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MMS RELEASES REPORT ON CUMULATIVE EFFECTS OF
OFFSHORE NATURAL GAS AND OIL ACTIVITIES FOR
1987-1991

The current Outer Continental Shelf (OCS) regulatory system prevents significant adverse cumulative effects from OCS-related activities on the human, marine and coastal environments concludes a report made available today by the Department of the Interior's Minerals Management Service (MMS).

According to the report, "Outer Continental Shelf Natural Gas and Oil Resource Management Program: Cumulative Effects, 1987-1991," OCS activities during that period caused only temporary, localized effects on most resources analyzed. Air and water quality, fish, and endangered or threatened species were among the resources examined along with socioeconomic issues.

"Cumulative effects" are defined as the total identifiable long-term effects that: (1) are attributable to activities authorized under the OCS Lands Act; (2) are evident during the time period analyzed; and (3) can be quantified or evaluated. The report does not evaluate effects from potential OCS activities or non-OCS-related activities/events.

Cumulative effects for the Gulf of Mexico OCS Region--where the bulk of OCS activity occurs--were identified as "social effects," including recreation/tourism enhancement, commercial fishing, and socio-cultural issues, as well as other effects. Family life in the Gulf of Mexico Region was affected as a result of fluctuations in OCS-related employment, which decreased from 1987 through 1989, then increased and stabilized in 1991. Recreation and tourism were enhanced because the 3800 platforms located in federal waters attract both fish and fishermen, as well as recreational SCUBA divers. Cumulative effects for the Pacific, Alaska, and Atlantic OCS Regions were limited to social effects.

Copies of the report are available, on a limited basis, free of charge from the Minerals Management Service, Environmental Policies and Programs Division, Branch of Environmental Operations and Analysis, 381 Elden Street, Herndon, VA 22070-4817, phone (703) 787-1728.

MMS is the federal agency that manages the nation's natural gas, oil, and other mineral resources on the OCS, and collects and disburses revenues from offshore federal mineral leases and from onshore mineral leases on federal and Indian lands.

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