



## NOAA's Gulf of Mexico Marine Debris Project

In response to the threat of submerged marine debris in the coastal zones of Alabama, Mississippi, and Louisiana, NOAA's Gulf of Mexico Marine Debris Project team is developing cartographic products from hydrographic surveys of debris left in the wake of Hurricane Katrina. A collaborative effort between NOAA's Office of Response and Restoration and Office of Coast Survey, the team is working with federal, state, and local stakeholders to provide ongoing support to the recovery efforts in the Gulf of Mexico.

Visit <http://gulfofmexico.marinedebris.noaa.gov> for the most current data, maps, and project updates where users can access printable maps indicating debris location and abundance.

### Project Background

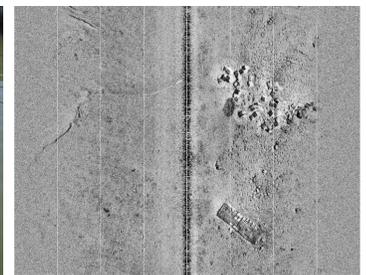
Survey work began in September 2006 using side scan sonar to image the sea floor and locate marine debris. Sounding measurements are also taken to determine the depth of each object. The Office of Coast Survey uses these data to update nautical charts, providing mariners with more accurate and up-to-date navigation information. The mapping aspect of the project provides location, density, and size of surveyed items, and assists debris removal efforts to restore safe navigation and re-establish viable commercial fishing in the region.



Marine debris removed from the Northern Gulf of Mexico



Survey vessel with side scan sonar apparatus



Side scan image of ship containers and a sunken barge

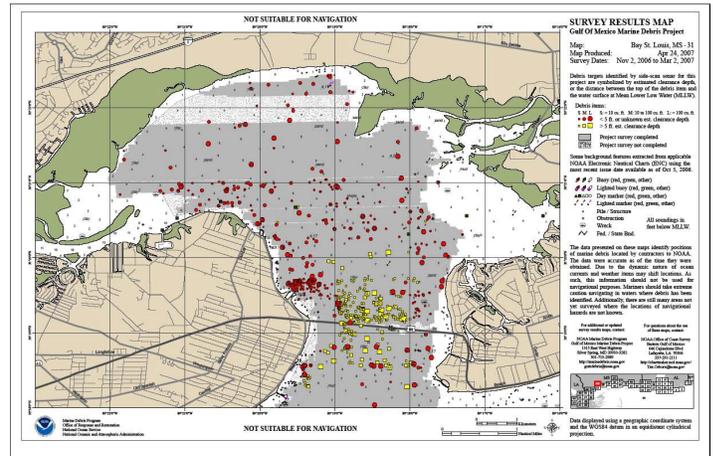
The Office of Response and Restoration's Marine Debris Program, along with state Sea Grant offices, are leading a public outreach effort which includes a project Web site where users can access printable maps indicating submerged objects' location and density. The maps provide survey data to those who need it for object avoidance and removal activities. Downloadable spreadsheets provide objects attributes including coordinates, which could be imported to GPS. The project Web site also links to a scaleable, interactive mapping server (IMS) that provides information on each submerged object identified, and allows users to highlight unique data layers, such as navigation aids and bathymetry information. NOAA is working collaboratively with local, state, and federal

stakeholders to determine their data needs and to develop methods of disseminating this information in a useful and effective manner.

**Critical Information**

- An area of 700 square miles has been mapped from Perdido Bay, AL, to Lake Borgne, LA.
- Over 5,000 objects have been located, with approximately 50% having a clearance depth of less than 5 feet
- Interactive maps indicate the size, volume, location, and estimated depth of located objects
- Survey work is complete in AL, MS, and Lake Borgne, LA. Additional survey in Plaquemines Parish, LA began in July 2007

The Gulf of Mexico Marine Debris Project team is working closely with regional outreach organizations to implement a comprehensive outreach program for effectively disseminating survey results to the public using brochures, posters, and media releases, as well as the project Web site. This is an ongoing process, and the team is focusing outreach efforts on critical stakeholders including commercial and recreational fishing and shrimp boat operators, recreational boaters, harbor masters, marina owners, natural resource managers, and coastal planners. The project team will continue to solicit



Project maps show survey locations (grey) and identified submerged objects debris (yellow and red dots)

feedback from users, and improve its products to best meet users' needs. Additionally, the team will produce planning documents to aid in marine debris coordination and removal following future hurricane activity.

To facilitate its presence in the region, the NOAA Gulf of Mexico Marine Debris Project team opened a field coordination office in the Hale Boggs Federal Complex at 501 Magazine Street, New Orleans, LA 70130.

For more information on the Gulf of Mexico Marine Debris Project:  
 E-mail: [gomdebris@noaa.gov](mailto:gomdebris@noaa.gov)  
 Web site: <http://gulfofmexico.marinedebris.noaa.gov/>

For more information on Marine Debris:  
 E-mail: [marinedebris@noaa.gov](mailto:marinedebris@noaa.gov)  
 Web site: <http://marinedebris.noaa.gov/>



Poster used in the project outreach effort

*NOAA's Office of Response & Restoration—Protecting our Coastal Environment*

For further information about NOAA's Office of Response and Restoration, please visit our Web site at

<http://response.restoration.noaa.gov> or call (301) 713-2989.

