinsky (1980) and Shortridge (1985). Vernacular region studies have commonly utilized one of two different approaches: surveys/questionnaires or analysis of name frequency, especially for businesses. Few of these previous studies have taken advantage of the advancement in technology with electronic databases and mapping software.

Another aspect that many of these past studies lack is a qualitative analysis of vernacular regional identity. Previous works have simply just delineated the regions, but have not thoroughly analyzed the meaning and imagery behind the business names that they have collected. This is where the work of Blake (2002), Mayfield and Morgan (2005), and Rice and Urban (2006) became quite useful. Not only do they examine how the physical environment can become a vernacular cultural region, but they also look at how the physical environment becomes reflected in and through a place's identity. Lastly and most importantly, none of these qualitative vernacular region studies have focused on the popular physical area of the coast.

The major significance of this research is to illustrate that vernacular regions remain analytically interesting and place naming can still provide insight into major cultural patterns. This research addressed two distinctive avenues of analysis. The first was a quantitative mapping of a physical environment, like the Coast, as a vernacular region. Several maps were produced to visualize coast(al) named businesses. The second was more of a qualitative analysis of place naming and branding. Analysis has been completed to examine how the physical environment is incorporated into people's representation of a sense of place, both their personal attachment to place and the larger marketable identity of place.

Instead of searching through telephone directories by hand as Zelinsky and previous researchers have done, the electronic business directory *ReferenceUSA* was used to collect business name data. Using technology like this allows for business data to be collected using one central database, as well as, reducing time spent on collection. This technology also allows for the inclusion of areas in the nation outside of metropolitan areas, which were typically the unit of study for previous studies, like small towns and more rural areas. However, it was found that only 3.33 percent (or 751) of the businesses with coast(al) in their name are located outside of a Metropolitan area. This number makes sense though because there are fewer businesses in places that are sparsely populated than there would be in high-density areas.

The methods Zelinsky (1980) used in his seminal study were also used in this research. The reasoning behind the rules he used was to make sure he determined the number of truly local names. Since vernacular regions are popular regions determined by the public, it is only logical to gather data that would reflect the perceptions of the local population. In order to remain consistent with Zelinsky, entries that were names of government agencies, personal surnames, branch or local offices of businesses that had multiple locations (unless the main office could be identified), or names that referred to local streets, neighborhoods, landmarks, or state/local political jurisdictions were not included and removed from the database. After collecting the data, it was cleaned then utilized in the first avenue of analysis – the quantitative mapping the coast as a vernacular region and description of how the practice varied by U.S. sub-region population, MSA and non-MSA, and distance from coastline.

Not only does technology allow for the widespread availability of certain electronic/digital data sources, such as *ReferenceUSA*, but it also provides for the use of GIS and mapping software. ESRI's *ArcMap* is a powerful geo-visualization and spatial analysis tool. The ArcToolbox and additional extensions were utilized, allowing for various spatial analyses to be

done within the same software package. Several different shapefiles needed to create the maps were obtained through various sources (ESRI, NOAA) then the business data was imported into *ArcMap*. Six different maps were produced: point location (dot density) for both the nation and North Carolina, kernel density also for the nation and North Carolina, a cartogram, and a point map of the locations that contain coast(al) in their name located in states without a coast.

As expected with the point location map, the majority of the points were concentrated along the coastal areas of the United States with a few other clusters of businesses located in areas like Washington D.C., in Richmond, VA, and Atlanta, GA. Before completing this research my definition of the coast consisted of the land that touched the Atlantic and Pacific Oceans and the Gulf of Mexico. One of the most important conclusions from this research is that determining where the coast is located, where people would put that dividing line, actually depends on who is being asked. This is especially apparent in the state of North Carolina. There are several different processes at work in these areas, such as people who relocate from the coast to inland areas. The coast has historically been a major draw within the tourism industry and businesses may utilize the name and imagery as a way to draw in business. There are also businesses that relate to the water and associate with the coastal name. It was also determined that many people in the United States consider areas near lakes and rivers also as “coastal.”

