ALABAMA

Enhanced Fisheries Monitoring in Alabama's Marine Waters

The projects funded under this effort implemented a significant and meaningful expansion of the collection of data on both catch effort and abundance information to be used for stock assessment and evaluation in coastal Alabama. The data was used to: improve ecosystem-based management capabilities; assess the recovery of reef fish stocks in association with other fisheries restoration efforts; and improve and expand single-species stock assessments for managed fish species. The project included the implementation of both fisheries-dependent and fisheries-independent data collection. This project is similar to and complementary of fisheries monitoring projects being supported by the Gulf Environmental Benefit Fund in Florida and Mississippi. The project also included a finfish data collection effort that focused on developing appropriate methods for reporting discards of reef fish species bycatch in the recreational fishery. In addition, this project supported the implementation of SnapperCheck, the tool used by the Alabama Department of Conservation and Natural Resources/Marine Resources Division to monitor recreational catch of Red Snapper. The timeliness of data provided by SnapperCheck has enhanced the State's management of the recreational Red Snapper fishery off its shores, allowing them to make in-season adjustments to ensure sustainable fishing practices.

Many Gulf of Mexico fishes have been subject to overfishing, causing periods of significant decline in stocks. While current stock assessments show an improving populations more work clearly remains to be done. The largest single impediment to effective management of Gulf of Mexico reef fishes such as red snapper is the lack of sound data related to both catch effort and population levels. Establishment and expansion of monitoring and assessment programs is critical to managing and monitoring the recovery of fishes and ecosystems.

This project expands reef fish monitoring in Alabama to improve data collection and inform fisheries management.

AT A GLANCE

RECIPIENT:
Alabama Department of Conservation and Natural Resources/Marine Resources Division

AWARD AMOUNT:
$1,456,471

PARTNERS:
University of South Alabama

Dauphin Island Sea Lab
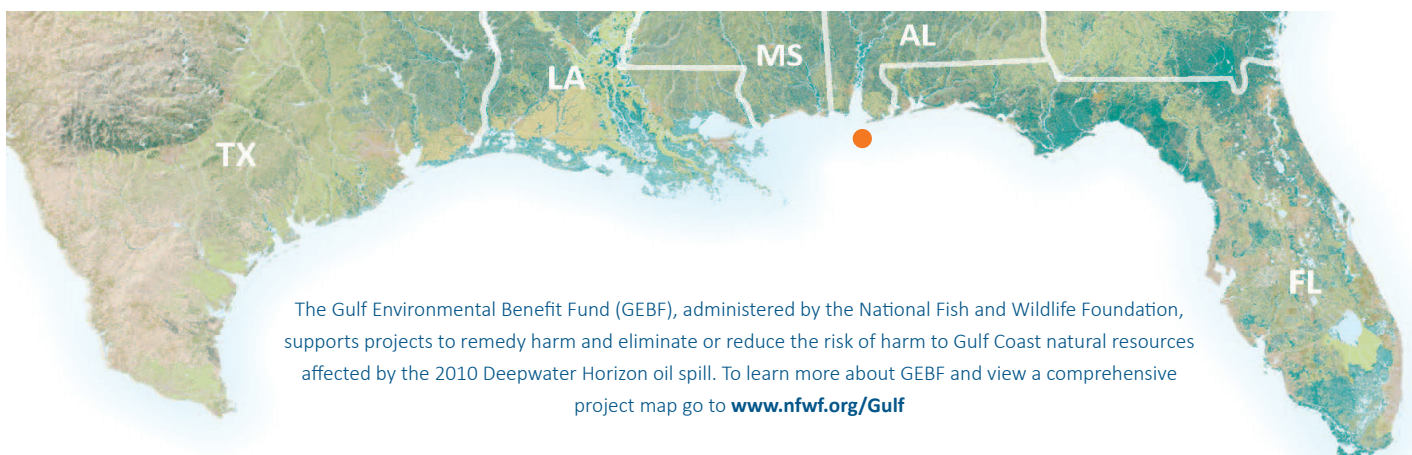
LOCATION:
Coastal water of Alabama

AWARD DATE:
November 2014

STATUS:
Closed

PROGRESS UPDATE:
Project closed December 2018.