



NFWF

# Gulf Environmental Benefit Fund

**RECIPIENT**

Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission

**AWARD AMOUNT**

\$5,814,200

**PARTNERS**

NOAA

University of Florida

**LOCATION**

Florida Panhandle and West Florida Shelf

**AWARD DATE**

November 2015

**PROGRESS UPDATE**

Dependently, the recreational effort has increased for several reasons, including the opening of several important reef fish fisheries. Samplers are capturing as much of the increased effort as they are able. The Angler e-Log has made the transition from paper to electronic submission. On the Independent side, research cruises and mapping efforts are taking place. Analytical efforts continued toward developing a statistical modeling approach for combining video data. (August 2016)

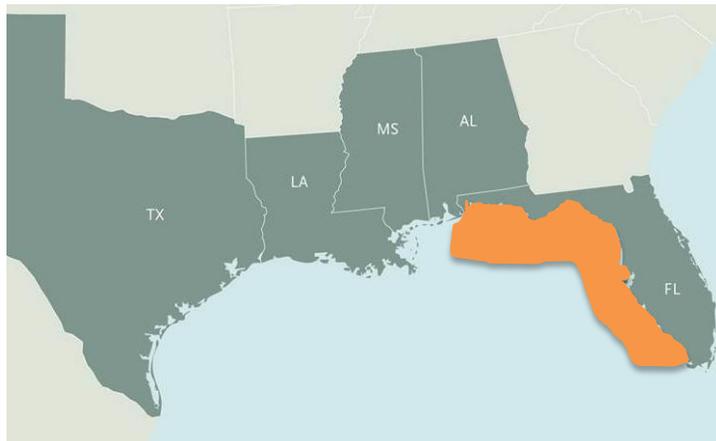
The Gulf Environmental Benefit Fund, administered by the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation (NFWF), supports projects to remedy harm and eliminate or reduce the risk of harm to Gulf Coast natural resources affected by the 2010 Deepwater Horizon oil spill. To learn more about NFWF, go to [www.nfwf.org](http://www.nfwf.org).

**FLORIDA**

## Enhanced Assessment of Gulf of Mexico Fisheries – Phase III

This project is a continuation of the previously funded (2013, 2014) assessment work in Florida and is complementary to similar projects in Alabama and Mississippi. The project will fund the third 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 such as 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 continue previously funded fisheries monitoring work along the Gulf Coast of Florida to inform future management of important reef fish species.