



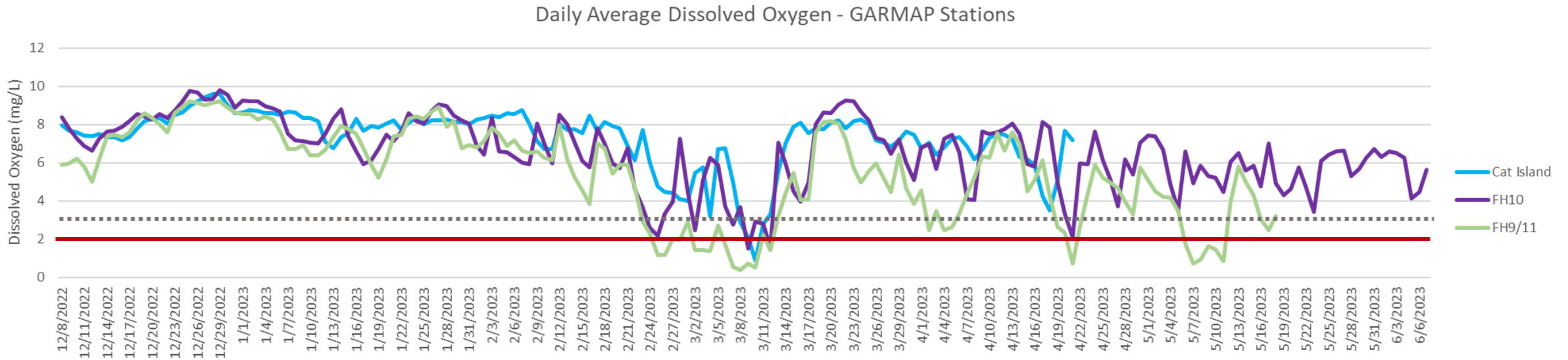
Sport Fish Restoration Program

October 2023

by Charlie Robertson



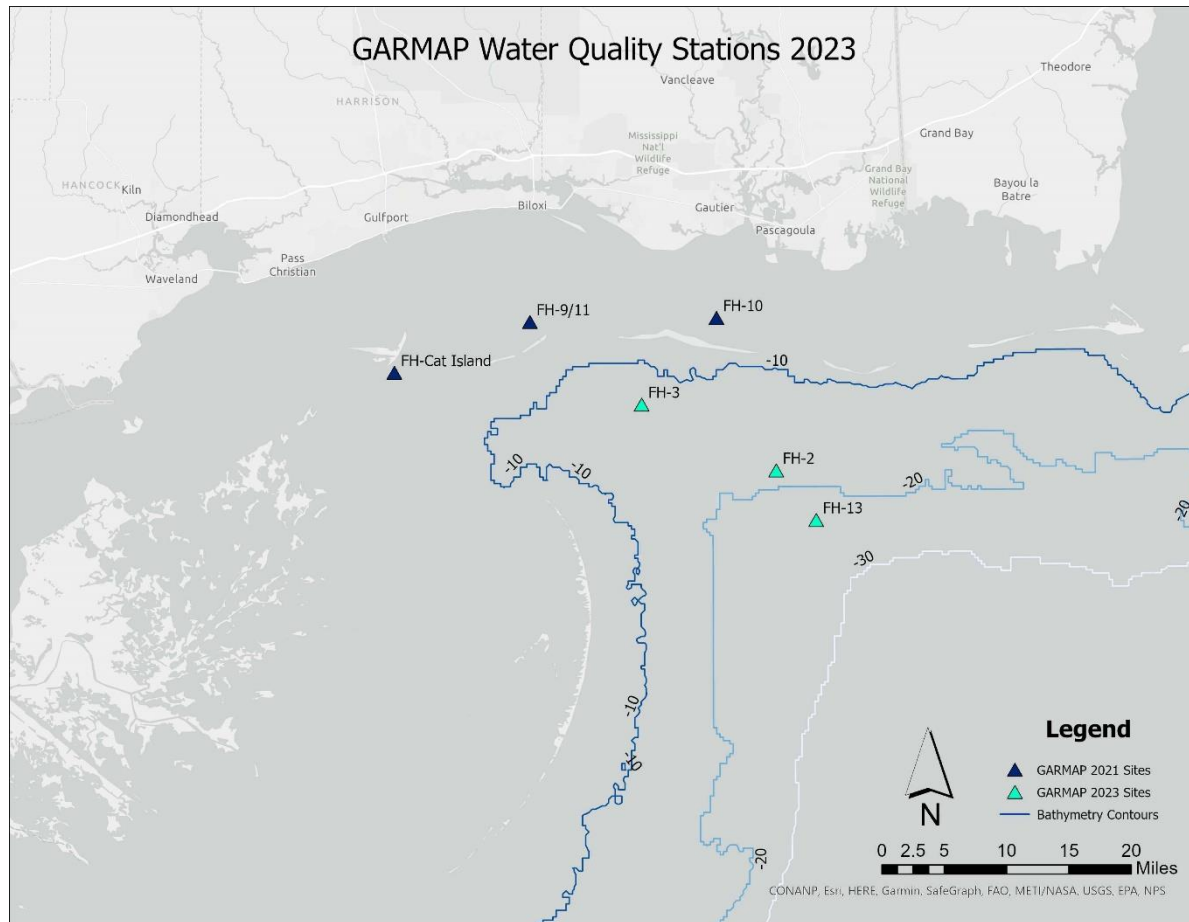
GARMAP



- Gulf Artificial Reef Monitoring and Assessment Program
- Assess water quality on artificial reef locations



Deployment & Data Collection



- 3 units at nearshore sites (FH-9/11, 10, & Cat Island)
- Water quality data every 30-min
- GARMAP Database (<http://garmap.gsmfc.org/map.php>)
- 3 more units at offshore sites (FH-13,3,&2)

