

## Louisiana TIG Draft Restoration Plan/ Environmental Assessment #5:

### *Living Coastal and Marine Resources – Marine Mammals and Oysters*

#### Increasing Capacity and Expanding Partnerships for Marine Mammal Stranding Response

#### PLAN DESCRIPTION

The *Draft Restoration Plan/Environmental Assessment #5: Living Coastal and Marine Resources – Marine Mammals and Oysters* describes the Deepwater Horizon (DWH) oil spill restoration planning process, evaluates a reasonable range of alternatives, and identifies four preferred alternatives that would best help compensate the public for injuries to marine mammals and oysters caused by the DWH oil spill in the Louisiana restoration area. The marine mammal alternative selected in the plan would help restore living coastal and marine resources by improving response to live and dead stranded marine mammals and increasing understanding of causes of illness and death.



Credit: MMPA Permit No. 14450

#### MARINE MAMMAL RESTORATION TYPE

During and after the DWH oil spill, contamination of nearshore and offshore waters of the northern Gulf of Mexico resulted in marine mammals inhaling, ingesting, aspirating, and possibly absorbing oil. As a result, thousands of animals have suffered physical injury and toxic effects to organs and tissues. Animals that experienced these adverse health effects contributed to the largest and longest marine mammal unusual mortality event on record in the Gulf of Mexico. Bottlenose dolphin stocks in Barataria Bay and Mississippi Sound were two of the most severely injured stocks, experiencing a 52 percent and 62 percent maximum reduction in their population sizes, respectively.

The *DWH Final Programmatic Damage Assessment and Restoration Plan and Final Programmatic Environmental Impact Statement* identifies multiple techniques for marine mammal restoration, one of which was selected in the Draft RP/EA #5:

- Increase marine mammal survival through better understanding of causes of illness and death as well as early detection and intervention of anthropogenic and natural threats.

# Increasing Capacity for LA Marine Mammal Stranding Response

## PROJECT DESCRIPTION

The Louisiana Trustee Implementation Group proposes the “Increasing Capacity and Expanding Partnerships along the Louisiana Coastline for Marine Mammal Stranding Response to Inform Future Restoration Efforts” project as the preferred alternative to help restore marine mammals. The objective of this alternative is to enhance the capacity of the Louisiana Marine Mammal Stranding Network (MMSN).

This alternative would include hiring a Stranding Coordinator, building partnerships, and filling gaps in capabilities and coverage along the coast. Trainings and resources would be provided to enhance capabilities to respond to strandings, and collect, store, and analyze samples collected from stranded cetaceans to improve diagnosis of illness and cause of death for marine mammals in Louisiana.

## ESTIMATED COSTS

The estimated total project cost for the Increasing Capacity and Expanding Partnerships along the Louisiana Coastline for Marine Mammal Stranding Response is \$3.1 million. These funds are for project implementation, stranding personnel support, equipment, maintenance, supplies, training, outreach materials, sample storage and analysis, and contingency.



Out of habitat dolphin rescue

Credit: Audubon Nature Institute's Coastal Wildlife Network



Dolphin stranding response

Credit: LDWF

For additional information, contact:  
Mel Landry, National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration  
225-425-0583  
mel.landry@noaa.gov