



NFWF

Gulf Environmental Benefit Fund

## MISSISSIPPI

# Reef Fish Assessment for Mississippi Coastal and Nearshore Gulf Waters - Phase I

This study was a two-year effort that implemented a significant and meaningful expansion of the collection of data on both catch effort and stock assessment of reef fish species in coastal Mississippi. The data will be used to improve ecosystem-based management capabilities 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 complimentary to fisheries monitoring projects being supported by the Gulf Environmental Benefit Fund in Florida and Alabama.

Gulf of Mexico fisheries, particularly red snapper, have historically been subject to overfishing, causing periods of significant decline in stocks. While current stock assessments show an improving fishery, more work clearly remains to be done. The largest single impediment to effective management of Gulf of Mexico reef fishes like 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 fisheries and ecosystems.



This project expanded reef fish monitoring in Mississippi to improve data collection and inform fisheries management.

## AT A GLANCE

### RECIPIENT:

Mississippi Department of Environmental Quality

### AWARD AMOUNT:

\$3,404,002

### PARTNERS:

Mississippi Department of Marine Resources

University of Southern Mississippi

### LOCATION:

Coastal waters of Mississippi

### AWARD DATE:

November 2014

### STATUS:

Closed

### PROGRESS UPDATE:

Final reports submitted and project is now closed. (April 2020)



The Gulf Environmental Benefit Fund (GEBF), administered by the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation, 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 GEBF and view a comprehensive

project map go to [www.nfwf.org/Gulf](http://www.nfwf.org/Gulf)