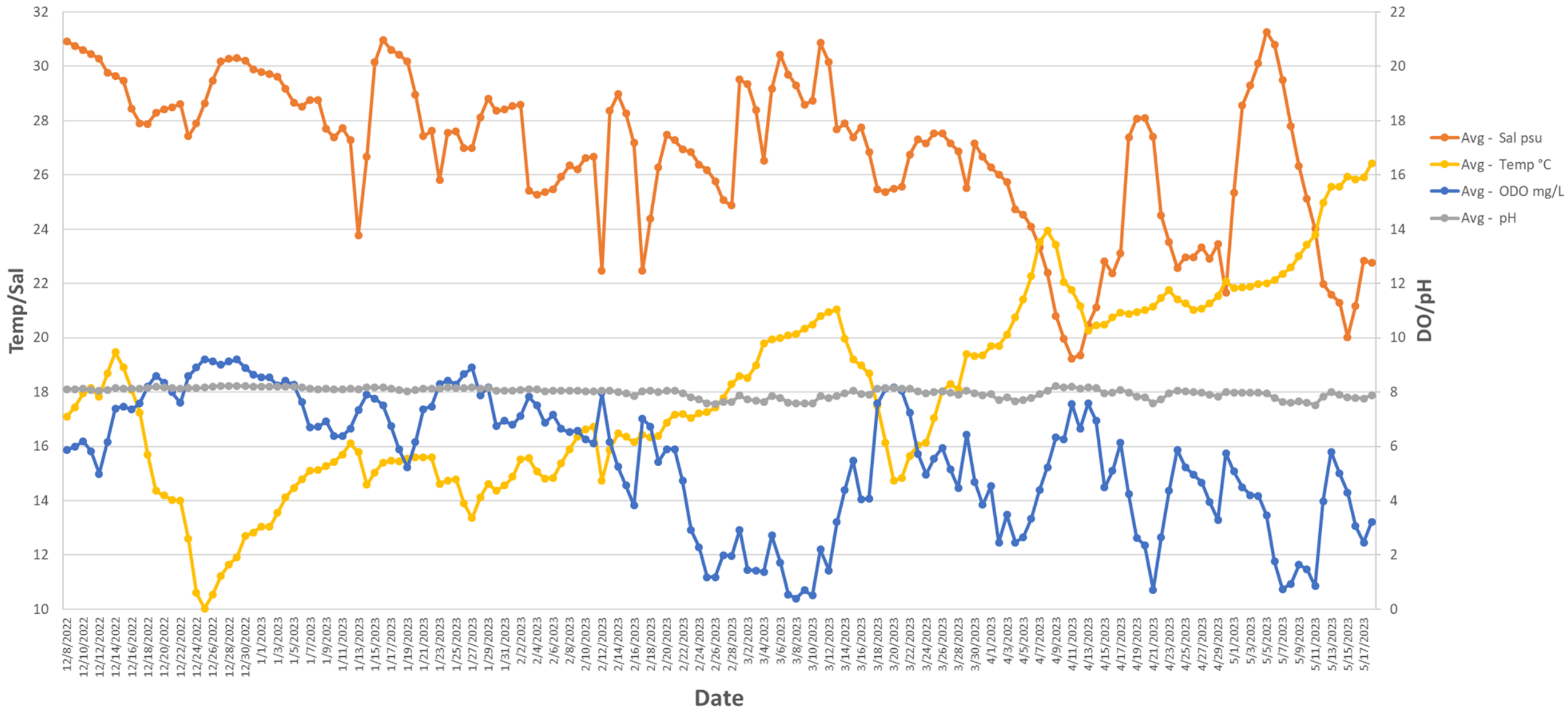


Water Quality Monitoring

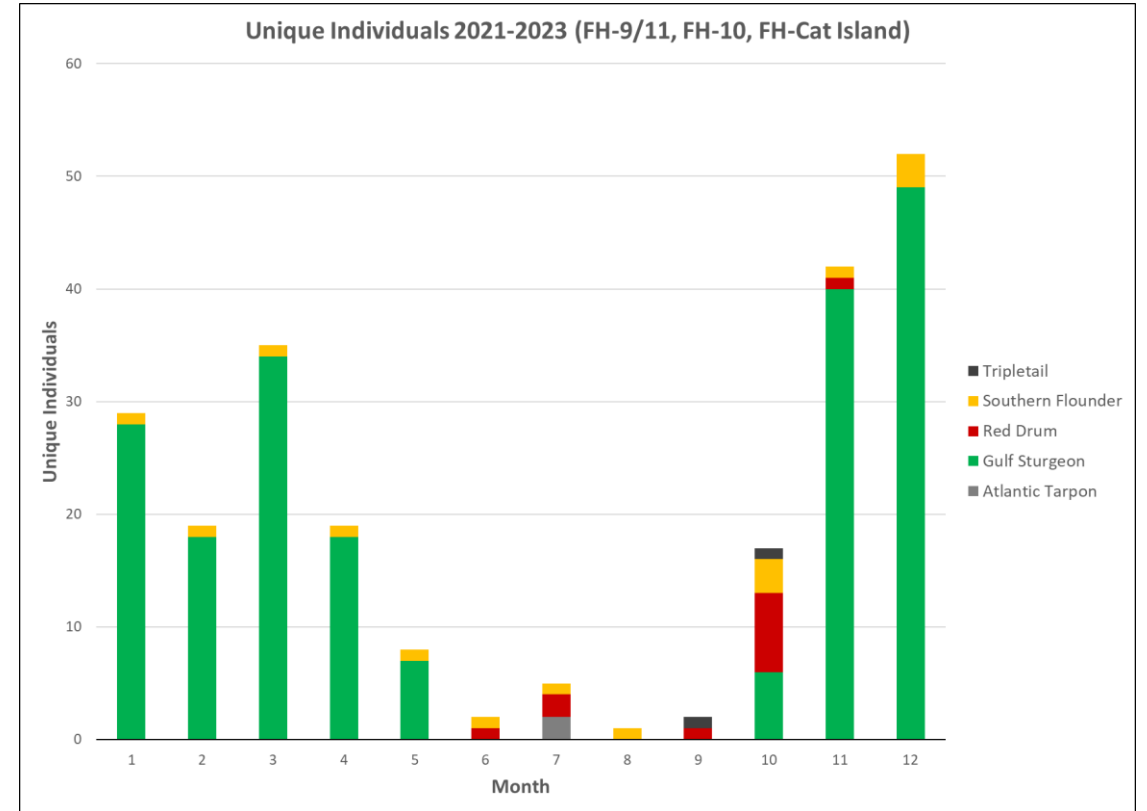
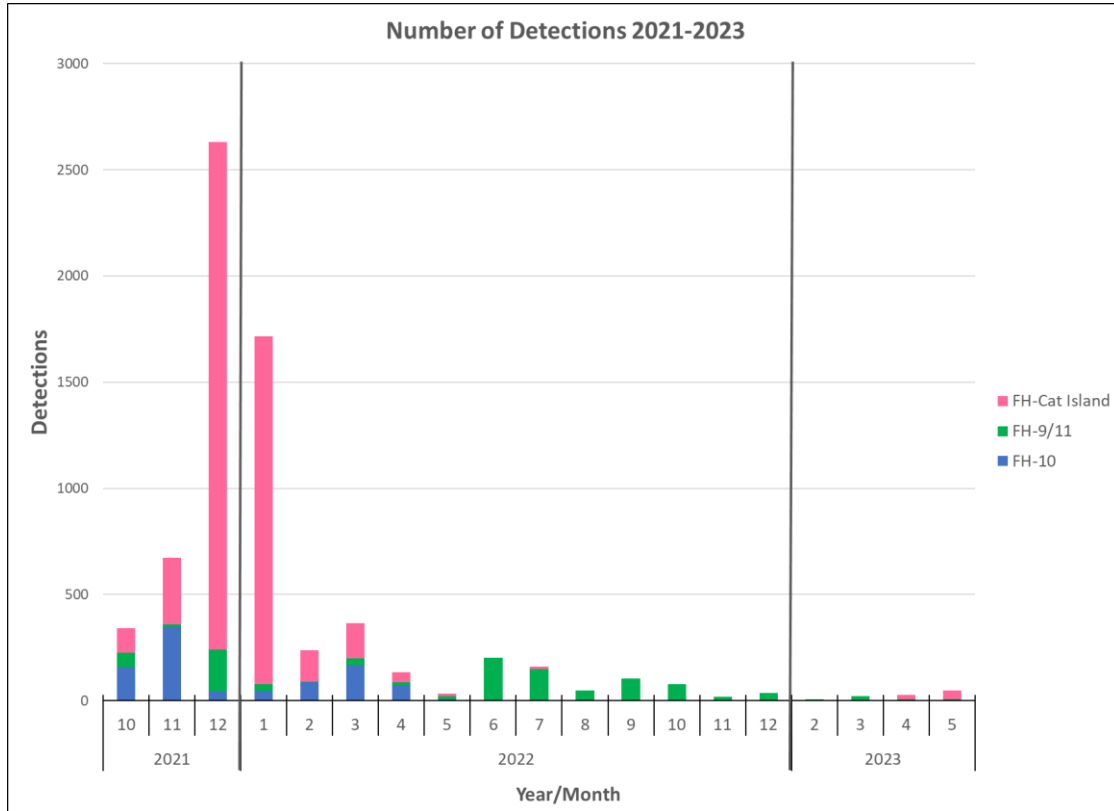
- Strategically positioned multiparameter data sondes
- Acoustic release system to eliminate entanglements
- Operates year-round to assess season water quality variations, specifically DO
- Acoustic receivers to track species movements
- Coordination with IJF Program



FH-9/11 - Avg Daily Water Quality Parameters



Acoustic Receiver Data



Questions?

