Sediments and the Sea Floor of the Continental Shelves and Coastal Waters of the United States—About the usSEABED Integrated Sea-Floor-Characterization Database, Built With the dbSEABED Processing System

Open-File Report 2020–1046

U.S. Department of the Interior
U.S. Geological Survey
Cover. Bottom photographs collected on U.S. Geological Survey Woods Hole Coastal and Marine Science Center Field Activity 2007–003–FA. Map image showing the distribution of usSEABED data output files US9_EXT (blue triangles) and US9_PRS (pink circles) around the continental United States, Hawai‘i, and Puerto Rico.
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By Brian J. Buczkowski, Jane A. Reid, and Chris J. Jenkins

Prepared in cooperation with the Institute of Arctic and Alpine Research at the University of Colorado Boulder

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Suggested citation:
Buczkowski, B.J., Reid, J.A., and Jenkins, C.J., 2020, Sediments and the sea floor of the continental shelves and coastal waters of the United States—About the usSEABED integrated sea-floor-characterization database, built with the dbSEABED processing system: U.S. Geological Survey Open-File Report 2020–1046, 14 p., https://doi.org/10.3133/ofr20201046.

Associated data for this publication:
Buczkowski, B.J., Reid, J.A., Schweitzer, P.N., Cross, V.A., and Jenkins, C.J., 2020, usSEABED—Offshore surficial-sediment database for samples collected within the United States Exclusive Economic Zone: U.S. Geological Survey data release, https://doi.org/10.5066/P9H3LGWM.
Acknowledgments

The usSEABED project has benefitted from the efforts of many individuals and institutions contributing data to the usSEABED database; careful interns entering, coding, and testing data; and reviewers’ quality-control testing the database in its various incarnations. We thank the following U.S. Geological Survey interns for their assistance in entry, coding, and testing of data and assistance with metadata: Carolynn Box, Emily Denham, Amalia Slovacek Hansen, Monica Iglecia, Adam Jackson, K. Halimeda Kilbourne, Tara Kneeshaw, Jennifer Mendonça, Emma Mitchell, Ariadne Prior-Grosch, Shea Quinn, April Villagomez, Viness Ubert, Hannah Waiters, and Paul Waiters. We thank Mark Zimmermann of the Alaska Science Center, of the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) National Marine Fisheries, for his early and continuing support of usSEABED along the Pacific coast and in the Gulf of Alaska.

The collaborators of usSEABED thank the following for their contributions of data: Humboldt State University; Louisiana Department of Natural Resources; Maryland Geological Survey; Moss Landing (California) Port Authority; New Jersey Geological Survey; NOAA National Centers for Environmental Information; NOAA National Marine Fisheries Service; NOAA National Marine Sanctuaries Program; NOAA National Ocean Survey; NOAA National Status and Trends Program; North Carolina Department of Transportation; Oregon State University; San Jose State University; Santa Cruz Harbor (California) Authority; Scripps Institute of Oceanography; Skidaway Institute of Oceanography; Smithsonian Institution; Southern California Coastal Water Research Project; State University of New York at Stony Brook; U.S. Army Corps of Engineers; U.S. Coastal and Geodetic Surveys; U.S. Environmental Protection Agency; U.S. Naval Oceanographic Office; U.S. Naval Postgraduate School; U.S. Naval Research Lab; U.S. Office of Naval Research; University of California, Berkeley; University of Colorado Boulder; University of New Orleans; University of Southern California; University of Southern Florida; University of Texas; University of Washington (Seattle); Virginia Institute of Marine Sciences (College of William and Mary); Woods Hole Oceanographic Institution; and the contributions from many nonauthor USGS sources.

The processing software at the core of usSEABED, dbSEABED, has benefited from the contributions of many people and institutions. It is a community structure, currently managed from the University of Colorado. Funding is from the Australian Department of Defence, Commonwealth Scientific and Industrial Research Organisation Australia, Geosciences Australia, U.S. Geological Survey, Institute of Arctic and Alpine Research (INSTAAR)/University of Colorado, Institute für Ostseewissenschaften-Warnemünde (IOW, Germany), Lamont Doherty Earth Observatory, NOAA National Geophysical Data Center (Boulder), U.S. Office of Naval Research, and Victoria Department of Natural Resources and the Environment (Australia).

Ideas for development of the dbSEABED software have been contributed in discussions by L. Hamilton and P. Mulhearn (Defence Science and Technology Organization); G. Rawson and A. Short (University of Sydney); P. Sliogeris (Royal Australian Navy Meteorology and Oceanography Services [Australia]); T. Wever (Forschungsanstalt der Bundeswehr für Wasserschall und Geophysik, Germany); J. Harff, B. Bobertz, and B. Bohling (IOW); P. Morin (University of Minnesota); M. Kulp and S. Briuglio (University of New Orleans); J. Goff (University of Texas); G. Sharman and C. Moore (NOAA National Geophysical Data Center); J. Flocks, J. Kindinger, C. Holmes, and C. Polloni (USGS); the URS Corporation; and the
Smithsonian Institution. M. Field and J. Gardner of the USGS first arranged to apply dbSEABED software to the U.S. Exclusive Economic Zone in 1999. Finally, the authors would like to express a special, last-but-certainly-not-least thank you to Jeff Williams, former Marine Aggregates Resources and Processes project chief at the USGS Woods Hole Coastal and Marine Science Center and continued advocate for the usSEABED project. Thank you, Jeff, for your years of dedication to the usSEABED project, for your encouragement, and your advice.
Contents

Acknowledgments........................................................................................................................................iii
Abstract........................................................................................................................................................1
Introduction...................................................................................................................................................1
  Applications.............................................................................................................................................1
The Data in usSEABED................................................................................................................................2
  How usSEABED is Built............................................................................................................................2
  Sources of Data.........................................................................................................................................2
  Output Files.............................................................................................................................................2
    Relational Keys....................................................................................................................................4
    Source Data (US9_SRC) ........................................................................................................................4
    Textural and Other Basic Information (US9_EXT, US9_PRS, US9_CLC, and US9_ONE) ......................4
      Extracted Data.....................................................................................................................................5
      Parsed Data.........................................................................................................................................5
      Calculated Data..................................................................................................................................5
      Combined Data....................................................................................................................................5
  Component/Feature and Facies Data (US9_CMP and US9_FAC).............................................................6
  Relationship Between Parsed and Component Data ..............................................................................6
Quality Control........................................................................................................................................13
Uncertainties in the Data..........................................................................................................................13
Accessing the usSEABED Database........................................................................................................13
References Cited........................................................................................................................................13

