OPEN OCEAN RESTORATION AREA

Communication, Adaptive Management, Planning, and Integration *(preferred)*

Retrieving a chevron fish trap on NOAA Ship PISCES
Photo from NOAA's Fisheries Collection

RESTORATION TYPE: Fish and Water Column Invertebrates

PROJECT DESCRIPTION

This project would improve the overall effectiveness of restoration projects that benefit fish and water column resources by increasing understanding of resource distribution and dynamics, facilitating coordination among restoration practitioners, and expanding outreach to fishing communities to raise awareness of and engagement with ongoing restoration activities. Activities would include enhanced observer coverage and electronic monitoring capacity, data collection to characterize fish populations and evaluate restoration activities, and engagement to improve coordination, communication, and awareness among fishing communities and partners.

This project, estimated to cost $23.3 million, would be implemented over approximately 15 years. Approximately $15.3 million of the project cost would be funded from the Open Ocean Trustees' Monitoring and Adaptive Management allocation.

PROJECT BENEFITS

- Improves understanding of high priority fish and invertebrate resources and the threats they face
- Improves coordination, communication, and engagement across restoration projects
- Activities would enhance benefits achieved across the suite of projects intended to restore injured fish and invertebrate species

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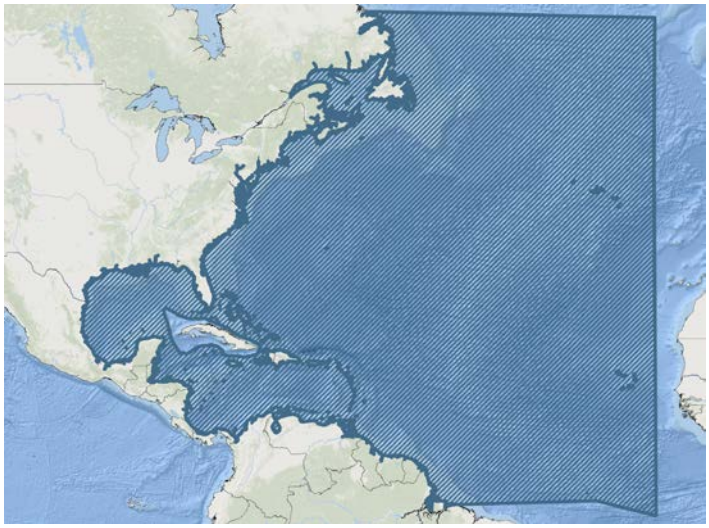
This project would improve understanding of high-priority fisheries and species' geographic distribution, abundance, habitat needs, feeding behaviors, and the threats they face using various methods such as collecting observations, electronic monitoring data, and tagging data; mapping; and modeling.

As multiple restoration projects intended to benefit fish and invertebrate resources have been implemented or are currently in planning, the Open Ocean Trustees identified the need for additional coordination across projects. This project would address information gaps to enhance restoration and improve coordination among ongoing restoration efforts, which would maximize the overall restoration benefits gained from the Open Ocean Trustees' portfolio of restoration projects. In addition, outreach efforts would be expanded within fishing communities to raise awareness of and engagement with ongoing restoration activities.

Project activities would include enhancing at-sea observer coverage and electronic monitoring capacity, tagging and tracking of fish, and predictive modeling to inform population characterizations for injured fish species, and conducting workshops and studies to collect data for analysis. These data would fill gaps in understanding to improve restoration and inform resource management. Outreach and engagement activities, including hosting and facilitating meetings and workshops, attending events, and other activities to engage with and develop relationships within fishing communities, would improve the fishing communities' awareness of and participation in restoration projects.

Project activities would occur in the U.S. Gulf of Mexico, U.S. Caribbean Sea, and U.S. Atlantic Ocean and potentially the Mexican Gulf of Mexico, the Caribbean, and Atlantic waters of Canada and northern South America.



ADDITIONAL INFORMATION
www.gulfspillrestoration.noaa.gov/restoration-areas/open-ocean

By coordinating these efforts across restoration projects, this project would improve resource-wide efficiency for common monitoring needs.

Additionally, by facilitating communication and strategic planning across projects, this project would aid in co-development of restoration concepts and goals and maximize restoration benefits.