



# NOAA's Gulf of Mexico Marine Debris Project

In response to the threat of submerged marine debris in the Louisiana, Mississippi, and Alabama coastal zones, 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 ensure coordination of ongoing recovery efforts in the Gulf of Mexico.

## Project Background

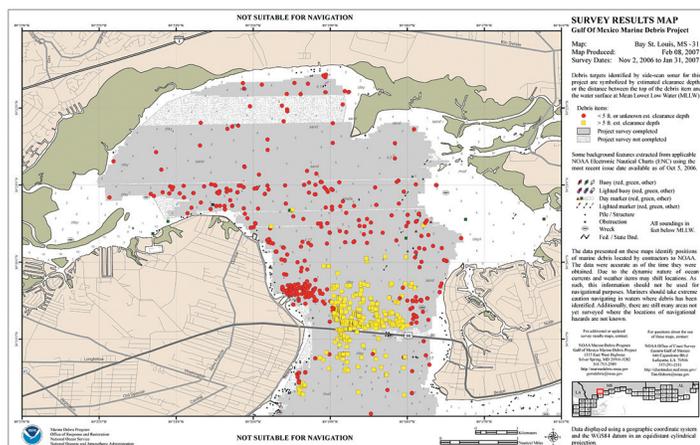
Survey work began in September 2006 using side scan sonar to image the sea floor and locate marine debris. Sounding measurements are also taken to determine the depth of each debris contact. The Office of Coast Survey uses this data to update nautical charts, providing mariners with more accurate and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

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.



Marine debris removed from the Northern Gulf of Mexico

The Marine Debris Program and Office of Response and Restoration, along with state SeaGrant offices, are leading a public outreach effort which includes a project Web site where users can access printable maps indicating debris location and density. The maps provide survey data to those who need it for debris avoidance and removal activities. The project website also links to a scaleable, interactive mapping server (IMS) that provides information



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



on each marine debris item identified, and allows users to highlight unique data layers, such as navigation aids and benthic habitat 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.

### Current & Future Actions

The Gulf of Mexico Marine Debris Project team is working closely with regional outreach organizations to develop a comprehensive strategy for effectively disseminating survey results to the public using brochures, posters, and media releases, as well as the project website. This is an ongoing process, and the team has already determined that outreach efforts will focus on critical stakeholders which include, but are not limited to: 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 specific feedback on the web-based IMS to ensure the most meaningful data layers are available to users. Additionally, the team will produce planning documents to aid in marine debris coordination and removal following future hurricane activity.

The team also recognizes that English is not the native language of all fishermen and shrimpers in the Northern Gulf of Mexico; therefore, outreach products will be translated into Vietnamese, another language common to fishermen in the region.

To assist in the coordination efforts and stakeholder outreach, 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. Field team personnel will staff this office through September 30, 2007.

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/>

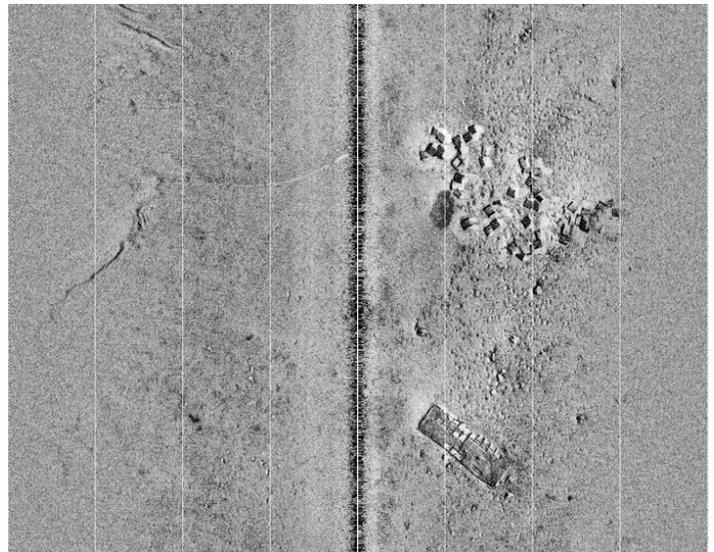
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Survey vessel with side scan sonar apparatus



Side scan image of ship containers and a sunken barge

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

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**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.**