The point location map of North Carolina was made for two reasons. One - it's the state I currently reside in, and two – it exhibited an interesting pattern that was not found in other states. This pattern was unique because although there is a high concentration of businesses located on the coast, there are also a significant number of businesses spread inland as well, departing from the more restrictive definitions of coasts used by government agencies like CAMA.

The state is divided into three different physical geographic regions: coastal plain, piedmont, and mountains. This map also looked at the CAMA counties in the state and found that more than half (58%) of the coast(al) named businesses in the state are located in these counties. The CAMA counties are not the only ones in the coastal plain. However, the boundary between the coastal plain and piedmont often varies depending on who is asked, as Lewis (2009) also found when explaining definitions of the coast among scientists and policy makers in the state. My thesis provides a needed counterpoint to Lewis' analysis since it examines, in a more comprehensive way, how the general public identifies themselves in relation to the coast and their attachment to the region.

This idea could be supported by the fact that 69 percent of North Carolina businesses with coast(al) in their names are located within 0 to 15 miles from the shoreline, as compared to the 85 percent of businesses for the entire nation. Logically the number of coast(al) named businesses should decrease the farther one moves away from the coastline. However with North Carolina, instead of the number of coastal businesses steadily decreasing as distance from the coastline increases, the number of businesses actually increases again when one approaches 121 to 215 miles from the shoreline. The kernel density maps further support what was revealed on the point location maps of both the nation and North Carolina. The kernel density map of North Carolina reveals that the higher densities of coastal businesses are located across the entire coastal plain, which makes up a large portion of the eastern part of the state. The cartogram is a more creative way of visualizing the data and also supports what the other maps have revealed.

An important question arising through the mapping of coastal businesses was the occurrence of these named enterprises in states that do not have a coastline. These businesses were identified and several were contacted through email, telephone call, or internet searching. There was a number of reasons determined for what these businesses contained coast(al) in their

name. The main reasons for finding a coastal business in a non-coastal state include a business relocating from a coastal location and keeping its name, the owner of the business in question being originally from East or West Coast and reflecting this connection in the name, a business has a direct connection with the coast, or a business that wants to create an image or atmosphere associated with the coast. This shows that even though these business names may seem out of place, the owner wants to be associated with the coast and the imagery that comes to mind. However, the coast can elicit different images for different people, which is another important conclusion derived from the completion of this research. This became especially apparent in the second part of analysis completed.

Before completing this research, I personally associated the coast with family, fun, and relaxation. I have always seen it as a place to getaway. However, someone who has lived at the beach all their life or earn their living on the coast may not relate the same ideas that I associate with the coast. While browsing through the coast(al) business name database, I noticed that there were numerous names that had an adjective in front of the word coast, like Treasure Coast. Many of these names are creations of state or tourism agencies as a way to brand their localities and promote them for marketing purposes. Tourism agencies, like all place promoters, are looking for ways to make their locations stand out from the rest, to create a unique sense of place.

A unique name will help a coastal area stand out from the rest of the locations found in the United States. This thesis examined three of these different coast brands: Crystal Coast, Gold Coast, and the Third Coast. Each one of these coasts is associated with different imagery and place meanings even though they all involve the coast. The Crystal Coast associates itself with recreation, nature, and family fun, the Gold Coast with wealth and exclusivity, and Third Coast with a different kind of culture than that found on the East or West Coast.

The name Crystal Coast was a creation of the Carteret County Chamber of Commerce in the late 1980's and the Carteret County Tourism Development Authority picked up on the name in 1990. The word "Crystal" supposedly comes from the area's beautiful crystal clear sparkling waters. The Carteret County Tourism Development Authority's website banner included images of children playing on beach, a scuba diver exploring ship wreckage, wild horses, the Cape Lookout Lighthouse, charter fishing boats, Fort Macon, and a couple walking on the beach.

