



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

**FOR
RELEASE:**

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**Characterization and Trends of Recreational and Commercial
Fishing
from the Florida Panhandle**

OCS Study MMS 97-0020

The Minerals Management Service (MMS), Gulf of Mexico OCS Region, announces the availability of a new study report describing fisheries offshore the Florida Panhandle, Characterization and Trends of Recreational and Commercial Fishing from the Florida Panhandle. This study was undertaken for the Minerals Management Service to provide a description of the area's recreational and commercial fisheries as part of an overall environmental assessment prior to possible oil and gas development. The Outer Continental Shelf (OCS) offshore the Florida Panhandle supports diverse fish and invertebrate assemblages that form the basis for important multi-species commercial and recreational fisheries. The study's main goal was the description of marine commercial and recreational fishing offshore the Florida Panhandle from 1983 to 1993. For this study, the Florida Panhandle encompassed the inland, inshore, and offshore waters of Escambia, Santa Rosa, Okaloosa, Walton, Bay, Gulf, Franklin, and Wakulla Counties. Study objectives were to (1) determine the number of marine recreational and commercial fishing trips initiated from the Florida Panhandle; (2) determine the fishery gear type and the species groups targeted for the trips; (3) determine the location(s) where fishing was performed, including, but not limited to, features such as natural live-bottom or artificial reefs; (4) describe trends in recreational and commercial fishing related to the first three objectives; and (5) identify any relationships recreational and commercial fisheries initiated from the Panhandle may have with OCS oil and gas structures within the Gulf of Mexico.

For more information about the Environmental Studies Program, contact the Environmental Studies Section (MS 5430), 1201 Elmwood Park Boulevard, New Orleans, Louisiana 70123-2394, telephone (504) 736-2897.

Copies of this report can be obtained from the Minerals Management Service, Gulf of Mexico OCS Region, at a charge of \$10.00 by referencing OCS Study MMS 97-0020. This report will also be available from the National Technical Information Service in the near future. These addresses are provided below. Copies are also available for inspection 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.
INTERNET: <http://www.mms.gov>

U.S. Department of Commerce
National Technical Information Service
5285 Port Royal Road

Springfield, Virginia 22161
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