Tables

1. Key to data themes in usSEABED output files and examples of the types of data that may be included in the themes..........................................................................................3
2. usSEABED output files..........................................................................................................................4
3. Field parameters, format, units, range, meaning, and comments for extracted, parsed, and calculated data in the US9_ONE (extending to US9_EXT, US9_PRS, and US9_CLC) file ...............................................................................................7
4. Components and features processed for the usSEABED database....................................................10
5. Field parameters for the US9_FAC file, featuring facies data and their component makeup............12
6. Biological components that may have textural implications.............................................................12
## Abbreviations

| Abbreviation | Description                               |
|--------------|-------------------------------------------|
| CLC          | calculated [data]                         |
|CMP          | component [data]                          |
|EXT          | extracted [data]                          |
|FAC          | facies [data]                             |
|GIS          | geographic information system             |
|IOW          | Institute für Ostseewissenschaften-Warnemünde |
|NOAA         | National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration |
|PRS          | parsed [data]                             |
|SRC          | source [data]                             |
|USGS         | U.S. Geological Survey                     |
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Abstract

Since the second half of the 20th century, there has been an increase in scientific interest, research effort, and information gathered on the geologic sedimentary character of the continental margins of the United States. Data and information from thousands of sources have increased our scientific understanding of the character of the margin surface, but rarely have those data been combined and integrated. Initially, the U.S. Geological Survey (USGS), in cooperation with the Institute of Arctic and Alpine Research at the University of Colorado Boulder, created the usSEABED database to provide surficial sea-floor-characterization data for USGS assessments of marine-based aggregates and for studies of sea-floor habitat. Since then, the USGS has continued to build up the database as a nationwide resource for many uses and applications.

Previously published data derived from the usSEABED database have been released as three USGS data series publications containing data covering the U.S. Atlantic margin, the Gulf of Mexico and Caribbean regions, and the Pacific coast. An updated USGS data release unifies the three publications, incorporates additional data and sources including data from Alaska, Hawaii, and U.S. overseas territories, and provides revised output files that fix known errors and add known or inferred sampling dates. This report accompanies the data release and contains information on the methodology and products of the usSEABED database.

Introduction

The usSEABED integrated database created by the U.S. Geological Survey (USGS), in cooperation with the Institute of Arctic and Alpine Research at the University of Colorado Boulder, offers data on surficial sediment and other characteristics of the U.S. continental shelves, coastal and large inland waterways, and other areas of the U.S. Exclusive Economic Zone. The associated USGS data release (Buczkowski and others, 2020) provides online access to usSEABED data and offers an expanded dataset that both includes updated data originally in prior publications (Reid and others, 2005; Buczkowski and others, 2006; Reid and others, 2006) and additional data from dozens of new sources.

usSEABED is a digital, numerical, and georeferenced database that integrates measurements and observations of the surficial sea floor, including textural, statistical, geochemical, geophysical, and compositional information of the sediment cover, across multiple original sea-floor datasets. The database is generated by using the most recently available version of the dbSEABED data mining and processing software, which extends the coverage of information in areas where data coverage is more descriptive than quantitative (Jenkins, 1997, 2002). This accompanying report describes the structure of the usSEABED integrated database and explains how it is built, how the data should be interpreted, and how they are best used.

Applications

The usSEABED database is a large compilation (more than 1 million points, nationwide) and contains complex assortments of data and geologic information on the surficial character of the sea floor. Although the database was initially developed for use in studies of offshore sedimentary character for assessing marine aggregates and characterizing benthic habitats, it has potential for broader application by the marine science community and other users. Users are encouraged to generate their own queries and extract information to meet specific needs. Some possible applications where data and maps from the usSEABED database are useful include the following:

• Observation and monitoring research
• Management and planning of coastal zones
The Data in usSEABED

The usSEABED database is based on published and unpublished laboratory measurements and descriptive observations that have been processed and extended by using the dbSEABED processing software (for detailed information on dbSEABED software, please refer to the information provided in Reid and others, 2005; Buczkowski and others, 2006; and Reid and others, 2006). The usSEABED database includes not only standard forms of numerical data but also a vast store of data about the sea floor derived from word-based descriptions that can be rich in information but, in their original form, are difficult to quantify, map, plot, or use in comparative analyses or models. The database provides numerical values for typical seabed characteristics that are based on these descriptive data. The usSEABED database differs from other marine databases in that it not only incorporates a variety of information about sea-floor sediment texture but also includes information on composition, color, biota, and rocks, as well as sea-floor characteristics such as hardness, acoustic properties, and geochemical and geotechnical analyses where available.

Although the dbSEABED software makes data coverage more comprehensive for mapping and analysis, the inclusion of sites geospatially located by now outmoded navigational techniques and sampled with a variety of sampler types adds locational uncertainty for some sites. Furthermore, the process of unifying the data into common units, combining data with different lab protocols, and creating numerical data from imprecise word-based descriptions means that absolute data precision is unavailable. Users of usSEABED data are encouraged to use the data on small scales (that is, over large areas) and make their own assessments of data reliability.

These reliability assessments can be made by reading this entire document, as well as detailed information on “dbSEABED (processing)” included in each of Reid and others (2005), Buczkowski and others (2006), and Reid and others (2006), before downloading the data files from the data release (Buczkowski and others, 2020). Source citation information is available on the usSEABED project website and includes information about individual sources’ methods and procedures, estimates of accuracy, dates of collection, and other pertinent information.

The database can be queried online and the downloaded output files are provided as comma-delimited text files for ease of use. These files are ready for inclusion into many different geographic information system (GIS), relational database, and other software applications.

How usSEABED is Built

The usSEABED database is generated by using the dbSEABED processing software created at the University of Sydney (Australia) and the University of Colorado. It has companion databases built along similar lines, including the Australian auSEABED, Baltic Sea balticSEABED, and a global database, goSEABED. Each of these databases relies on preexisting data from a variety of sources to mine and extrapolate useful information about the seabed.

