



# Open Ocean Restoration Area

## Upcoming Draft Restoration Plan 4 and Environmental Assessment

*Gulf States Marine Fisheries Commission Oct. 2024*

October 2024

1

# Agenda



- *Deepwater Horizon* Natural Resource Damage Assessment and 2016 Settlement
- Open Ocean Trustee Implementation Group
- Upcoming Draft Restoration Plan 4/Environmental Assessment
- Next Steps

# Deepwater Horizon Oil Spill

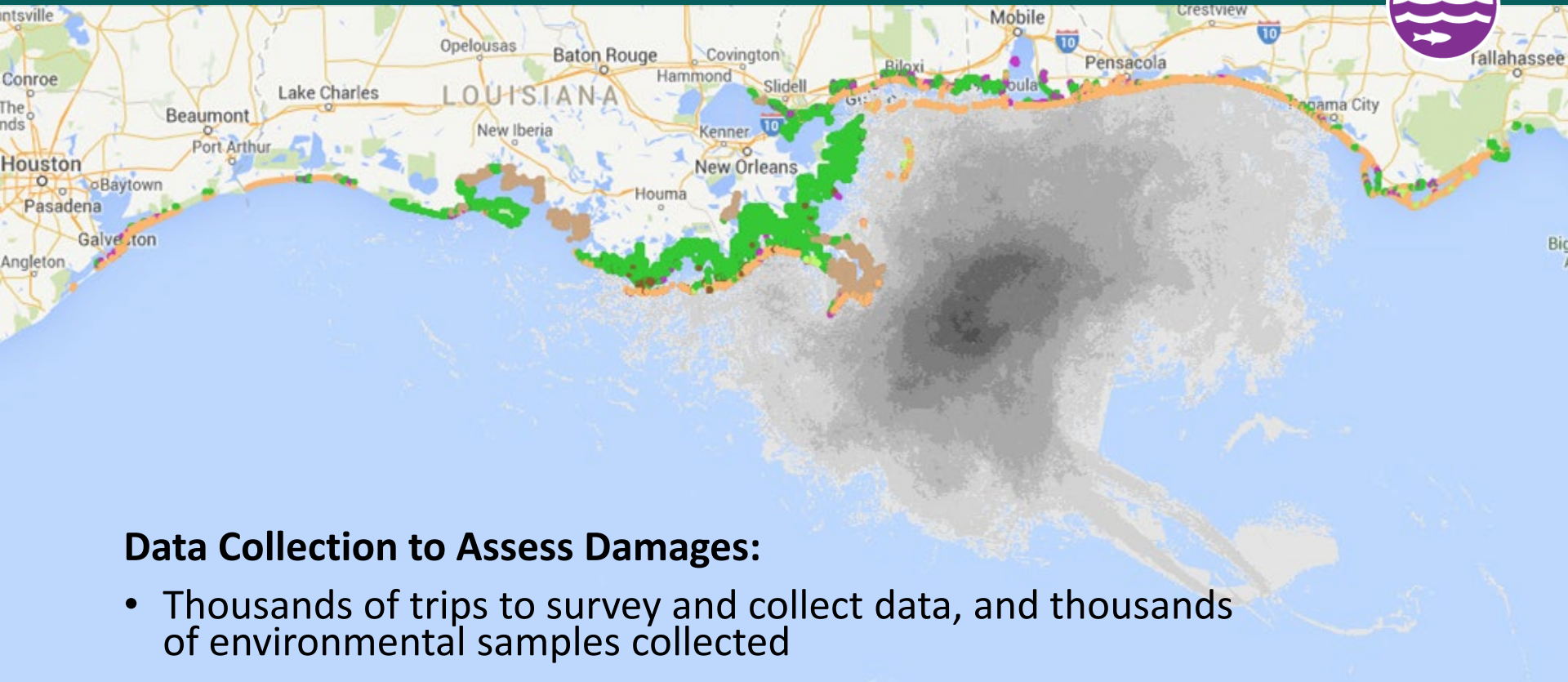


- Tragic loss of 11 workers and largest marine oil spill in U.S. history
- 3.19 million barrels (134 million gallons) of oil released into the ocean over 87 days
- 43,300 square miles: Cumulative extent of surface slick during the spill—an area almost the size of Mississippi



Heavy band of oil.  
Photo by NOAA.

