FLORIDA

Enhanced Assessment for Recovery of Gulf of Mexico Fisheries – Phase I

RECIPIENT
Florida Fish & Wildlife Conservation Commission

AWARD AMOUNT
$1,812,863

PARTNERS
NOAA

LOCATION
Florida Panhandle and West Florida Shelf

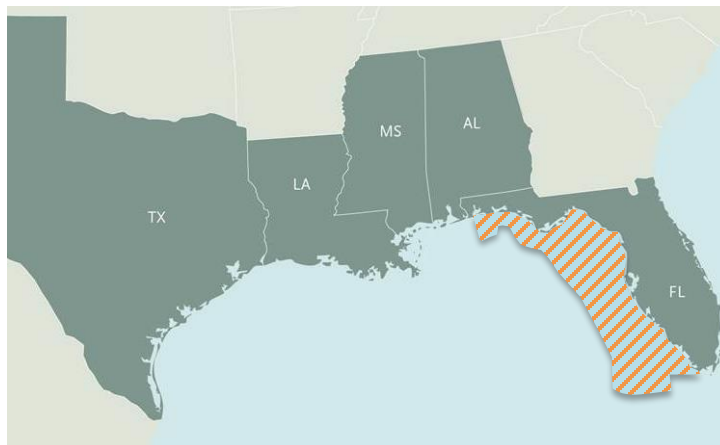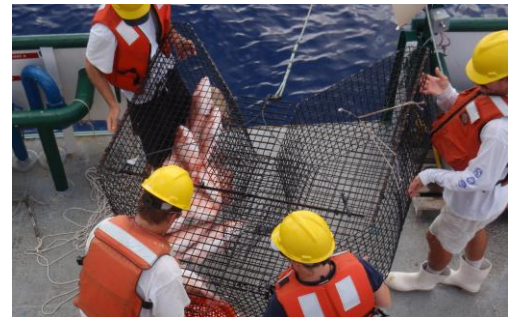**AWARD DATE**
November 2013

STATUS
Closed

PROGRESS UPDATE
Data collection for Phase I is complete. This project is now closed. (May 2016)

This project is the first phase of a five year study to implement a significant expansion of the collection of data on both catch effort and stock assessment in the northern and eastern Gulf of Mexico. This data will be used to assess the recovery of reef fish stocks in association with restoration efforts implemented in response to the Deepwater Horizon oil spill, improve and expand single-species stock assessments for managed fish species, and foster improved ecosystem-based assessment and management capabilities.

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 fisheries like red snapper is the lack of sound data related to both catch effort and stock assessment. The proposed work is widely-recognized by state and federal resource agencies, conservation organizations and commercial and recreational fishing interests as being an extremely critical step needed to improve management of red snapper and other reef fisheries to ensure their sustainability.

This project will provide critical baseline data for improved management of economically vital fisheries such as red snapper.

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.**