The dbSEABED software allows these source datasets to be compiled in a standardized format and integrates information across a series of data themes (Table 1). Each data theme holds multiple fields of numerical and (or) word-based information. Original data are from samples collected with physical equipment (grabs, cores, or probes), are from observations that are remotely sensed (such as descriptions from photographs and videos), or are gathered through geophysical methods. Source data may be numerical lab- or instrument-based textural, acoustic, geochemical, or geophysical data; verbal (linguistic) descriptions of grabs, cores, or photographs; or a combination of any of these.

In building the usSEABED database, many data sources are processed by dbSEABED software to determine associated data beyond what is provided in the source document, such as statistical parameters from a series of grain-size analyses. The additional information increases the spatial and thematic completeness of the database. Even with the extra fields produced through the dbSEABED processing, few source reports contain all data types reportable in the usSEABED database; null values are given in those fields without data.

Sources of Data

usSEABED relies on previously collected data, both published and unpublished, from Federal, State, regional, and local agencies and consortiums, as well as research institutions. For the offshore areas within the U.S. Exclusive Economic Zone, many of the data are from the USGS, including published and unpublished data from the 1960s to the present.
Table 1. Key to data themes in usSEABED output files and examples of the types of data that may be included in the themes.

| Acronym | Meaning and examples |
|---------|----------------------|
| ACU     | Acoustic properties (measured P- and S-wave velocities; acoustically derived density, porosity, and void ratio data) |
| AGE     | Sample ages (carbon-14 age dates, upper and lower age confidence limits, sedimentation rates) |
| BIO     | Biota descriptions (size, type, abundance, and form of biota, including infauna and epifauna) |
| CLS     | Landform classifications (landform and reef structures; proportions of rocky, sandy, and muddy coasts) |
| CMP     | Sediment composition analyses (weight percent of carbonate and nitrogen, as well as iron, titanium, and aluminum oxides) |
| COL     | Sediment colors (color descriptions, Munsell color codes) |
| DIV     | Diver reports (current, turbidity, wave period and height, seabed description) |
| DYN     | Experimental hydrodynamic analyses (settling velocities; experimental bedload grain sizes; statistical data, including mean and standard deviation grain sizes, and graphical skewness and kurtosis) |
| ENV     | Environmental observations (pH, reduction potential, carbon to nitrogen ratios) |
| GCM     | Geochemistry analyses (constituent chemical components and their abundances) |
| GRZ     | Grain-size analyses (coarse and fine grain-size limits, abundances of coarse and fine fractions) |
| GTC     | Geotechnical properties (penetrometer strength, thermal conductivity, plasticity, shear strength) |
| IMG     | Imagery interpretations (type of image, number of photos, height above sea floor) |
| ISO     | Isotopic analyses (18O, 13C, 15C, and 210Pb ratios) |
| LTH     | Lithologic descriptions (lithologic descriptions, including compaction, texture, layering, structure, sorting, and alteration); may include Folk codes (Folk, 1954) |
| MSL     | Analyses from multisensor core loggers (P-wave amplitudes and velocities, gamma ray densities, acoustic impedance, and fractional porosities) |
| OCE     | Oceanographic data (temperatures, salinities, pHs, currents, dissolved oxygen levels) |
| PAL     | Paleontological observations (descriptions of fossil components, preservation, and mode of occurrence) |
| PET     | Grain petrographic analyses (grain types, shapes, sorting, character) |
| PRB     | Field data from electronic probes (penetrometer bearing strengths and ranges) |
| SDT     | Sediment thickness data (unit thicknesses, top and basal horizon descriptions) |
| SFT     | Sea-floor type descriptions (descriptions of the sea floor, including wavelength, height, and slope of the seabed) |
| TRB     | Turbidity observations (Secchi disk observations, suspended sediment concentrations, transmissivity) |
| TXG     | Graphical texture statistics (grain-size percentiles, Inman (1952), Folk and Ward (1957) grain-size statistics, including mean and median grain sizes, skewness, and standard deviation) |
| TXN     | Taxonomic observations (taxonomic names) |
| TXR     | Texture statistics (grain-size data, including gravel, sand, silt, clay, and mud weight percent; grain-size statistical data, including mean and median grain sizes, skewness, and kurtosis) |
| XRD     | X-ray diffraction analyses (mineral names and calculated abundances, peak counts and spacings) |

Data gathered by the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) National Ocean Service during its many sounding surveys in the 1800s to 2000s are included, as archived by the Smithsonian Institution and as provided by the National Geophysical Data Center. Theses and dissertations from many universities, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers reports, local and regional coastal management agencies, state geological surveys, and U.S. Navy reports are also included. Large data compilations also contribute to the database, including the joint USGS–NOAA Gulf of Alaska National Ocean Service digitization project (Golden and others, 2016) and the U.S. Geological Survey East-Coast Sediment Texture Database (Poppe and others, 2014). A citations list for usSEABED sources contributing to the data release is in the usSEABED source file, US9_SRC.

Efforts have been made to reduce data duplications within usSEABED that may result if data from the same field activity or site are published in more than one source report or data compilation. For example, the National Geophysical Data Center's Seafloor Surficial Sediments (Deck 41) compilation contains information from several sources. If data from original and more complete sources are included in the usSEABED database, data for those same sites are not imported into the usSEABED database from the National Geophysical Data Center’s Deck 41 dataset. (See the section “dbSEABED (processing)” included in Reid and others, 2005; Buczkowski...
and others, 2006; and Reid and others, 2006, for information on how data are incorporated by the dbSEABED software.) In other instances, data from multiple sources for a given site are included in the usSEABED database if additional data fields are included as a result. For example, one source may report only grain size for a particular site, but another source may include geophysical properties for the same site.

Output Files

The USGS data release for the usSEABED database (Buczkowski and others, 2020) enables search and download of six interlinked files of output data and a seventh file that provides linked information about the original data sources (table 2).

These files can be downloaded in their entirety and are also searchable through an online interface that allows for search and selection either through a GIS display or through a web form. Both options query and export selected portions of the usSEABED database.

Relational Keys

Values in the usSEABED data file types are linked relationally by three relational keys: DataSetKey (for source datasets), LocnKey (for individual sites), and the ObsvnKey (for individual analyses). The DataSetKey field gives the relationship of the data to the original source using the information provided in the US9_SRC file. When files are loaded into a relational database or GIS, the keys-in-common can be used to construct relationships between the tables, thereby joining the data across files.

