



Open Ocean Monitoring and Adaptive Management Priorities



The Open Ocean Trustee Implementation Group (TIG) is responsible for restoring Open Ocean resources that were

injured during the Deepwater Horizon oil spill, including fish and water column invertebrates, birds, marine mammals, turtles, sturgeon, and mesophotic and deep benthic communities.

Because of the unprecedented scale of the restoration that will be supported, the Open Ocean TIG is using a robust Monitoring and Adaptive Management (MAM) approach to support restoration planning, implementation, and evaluation.

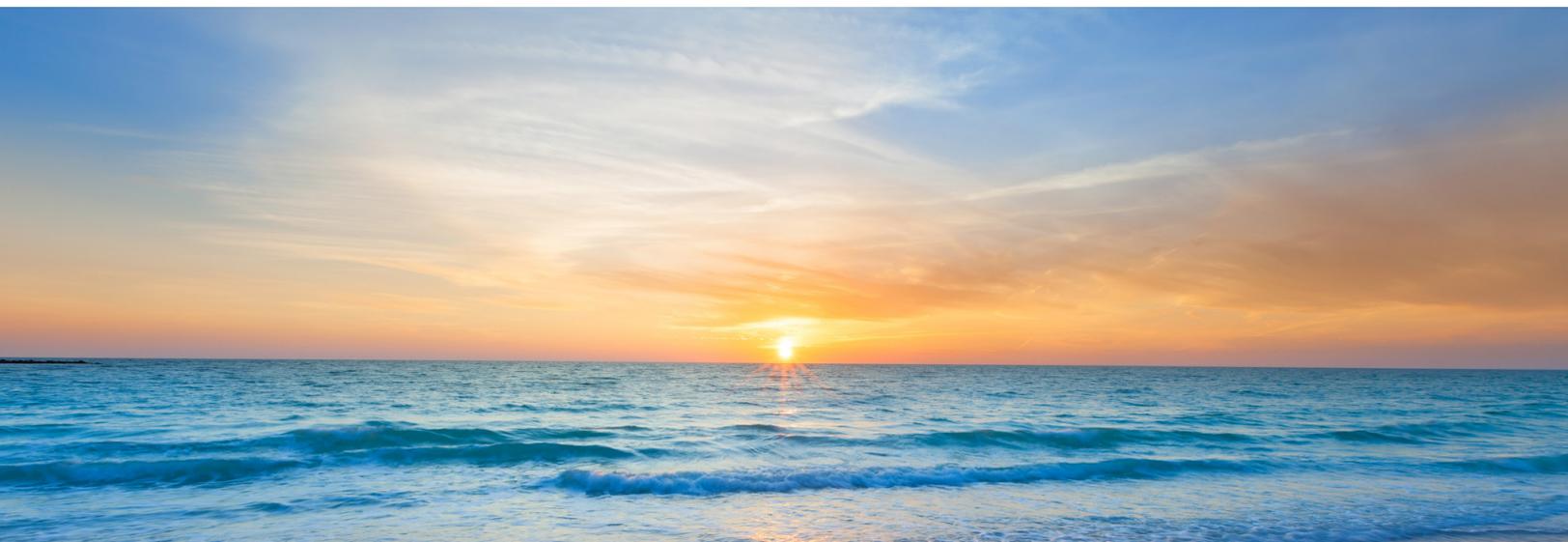
A key part of the approach includes identifying specific MAM priorities that will guide the Open Ocean TIG's MAM-related work. The priorities, presented here, were identified through the process, as described in the June 2020 Open Ocean MAM Strategy. Visit [gulfspillrestoration.noaa.gov/restoration-areas/open-ocean](https://www.noaa.gov/restoration-areas/open-ocean) for more information.



Evaluate Restoration Progress

Under this priority, the Open Ocean TIG will use a wide range of data to help assess the combined effect of restoration activities on Open Ocean resources. The following information needs may be addressed:

1. Use of indicators to assess restoration progress, recognizing that not all species and habitats in the Gulf of Mexico can be monitored.
2. Cumulative impacts of multiple projects, implemented across different locations and over time.
3. Indirect impacts of Open Ocean restoration actions arising from the interconnected nature of the Gulf of Mexico ecosystem.
4. Influences of external factors on the success of restoration actions, including changing environmental conditions, extreme weather, and policies and management.





Identify Stressors

Open Ocean resources may be affected by multiple natural and man-made stressors, many of which present potential

opportunities for restoration. Under this priority, the Open Ocean TIG is focused on assessing when and where key stressors occur in the Gulf, including identifying where and when they are most intense and how much of a threat they pose to certain resources. The following information needs related to stressors may be addressed:

1. The nature and frequency of Open Ocean resource interactions with fisheries.
2. Marine debris location, type, extent, and potential impacts on Open Ocean resources.
3. The location, timing, type, and frequency of vessel traffic and its impact on Open Ocean resources.
4. The distribution and intensity of underwater noise and its impact on Open Ocean resources.
5. The nature, distribution, and frequency of mineral extraction activities and their interactions with Open Ocean resources.
6. The overlap in space and time of Open Ocean stressors and resources, including the identification of areas that are both highly impacted by stressors and ecologically valuable.



Assess Focal Resources and Important Habitats

Under this priority, the Open Ocean TIG is focused on analyzing data to identify where and when particular geographic areas are highly valuable or productive for Open Ocean resources. The following information needs may be addressed:

1. Locations and characteristics of ecologically valuable habitats.
2. The distribution, abundance, health, and status of focal species.

Next Steps

Now that initial MAM priorities have been identified, the Open Ocean TIG will identify opportunities to most effectively address them. As a part of this process, the Open Ocean TIG may review existing datasets, models, and ongoing science and monitoring efforts; review project ideas submitted to the Trustees' project portal; and hold workshops or webinars to obtain further input from stakeholders, technical experts, and other interested members of the public.

For more information, contact
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