



OPEN OCEAN RESTORATION AREA

Next Generation Fishing (*preferred*)



Fishing vessels
Photo by NOAA Fisheries

RESTORATION TYPE: Fish and Water Column Invertebrates

PROJECT DESCRIPTION

This project would restore priority fish species by implementing strategies to reduce bycatch and prevent the increase of bycatch in commercial fishing fleets that target fish with connectivity to injured populations. Fishing communities would be provided with methodologies and incentives to reduce bycatch mortality to fishery resources. Activities including engagement, outreach, training, and technical assistance; advancing voluntary use of new fishing gear, best practices, and techniques; and supporting data collection and sharing would support a “next generation” of commercial fishers.

This project, estimated to cost \$57.2 million, would be implemented over approximately 15 years.



PROJECT BENEFITS

- Advances the use of bycatch-reducing gear, best practices, and techniques to reduce and prevent the increase of bycatch in commercial fishing fleets
- Activities would benefit injured species such as reef and reef-associated fish, highly migratory species, coastal migratory pelagic species, and other species such as menhaden, drums, and sea trout





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This project would implement strategies in commercial fisheries to help fleets adopt conservation techniques and best practices that reduce sources of bycatch mortality while also helping them adapt to changing conditions including climate change. An implementation plan would be developed through workshops and engagement with interested parties, experts, and representatives of engaged organizations.

Activities would involve developing a training program to increase awareness of best practices, conservation techniques, and resource stewardship principles to reduce bycatch. Outreach and technical assistance would be provided to existing and new fishers for retention within the fishing industry. The use of new gear, best practices, and techniques that reduce bycatch would be advanced within the commercial fishing community through voluntary actions, including gear trials and demonstrations. Systems for collecting and sharing fishery-dependent data would be supported, which could include information on fishing effort, catch, and environmental conditions. These data may be used to inform restoration efforts, fisheries science and management, and understanding of climate-induced changes to fisheries resources, among other uses.

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.



Climate change is expected to impact the distribution of fish species including spawning and feeding grounds, which may result in increased fishing pressure and bycatch mortality.

Further, the shift in seafood production toward global imports has also been associated with higher rates of bycatch mortality.

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

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