# 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

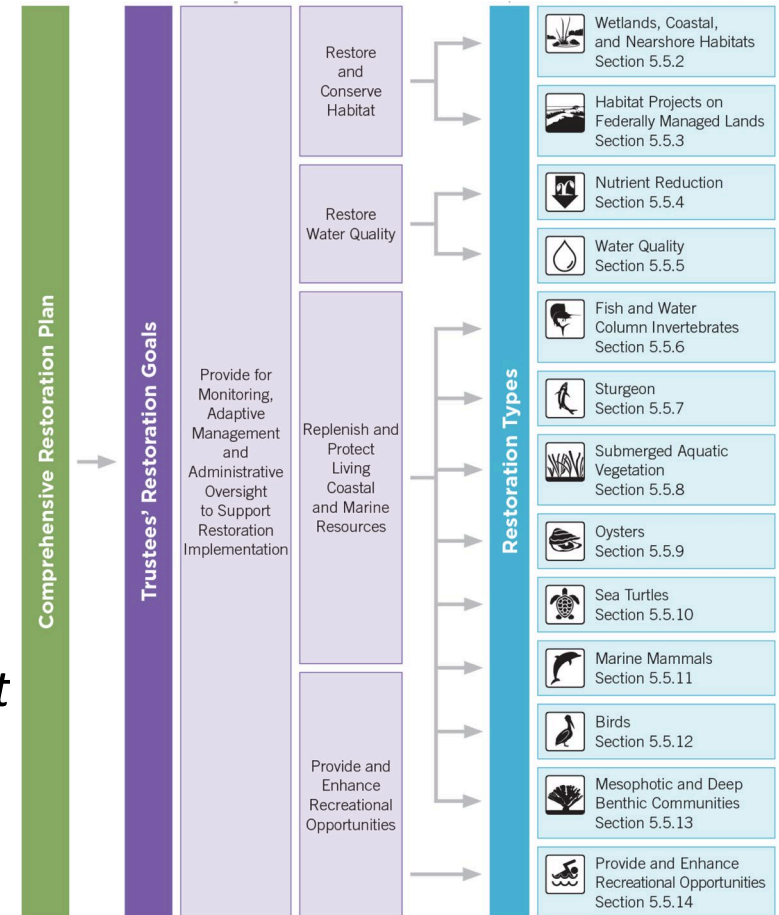


# Deepwater Horizon NRDA Settlement



A total of 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  
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**U.S. Environmental  
Protection Agency  
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Danny Wiegand  
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**U.S. Department of  
Agriculture**

