

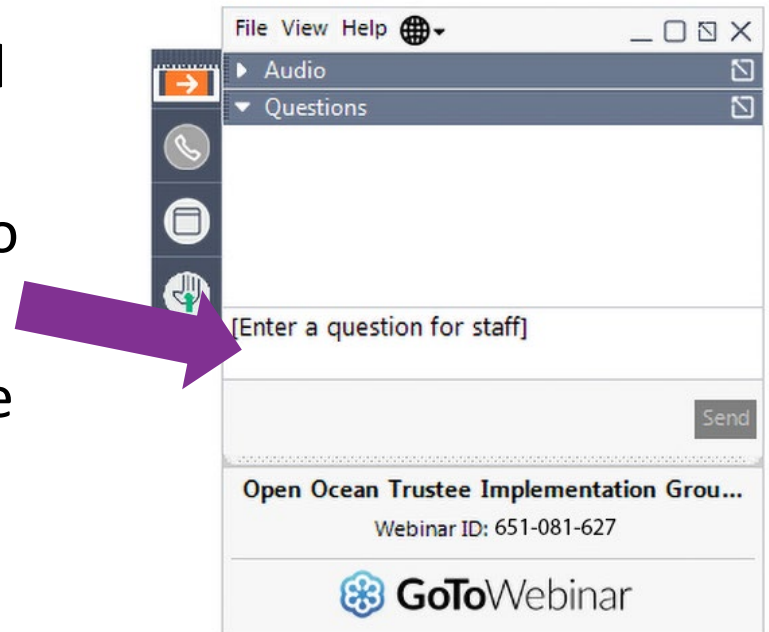


# Open Ocean Restoration Area Draft Restoration Plan 4 and Environmental Assessment *Public Webinar*

# Webinar Participation



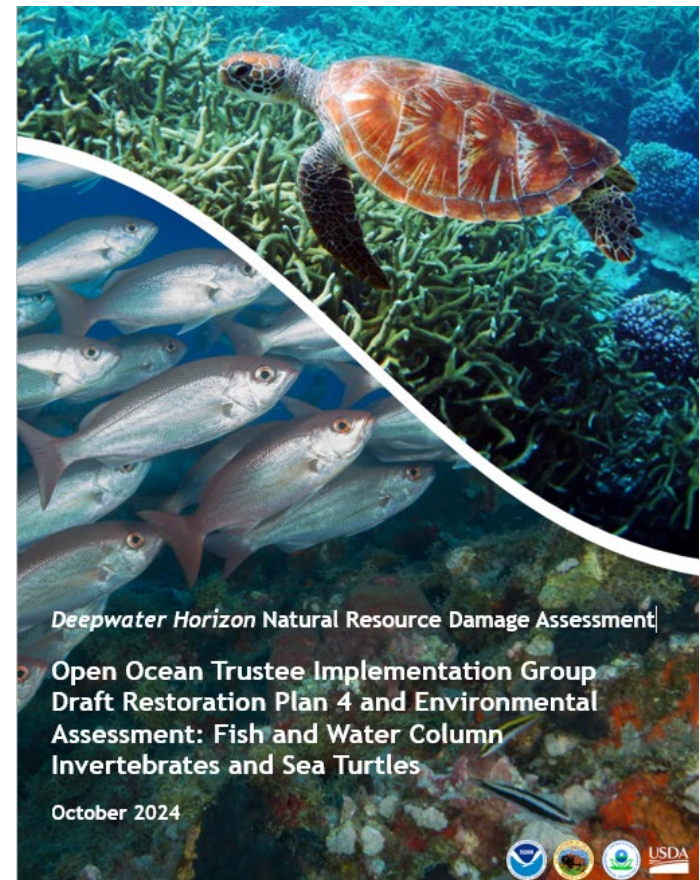
- If you are using a phone, turn off your computer's microphone and speakers
- Please use the “Questions” box to type questions at any time
- During the Comment Session, use the “Questions” box to sign up to give a verbal comment
- Presentation will be posted on [www.gulfspillrestoration.noaa.gov](http://www.gulfspillrestoration.noaa.gov)



