



NFWF

Gulf Environmental Benefit Fund

MISSISSIPPI

Reef Fish Assessment for Mississippi Coastal and Nearshore Waters: Restoration through Improved Data Collection and Management – Phases III and IV

These two projects (Phases III and IV) will complete the final phases of data collection efforts to assess reef fish populations in coastal Mississippi and nearshore Gulf waters. The assessment will provide data necessary for reducing scientific uncertainty of factors influencing red snapper and other reef fish populations. Sampling will continue to inform management to support restoration of these populations. Information produced from the proposed assessments will be comparable to data collected in Alabama and Florida fisheries monitoring efforts, thereby enhancing region-wide assessments of red snapper and other reef associated species. Data from these projects will continue to allow the State of Mississippi to improve its management of coastal fisheries. The final deliverable of these projects will be a final report summarizing the overall significance of all four phases.

The State of Mississippi currently manages more than 16,000 acres of permitted offshore artificial reef sites at 15 areas north and south of its barrier islands, and numerous oil and gas platforms that serve as habitat for reef fishes in adjacent Gulf of Mexico waters. This proposal represents phases III and IV of Mississippi’s effort to address the GEBF funding priorities associated with improving red snapper and reef fish data collection to promote sustainable fisheries through improved management. It will also provide new and vital information on artificial reef ecosystem dynamics in Mississippi and adjacent Gulf waters. Analysis and results from this work are already contributing to the scientific knowledge base, and being shared with colleagues throughout the Gulf and informing management of fisheries.



Credit | David Reeves

Above, Gray Triggerfish, Blue Runner, and Atlantic Bumper around a petroleum platform in Gulf of Mexico waters.

AT A GLANCE

RECIPIENT:
Mississippi Department of Environmental Quality

AWARD AMOUNT:
*\$6,462,000

PARTNERS:
Mississippi Department of Marine Resources

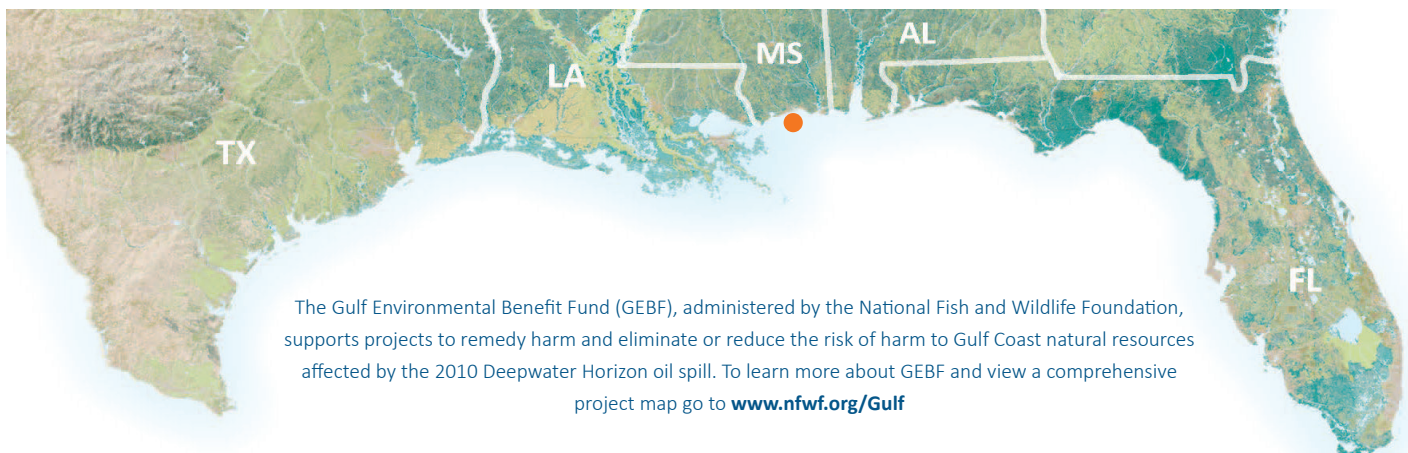
University of Southern Mississippi

LOCATION:
Mississippi Gulf Coast

AWARD DATE:
March 2019—Phase III
November 2019—Phase IV

STATUS:
Active—Phase III
Active—Phase IV

**Phase IV project was amended in November 2020 to add \$500,000 to extend the recreational catch effort program, Tails n’ Scales, by three years.*



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