



NFWF

Gulf Environmental Benefit Fund

RECIPIENTS

Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission

AWARD AMOUNT

\$6,242,700

LOCATION

Florida Gulf Coast

AWARD DATE

November 2016

PROGRESS UPDATE

Enhanced collection of fishery-dependent and fishery-independent data and the fourth full year of the Gulf Reef Fish Survey has been completed. Lessons learned will guide the final year of the program. Final reports have been submitted and are being reviewed. (February 2018)

The Gulf Environmental Benefit Fund, administered by the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation (NFWF), supports projects to remedy harm and eliminate or reduce the risk of harm to Gulf Coast natural resources affected by the 2010 Deepwater Horizon oil spill. To learn more about NFWF, go to www.nfwf.org.

FLORIDA

Enhanced Assessment of Gulf of Mexico Fisheries – Phase IV

This project requests a fourth year of funding for the Florida Gulf of Mexico fisheries assessment to support the second year of full scale implementation. This project builds upon and expands the GEBF investments in both fisheries-dependent and -independent data collection begun in 2013. Reef fish, particularly red snapper, have historically been subject to overfishing and habitat loss, causing significant decline in stocks. The largest single impediment to effective management of Gulf of Mexico reef fisheries remains the lack of sound data related to both catch effort and population levels. This lack of reliable data is particularly evident in relation to the recreational fishery, a significant and growing component.

This project will continue a significant expansion of the collection of data on both catch effort and stock assessment of reef fish in the northern Gulf of Mexico to provide a greater understanding the potential long-term impacts of the Deepwater Horizon spill on fisheries. Additional funding is being requested to leverage potential funding available through NFWF's electronic monitoring program under a cooperative agreement with NOAA.



Underwater stereo camera imagery of red snapper: Credit FWRI



Increased data collection for key species, such as the snapper pictured above, will create a more accurate stock assessment and influence best practices in Florida Gulf Coast fisheries.