Source Data (US9_SRC)

Information about the original data is in the source (US9_SRC) file. Each value in the output data files discussed below is linked to the corresponding item in the US9_SRC file by the DataSetKey field. Information on data sources is also provided with the online data portal in a more traditional bibliographic format.

Textural and Other Basic Information (US9_EXT, US9_PRS, US9_CLC, and US9_ONE)

Textural, statistical, geochemical, geophysical, dominant component, and color data are available in three data files, which represent the three ways the data were obtained. The US9_EXT data file contains data categorized as extracted from lab-based analytical data and generally represents statistical results as given by the original source. The US9_PRS data file contains so-called parsed data; that is, numerical information determined within the dbSEABED software through processes based on fuzzy-set theory, applied to written descriptions. The US9_CLC data file contains calculated data created through the application of known relationships between analytical values or through the application of empirical relationships (see “Parsing Description: A simplified description of dbSEABED processing” in Reid and others, 2005; Buczkowski and others, 2006; and Reid and others, 2006). In some samples where subsample depths are not provided by the original data source, assumptions are made about sediment-layer thickness within the dbSEABED software, based on the sampler type. Many original datasets include information that fits into more than

| Data file | Contents |
|-----------|----------|
| US9_ONE | Combined information including extracted, parsed, and calculated information about grain size, sediment texture, color, age, and other information about the sea floor derived from quantitative observations and analyses of samples (extracted); information, from written descriptions from cores, grabs, photographs, and videos (parsed); and information from calculations based on empirical relations or known functions performed by dbSEABED software (calculated) |
| US9_EXT | Extracted information about grain size, sediment texture, color, age, and other information about the sea floor derived from quantitative observations and analyses of samples |
| US9_PRS | Parsed information about grain size, sediment texture, color, age, and other information about the sea floor derived from written descriptions from cores, grabs, photographs, and videos |
| US9_CLC | Calculated information about grain size, sediment texture, color, age, and other information about the sea floor derived from calculations based on empirical relations or known functions performed by dbSEABED software |
| US9_FAC | Concatenated information about components (minerals and rock type), genesis (igneous, metamorphic, carbonate, terrigenous), and other appropriate groupings of information about the sea floor parsed from written descriptions of cores, grabs, photographs, and videos |
| US9_CMP | Numerical data about selected components (for example, minerals, rock type, microfossils, and benthic biota) and sea-floor features (for example, bioturbation, structure, and ripples) at a given site; values in the attribute fields are measures of membership in that attribute’s fuzzy set |
| US9_SRC | Information about the original source data incorporated into the usSEABED database |
one of the extracted, parsed, and calculated categories, giving overlapping results for most samples. US9_ONE combines the information from the three data textural files.

Extracted Data

Extracted data are those data from lab-based, numerical analyses. Most data in this file are listed as reported by the source data report; generally, only minor unit changes have been performed. Typical data themes include textural distributions and statistics (TXR: gravel, sand, silt, clay, mud, and various statistics), phi-based grain-size classes (GRZ), chemical compositions (CMP), acoustic measurements (ACU), color (COL), and geotechnical parameters (GTC). Extracted data are based on lab-determined values and are the most reliable data. Limitations, however, exist when there is uncertainty about how much of the sample has been analyzed. For example, the analysis may have been performed only on the matrix, ignoring larger particles such as shells or pebbles.

Parsed Data

Numerical data derived from verbal logs, core or grab sample descriptions, shipboard notes, and photograph descriptions are classified as parsed data. Verbal input data are maintained in the terms employed by the original researchers but are coded by using phonetically derived abbreviations for easier processing by the dbSEABED software. Data in longer descriptions are sometimes divided by theme (table 1). The descriptions often include information on associated biota, sea-floor features, and structure. Typical data themes for the parsed dataset are lithologic descriptions (LTH), biology (BIO), color (COL), and sea-floor type (SFT, descriptions from photos and videos). Data values are calculated by using the dbSEABED software parser, which uses fuzzy-set theory to assign field values based on the form and content of a description. The application of fuzzy-set theory to verbal descriptions allows a sample or observation to belong partially to an attribute in the database, referred to as a “set.” How much an entry in the database is represented by a set is referred to as degree of membership. Fuzzy-set theory suits words because they are often partial carriers of categorical meaning. For example, a sample described as “gravelly mud” is partially gravel and partially mud, with mud being the predominant component (for more details, see “Parsing Description: A simplified description of dbSEABED processing” in Reid and others, 2005; Buczkowski and others, 2006; Reid and others, 2006; and Jenkins, 1997, 2002, and 2003). Similarly parsed verbal information is also used to produce the US9_CMP and US9_FAC data, described in the report section “Component/Feature and Facies Data (US9_CMP and US9_FAC).”

The parsing process was tested and calibrated by comparing the outputs against analytical results for the same samples (see the section “Calibrations” included in each of Reid and others, 2005; Buczkowski and others, 2006; and Reid and others, 2006). The fuzzy-set theory used in the parser produces output data that are degrees of membership in fuzzy sets (Mott and others, 1986). In the example given above, “gravelly mud” applied to fuzzy-set theory would result in degrees of membership assigned for both “Gravel” and “Mud” attributes, where the degree of membership for “Mud” is greater than the degree of membership for “Gravel.” Output data are expected to be somewhat close to, but not fully equivalent to, the percent abundance of a characteristic in the sample or seabed being observed. Calibrations within the dbSEABED software provide assurance that the output degrees of membership reflect absolute abundances to some degree of accuracy.

For a laboratory sample of well-sorted fine sediments, the descriptive results in the parsed file will be less accurate than measured values in the extracted file. For complex, living seabeds, the data in the parsed file can be more representative of the sample and seabed as a whole, as they may include description of objects such as shells, stones, algae, and other objects that are a textural component of the seabed and are often left out of laboratory samples that are analyzed, particularly when a machine analysis is employed.

Calculated Data

For the extracted and parsed data sources, the usSEABED database provides some values that are not reported by the original source but can be calculated directly or estimated by standard derivative equations by using assumptions about the conditions or variables (for detailed information, see the section “Summary of the onCALCULATION Methods used in dbSEABED” included in each of Reid and others, 2005; Buczkowski and others, 2006; and Reid and others, 2006). In the usSEABED database, these values are reported as calculated data. Calculated data are the least reliable of the three data types and should be used with caution.