# Agenda



- *Deepwater Horizon* Natural Resource Damage Assessment and 2016 Settlement
- Open Ocean Trustee Implementation Group
- Draft Restoration Plan 4/ Environmental Assessment
- Open House: Questions and Answers
- Public Comments
- Next Steps



# *Deepwater Horizon* Oil Spill

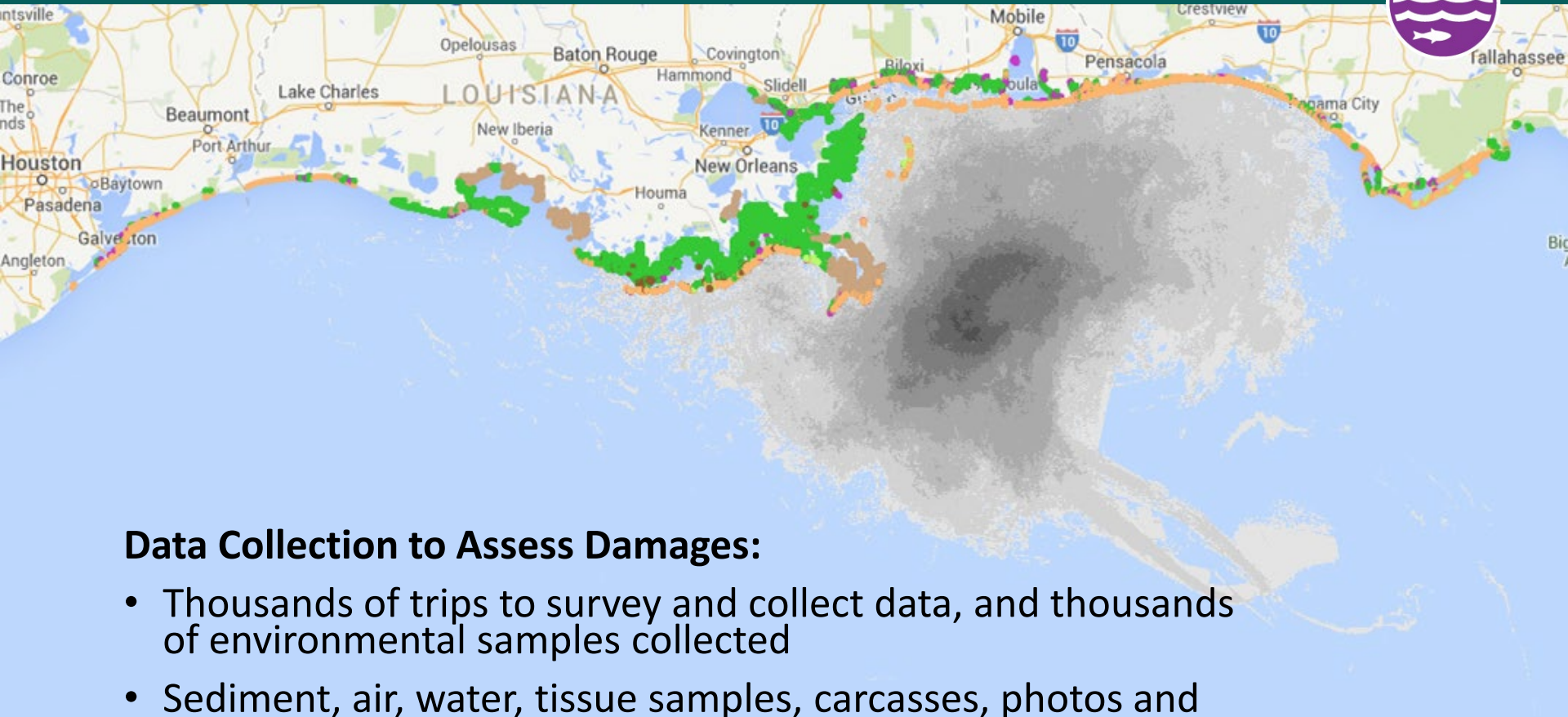


- Tragic loss of 11 workers
- Largest marine oil spill in U.S. history
  - 3.19 million barrels (134 million gallons) of oil released into the ocean over 87 days
  - 43,300 square miles: Cumulative extent of surface slick during the spill—an area almost the size of Mississippi