Charlie Robertson, Program Coordinator
Gulf States Marine Fisheries Commission
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PROGRAM UPDATE OCTOBER 2023

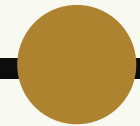
AQUATIC NUISANCE SPECIES PROGRAM

by Charlie Robertson



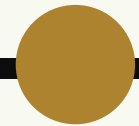
Panel Coordination

GSARP & ANS Task Force



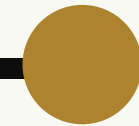
GSARP

April 25-26, 2023
Georgia



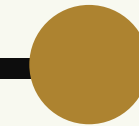
ANS TASK FORCE

July 18-19, 2023
Virtual



GSARP & MID- ATLANTIC

November 14-16, 2023
North Carolina



ANS TASK FORCE

January 24-25, 2024
Virginia

REGION 4 USFWS AIS SMALL GRANTS

U.S. GEOLOGICAL SERVICE

Leveraging habitat suitability modeling for nonnative fish management in a changing climate

UNIVERSITY OF FLORIDA

Identifying invasive species threats to Puerto Rico and U.S. Virgin Islands

UNIV. OF TN & NC STATE UNIV.

Evaluating invasive armored catfish and Midas Cichlid in Puerto Rico rivers

MISSISSIPPI STATE UNIVERSITY

Integrating controls for aquatic weed, alligatorweed

- OVER THE COURSE OF SEVEN YEARS, 43 PROJECTS HAVE BEEN COMPLETED, TOTALING OVER \$1 M.
- IN 2021, FOUR PROJECTS WERE SELECTED, AMOUNTING TO \$177,693.
- ALL PROJECTS ARE EXPECTED TO BE COMPLETED BY DECEMBER 2024, AND THERE ARE NO PLANS TO CONTINUE THE AIS SMALL GRANTS PROGRAM BEYOND THAT POINT.

INVASIVE SPECIES TRAVELING TRUNK



6

Different events this year
over 90 days



7

Start up trunk kits for GSARP
members



1,716 DAYS

Since 2012

Change in GSARP Management

ENDING DECEMBER 2023

GSMFC's management of GSARP ends December 2023, no renewal.

FINANCIAL CONCERNS

The program has been level funded for over a decade, and it's no longer financially sustainable for GSMFC to continue in its current role.

NEW MANAGEMENT STRATEGY

Starting in January 2024, GSARP plans to hire a fiscal agent and rotate meeting coordination responsibilities between host states for one year to assess feasibility.

GSMFC MEMBERSHIP

GSMFC still be involved as a member of GSARP and ANSTF. It is possible for GSMFC to become more involved in the future, depending on how the new approach goes.



**RETURN 'EM
RIGHT**

Return 'Em Right

Gulf States Marine
Fisheries Commission
Commission Business
Meeting

October 19, 2023

CHARLIE ROBERTSON, CHARLIE.ROBERTSON@GSMFC.ORG, 228-327-0297



Goals

- Reduce post-release mortality
- Increase the health of fisheries
- Improve angler experiences

Objectives

- Provide tools and training
- Measure prevalence of use and trends
- Validate mortality rates and effectiveness of release treatments



Studies

- Four collaborative studies to assess impacts of release methods on survival
- Wide geographic range
- High priority reef fish species
- Anticipated completion in 2024



Monitoring

- Gulf At-sea Observer Program
 - Second year – FL, AL, MS
 - 568 for-hire recreational trips observed
 - Digital measuring boards
- State reef fish validation surveys
 - 1,845 trips surveyed
 - 41% had a descending device on board
- Southeast Region Headboat Survey
 - Fish released = 311,195
 - Vented = 68,505
 - Descended = 30,718



Outreach & Education

- Collaboration with FL Sea Grant
- 15-min online training course
- Complimentary descending devices
- Over 24,000 Gulf reef fish anglers
- Publishing the Best Release Practices Manual for Reef Fish

<https://training.returnemright.org/>



Next Steps

- Expand and enhance data collection in Gulf
- Provide oversight research studies
- Develop central at-sea database
- Follow-up human dimensions survey 2024
- Explore opportunities and provide support for outreach and education
- Awareness of best release practices



Questions?