Combined Data

The US9_ONE file provides a single, concise coverage of the sea floor that combines extracted (EXT), parsed (PRS), and calculated (CLC) data. Analyzing information telescoped in the US9_ONE file can be advantageous over comparing extracted, parsed, and calculated files to each other by enabling the user to see data from all three data files together with their data merged into a single output. However, it is important for users to understand the inherent limitations of the original data files (US9_EXT, US9_PRS, US9_CLC) to choose the value, or combination of values, from this combined data file that are most appropriate for a particular use. Each entry in the US9_ONE file contains a “DataTypes” code (produced by the dbSEABED software) to identify which output file (extracted, parsed, or calculated) provided the data listed in each attribute for the sample or observation. This code consists of 20 characters, which represent the following data attributes, in order: Gravel, Sand, Mud, Clay, Grainsize, Sorting, Facies, FacMshp, FolkCde, RckMshp, VegMshp, Carbonate, MunsColr, OrgCarbn, IShearStr, Porosity, PWaveVel, Roughness, ICritShStr, and GeoAge
Attributes identified with “E” have data derived from extracted data, attributes identified with “P” have data derived from parsed data, and attributes identified with “C” have data derived from calculated data. Attributes identified with an “x” have no recorded extracted, parsed, or calculated data.

In order to allow users to use their preferred type of data, the full and independent files of EXT, PRS, and CLC data are also provided in the data release publication. Data may exist in each of the three files for a given subsample, consistent with the original data. The same fields are reported in each file (table 3) and can be linked by the relational keys (DataSetKey, LcnnKey, and ObsvnKey).

Component/Feature and Facies Data (US9_CMP and US9_FAC)

Two usSEABED data files (US9_CMP and US9_FAC) contain information about compositional content, biota, and sediment structure present on the sea floor. These data can be relationally linked to data in the four files that contain textural and other typical sea-floor data using the ObsvnKey field. The data reported in US9_CMP and US9_FAC files are class names defined by the thesaurus in the dbSEABED parsing software, which clusters comparable identifying terms together. For example, the “quartz sediment” component can be indicated by the terms “quartz feldspar,” “quartzite”, “quartzose”, “silica sediment”, etc. The “granite” facies represents significant use of the words “granite,” “aplite,” “granodiorite,” and “pegmatite”; the “laminated” structure represents “laminated,” “laminations,” or “lamina.” Individual components and features (terms like “feldspar,” “phosphorite,” “bivalves,” “seagrass,” and “wood”) are held in the US9_CMP data file (table 4). Here, a significant use is defined as a membership of greater than 33 to the component or facies fuzzy set. Combinations of components with significant occurrences in a subsample are held in the facies (US9_FAC) data file (table 5). As with the parsed data in the US9_ONE and US9_PRS file, the values held within the US9_CMP and US9_FAC files are the results of applying functions of fuzzy-set membership to verbal data and represent a measure of veracity about the attribute, not percentages or defined values. (These files indicate only presence, not absence, of material; it is rare that a source report states, “no bivalves” or “no phosphorite,” for example. The values within this attribute field range between 0 (no membership in the fuzzy set, possibly due to no information) up to 100 (maximum feature development).

The 44 components and the 3 features (codes tagged with “_F”) that appear in more than 0.01 percent of parsed samples within the U.S. Exclusive Economic Zone are given in the US9_CMP file. Table 4 lists the components and gives basic forms of descriptive terms that contribute to membership for each.

The facies file (US9_FAC) summarizes the presence of related groups of components, denoted as facies, such as igneous, metamorphic, ooze, and foraminifera. The dbSEABED facies processing is limited to a maximum of six components per facies; however, not all facies have six defining components. Table 5 lists the most common facies types and the basic forms of components that comprise each facies group.

Again, the US9_CMP and US9_FAC files only indicate presence, not absence, of material; it is rare that a source report states, “no bivalves” or “no phosphorite,” for example. The values within this attribute field range between 0 (no membership in the fuzzy set, possibly due to no information) to 100 (complete membership, for example, a schist membership of 100 produces a membership of 100 in the metamorphic set).

Relationship Between Parsed and Component Data

The dbSEABED software recognizes that many skeletonized biota, such as halimeda, rhodoliths, and shells (broken and unbroken), often constitute all or part of a sediment sample. Such biological terms are included in the parsing of the textural values. The selected biota with textural implications are listed in table 6. When using the parsed data, it may be important to cross-check with the component file by using the relational keys (LocnKey, ObsvnKey) to determine if biota are included in the textural outputs.

Within the parsed data textural file (US9_PRS), the “Facies” and “FacMshp” fields indicate the dominant compositional facies and the fuzzy-set membership of a sample in that facies. Other components and observations may also be listed for that sample in the US9_CMP file, linked by the relational keys.
Table 3. Field parameters, format, units, range, meaning, and comments for extracted, parsed, and calculated data in the US9_ONE (extending to US9_EXT, US9_PRS, and US9_CLC) file.

[%, percent; kPa, kilopascal; m/s, meter per second; P/T, high pressure and temperature; V:H, ratio of vertical height to horizontal length]