# *Deepwater Horizon* Incident and Response



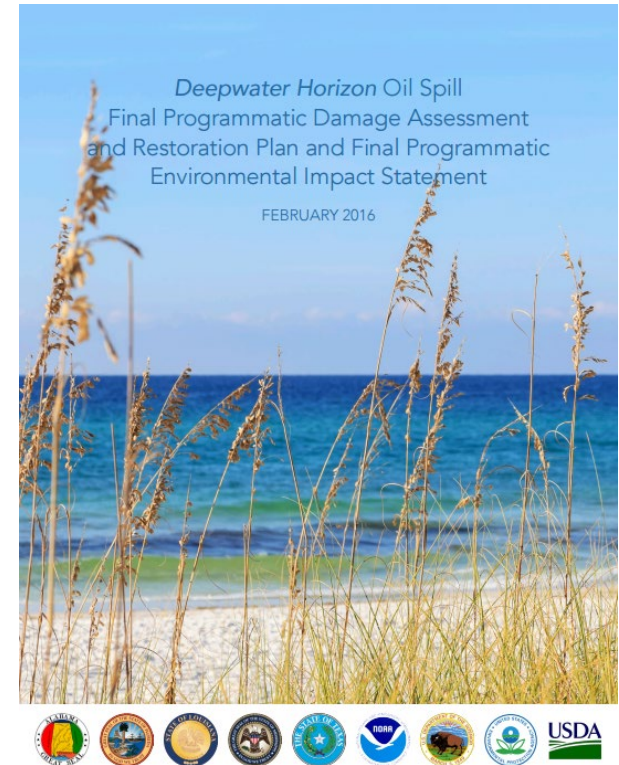
## **Data Collection to Assess Damages:**

- Thousands of trips to survey and collect data, and thousands of environmental samples collected
- Sediment, air, water, tissue samples, carcasses, photos and videos, telemetry, aerial imagery, GPS data, observations
- Including observations and collections of oiled sea turtles and plankton and fish sampling

# Trustees' Programmatic Restoration Plan



- **Damage assessment:** Injuries to natural resources and services
- **Restoration:** Ecosystem approach and science-based adaptive management
- **Governance:** Framework for future decision-making, including project selection & implementation

