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Minerals Management Service
Gulf of Mexico OCS Region

Technical Announcement

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Sperm Whale Seismic Study in the Gulf of Mexico, Annual Report: Year 2
OCS Study MMS 2004-067

The Minerals Management Service (MMS), Gulf of Mexico OCS Region, announces the availability of a new study report, *Sperm Whale Seismic Study in the Gulf of Mexico, Annual Report: Year 2*.

The Sperm Whale Seismic Study (SWSS) is a 3-year field study conducted under a Cooperative Agreement through the Texas A&M Research Foundation with additional cooperation and funding support from the Industry Research Funders Coalition (IRFC), the Office of Naval Research, and (beginning in Year 2) the National Science Foundation. This document reports on 2003 field work – four cruises (June 3–24 using the R/V *Maurice Ewing*, June 7-22 using the M/V *Kondor Explorer*, May 31–June 21 using the R/V *Gyre*, and June 26–July 14 using the R/V *Gyre*) – conducted in the northern Gulf of Mexico with objectives to (1) establish the normal behavior of sperm whales in this area, (2) characterize their habitat use, and (3) determine possible changes in the behavior of sperm whales when subjected to manmade noise, in particular, seismic airgun arrays.

As an interim report, most of the information is concerned with methods and field measurements accomplished during the second year. Any results discussed are preliminary and not peer-reviewed. Included in this report are synopses of SWSS presentations from the November 19-21, 2003, SWSS Workshop and Planning Meeting held in Houston, Texas. Of particular note is the successful tagging of 15 sperm whales with satellite tags despite a shortened cruise because of Hurricane Claudette. Three controlled exposure experiments where four sperm whales with digital tags (recording movement and received sound levels) were exposed to an air-gun source were accomplished. Other topics reported on include major physical oceanographic features during the cruises, photo-ID efforts, genetic analyses, passive acoustic experiments, mid-water trawling for sperm whale prey, and D-tag results on baseline diving and vocalizations including night diving profiles.

This report is available only in compact disc format. The disc is available from the Minerals Management Service, Gulf of Mexico OCS Region, at a charge of \$15.00 by referencing OCS Study MMS 2004-067. The report may be ordered through the Minerals Management Service's on-line ordering system at <http://www.gomr.mms.gov/WebStore/front.asp>. 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.

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MMS, part of the U.S. Department of the Interior, oversees 1.76 billion acres of the Outer Continental Shelf, managing offshore energy and minerals while protecting the human, marine, and coastal environments through advanced science and technology research. The OCS provides 30 percent of oil and 23 percent of natural gas produced domestically, and sand used for coastal restoration. MMS's collects, accounts for, and disburses mineral revenues from Federal and American Indian lands, with fiscal year 2004 disbursements of around \$8 billion and more than \$143 billion since 1982. The Land and Water Conservation Fund, which pays for acquisition of state and federal park and recreation land, gets nearly \$1 billion a year.

MMS Main Website: www.mms.gov
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*** MMS: Securing Ocean Energy and Economic Value for America ***

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