| Attribute   | Parameter   | Data format | Units, range, meaning | Comment |
|-------------|-------------|-------------|-----------------------|---------|
| Latitude    | Latitude    | Decimal 00.00000 | Decimal degrees, 90° to −90° range | Represents a mix of datums; users of the data should note the available information found in the original sources and use their own criteria for assessing the accuracy of the locations. |
| Longitude   | Longitude   | Decimal 000.00000 | Decimal degrees, −180° to 180° range | Represents a mix of datums; users of the data should note the available information found in the original sources and use their own criteria for assessing the accuracy of the locations. |
| WaterDepth  | Water depth | Integer 00000 | Meters | Corrections for tides should not be assumed. |
| ObsvnTop    | Observation top | Decimal 000.00 | Meters below seabed surface | Observation top as noted in source report. |
| ObsvnBot    | Observation bottom | Decimal 000.00 | Meters below seabed surface | Observation bottom as noted in source report. |
| LocName     | Location name | Character Xxxx…. | Survey or laboratory code for the sampling site | Not unique; site name as given in report; sometimes linked to cruise name or other information to decrease site name overlap. |
| DataSetKey | Dataset number key | Integer 000 | Generated by dbSEABED processing software | Relational key linking to data source (US9_SRC) file. |
| LocnKey     | Location key | Integer 0000000 | Generated by dbSEABED processing software | Relational key linking to data from the same location in other data files. Each location counted sequentially as total output; core data may have more than one sample per site. |
| ObsvnKey    | Observation key | Integer 0000000 | Generated by dbSEABED processing software | Relational key linking to data from same observation or sample in other data files. Each sample or observation site counted sequentially as total output; multiple samples may be at each site (that is, within core). |
| Device      | Device type | Character Xxxx…. | Type of sampling or observation device | As given in source report; recovery ("rcvy") or penetration ("pen") length appended if given in source report. |
| DataTypes   | Data types | Character xxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxx | Code produced by the dbSEABED processing software to identify which output file (extracted, parsed, or calculated) was used, or data themes recorded during data entry | Code used in two ways. In the US9_ONE file that identifies which type of data (extracted, parsed, or calculated) is provided in the attribute fields for the observation. In the outputs of US9_EXT, US9_PRS, and US9_CLC, this field provides the dbSEABED software’s data themes for the observation. |
| Gravel      | Gravel      | Integer 000 | Gravel grain-size fraction, % | Textural class. |
| Sand        | Sand        | Integer 000 | Sand grain-size fraction, % | Textural class. |
### Table 3. Field parameters, format, units, range, meaning, and comments for extracted, parsed, and calculated data in the US9_ONE (extending to US9_EXT, US9_PRS, and US9_CLC) file.—Continued

[%, percent; kPa, kilopascal; m/s, meter per second; P/T, high pressure and temperature; V:H, ratio of vertical height to horizontal length]

| Attribute        | Parameter        | Data format | Units, range, meaning                                                                 | Comment                                                                 |
|------------------|------------------|-------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Mud              | Mud              | Integer 000 | Mud grain-size fraction, %                                                            | Textural class.                                                        |
| Clay             | Clay             | Integer 000 | Clay grain-size fraction, %                                                            | Textural class; output for extracted data only, as clay value can be determined only by analysis. |
| Grain size       | Grain size       | Decimal 00.00| Phi characteristic grain size                                                          | Characteristic grainsize, based on mean and median grain size values.   |
| Sorting          | Sorting          | Decimal 0.00 | Phi grain-size dispersion                                                              | Standard deviation.                                                    |
| Facies           | Sea-floor facies | Character  | Fuzzy-set membership (%) of the class (or facies), noted above                        | Output for parsed data only.                                           |
| FacMshp          | Facies membership| Decimal 000 | Fuzzy-set membership (%) of the class (or facies), noted above                        | Output for parsed data only.                                           |
| FolkCde          | Folk classification | Character  | Grain-size classification based on the Folk Code (Folk and others, 1970)               |                                                                      |
| RckMshp          | Rock index       | Integer 000 | Fuzzy-set membership (%)                                                               | Degree of membership of sample in the rock fuzzy set; reported only for parsed data. |
| VegMshp          | Vegetation index | Integer 000 | Fuzzy-set membership (%)                                                               | Degree of membership of sample in the vegetation fuzzy set; reported only for parsed data. |
| Carbonate        | Carbonate        | Integer 000 | %                                                                                    | For parsed data, this value is a degree of fuzzy-set membership         |
| MunsColr         | Munsell color code | Character XXXX.... | Standard alphanumeric coding of color partitioned into hue, value, and chroma | Example: “5YR 6/4” (Rock-Color Chart Committee, 1991).                |
| OrgCarbn         | Organic carbon   | Integer 000 | %                                                                                    | For parsed data, minimum value from descriptions is 0.1%.              |
| IShearStr        | Log shear strength| Decimal 00.0 | kPa, undrained, unconfined                                                            | As reported in sources; see source documentation for instrumentation used. |
| Porosity         | Porosity         | Decimal 00.00| %                                                                                    | Usually not corrected for P/T effects.                                 |
| PWaveVel         | P-wave velocity  | Decimal 00.0 | m/s                                                                                   |                                                                        |
| Roughness        | Roughness        | Decimal 0000.00 | Coded to express the height and length of the bottom feature with greatest aspect ratio | In a coding that expresses the height and length of the bottom feature with greatest aspect ratio; a coded output representing the V:H of the roughness element with greatest aspect ratio, values expressed as (rounded) integer log2. |
Table 3. Field parameters, format, units, range, meaning, and comments for extracted, parsed, and calculated data in the US9_ONE (extending to US9_EXT, US9_PRS, and US9_CLC) file.—Continued

[%, percent; kPa, kilopascal; m/s, meter per second; P/T, high pressure and temperature; V:H, ratio of vertical height to horizontal length]

| Attribute     | Parameter            | Data format | Units, range, meaning                                                                 |
|---------------|----------------------|-------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| ICritShStr    | Log critical shear stress | Decimal 0000.00 | Log10 of $\tau$, in kPa, being the shear stress required to initiate easily observable erosion and transport, whether by traction or suspension; taken from a compilation of published relationships ranging from large boulder to muds, through a range of grain shapes (for example, shell) (see the section “Summary of the onCALCULATION Methods Used in dbSEABED” included in each of Reid and others, 2005; Buczkowski and others, 2006; and Reid and others, 2006). |
| Key           | Primary key          | Character Xxxx.... | Assigned during formatting of the usSEABED database. Unique identifier of the sample entry and primary key for the database. |
| GeolAge       | Geologic age         | Character Xxxx.... | Age of the sample as defined by the geologic time scale. Geologic age of the sample or observed materials. |
| ObsvnDate     | Observation date     | Character Xxxx.... | Date provided by the data source or by the persons entering the data into usSEABED. Date of collection, or the start of a range of collection dates for the sample or observation. |
| Date Src      | Source of date       | Character Xxxx.... | Date provided by the data source or by the persons entering the data into usSEABED. Source of the date provided for the sample or observation. |
Table 4. Components and features processed for the usSEABED database.