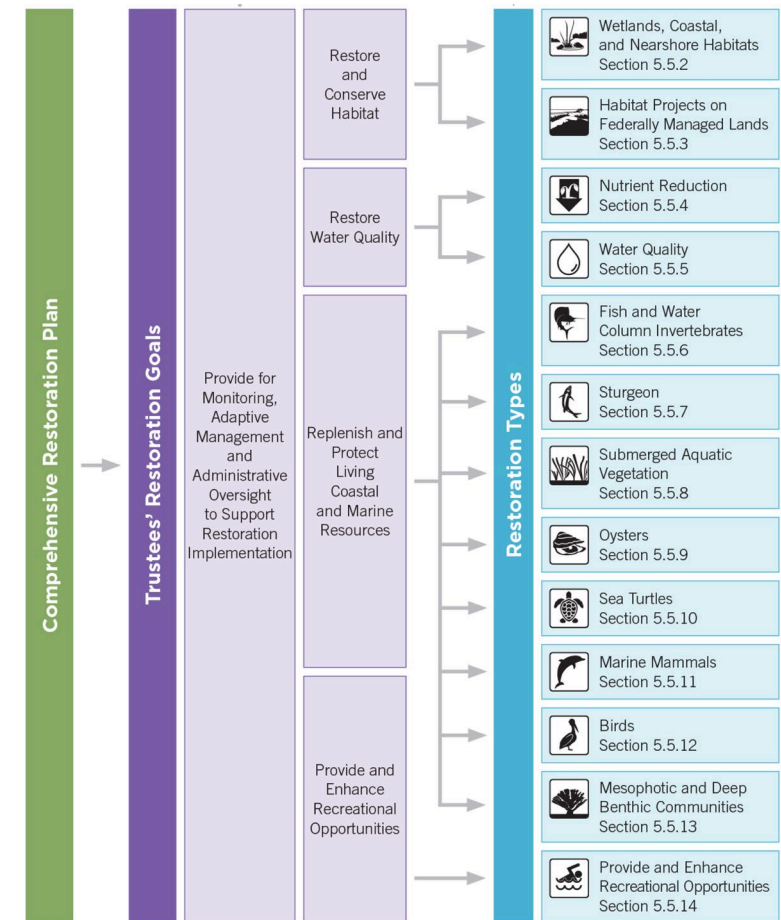


# Deepwater Horizon NRDA Settlement



Up to \$8.8 billion allocated to:

- Restore and Conserve Habitat - \$4.7 billion
- Replenish and Protect Living Coastal and Marine Resources - \$1.8 billion
- Restore Water Quality - \$400 million
- Provide and Enhance Recreational Opportunities - \$400 million
- Provide Monitoring, Adaptive Management, Administrative Oversight - \$1.5 billion
- Future Unknown Conditions – up to \$700 million



