



Tab A, No. 8

# PROJECT UPDATES

## FISH AND WATER COLUMN INVERTEBRATES RESTORATION

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Deepwater Horizon Restoration Program

*Open Ocean Trustee Implementation Group*

*Gulf of Mexico Fishery Management Council*



## Presentation Purpose

- High level overview/reminder of project goals, objectives, and timeline status
- Key milestones that have been accomplished and upcoming milestones
- Key highlights of partnerships and stakeholder engagement for project activities





## Programmatic Restoration Goals and Funded Projects

- The goals for Fish and Water Column Invertebrates are to restore for injuries from the spill by
  - Reducing direct sources of mortality, and
  - Increase the health of fisheries by providing fishing communities with methodologies and incentives to reduce impacts to fishery resources
- Five fish restoration projects
  - Oceanic Fish Restoration Project, \$20M
  - Restoring for Bluefin Tuna via Fishing Depth Optimization, \$6.1M
  - Better Bycatch Reduction Devices, \$17.1M
  - Reduction of Post-release Mortality from Barotrauma, \$30M
  - Communication Networks and Mapping Tools to Reduce Bycatch—Phase 1, \$4.4M



## Reduction of Post-release Mortality from Barotrauma \$30M for 8 years

- Distribute fish descender devices ( ) Fish Descender Devices and other tools, promote their use & educate recreational fishermen on best handling practices
- Monitor changes in use of release devices and handling methods
- Improve release mortality estimates for reef fish



Conceptualization

Restoration  
Planning

Implementation  
Planning

Initiating

Performing

Closing

Continuing  
monitoring



## Reduction of Post-release Mortality from Barotrauma

Current status: Foundational planning stages

- Finalized agreements with Florida Sea Grant and Gulf States Marine Fisheries Commission (GSMFC).
- Conducting outreach to:
  - State managers - recreational fisheries monitoring/partnering with existing state-run programs.
  - Industry representatives - advice on logistics of device distribution and stakeholder engagement.
  - Updating Gulf Council and Council's Outreach and Education Technical Committee in October meetings.

Upcoming activities:

- Publication of GSMFC RFP for validation studies & attitudes and opinions survey.
- Information gathering on logistics for device distribution.
- Education, outreach and communication planning.



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## Pelagic Longline Set Depth Optimization

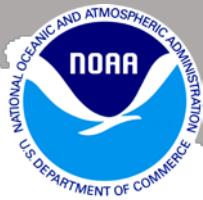
\$6M over 10 years

Project Goal: Restore pelagic fish biomass through a demonstration that adjustments to fishing practices can reduce bluefin tuna bycatch and bycatch mortality in the pelagic longline fishery (PLL) operating in the Gulf of Mexico

- Start implementation planning in 2022







## Communication Networks and Mapping Tools to Reduce Bycatch—Phase

**\$4.4M for 4 years**

Project Goal: Reduce bycatch and mortality of injured species by the identification of bycatch hotspots and development of tools to avoid bycatch

- Determine the feasibility
- Create near-real time maps of bycatch hotspots and network designs
- Evaluation of implementation options
- Coordination with fishermen, stakeholders, and state and federal fishery managers



Photo: © Jay Fleming

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## Better Bycatch Reduction Devices \$17M for 7 years

Project Goal: Reduce fish bycatch in the commercial shrimp trawl fishery in the Gulf by identifying, developing, certifying new innovative bycatch reduction devices (BRDs) for use by the fleet

- Identify new advances in BRD technology
- Validate the effectiveness of improved BRDs
- Maximize the use of better BRDs through outreach and incentives
- Maximize restoration benefits through dockside BRD training



Photo: © Jay Fleming







## Better Bycatch Reduction Devices

### Next Steps:

- ⦿ Finalize partnership with Sea Grant
- ⦿ Create a communication strategy for engaging with the industry and interested stakeholders
- ⦿ Form a Stakeholder Working Group - input on the development of new BRDs
- ⦿ Outreach to identify new BRDs and gear testing of new BRDs
- ⦿ Dockside outreach to assist with current BRDs regulations



Photo: © Jay Fleming

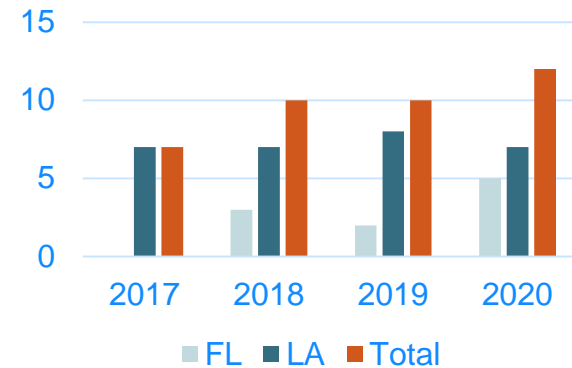




# Oceanic Fish Restoration Project

## \$20M for 8 years

Participation by State



### Project Goal:

- Restore pelagic fish biomass by reducing fish mortality in the PLL fishery in Gulf of Mexico

### Project Adaptation Examples:

- Additional gear choices
- Regional auctions to promote broader geographic participation

### Current Activities:

- Fisheries & gear testing data analysis
- 2021 application and selection in October
- Plan for tagging study





## Key Highlights

- Initial focus on partnership development
- Substantial public engagement
- Sequenced implementation timelines
- This is just the beginning!



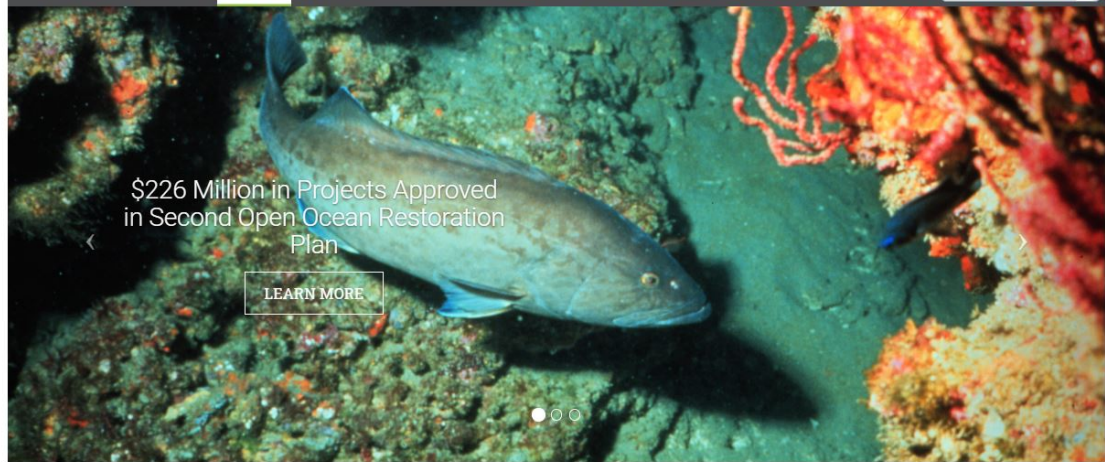
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# GULF SPILL RESTORATION



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## Restoration Areas

- Alabama
- Florida
- Louisiana
- Mississippi
- Texas
- Region-wide Open Ocean