[The 48 components with the highest cited occurrences (greater than 0.01 percent) for U.S. waters are given in the US9_CMP file. As usSEABED uses the same thesaurus as its sister data compilations (auSEABED, goSEABED, and so on), some triggering words listed below may not occur for U.S. waters. Only one of the possible word variations is listed below; for example, the word “mollusc” incorporates “mollusk” and “Mollusca,” and “chlorite” includes “chloritic”. Non-textural or compositional features are indicated by “_F” at the end of the senior synonym.]

| Senior synonym | Triggering words (word variations not included) |
|----------------|--------------------------------------------------|
| **Terms related to shells** | |
| shl | Shell, shell (-bed, -bank, -carpet, -fraction, -content, -material), shellfish, valves |
| shl_dbr | Shell debris, shell hash, coquina, shell (-bit, -conglomerate, -fragments, -festoon, -grit, -lag, -mash, -material, -piece, -particle) |
| skl_dbr | Skeletal debris, -sand, -fragment, -carbonate, -calcarenite, -clasts; bioclastic debris, -gravel; biogenic debris, faunal debris |
| mlscl | Mollusc |
| biv | Bivalve, arctica, astarte, cardium, chama, chione, chlmys, clam (-shell, -flat material, -hash, -valves), cockle (anadara, -shell), donax, glycymmeris, katalysia, lamellibranch, macoma, mercenaria, mulinia, mussel (-bed, -bank, -shell), mya, mytilus, nucula, pelecypod, quahog, rangia, seep mytilid, slipper shells, surf clam, tellina, tellinid, venerid, venus clams, vesicomyid, yoldia |
| musl | Mussel, mytilus, Atrina |
| **Terms related to rocks** | |
| rck | Rock, outcrop, substrate, reef, pavement, banks, pinnacle, mound, boulder, platform, hard bottom |
| rck_frg | Rock fragment, rock chips, rock particles |
| hrdgrond | Hard ground |
| mudstn | Mudstone, calcareous (-mudstone, -siltstone), clay (-rock, -shale, -stone), marlstone, mud (-rock, -stone), pelite, shale, siliceous shale, siltstone |
| sed_rck | Terrigenous breccia, sand rock, cemented sand |
| sndstn | Sandstone, gritstone, graywacke, labile sandstone, sandstone reef, wacke |
| bluschst | Blue schist, crossite-albite schist, crossite-quartz schist, glaucophane, quartz crossite schist, quartz glaucophane schist |
| **Terms related to sediments** | |
| sed | Sediment, detrital, mud, clay, silt, sand, pebbles, cobbles, gravel, rubble, granule, fraction, moraine, lag deposit, clastic |
| **Terms related to terrigenous materials** | |
| qtz_sed | Quartz sediment, quartz feldspar, quartzite, quartzose, silica sediment, clast, sand, gravel, grit, pebbles, | |
| trrg | Terrigenous, lithic, inorganic |
| volgls | Volcanic glass, obsidian, hyaloclastite, pyroclastic, quenched, vitric, subvitreous |
| **Terms related to carbonates** | |
| carb | Allogenic grain, authigenic carbonate, biogenic, calcareous, calcilutite, calcarenite, calcirudite, calcareous biogenic, carbonate, limey, marl, skeletal micrite |
| dolmt | Dolomite, dolostone, ankerite, molar magnesium carbonate |
| **Terms related to clays** | |
| glauc | Glaucanite, greensand |
| claymin | Clay mineral, bentonite, chlorite, collophane, illite, kaolinite |
| smect | Smectite, bentonite, montmorillonite, nontronite |
| kaol | Kaolinite |
| chlort | Chlorite |
Table 4. Components and features processed for the usSEABED database.—Continued

[The 48 components with the highest cited occurrences (greater than 0.01 percent) for U.S. waters are given in the US9_CMP file. As usSEABED uses the same thesaurus as its sister data compilations (auSEABED, goSEABED, and so on), some triggering words listed below may not occur for U.S. waters. Only one of the possible word variations is listed below; for example, the word “mollusc” incorporates “mollusk” and “Mollusca,” and “chlorite” includes “chloritic”. Nontextural or compositional features are indicated by “_F” at the end of the senior synonym.]

| Senior synonym | Triggering words (word variations not included) |
|----------------|-------------------------------------------------|
| **Terms related to corals** | |
| crl | Coral, Acropora palmata, brain coral, Dendrophyllia, Madrepore, Manicina, Porite, sea twig |
| **Terms related to microfossils** | |
| rad | Radiolaria |
| diat | Diatom, diatomite/diatomaceous |
| frm | Calcareous foraminifera, foraminifera, globigerina bit, planktonic |
| plnk_frm | Planktonic foraminifera, globerina, globorotalid, planktic foraminifera |
| bnth_frm | Benthic foraminifera, archaias, bolivina, bulimina, coralline foraminifera, discorbis, eponides, homotrema, hyaline, lenticulina, loxostema, miliolid, nodosirid, nonien, notosirid, peneroplis, porcellanous, rotaid, uvigerina |
| **Terms related to minerals** | |
| min | Mineral |
| mica | Mica, biotite, chlorite, muscovite, sericite, talc |
| qtz | Quartz, arkosic sand, calcareous quartz sand, milky vein quartz, quartz (-content, -fragment, -grain, -granule, -groundmass, -mass, -rich, -vein, -veinlet, -crystal), quartzose, quartzite (-cobble, -gravel, -pebble), sandstone (-chunk, -fragment), silica |
| zeol | Zeolite, clinoptolite |
| hvy_min | Heavy mineral, anatase, andalusite, apatite, black sand, brookite, cassiterite, clinzoisite, corundum, dumortierite, epidote, garnet, ilmenite, jadeite, kyanite, leucoxene, magnetite, monazite, ore mineral, piedmontite, rutile, sillimanite, sphene, spinel, staurolite, titanomagnetite, titanite, tourmaline, topaz, zircon, zoisite |
| maf | Mafic, actinolite, aegirite, amphibole, augite, (brown- green- basaltic-) hornblende, bronzite, clinopyroxene, ferromagnesian, hypersthene, olivine, orthopyroxene, oxyhornblende, pyroxene, titanaugite, titaniferous, tremolite |
| **Terms related to mineralized deposits** | |
| phspht | Phosphate, phosphorite |
| **Terms related to ooze** | |
| ooz | Ooze |
| calc_ooz | Calcareous ooze, nannofossil (-mud, -ooze), pteropod (-mud, -ooze), foraminiferal (-marl, -ooze, -mud), globigerina (-mud, -ooze) |
| **Terms related to organic material** | |
| orgnc_dbr | Organic debris, -content, -material, -parts, -matter |
| wood | Wood, bark, twig |
| peat | Peat, lignite |
| **Terms related to clast size** | |
| cbl | Cobble |
| bldr | Boulder |
Table 5. Field parameters for the US9_FAC file, featuring facies data and their component makeup.

