Workshops & Synthesis Studies

Completed (1998) — Proceedings: Public Workshop, Decommissioning and Removal of Oil and Gas Facilities Offshore California: Recent Experiences and Future Deepwater Challenges, September 1997

This two-day workshop addressed research, technology, and socio-economic impacts and disposition issues for decommissioning projects offshore California. The proceedings include plenary addresses; sessions on technical, environmental, and disposition studies, and agency lessons learned; position papers from stakeholder groups; and appendices about regulatory framework, environmental review process, platform schematics, and decommissioning decision trees for onshore and offshore facilities.

Report (MMS 98-0023): https://www.data.boem.gov/PI/PDFImages/ESPIS/3/3503.pdf

Completed (2001) — The Politics, Economics, and Ecology of Decommissioning Offshore Oil and Gas Structures

This study by the University of California, Santa Barbara (UCSB) identified costs and benefits of various options to decommission platforms in the Southern California Bight, described the history of California's artificial reef program, and characterized the political and ecological factors that have contributed to the policy debate over rigs-to-reefs as an alternative to complete removal of platforms. The report includes a case study of rigs-to-reef programs in the Gulf of Mexico.

Report (MMS 2001-006): https://www.data.boem.gov/PI/PDFImages/ESPIS/3/3505.pdf

Completed (2003) — Decommissioning Environmental Studies Workshop Proceedings (2003)

This three-day workshop addressed information needs and scientific data gaps relating to analyzing potential environmental impacts of total removal of platforms offshore California. It identified environmental studies that would support decisionmaking about decommissioning proposals, and identified leveraging and partnering opportunities for funding the studies. The proceedings include overview presentations about the decommissioning process and environmental and regulatory issues, and a case history of decommissioning the 4-H platforms (Hazel, Hilda, Hope, and Heidi); it also includes presentations and summaries about platform-associated biota and fishing, disposition (onshore dismantlement, disposal, and recycling), and protected species (marine mammals, birds, and turtles).

<u>Proceedings</u>: https://www.boem.gov/Oil-and-Gas-Energy-Program/Leasing/ Regional-Leasing/Pacific-Region/Leasing/Decomissioning/Decommissioning-Workshops-Introduction.aspx







Ongoing (to be completed August 2018) — Synthesis of Pacific Platform Research

This study by UCSB is summarizing and synthesizing three decades of MMS, BOEMRE, and BOEM-funded research about the ecology and biological assemblages of fishes and invertebrates at platforms and natural reefs offshore southern and central California. The resulting synthesis, to be published as a special issue of a scientific journal, will further understanding of platform ecology and assemblages, and the influence of the platform assemblages on the Pacific coastal ecosystem.

Study Profile: https://www.boem.gov/PC-15-03/

Ongoing (to be completed September 2019) — Net Environmental Benefit Analysis of Pacific Platform Decommissioning Scenarios

This study by UCSB will estimate the community structure and biological productivity of fishes and invertebrates at platforms offshore California under different decommissioning scenarios (full removal, partial removal) and compare them to undisturbed pristine habitat. It will model and predict the net environmental consequences to the marine environment for the different scenarios, and will determine if partial removal would provide a net environmental benefit compared to full removal.

Study Profile: https://www.boem.gov/pc-16-x07/

Platform Ecology Studies: Fish

Completed (2003) — The Ecological Role of Oil and Gas Production Platforms and Natural Outcrops on Fishes in Southern and Central California: A Synthesis of Information

This study by UCSB, in cooperation with U.S. Geological Survey (USGS), synthesized information collected from 1995 to 2001 on fishes living around eight platforms and eight natural rock outcrops (reefs) at similar depths to better understand how offshore platforms contribute to fish populations and fishery productivity offshore southern and central California. It characterized the fish assemblages around platforms and natural reefs, examined how oceanography affects patterns of recruitment and community structure of reef fishes, and described patterns of fish diversity and abundance among habitat types. Report (MMS 2003-032): https://www.data.boem.gov/PI/PDFImages/ESPIS/0/183.pdf

Completed (2003) — Consequences of Alternative Decommissioning Options to Reef Fish Assemblages and Implications for Decommissioning Policy

This study by UCSB estimated potential ecological effects of decommissioning platforms offshore southern California (through total or partial removal) on regional fish population and assemblages. It also examined whether scientific information has influenced decommissioning policy offshore California and in the Gulf of Mexico.