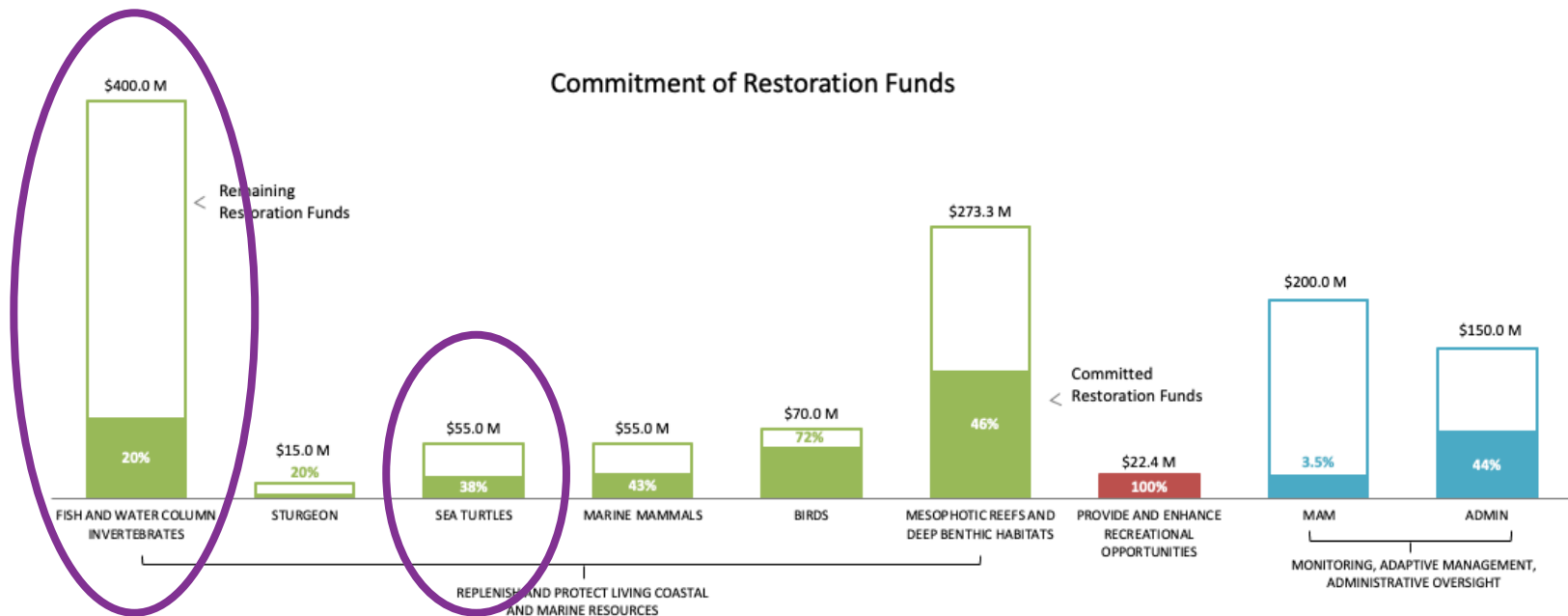
Ben Battle  
Ron Howard



# Open Ocean Funding Allocation



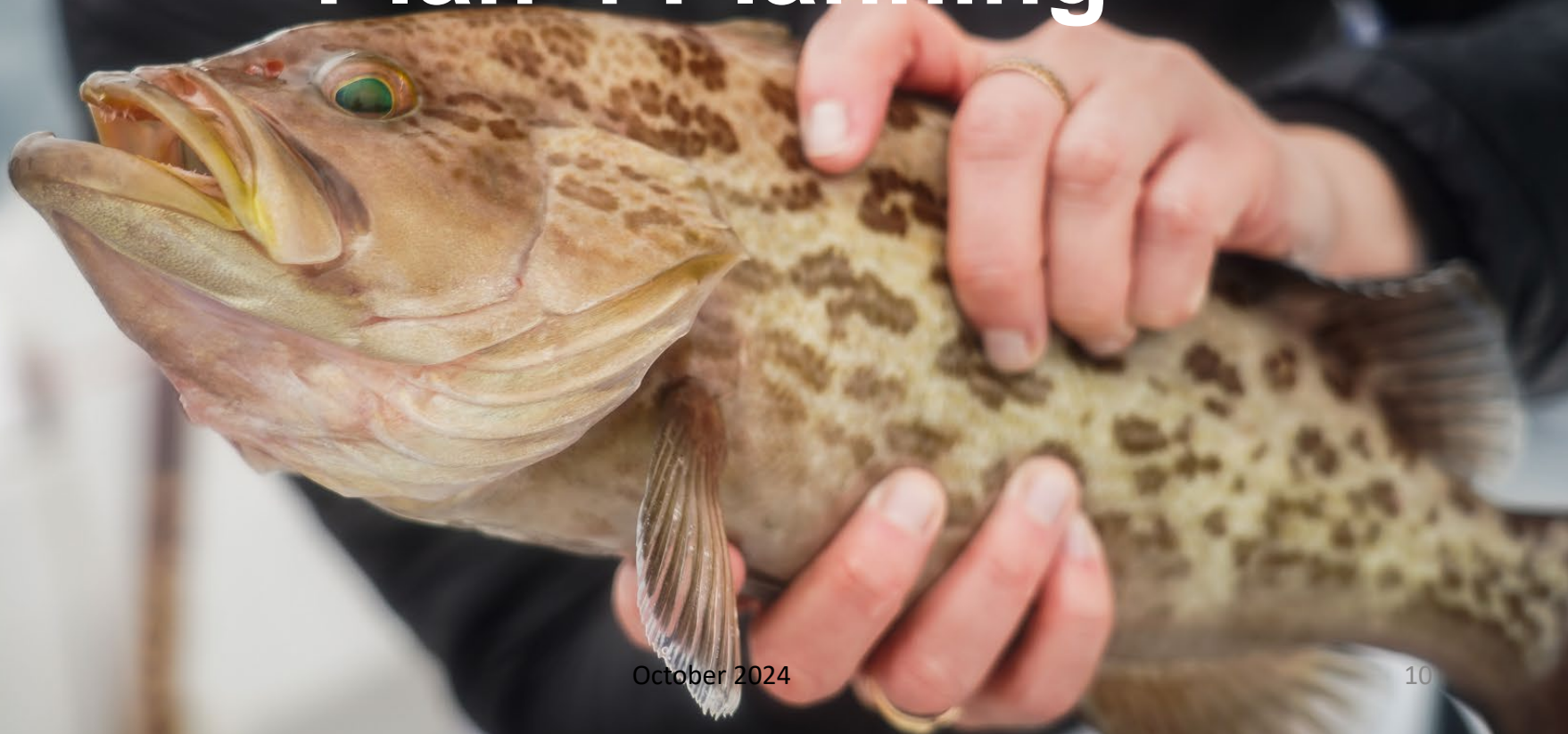
- A total of \$1.2 billion will be received in payments through 2031
- \$651 million received to date