[Facies values are determined by a combination of components and their mined values from word-based descriptions. Numerical textural, geochemical, and geophysical information for word-based descriptions is found in the parsed (US9_PRS) data file. Values are degrees of membership in fuzzy sets, given as numbers between 0 and 100. A minimum membership value of 33 in component presence is required to be included in a given facies, and a component may be included more than one facies. Facies values notes presence only, not absence]

| Field name | Parameter | Contributing components |
|------------|-----------|-------------------------|
| Algae      | Algae     | Halimeda, rhodolith, coralline algae |
| Shells     | Shells    | Shells, shell debris, skeletal debris, molluse, bivalves, mussels |
| Carb       | Carbonate | Carbonate, marl, chalk, carbonate cementation, calcareous nodules, carbonate ooze |
| Clay       | Clay      | Clay minerals, glauconite, smectite, kaolinite, chlorite |
| Coral      | Coral     | Coral, coral reef |
| Fossil     | Fossil    | Radiolaria, diatom, nannofossil, fish debris, palynomorph |
| Forams     | Foraminifera | Foraminifera (benthic, planktonic, arenitic) |
| AlSi       | Aluminosilicate | Mica, quartz, zeolite, siliceous, opal |
| Hvy_min    | Heavy minerals | Heavy mineral, mineral, mafic, ultramafic |
| Mineralized | Mineralized | Phosphorite, pyrite, sulfide, barite |
| Mn/Fe      | Ferromanganese | Ferruginous, iron nodule, siderite, manganese nodule, ferromanganese oxide, ferromanganese crust |
| Organic    | Organic   | Wood, peat, coal, organic organic debris, organic carbon |
| Metam_rock | Metamorphic rock | Metamorphic, dolomite, schist, blueschist, gneiss, slate |
| Generic_rock | Generic rock | Rock, rock fragment, hard ground |
| Sed_rock   | Sedimentary rock | Sedimentary rock, mudstone, sandstone, limestone, chert |
| Sediment   | Sediment  | Terrigenous, metamorphic debris, igneous debris, sediment, quartz sediment, volcanic sediment |
| Plant      | Plant     | Foliage, plant |
| Terrigenou | Terrigenous | Terrigenous, quartz, quartz sediment, feldspar, mafic |
| Seaweed    | Seaweed   | Seaweed, seagrass, weed |

Table 6. Biological components that may have textural implications.

[Listed are only those components that are frequently noted in samples from U.S. waters. Biological components in **bold** appear in more than 0.01 percent of samples and are provided in the US9_CMP file]

| Biological components |
|-----------------------|
| barnacles             |
| bivalves              |
| brachiopods           |
| brachiozoa            |
| calcareous algae      |
| clypeasts             |
| coralline algae       |
| corals                |
| crabs                 |
| crustaceans           |
| diatoms               |
| echinoids             |
| forams                |
| halimeda              |
| molluscs              |
| nannofossils          |
| pteropods             |
| radiolaria            |
| razor clams           |
| reefs                 |
| scaphopods            |
| serpulids             |
| shells                |
**Quality Control**

Quality control over the data is an iterative process beginning with visualization of each source file. First, graphical plots of site locations and parameter values are used to detect outliers, which are corrected if possible. Each dataset is viewed in a GIS to ensure that data locations are reasonable relative to survey extents; those sites with unresolvable location issues or known incomplete analyses are not included in the usSEABED database. (Note: the usSEABED database contains a small number of onshore samples.) Old sets may require more scrutiny than newer or well-exercised datasets.

Users of the output data are reminded to note the inherent limitations imposed by the source datasets as to navigational precision, sampler type, and analytical technique. To help inform users about the provenance of the data, sample-collection devices and observation methods, where provided, are recorded for each data entry in the usSEABED data files. The US9_SRC source file includes information pertaining to the original data sources, such as the type of source material the data were taken from (published and unpublished reports, technical memoranda, and theses), as well as navigational methods, if known, and publication or other release dates. Citations for each data source are also available in the source file to direct users to additional information about data-collection methods and analytical techniques found in the original publication or dataset.

Next, built-in filters in the dbSEABED software detect implausible values for numerical fields, unknown verbal terms, incomplete analyses (for example, the total of percentages in grain-size classes is greater than 105 percent or less than 95 percent), and incorrect field types (string or numerical). The software also detects samples that seem to belong to a core though they are entered as independent samples. Through iterative testing, the detected issues are either fixed or excluded from usSEABED.

Parsing verbal descriptions within the dbSEABED software also includes a number of quality-control devices. The dbSEABED software contains a thesaurus where various terms used to describe the seabed are given lithologic, textural, and biological classes and weightings. If a term is not recognized in the dictionary, the process is aborted and null values are given to all appropriate fields. Likewise, if a description contains more than 32 terms, it is not parsed due to complexity.

**Uncertainties in the Data**

Users of the usSEABED database are reminded that many sea-floor regions are, by their nature, dynamic environments subject to a variety of physical processes, such as erosion, winnowing, reworking, and sedimentation or accretion, that vary on different spatial and temporal scales, and sea-floor samples represent a moment in time.

Because site locations are as given in the original sources, the usSEABED compilation may include uncertainties resulting from the navigational techniques and datums used. As many reports are decades old, users of usSEABED data should use their own criteria to determine the appropriateness of data from each source report for their particular purpose and scale of interest.

In addition, there are uncertainties in data quality associated with both the extracted data (from lab-based analytical analyses) and parsed data (from word-based descriptions). Some grain-size analyses are done solely on the sand fraction and exclude coarser material, such as shell fragments and gravel. Word descriptions of sediment samples may emphasize the proportion of one sediment fraction over another and may disregard other important textural or biological components. Incomplete data or that data that are known to produce erroneous results are not included in the usSEABED database.

**Accessing the usSEABED Database**

The usSEABED database is available online (Buczkowski and others, 2020) through an interface that allows download of all the data files that make up usSEABED, as well as search and selection of portions of the database through a GIS display or through a web form at https://cmgds.marine.usgs.gov/usseabed/. Search results are downloadable as comma-separated value files and come with customized metadata.

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