Report (MMS 2003-053): https://www.data.boem.gov/PI/PDFImages/ESPIS/3/3552.pdf

Completed (2005) — Ecological Performance of OCS Platforms as Fish Habitat off California

This study by UCSB determined certain aspects of the ecological performance of fishes living on offshore platforms compared to those living on natural reefs offshore California, including larval production, growth rate, and mortality rate of various species.

Report (MMS 2005-005): https://www.data.boem.gov/PI/PDFImages/ESPIS/3/3471.pdf







Completed (2006) — Relative Contribution of POCS Oil Platforms to Regional Population Dynamics of a Model Reef Fish, The Blackeye Goby Rhinogobiops nicholsii, in the Eastern Santa Barbara Channel

This study by UCSB tested whether platforms in the eastern Santa Barbara Channel influence the regional population abundance of the blackeye goby, the most common demersal fish found on the platforms. It found that populations at the test site (Platform Gina) are not a significant part of the regional stock of the species, indicating that the platform's removal or in-situ modification (through decommissioning) would not have an important influence on the species' regional abundance and population dynamics.

Report (MMS 2006-048): https://www.data.boem.gov/PI/PDFImages/ESPIS/4/4381.pdf

Completed (2007) — Site Fidelity of Characteristic Fish Species at Offshore Oil Platforms in the Santa Barbara Channel

This study by California State University, Long Beach (CSULB) monitored 15 species of fishes at three platforms in the eastern Santa Barbara Channel (Gail, Gilda, and Grace). Individuals were monitored using acoustic telemetry to determine the residence time, site fidelity, and movement patterns. It also determined the degree to which site fidelity varies among individuals, species, and platforms.

Report (MMS 2007-006): https://www.data.boem.gov/PI/PDFImages/ESPIS/4/4931.pdf

Completed (2008) — Assessing the Fate of Juvenile Rockfish at Offshore Platforms and Natural Reefs in the Santa Barbara Channel

This study by UCSB investigated the role of ocean currents in delivering juvenile rockfishes to offshore platforms in the eastern Santa Barbara Channel (Gilda and Gail). It also assessed the likelihood of fish recruits encountering natural reef habitat if the platforms were removed and if survival would be compromised in the absence of the platforms.

Report (MMS 2007-008): https://www.data.boem.gov/PI/PDFImages/ESPIS/4/4865.pdf

Completed (2009) — Reproductive Ecology and Body Burden of Resident Fish Prior to Decommissioning

This study by UCSB examined possible contaminants in fishes living around platforms offshore southern California and compared contaminant levels in several species at platform and natural habitats. It also assessed the reproductive health of fish from platforms and natural habitats.

Report (MMS 2009-019): https://www.data.boem.gov/PI/PDFImages/ESPIS/4/4916.pdf

Completed (2009) — Translocation, Homing Behavior and Habitat Utilization of Groundfishes around Offshore Oil Platforms in the East Santa Barbara Channel

This study by CSULB determined whether groundfishes translocated from platforms in the Santa Barbara Channel (Gail, Gilda, and Grace) to a natural reef of comparable depth would home back to their sites of capture or take residency at their new location and, conversely, whether fishes translocated from a natural reef to a platform (Grace or Gilda) would return to their home reef.

Report (MMS 2009-033): https://www.data.boem.gov/PI/PDFImages/ESPIS/4/4914.pdf











Completed (2010) — Fish Assemblages Associated with Platforms and Natural Reefs in Areas where Data Are Non-existent or Limited

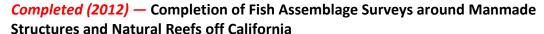
This study by UCSB surveyed fish assemblages and habitats at 20 platforms and 110 natural reefs offshore southern and central California to fill information gaps about the comparative importance of platforms and reefs as fish habitat, and to analyze the potential environmental consequences of platform decommissioning on local or regional fish populations. It also compared fish assemblages at two platforms – one with relatively little jacket complexity (Gail) with one that is more complex (Eureka) – to assess the role of habitat complexity in structuring fish assemblages.