# NRDA Trustees' Governance Structure



## Trustee Implementation Groups (TIGs)

### Texas

Texas Trustees  
Federal Trustees

### Louisiana

Louisiana Trustees  
Federal Trustees

### Mississippi

Mississippi Trustees  
Federal Trustees

### Alabama

Alabama Trustees  
Federal Trustees

### Florida

Florida Trustees  
Federal Trustees

### Regionwide

All Trustees

### Open Ocean

Federal Trustees

**Unknown  
Conditions and  
Adaptive  
Management**  
All Trustees



# Open Ocean Trustee Implementation Group



## **U.S. Department of the Interior (DOI)**

Erin Chandler  
Mary Josie Blanchard



## **National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA)**

Laurie Rounds  
Chris Doley



## **U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA)**

Danny Wiegand  
Gale Bonanno



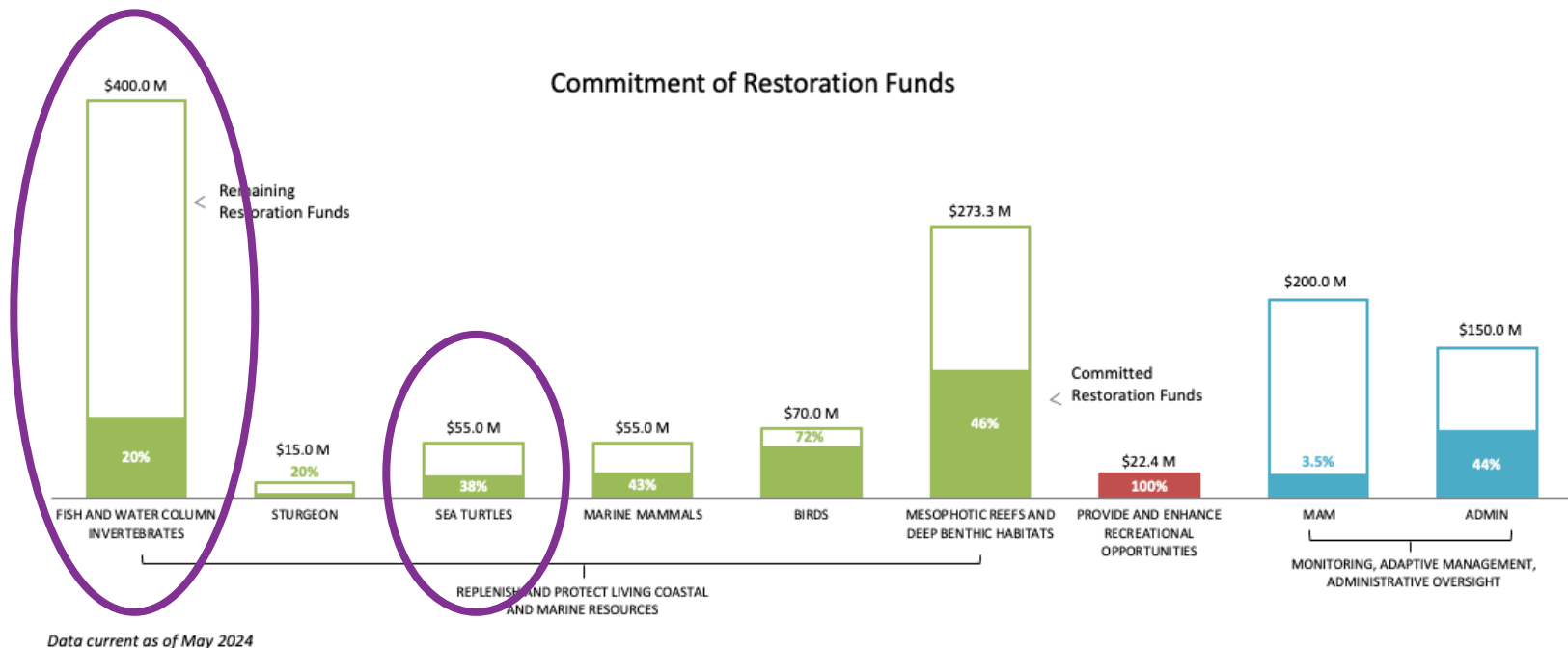
## **U.S. Department of Agriculture**

Ben Battle  
Ron Howard

# Open Ocean Funding Allocation



- A total of \$1.2 billion will be received in payments through 2031
- \$651 million received to date



**\$868 million** for oceanic fishes and invertebrates, sea turtles, birds, sturgeon, marine mammals, and deep-sea coral communities



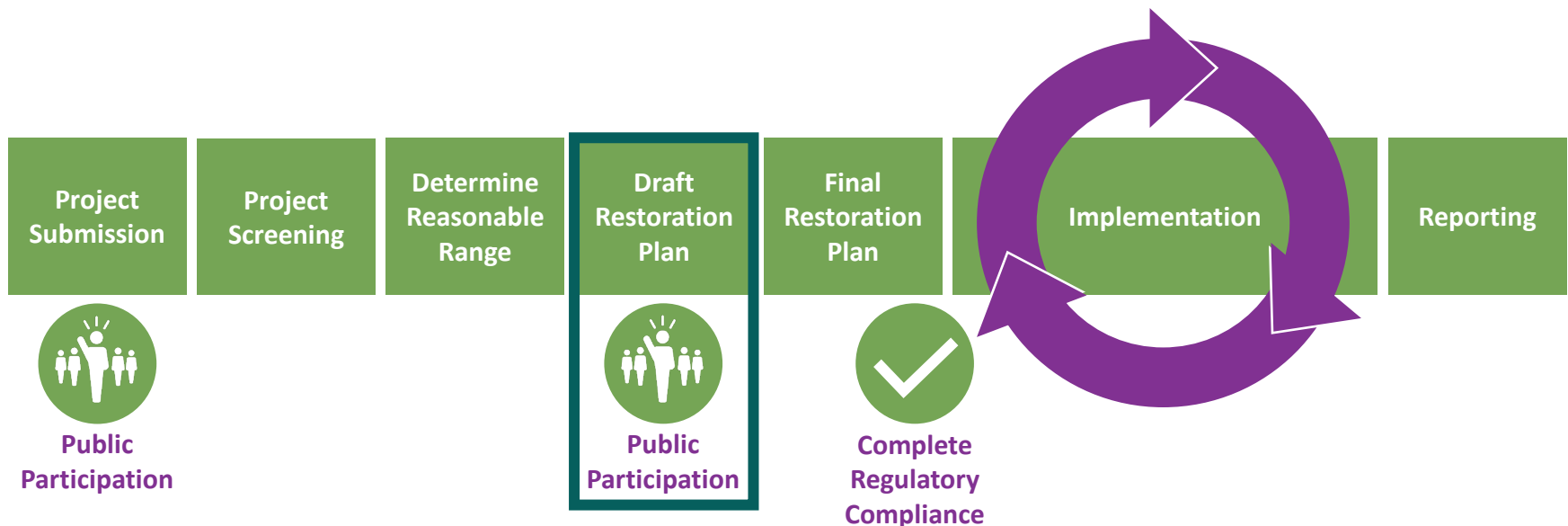
# Open Ocean Restoration Plan 4 Development