The website touts four main types of experiences available at the Crystal Coast. These include Beaches & Vacations, Outdoor Adventure, History and Tours, and Eco-Exploration. Another aspect explored with the Crystal Coast is how the physical environment is incorporated in a places' identity. To do this, place images in several of the towns seals were analyzed like Blake (2002) did with the Colorado Fourteeners. For the most part, physical and natural features of the coast (water, sand, seabirds, etc.) were incorporated into the seal designs.

The Gold Coast differs from the Crystal Coast because not only is it found in several different states, but it also is associated with wealth and affluence. Florida is different from the other states with Gold Coast because not only is it it associate with wealth, but gained its name from the gold coins that occasionally wash up along the coast due to shipwrecks. The Gold Coasts of Chicago and Long Island have undergone an air of wealth and power since the late nineteenth/early twentieth centuries, whereas the wealth in Florida has been more recently accrued and developed. The Gold Coasts of Florida, Chicago, and Long Island have aspects that are associated with exclusiveness, through its real estate (gated communities, waterfront property, mansions), trendy high-designer shopping (Chanel, Gucci, Hermès, Prada, Lamborghini, Ferrari), and fine dining establishments.

The Third Coast is different from the Crystal and Gold Coasts because there is debate over where this coast is actually located. There are three different areas in the nation that

associate with the moniker, Third Coast: the Great Lakes area, the Gulf Coast (especially Houston, Texas), and Nashville, Tennessee. While the term may be used geographically, it is also used in to refer to a place's culture, especially its connection with film and music. The term has been used to establish that the culture differs from those of the East and West Coasts, a third and alternative perception. The Great Lakes area was the "third coast" in the 1960s and 1970s. The Texas Gulf Coast was being called "America's third coast" by the late 1970s to describe the increase in significant activity in the arts among the states in the Southern U.S. that border the Gulf of Mexico. Nashville has also acquired the nickname to denote its significance in its music scene from that of the East and West coast. All three places have utilized the moniker when it comes to the culture – whether its beer, a literary magazine, or audio festival in the Great Lakes area, rap scene and film tourism in Texas, or entertainment agencies and country music in Nashville.

In conclusion, this research has accomplished several different objectives. It has utilized advanced digital databases and geospatial techniques to analyze a popular, yet largely un-analyzed vernacular region – the coast. It has delineated the coast is in the United States based on the use of business names, demonstrating that place naming can provide insight in the popular cultural identification with the coast rather than simply its physical and social characteristics. It has also illustrated that vernacular regions remain analytically interesting through the examination of place branding and the interpretation of several different coastal brands and their associated imagery. Two major notions have been revealed through this research: determining where the coast is located can differ depending on who is being asked and the coast can evoke different imagery, which can become incorporated into everyday life and become a part of one's identity, among different people.

There are two different avenues this research should go in the future. The first would be an extension of this research and looking at the question: where does the coast as a vernacular region go further? One way to add on to this study would be to look at a finer scale of study, such as the county, census tract, or census block level. This thesis only looked at one variable at the county level of scale. Doing more analysis at this scale or smaller would open up a richer detail analysis in terms of connecting the business name patterns to social and demographic issues. Another way to add to this study would be an expansion of the qualitative analysis. Several past vernacular region studies conducted surveys and questionnaires to collect data. This research used a more quantitative method with collecting business names, however in regards to future research both of these methods could be combined. Some of the more interesting information collected for this thesis came from the coastal business owners in states with no actual coastline. Business addresses were one of the variables downloaded from *ReferenceUSA*. Each business could be mailed a survey asking the same questions the coastal business owners in states with no coastline were asked about the naming of their business. This would provide even more insight into the practice of place naming patterns and regional identity.

The second avenue of future research would be to examine another term like the coast. Using similar methods as the ones in this thesis other place names could be examined. For example, one of Zelinsky's (1980) original terms was American. The analysis of this term as a vernacular region would be especially pertinent in light of the events that occurred on and after 9/11. One of the goals would be to uncover where the "most American" place is located in the United States and an analysis of the nationalism found throughout the country.



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