Sturgeon

Open Ocean MAM Strategy Workshop

Gulf sturgeon is one of the six restoration types assigned to the Open Ocean Restoration Area as part of the *Deepwater Horizon* settlement and Consent Decree. Between 1,100 and 3,600 Gulf sturgeon were potentially exposed to *Deepwater Horizon* oil in the nearshore areas of the northern Gulf of Mexico in the fall of 2010. The purpose of this workshop is to obtain input on data needed for restoration planning, implementation, and evaluation given the established goals and approaches noted below.

RESTORATION GOALS

- Restore and protect Gulf sturgeon through improving access to spawning areas.
- Increase the reproductive success of Gulf sturgeon.

RESTORATION APPROACHES

- Restore sturgeon spawning habitat
- Reduce nutrient loads to coastal watersheds
- Protect and conserve marine, coastal, estuarine, and riparian habitats

GULF STURGEON RESTORATION PROJECT IN DRAFT OO TIG RESTORATION PLAN 1

- The Open Ocean TIG Draft Restoration Plan 1 and Environmental Assessment includes the following proposed preferred project alternative for Gulf sturgeon restoration: "Characterizing Gulf Sturgeon Spawning Habitat, Habitat Use, and Origins of Juvenile Sturgeon in the Pearl and Pascagoula River Systems."
- This proposed project would:
  - Identify and characterize the potential spawning habitat in the Pearl and Pascagoula River systems;
  - Describe habitat accessibility and patterns of habitat use during spawning periods;
  - Determine the river of origin for juvenile sturgeon; and
  - Synthesize the data needed to evaluate and prioritize spawning habitat restoration projects such as in-stream barrier removal, spawning reef creation, or riparian restoration.
- The estimated cost of this project is $2,150,000.

Breakout Group Guiding Questions

There are a number of unknowns in Sturgeon restoration; however, the workshop's goal is to focus on what science and monitoring is needed to inform restoration planning and implementation, and understand restoration outcomes.

What data are needed for planning/implementation?

What data are needed for evaluation?

What data are needed for adaptive management?

What are the key takeaways from our discussion today?