# Restoration Planning Process and Timeline



- June 1, 2023: Call for project ideas
- June 25, 2024: Notice of restoration plan development
- October 30, 2024: Notice of availability of Draft RP4/EA
- November 14 & 20, 2024: Draft RP4/EA public webinars
- December 16, 2024: End of Draft RP4/EA comment period



# Open Ocean Draft Restoration Plan 4 Overview



- Proposes restoration for oceanic fish, invertebrates, and sea turtles.
- Evaluates 12 restoration projects identified through robust screening.
- Public comments accepted from October 30 to December 16, 2024.

**10 preferred projects totaling over \$210 million**





# Fish and Water Column Invertebrates (FWCI) Restoration Alternatives

# Return 'Em Right: Species and Area Expansion (Reduction of Postrelease Mortality from Barotrauma in Gulf of Mexico Reef Fish Recreational Fisheries)



## ACTIVITIES

- Outreach and education
- Advance the use of release gear and best fishing practices

## LOCATION

Gulf of Mexico, Caribbean, U.S. Atlantic

## TARGET FWCI

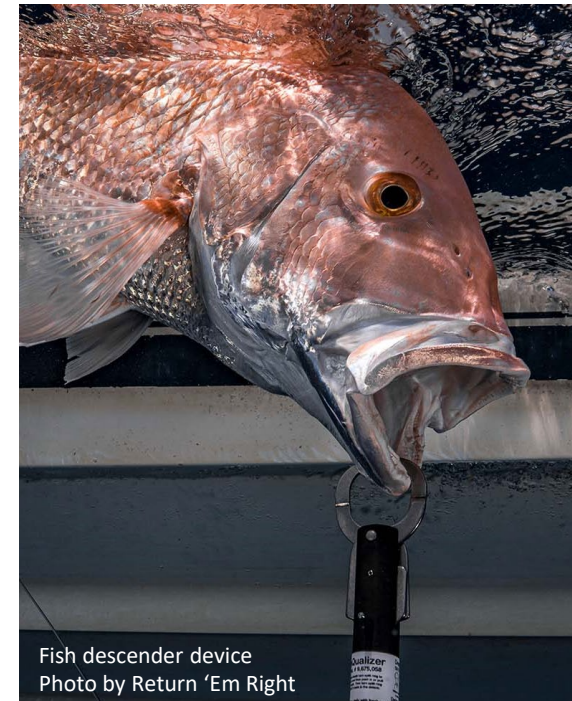
Reef fish, highly migratory species, coastal migratory pelagic species, and other species such as flounders, drums, and sea trout

## ESTIMATED BUDGET

\$66.2 million

## TIMELINE

15 years





# Next Generation Fishing



## ACTIVITIES

- Outreach, education, and support for a “next generation” fishing fleet
- Advance the use of new gear, best practices, and techniques to reduce bycatch
- Support data collection, analysis, and data sharing

## LOCATION

Gulf of Mexico, Caribbean, Atlantic

## TARGET FWCI

Reef and reef-associated fish, highly migratory species, coastal migratory pelagic species, and other species such as menhaden, drums, and sea trout

## ESTIMATED BUDGET

\$57.2 million

## TIMELINE

15 years



Fishing vessels  
Photo by NOAA Fisheries

# Communication Networks and Mapping Tools to Reduce Fish Mortality



## ACTIVITIES

- Data collection, analysis, and model development
- Develop spawning aggregation conservation strategy
- Enhance at-sea observer coverage for reef fish fishery to gather data on restoration effectiveness
- Develop communication and mapping tools to reduce bycatch

