

The NewsRoom

Release #: 3019

Date: January 2, 2004

From Algae to Snapper: MMS Presents Gulf of Mexico Fisheries Research

The latest findings about the nature of the relationship between aquatic life and the offshore places they call home are chronicled in a new set of scientific peer-reviewed papers now available from the Minerals Management Service. The papers were published by the prestigious American Fisheries Society as "*Symposium 36: Fisheries, Reefs, and Offshore Development*," in September of 2003.

The papers, for use in policy decisions about artificial reefs and offshore structure removal, address fisheries issues and the presence of offshore structures in the Gulf of Mexico.

As part of understanding the role that oil and gas structures play in the ecology of Gulf fisheries, the scientists made comparisons between natural reefs and artificial reefs. It should be noted that biofouling communities such as barnacles, algae, and oysters also call these structures home.

Most of the papers focus on fish and fisheries in the northern Gulf of Mexico, where over 4,000 offshore oil and gas structures are found. The role that these structures play in the life cycles of fish is investigated. Of particular interest is the commercially important red snapper and how these fish interact with the structures and are affected by the removal of the structures.

Some of the papers were expanded from [The Proceedings of the Gulf of Mexico Fish and Fisheries Meeting](#), which was published in January 2002 by MMS (MMS 2002-004). Along with the published proceedings, MMS provided financial support for the publication of selected papers in the symposium.

As part of understanding the role that oil and gas structures play in the ecology of Gulf fisheries, the scientists made comparisons between natural reefs and other types of artificial reefs. These structures also supply hard surface for biofouling communities, such as barnacles, algae, and oysters.

A limited number of copies of the *Symposium* are available in the Minerals Management Service Gulf of [Mexico Region Public Information Office](#), 1-800-200-GULF, and the *Symposium* can also be ordered from the [American Fisheries Society](#).

MMS is the Federal agency in the U.S. Department of the Interior that manages the nation's oil, natural gas, and other mineral resources on the Outer Continental Shelf in Federal offshore waters. The agency also collects, accounts for, and disburses mineral revenues from Federal and American Indian leases. These revenues totaled over \$6 billion in 2002 and nearly \$127 billion since the agency was created in 1982. Annually, nearly \$1 billion from those revenues go into the Land and Water Conservation Fund for the acquisition and development of state and Federal park and recreation lands.

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