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



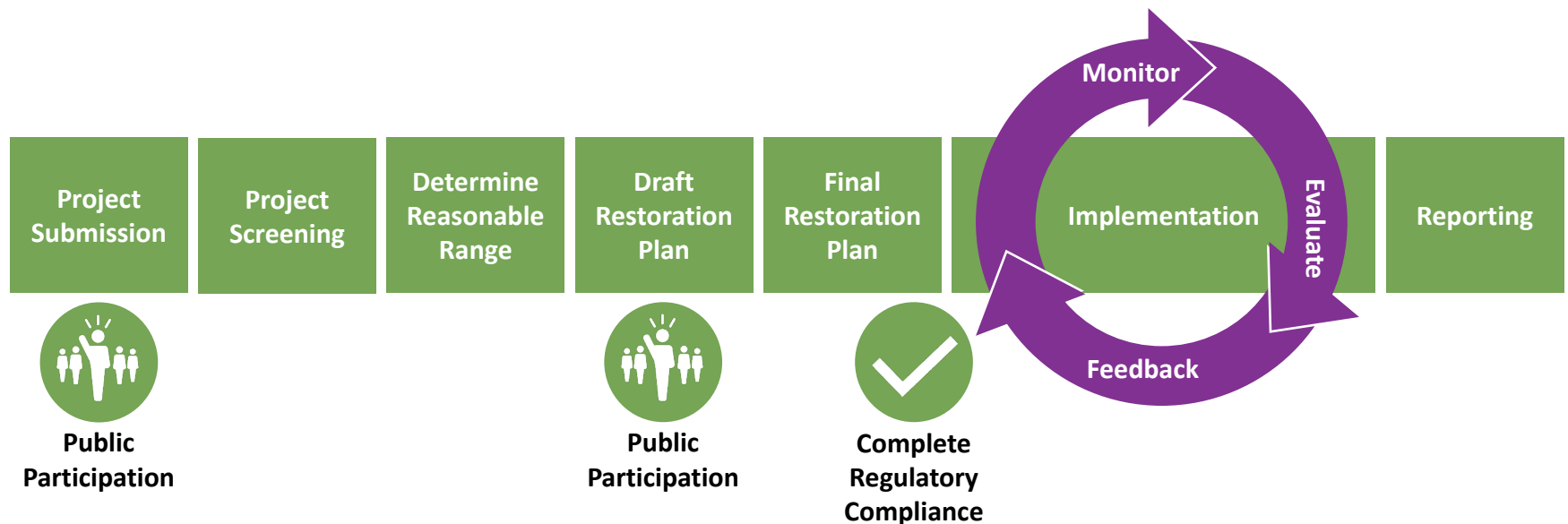
# Open Ocean Restoration Plan 4 Planning



# Restoration Planning Process and Timeline



- 6/1/23: Call for project ideas
- 6/25/24: Notice of restoration planning
- Soon: Notice of availability of Draft RP4/EA
- Planned in November: Draft RP4/EA public webinars
- 45 days Draft RP4/EA comment period