## LOCATION

U.S. Gulf of Mexico

## TARGET FWCI

Reef fish, highly migratory species, and other priority fish species

## ESTIMATED BUDGET

\$18 million

## TIMELINE

8 years



# Reduction of Diverse Threats to Fish and Water Column Invertebrates



## ACTIVITIES

- Prevent and remove marine debris and invasive species
- Reduce negative effects from changes in water quality and energy development and production
- Outreach and education

## LOCATION

U.S. Gulf of Mexico

## TARGET FWCI

Reef fish, drums, sea trout, highly migratory species, forage fish, crabs, lobsters, and water column invertebrates

## ESTIMATED BUDGET

\$14.3 million

## TIMELINE

10 years





# Education and Stewardship Partnerships with Charter Anglers



## ACTIVITIES

- Outreach and education
- Reduce sources of mortality from illegal charter fishing

## LOCATION

U.S. Gulf of Mexico

## TARGET FWCI

Reef fish, highly migratory species, and other oceanic fishes

## ESTIMATED BUDGET

\$3 million

## TIMELINE

8 years



# Communication, Adaptive Management, Planning, and Integration



## ACTIVITIES

- Enhance monitoring support
- Facilitate communication across DWH FWCI restoration projects

## LOCATION

Gulf of Mexico, Caribbean, Atlantic

## TARGET FWCI

All Open Ocean FWCI Strategic Plan priority species

## ESTIMATED BUDGET

\$23.3 million

- \$8 million FWCI
- \$15.3 million MAM allocation

## TIMELINE

15 years



# Reduction in Fish Post-Release Mortality from Depredation



## ACTIVITIES

- Expand collection and analysis of data
- Develop and test strategies to mitigate depredation
- Outreach and education

## LOCATION

U.S. Gulf of Mexico, South U.S. Atlantic

## TARGET FWCI

Reef fish, highly migratory species, and other oceanic fishes

## ESTIMATED BUDGET

\$5.1 million

## TIMELINE

10 years



Photo by Matt McIntosh Florida Keys National Marine Sanctuary





# Sea Turtles Restoration Alternatives

# Sea Turtle Nesting Habitat Protection Expansion in Florida (Long Term Nesting Habitat Protection for Sea Turtles)



## ACTIVITIES

- Nesting habitat acquisition
- Removal of derelict structures

## LOCATION

Archie Carr and Hobe Sound NWR,  
Florida Atlantic Coast

## TARGET SEA TURTLES

Loggerhead, green, leatherback

## ESTIMATED BUDGET

\$5 million

## TIMELINE

6 years



Green sea turtle hatchling at Archie Carr NWR  
Photo by Keenan Adams, USFWS



# Gulf-Wide Sea Turtle Bycatch Reduction



## ACTIVITIES

- Engage commercial fisheries through the Gear Monitoring Team
- Encourage adoption of small-bar turtle excluder devices (TEDs)

## LOCATION

U.S. Gulf of Mexico

## TARGET SEA TURTLES

All five injured species

## ESTIMATED BUDGET

\$8.5 million

## TIMELINE

8 years



Turtle excluder device  
Photo by NOAA & U.S. Dept of State

# Gulf-Wide Sea Turtle Vessel Strike Reduction



## ACTIVITIES

- Phase 1 – complete data analyses
- Phase 2 – evaluate potential hotspots
- Phase 3 – implement site-specific, voluntary measures

## LOCATION

U.S. Gulf of Mexico coastline

## TARGET SEA TURTLES

All five injured species

## ESTIMATED BUDGET

\$3.5 million

## TIMELINE

8 years



Green sea turtle  
Photo from Pixabay

# Gulf-Wide Sea Turtle Stranding Network and Emergency Response Enhancements



## ACTIVITIES

- Coordinate Gulf-wide Stranding Network activities
- Support emergency response and enhance emergency preparedness
- Enhance Stranding Network data management and analysis

