



U.S. Department of the Interior
Minerals Management Service
Gulf of Mexico OCS Region

November 2001

Mississippi/Alabama Pinnacle Trend Ecosystem Monitoring, Final Synthesis Report

OCS Study MMS 2001-080

The Minerals Management Service (MMS), Gulf of Mexico OCS Region, announces the availability of a new study report, *Mississippi/Alabama Pinnacle Trend Ecosystem Monitoring, Final Synthesis Report*.

This final synthesis report summarizes a four-year program to characterize and monitor carbonate mounds on the Mississippi/Alabama Outer Continental Shelf (OCS). The overall program goal was to characterize and monitor biological communities and environmental conditions at carbonate mounds along the Mississippi/Alabama OCS. Specific objectives included the description and monitoring of seasonal and interannual changes in community structure and zonation, relating these to changes in environmental conditions (i.e., dissolved oxygen, turbidity, temperature, salinity, etc.). Additionally, this project characterizes the geological, chemical, and physical environment of the mounds as an aid in understanding their origin, evolution, present-day dynamics, and long-term fate. On the basis of previous studies and new geophysical reconnaissance, nine sites in the Mississippi/Alabama "Pinnacle Trend" area were selected for monitoring. Hard-bottom community structure dynamics were monitored because the potential sensitivity of these communities to OCS oil and gas industry activities is of interest to the MMS. Geological and oceanographic processes were studied to help understand environmental factors that control or influence hard-bottom communities. These environmental factors included substrate characteristics such as relief, microtopography, sedimentology, and contaminant levels; near-bottom current patterns; and the presence, extent, and dynamics of nepheloid layers. In addition, two "companion studies" provided information on epibiont recruitment and the distribution and orientation of sea fans in relation to currents and microtopography.

For more information about this study or the Environmental Studies Program in general, contact the Environmental Sciences Section (MS 5430), 1201 Elmwood Park Boulevard, New Orleans, Louisiana 70123-2394, telephone (504) 736-2752.

You can obtain copies of the report from the Minerals Management Service, Gulf of Mexico OCS Region, at a charge of \$20.00 by referencing OCS Study MMS 2001-080. You will be able to obtain this report also from the National Technical Information Service in the near future. Here are the addresses. You may also inspect copies at selected Federal Depository Libraries.

Minerals Management Service
Gulf of Mexico OCS Region
Public Information Office (MS 5034)
1201 Elmwood Park Boulevard
New Orleans, Louisiana 70123-2394
Telephone requests may be placed at
(504) 736-2519 or 1-800-200-GULF
or FAX: (504) 736-2620

U.S. Department of Commerce
National Technical Information Service
5285 Port Royal Road
Springfield, Virginia 22161
(703) 487-4650 or FAX: (703) 321-8547
Rush Orders: 1-800-336-4700

MMS is the federal agency in the U.S. Department of the Interior that manages the nation's oil, natural gas and other mineral resources on the outer continental shelf in federal offshore waters. The agency also collects, accounts for and [disburses mineral revenues](#) from federal and Indian leases. These collections totaled nearly \$8 billion last year and more than \$110 billion since the agency was created in 1982. Annually, nearly \$1 billion from those revenues go into the Land and Water Conservation Fund for the acquisition and development of state and federal park and recreation lands.

-MMS-GOM-

MMS's Website Address: <http://www.mms.gov>

[Return to Technical Announcements](#)