Report (BOEMRE 2010-012): https://www.data.boem.gov/PI/PDFImages/ESPIS/4/5046.pdf

Completed (2011) — Spatial and Seasonal Variation in the Biomass and Size Distribution of Juvenile Fishes Associated with a Petroleum Platform off the California Coast, 2008-2010

This study by UCSB surveyed fish assemblages at seven platforms, seven natural reefs, and three shipwrecks offshore southern and central California to fill information gaps about the spatial and depth variability in recruitment of juvenile fishes to platforms and natural reefs. It elucidated the importance of the platform as a depth-stratified fish habitat as compared to adjacent natural reefs of comparable depths, and it estimated the potential environmental consequences of partial platform removal on local and regional fish populations.

Report (BOEMRE 2011-08): https://www.data.boem.gov/PI/PDFImages/ESPIS/4/5105.pdf



This study by UCSB surveyed fish assemblages at 11 platforms (some of which had never been surveyed) and two natural reefs offshore southern California, including a wide range of structures occupying a diversity of water depths, geographic locations, and water masses. It also estimated species densities at both platform and natural reef habitats, and synthesized the new data to describe the ecological performance of platforms as rockfish habitat and rockfish producers.

Report (BOEM 2012-020): https://www.data.boem.gov/PI/PDFImages/ESPIS/5/5188.pdf

Completed (2014) — Biological Productivity of Fish Associated with Offshore Oil and Gas Structures on the Pacific OCS

This study by Vantuna Research Group determined and compared the productivity of fish communities on 16 platforms to those on seven natural reefs offshore southern California and to published estimates of production from other marine ecosystems. It also evaluated the potential effects of partial platform removal on the biomass and production of the fish communities on the 16 platforms.

Report (BOEM 2014-030): https://www.data.boem.gov/PI/PDFImages/ESPIS/5/5387.pdf

Completed (2015) — Analysis of Fish Populations at Platforms off Summerland, California

This study by UCSB surveyed fish assemblages at eight platforms (A, B, C, Habitat, Henry, Hillhouse, Hogan, and Houchin) offshore Summerland, California. It also compared the assemblages with those at two other platforms at similar bottom depths in the Santa Barbara Channel (Holly and Gilda).

Report (BOEM 2015-019): https://www.boem.gov/2015-019/











Ongoing (to be completed 2018) — Regional Importance of OCS Oil and Gas Platforms as Rockfish Nurseries

This study by USGS is integrating seafloor habitat maps, current flow patterns, and field surveys to better understand the role that platform habitat may have in rebuilding stocks of overfished species. It is generating a stock assessment of juvenile fishes in the Southern California Bight, quantifying the contribution of platform habitat to regional production, and describing potential connectivity pathways between juvenile and adult habitats in the Santa Barbara Channel region and San Pedro Basin, focusing on platform-natural reef links.

Study Profile: https://www.boem.gov/pc-10-01/

Platform Ecology Studies: Biota Other Than Fish

Completed (1999) — Effect of Offshore Oil Platform Structures on the Distribution Patterns of Commercially Important Benthic Crustaceans, with Emphasis on the Rock Crab

This study by UCSB tested whether commercially important crab species occurred in higher densities beneath a platform in the Santa Barbara Channel (Holly) compared to adjacent soft-bottom habitat. It also characterized the spatial and temporal patterns of crab recruitment to the platform, including the importance of the platform invertebrate community as potential habitat and food source for crabs.

Report (MMS 99-0018): https://www.data.boem.gov/PI/PDFImages/ESPIS/4/4331.pdf

Completed (2004) — GIS Database Characterizing the Hardbottom Habitats Near OCS Structures in the Pacific Region

This study by Ocean Imaging compiled geophysical survey maps and biological reports from 1977 to 2002 to identify the locations and habitat characteristics of hardbottom features within 2 miles of OCS structures (including platforms, pipelines, and power cables) offshore southern California. It also developed a GIS database that can be used to determine the potential for damage to sensitive habitats during decommissioning activities for the OCS structures.

