

# Fish and Water Column Invertebrates Strategic Plan



## Open Ocean Fish and Water Column Invertebrate Strategic Plan

Deepwater Horizon Open Ocean Trustee Implementation Group

MARCH 2022



PRELIMINARY - DRAFT





# Overview

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- Purpose of the Plan
- Approach to the Strategy
  - Engagement
  - Prioritization
  - Threats
  - **Preliminary** Objectives
- Next Steps





# Purpose

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- Guide restoration planning for FWCI
  - Establishing a species prioritization process
  - Identifying threats to injured species and associated restoration opportunities
  - Setting objectives for those species and/or species groups.
  - Data gaps





# Engagement



- Four sessions with external stakeholder groups in winter/spring 2021
  - Two invited roundtables
  - Two public meetings coordinated with the Gulf Commission and Gulf Council
  - Numerous internal meetings
- Received input on
  - Threats
  - Prioritization criteria – important species
  - Communications
  - Opportunities for collaboration





# Steps in species prioritization process



1

Determine species groups representing ecosystem components

2

Determine criteria to evaluate restoration priorities

3

Collect data that serve as criteria proxies

4

Select priority species by group based on evaluation of criteria



## Priority species selections by group

FWCI Species Group	Priority Species
<b>Billfish*</b>	Blue marlin ( <i>Makaira nigricans</i> )
<b>Drums and seatrout*</b>	Spotted seatrout ( <i>Cynoscion nebulosus</i> )
Flatfishes	Southern flounder ( <i>Paralichthys lethostigma</i> )
<b>Jacks*</b>	Greater amberjack ( <i>Seriola dumerili</i> )
<b>Forage fish*</b>	Mullets ( <i>Mugil cephalus</i> and <i>curema</i> ) Gulf menhaden ( <i>Brevoortia patronus</i> )
<b>Sea basses/Groupers*</b>	Red grouper ( <i>Epinephelus morio</i> )
Snappers*	Red snapper ( <i>Lutjanus campechanus</i> ) Vermilion snapper ( <i>Rhomboplites aurorubens</i> )
<b>Tunas/mackerels*</b>	Yellowfin tuna ( <i>Thunnus albacares</i> ) King mackerel ( <i>Scomberomorus cavalla</i> )
Other demersal	American eel ( <i>Anguilla rostrata</i> )
Other reef-associated	Golden tilefish ( <i>Lopholatilus chamaeleonticeps</i> )
Crabs and Lobsters	Blue crab ( <i>Callinectes sapidus</i> )
Shrimp	Royal red shrimp ( <i>Pleoticus robustus</i> )



Photo by Jay Fleming



# Threats

	Blue marlin	Greater amberjack
<b>Fishing</b>		
Overfishing	X	X
Illegal fishing		
Bycatch	X	X
Data limitations	X	X
<b>Marine debris</b>		
Plastic/Microplastic	X	X
Derelict gear		
<b>Ecological</b>		
Invasive species		
Climate change	X	X
<b>Water quality</b>		
HABs (red tide)		
Nutrient enrichment/hypoxia	X	





# Draft Objectives



- Reduce negative effects or risks of:
  - **bycatch**
  - **illegal, unregulated, and unreported fishing**
  - **marine debris to FWCI resources**
  - **post-release mortality**
  - invasive species
  - marine pollution
  - energy production
  - harmful algal blooms (HABs)
- Improve pelagic and sargassum habitat
- **Develop tools and techniques to reduce uncertainty in restoration and provide best practices to stakeholders and fishing communities**







# Stay involved [Gulfspillrestoration.noaa.gov](http://Gulfspillrestoration.noaa.gov)



## Draft Plans Currently Open for Public Comment

### Alabama Swift Tract Supplemental Environmental Assessment

Comment deadline March 28, 2022

[COMMENT NOW](#)

### Texas Restoration Plan 2

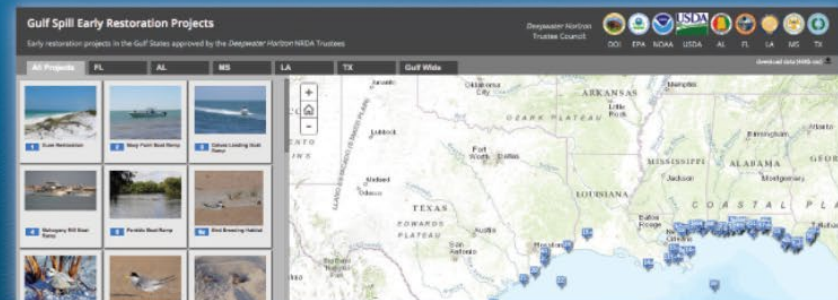
Comment deadline March 28, 2022

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