## LOCATION

U.S. Gulf of Mexico coastline

## TARGET SEA TURTLES

All five injured species

## ESTIMATED BUDGET

\$11 million

- \$5.3 million Sea Turtles
- \$5.7 million MAM allocation

## TIMELINE

8 years



# Kemp's Ridley Nesting Enhancement in Mexico



## ACTIVITIES

- Conduct nesting beach patrols
- Protect sea turtle eggs and nests
- Maintain sea turtle camp infrastructure

## LOCATION

Tamaulipas, Mexico

## TARGET SEA TURTLES

Kemp's ridley

## ESTIMATED BUDGET

\$5.5 million

## TIMELINE

10 years



Kemp's ridley sea turtle nesting  
Photo by National Park Service





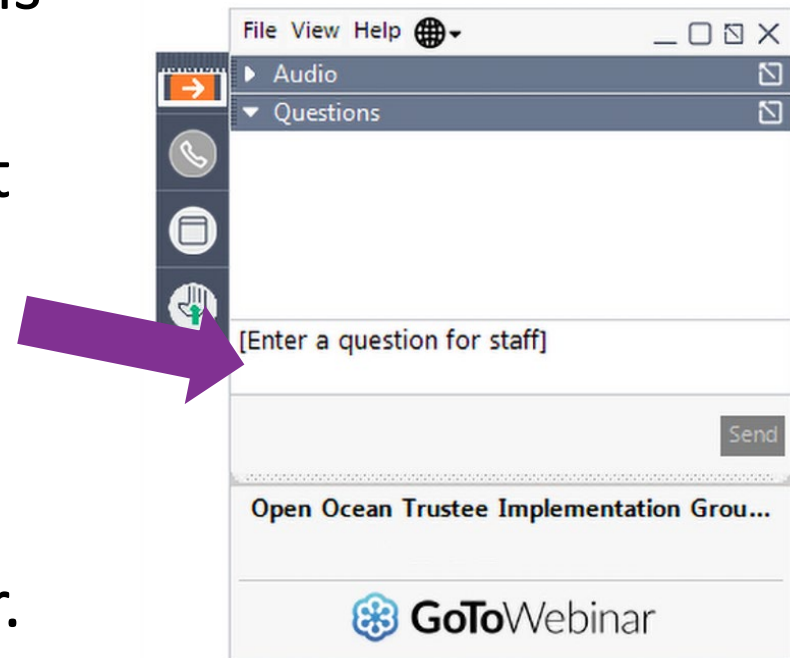
# Open House: Questions and Answers



# Open House Participation



- Please type your questions in the “Questions” box.
- We will do our best to get to as many questions as possible.
- Please note that formal public comments will be taken later in the webinar. Please only enter **questions** during the Open House.





# Public Comment Session

# Public Comment Participation



- If you would like to provide a ***verbal comment***, enter your audio PIN – you will be unmuted at the appropriate time.
- Type your name into the “Questions” box to get into the speaking queue.

The screenshot shows the GoToWebinar interface with the following sections and annotations:

- Audio Section:**
  - Options: ☐ Computer audio, ☒ Phone call. A red arrow points to the "Phone call" option with the text: "If you call into the webinar with a phone, do not select computer audio."
  - Fields: Dial: ###-###-####, Access Code: ###-###-####, Audio PIN: ##. A red arrow points to the "Audio PIN" field with the text: "If you use a phone and wish to make a comment you will need to enter your personal audio PIN in order to speak. (Computer audio users do not need to enter a PIN)".
  - Text: "Already on the call? Press ### now." and "United States" (dropdown menu).
  - Link: "Problem dialing in?"
- Questions Section:**
  - Text: "[Enter a question for staff]". A red arrow points to this text with the text: "To communicate with staff, type questions here."
  - Button: "Send"
- Footer:**
  - Text: "Multi sessions different registrants", "Webinar ID: 357-351-315"
  - Logo: GoToWebinar



# Next Steps



# How to Submit Comments



- Online:  
<https://parkplanning.nps.gov/OOTIGRP4>
- By mail (hard copy),  
addressed to:  
U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service  
Gulf Restoration Office  
1875 Century Blvd.  
Atlanta, GA 30345

Comments  
accepted through  
**December 16,  
2024**



**Thank You**