Report (MMS 2004-025): https://www.data.boem.gov/PI/PDFImages/ESPIS/4/4997.pdf

Completed (2005) — Survey of Invertebrate and Algal Communities on Offshore Oil and Gas Platforms in Southern California

This study by CSA determined abundance, density, and depth distribution/vertical zonation characteristics of invertebrate and algal communities on selected platforms and natural reefs offshore southern and central California. It also quantified biomass production estimates of the platform communities (and natural reef communities, where practical), and evaluated the relative importance of platform-associated invertebrate and algal communities to the ecology of the region.

Report (MMS 2005-070): https://www.data.boem.gov/PI/PDFImages/ESPIS/3/3407.pdf

Completed (2016) — Characterizing and Quantifying California Sea Lion (Zalophus californianus) Use of Offshore Oil and Gas Platforms in California

This study by the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, Alaska Fisheries Science Center characterized California sea lion use of five platforms offshore southern California (Elly, Gina, Habitat, Heritage, and Harvest) over a two-year period. Abundance, seasonal use patterns, and age/sex class structure were evaluated to assess the net benefit of platforms for sea lions and to provide data needed for permitting of future decommissioning activities. Report (BOEM 2016-009): https://www.data.boem.gov/PI/PDFImages/ESPIS/5/5571.pdf









Ongoing (to be completed May 2018) — Understanding the Role of Offshore Structures in Managing Potential Watersipora subtorquata Invasions

This study by UCSB is surveying the distribution and abundance of a non-native bryozoan on 23 platforms and natural reefs in the Southern California Bight, and is elucidating the role that offshore artificial structures may have in linking and affecting biological communities. The study results will inform environmental reviews of conventional energy activities (including decommissioning of platforms) offshore southern and central California.

Study Profile: https://www.boem.gov/pc-13-04/

Ongoing (to be completed January 2019) — Disturbance Index Development for the Pacific OCS

This study is analyzing soft-sediment biological communities near platforms on the continental shelf and slope offshore southern California, and is developing an index to assess the degree of anthropogenic disturbance to those communities compared to undisturbed areas. BOEM, through this effort, is a partner with the Southern California Coastal Water Research Project to characterize the ecological condition of shelf and slope habitats in the Southern California Bight. Study Profile: https://www.boem.gov/pc-16-04/

Ongoing (to be completed June 2020) — Pacific Marine Assessment Partnership for Protected Species (PacMAPPS)

This study is a partnership between BOEM, National Marine Fisheries Service, and U.S. Navy to conduct shipboard surveys of marine mammals, seabirds, and sea turtles in the Pacific. The data collected will help BOEM evaluate potential effects of proposed energy activities on protected species in an ecosystem-level context, including in areas of interest for renewable energy development (California, Oregon, and Hawaii) and for conventional energy decommissioning (California). Surveys of the Hawaiian Islands were conducted in 2017 and surveys of the California Current Ecosystem (Baja California, California, Oregon, and Washington) are scheduled for 2018. Study Profile: https://www.boem.gov/PC-17-04/

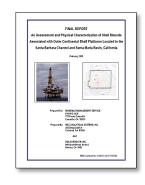
Shell Mound Studies

Completed (2003) — An Assessment and Physical Characterization of Shell Mounds Associated with Outer Continental Shelf Platforms Located in the Santa Barbara Channel and Santa Maria Basin, California

This study by MEC Analytical Systems conducted multibeam hydrographic surveys at 16 platforms offshore southern and central California to identify and delineate shell mounds or debris piles, and discussed factors contributing to shell mound formation. Survey data were used to generate bathymetric maps and cross-sectional profiles of each platform area and to delineate the physical proximity of the mounds to the platforms, mound size and dimensions, and any correlations between water depth, platform orientation, and platform age. Report: https://www.boem.gov/2003-Assessment-Shell-Mounds/

Completed (2005) — Role of Food Subsidies and Habitat Structure in Influencing Benthic Communities of Shell Mounds at Sites of Existing and Former Offshore Oil Platforms