# Upcoming 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 will be considered before finalizing the plan in 2025.

Proposed projects anticipated for over **\$210 million**





# Anticipated Fish and Water Column Invertebrate (FWCI) Restoration Alternatives

October 2024

13

# Return 'Em Right: Species and Area Expansion



## ACTIVITIES

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

## LOCATION

U.S. Gulf of Mexico, Caribbean, Atlantic

## TARGET FWCI

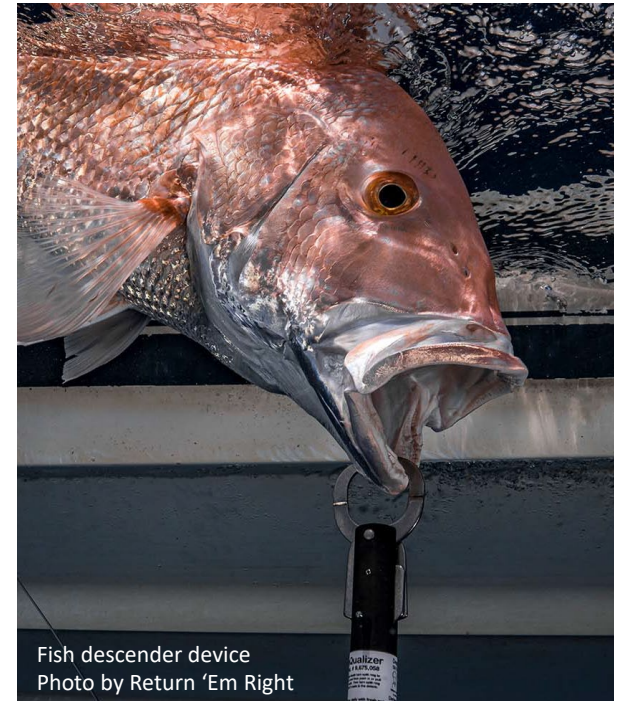
Reef fish, highly migratory species, flounder, coastal species, coastal migratory pelagic species

## ESTIMATED BUDGET

\$66.2 million

## TIMELINE

15 years





# Next Generation Fishing



## ACTIVITIES

- Outreach and education and development of “Next Generation” fishing fleet
- Advance the use of new gear, technology, and techniques to reduce bycatch
- Support data collection and communications systems

## LOCATION

Gulf of Mexico, Caribbean, Atlantic

## TARGET FWCI

Reef fish, highly migratory species, coastal species, coastal migratory pelagic species, menhaden

## 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
- Enhance at-sea observer coverage for reef fish fishery to gather data on restoration effectiveness
- Develop spawning aggregation conservation strategy
- Develop communication and mapping tools to reduce bycatch

## LOCATION

U.S. Gulf of Mexico

## TARGET FWCI

Reef fish, highly migratory species

## ESTIMATED BUDGET

\$18 million

## TIMELINE

8 years



Vermilion snapper  
Photo by G.P. Schmahl, Flower Garden Banks National Marine Sanctuary

# 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, highly migratory species, invertebrates

## ESTIMATED BUDGET

\$14.3 million

## TIMELINE

10 years



# Education and Stewardship Partnerships with Charter Anglers



## ACTIVITIES

- Outreach and education
- Reduce illegal charters

## LOCATION

U.S. Gulf of Mexico

## TARGET FWCI

Reef fish, highly migratory species

## ESTIMATED BUDGET

\$3 million

## TIMELINE

8 years



Fishing vessels  
Photo by NOAA  
Fisheries



# 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



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

# 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, U.S. South Atlantic

## TARGET FWCI

Reef fish, highly migratory species

## ESTIMATED BUDGET

\$5.1 million

## TIMELINE

10 years



Vermilion snapper  
Photo by G.P. Schmah, Flower Garden Banks National Marine Sanctuary





# Anticipated Sea Turtles Restoration Alternatives

October 2024

21

# Sea Turtles Restoration Alternatives



- Sea Turtle Nesting Habitat Protection Expansion in Florida (Long Term Nesting Habitat Protection for Sea Turtles)
- Gulf-Wide Sea Turtle Bycatch Reduction
- Gulf-Wide Sea Turtle Vessel Strike Reduction
- Gulf-Wide Sea Turtle Stranding Network and Emergency Response Enhancements
- Kemp's Ridley Nesting Enhancement in Mexico



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



- OORP4 Release in coming weeks
- James.Reinhardt@NOAA.gov
- <https://www.gulfspillrestoration.noaa.gov/>
  - Subscribe for updates!

# Thank You