

Better Bycatch Reduction Devices for the Gulf of Mexico Commercial Shrimp Trawl Fishery

Fish Restoration Type



Bycatch reduction devices are devices inserted into shrimp trawls which allow non-target species to escape while retaining shrimp.



This project would restore fish by reducing finfish bycatch in the commercial shrimp trawl fishery.

The shrimp trawl fishery targets brown, white, and pink shrimp. However, as trawl fishing involves the use of nets, shrimp trawling can result in unintentional catch of

Estimated Cost and Timeframe

\$ 17,171,000 • 7 years

other species. This finfish bycatch can include juvenile red snapper, croaker, porgy, pinfish, and Gulf menhaden fish species.

Project Objectives

- Identify new advances in BRD technology.
- Validate the effectiveness of improved BRDs.
- Maximize the use of BRDs through outreach and incentives.
- Maximize restoration benefits through dockside BRD training.

Finfish bycatch in the shrimp trawl fisheries is a concern as many of these species are commercially, recreationally, and ecologically important.

To reduce finfish bycatch, this project proposes to identify and implement a program to promote the use of better bycatch reduction devices (BRDs). BRDs are devices inserted into shrimp trawls which allow non-target species to escape while retaining shrimp.

The project supports two of the Trustees' goals for restoring injured fish species: 1) reduce direct sources of mortality; and 2) provide methodologies and incentives to fishing communities that reduce impacts to fishery resources.

Components

The proposed project area would include the northern Gulf of Mexico off the coasts of Texas, Louisiana, Mississippi, and Alabama. Outreach activities would be conducted at shrimping fleet locations along the Gulf coast.

The initial activity of the project would be to conduct a BRD innovation survey within the Gulf shrimp fishery to identify industry-based

BRD innovations currently in use. The project would engage with U.S. and international entities that are actively involved in shrimp trawl bycatch reduction development to identify BRDs for testing.

Proof-of-concept tests would then be conducted on prototypes to identify innovative BRD technology for full certification testing. To promote the use of these BRDs and help fishermen install and use them correctly, outreach workshops, training, and incentives would be made available. Experts on gear modification with longstanding working relationships with fishermen would be engaged to help develop these incentives to maximize project participation.

Engagement with the Gulf shrimp fishery and its supporting industries would continue throughout the project duration to get ongoing feedback on all new BRD technology identified.

Year one activities would be focused on surveying and information gathering to identify new BRD innovations. Activities for years two through four would consist of conducting proof-of-concept and certification testing. Outreach and incentive-based engagement would be conducted throughout the seven year project timeline.

This is one of 18 Open Ocean Final Restoration Plan 2 projects selected to restore for injuries from the *Deepwater Horizon* oil spill. Based on public input, this is one of several projects revised to increase opportunities for the fishing industry to engage in restoration efforts.