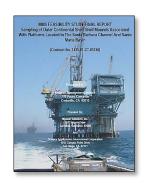
This study by UCSB compared the abundance of mobile macroinvertebrates in the Santa Barbara Channel at three types of sites: 1) shell mounds beneath existing offshore platforms (Gina, Houchin, and Hogan), 2) shell mounds without overlying platforms (the former sites of platforms Hazel, Hilda, Hope, and Heidi), and 3) soft-bottom sites. It also examined how the structure of shell mound communities is influenced by the presence of the platform structure and the food subsidies provided by organisms that fall from the platform to the sea floor. Report (MMS 2005-001): https://www.boem.gov/ESPIS/3/3405.pdf





Completed (2005) — MMS Feasibility Study Final Report – Sampling of Outer Continental Shelf Shell Mounds Associated with Platforms Located in the Santa Barbara Channel and Santa Maria Basin

This study by Weston Solutions, Inc. and SAIC determined the viability of sampling representative shell mound sites under platforms offshore southern and central California to determine their internal structure and chemical and biological characteristics, including potential contaminants, toxicity, petrogenic hydrocarbons, and trace metals. Feasibility of sampling was based on platform-screening criteria (depth, bottom slope, age, shell mound size, and distance from port) and logistical and technical issues, safety, and scientific utility. Report: https://www.boem.gov/2005-Sampling-Shell-Mounds/



Completed (2007) — Physical and Chemical Characteristics of the Platform Gina Shell Mound

This study by Weston Solutions, Inc. and SAIC provided information on the physical and chemical characteristics of the shell mound under Platform Gina. Sediment cores were collected, subsampled by strata, and analyzed for grain size and chemical constituents (e.g., organic carbon, sulfides, metals, volatile and semi-volatile organics, and petroleum hydrocarbons). It also compared chemical concentrations in the mound and in associated drilling muds and cuttings. Report: https://www.boem.gov/2007-Gina-Shell-Mound/



Completed (2008) — Megabenthic Invertebrates on Shell Mounds Under Oil and Gas Platforms off California

This study by UCSB identified and quantified the invertebrate fauna on deepwater shell mounds under 15 platforms offshore southern and Central California (Edith, Ellen, Elly, Eureka, C, Gail, Gilda, Grace, Holly, Harmony, Hondo, Harvest, Hermosa, Hidalgo, and Irene). It compared important elements of the fauna to those found on neighboring soft sediments and natural reefs, and investigated elements of their potential ecological and conservation importance. Report (MMS 2007-007): https://www.data.boem.gov/PI/PDFImages/ESPIS/4/4929.pdf



Completed (2014) — Determining the Potential Release of Contaminants into the Marine Environment from Pacific OCS Shell Mounds

This by Applied Marine Sciences, Inc. assessed the potential release of PAHs (polynuclear aromatic hydrocarbons, the toxic component of crude oil) from platform shell mounds into surrounding waters. Two platforms in the Santa Barbara Channel (Platforms A and B) and one control site near each platform were studied. Findings provided insights into the source of the detected PAHs and their weathering patterns, spatial patterns in the concentrations and compositions, and their potential harm to marine organisms.



Report (BOEM 2013-208): https://www.data.boem.gov/PI/PDFImages/ESPIS/5/5382.pdf

Air Quality Study

Planned (to start 2018) — Air Emissions Associated with Decommissioning Operations for Pacific Outer Continental Shelf (OCS) Oil and Gas Platforms

Air emissions from decommissioning Pacific OCS oil and gas facilities are expected to be a potential significant impact to local and regional air quality. The facilities are subject to local air quality regulations, and this study will develop estimates of air pollutants expected for all phases of decommissioning for each facility, including from offshore and associated onshore operations. The study will also determine which local regulations will be required and how they would be applied to ensure regulatory compliance within the jurisdictions to support NEPA analyses for decommissioning the facilities. Study Profile: https://www.boem.gov/PC-17-x10/

Decommissioning Technology & Cost Studies

Completed (2000) — State of the Art of Removing Large Platforms Located in Deep Water

