NFWF | Gulf Environmental Benefit Fund

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

AMOUNT
$1,456,471

PARTNERS
University of South Alabama

Dauphin Island Sea Lab

LOCATION
Coastal waters of Alabama

AWARD DATE
November 2014

STATUS
Closed

PROGRESS UPDATE
Final reports and lessons learned have been submitted and results are anticipated to continue to inform fisheries management strategies in Alabama, and across the Gulf over the coming years. This project is now closed. (December 2018)

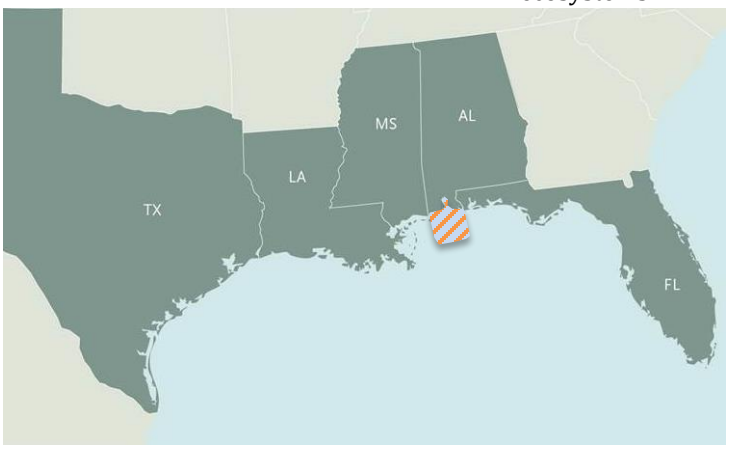
The Gulf Environmental Benefit Fund, administered by the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation (NFWF), supports projects to remedy harm and eliminate or reduce the risk of harm to Gulf Coast natural resources affected by the 2010 Deepwater Horizon oil spill. To learn more about NFWF, go to **www.nfwf.org.**

ALABAMA

Enhanced Fisheries Monitoring in Alabama's Marine Waters

The projects funded under this effort will implement 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. These data will be 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 includes 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 includes a finfish data collection effort that will focus on developing appropriate methods for reporting discards of reef fish species bycatch in the recreational fishery. In addition to the baseline program, the Alabama Department of Conservation and Natural Resources/Marine Resources Division will conduct fishery-dependent survey work relating to the nearshore blue crab fishery to provide appropriate metrics for future management of this important fishery.

Many Gulf of Mexico fisheries have 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 fish fisheries 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 fisheries and ecosystems.



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