This study by Twachtman Snyder & Byrd, Inc. reviewed the technology available for removing platforms in water depths exceeding 400 feet, including three platforms offshore southern and central California (Hidalgo, Gail, and Harmony). Three removal methods were evaluated: complete removal, partial removal (reefing in place), and remote reefing (reefing off site). Decommissioning cost estimates were prepared for the three platforms and removal methods, including an evaluation of cost sensitivity (risk) issues and the cost of alternative technologies. Report: https://www.bsee.gov/sites/bsee.gov/files/tap-technical-assessment-program//372aa.pdf



Completed (2003) — Comparative Health and Safety Risk Assessment of Decommissioning Large Offshore Platforms; Final Report, Case Studies for Decommissioning of Three Offshore Platforms in the Pacific OCS Region

This study by Twachtman Snyder & Byrd, Inc. provided a comparative risk assessment of the decommissioning options for removing three platforms offshore southern and central California (Eureka, Hidalgo, and Irene). The assessment considers the impact of specific removal methods such as diver versus non-diver operations, and focuses on health and human safety. Findings are relevant to all similar platform removals.

Report: https://www.bsee.gov/sites/bsee.gov/files/tap-technical-assessment-program//459aa.pdf

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Completed (2004) — Explosive Removal of Offshore Structures: Information Synthesis Report

This study by Continental Shelf Associates, Inc. (CSA) summarized information on four topics associated with the explosive removal of offshore structures: 1) explosive removal methods; 2) physics of underwater explosions; 3) effects of underwater explosions on three faunal groups: marine fishes, turtles, and mammals; and 4) mitigation and monitoring of the effects. The report includes a summary chapter with recommendations for the use of explosives for platform removal in the Gulf of Mexico OCS that may have application for the Pacific OCS. *Report (MMS 2003-070): https://www.data.boem.gov/PI/PDFImages/ESPIS/2/3042.pdf*



Completed (2014*) — Decommissioning Cost Update for Pacific OCS Region Facilities

This study by TSB Offshore, Inc. developed the most recent estimate of costs for decommissioning platforms on the Pacific OCS. It reviewed and updated information in the previous (2009) decommissioning cost report, including: 1) decommissioning scenarios for OCS platforms, 2) engineering cost assumptions and methodologies, and 3) costs for each phase of the decommissioning process. *Revisions to the report were last made in October 2016. Project Information: https://www.bsee.gov/research-record/tap-735-decommissioning-cost-update-pacific-ocs-region-facilities

<u>Report Volume 1</u>: https://www.bsee.gov/sites/bsee.gov/files/tap-technical-assessment-program//decommissioning-cost-update-for-pacific-ocs-region-facilities-volume-1-rev5.pdf
<u>Report Volume 2</u>: https://www.bsee.gov/sites/bsee.gov/files/tap-technical-assessment-program//decommissioning-cost-update-for-pacific-ocs-region-facilities-volume-2-rev5.pdf



Completed (2016) — Pressure Wave and Acoustic Properties Generated by the Explosive Removal of Offshore Structures in the Gulf of Mexico

This study by CSA Ocean Sciences, Inc. refined explosive acoustic models developed by MMS to define impact zones/exclusion areas necessary for issuance of marine mammal incidental take permits. Field measurements of explosives used for decommissioning in the Gulf of Mexico and validation of existing models are useful when considering the potential use of explosives for decommissioning of Pacific platforms.

Report (BOEM 2016-019): https://www.boem.gov/ESPIS/5/5505.pdf



For information about BOEM's Environmental Studies Program (ESP):

ESP Homepage: https://www.boem.gov/Studies/

Pacific OCS Region Environmental Studies Homepage: https://www.boem.gov/Pacific-Studies/ Environmental Studies Program Information System (ESPIS): https://marinecadastre.gov/espis/#/

For information about BSEE's Technology Assessment Program (TAP):

TAP Homepage: https://www.bsee.gov/what-we-do/research/tap

TAP Fact Sheet: https://www.bsee.gov/newsrooom/fact-sheets/technology-assessment-program

TAP Decommissioning Research: https://www.bsee.gov/what-we-do/research/tap-categories/decommissioning

For information about Pacific Region Decommissioning: https://www.boem.gov/Decommissioning/