



OIL SPILL SCIENCE

SEA GRANT PROGRAMS OF THE GULF OF MEXICO

ABOUT SEA GRANT

The mission of Sea Grant is to enhance the practical use and conservation of coastal, marine and Great Lakes resources in order to create a sustainable economy and environment. There are 33 university-based Sea Grant programs throughout the coastal U.S. states and its territories. These programs are primarily supported by the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) and the states in which the programs are located. For more information about the four Sea Grant programs that border the Gulf of Mexico, visit gulfseagrant.org.



ABOUT GOMRI

The Gulf of Mexico Research Initiative is led by an independent and academic 20-member Research Board, which guides the research focus and the funding decisions to ensure the intellectual quality, effectiveness and academic independence of the GoMRI research. GoMRI was established using funds that are not associated with any oil spill penalties. For more information, visit gulfresearchinitiative.org.



YOU HAVE QUESTIONS. WE FIND ANSWERS.

Sea Grant and partner Gulf of Mexico Research Initiative have assembled a team of oil spill science outreach specialists to collect and translate the latest peer-reviewed research for those who rely on a healthy marine ecosystem for work or recreation. Our specialists – all trained scientists themselves – connect with audiences in person, in print, and online.



Sea Grant specialists host seminars, bringing top scientists and hands-on learning straight to our target audiences. The team shares science using a just-the-facts approach, reaching thousands face-to-face and even more via webinar. (RECOVER/Dan DiNicola)

FACTS AT YOUR FINGERTIPS

Our specialists produce in-depth publications and presentations to reveal what current research says about these issues and more:

- Fisheries health and seafood safety,
- Human and environmental impacts,
- Oil spill response, including dispersant use and emerging technologies.

Our audiences let us know what oil spill science topics they want to learn about next! Join our mailing list to become a part of the conversation.

All of our publications, news about upcoming events, links to webinars, and videos of past presentations can be found on our website at gulfseagrant.org/oilspilloutreach.



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THE SEA GRANT and GOMRI PARTNERSHIP

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In the immediate aftermath of the Deepwater Horizon oil spill, BP committed \$200 million over a 20-year period to create the Gulf of Mexico Research Initiative, or GoMRI. It is an independent research program that studies the effect of the environment and public health, as well as develops detection, characterization, oil spill response, and remediation technologies. GoMRI is led by an independent and academic, 20-member research board.

The Sea Grant oil spill science outreach team identifies and projects funded by GoMRI and others, and only shares peer-reviewed research results.

Sea Grant
GULF OF MEXICO RESEARCH INITIATIVE
<http://gulfseagrant.org>
<http://gulfresearchinitiative.org>

THE DEEPWATER HORIZON OIL SPILL'S IMPACT ON GULF SEAFOOD

Lorissa J. Graham, Christine Hale, Emily Melling-Douglass, Stephen Semper, Landon Seaton, and Monica Wilson

Even five years after the Deepwater Horizon oil spill, consumers have concerns about whether Gulf seafood is safe to eat. Federal and state scientists tested more than 22,000 seafood samples during the oil spill and did not find a single sample where levels of chemicals from oil or dispersants were unsafe. Scientists are still conducting studies to ensure that the seafood harvested from the Gulf is safe to eat.



Local seafood is an important part of the Gulf of Mexico community and livelihood. During the oil spill, there was much concern about whether local seafood was safe to eat. (GRIFFAS photo)

Scientists have found that eating seafood is good for people's health and recommend that most people eat two servings of seafood, about the size of the palm of your hand, each week. However, experts encourage pregnant women, young children, elderly individuals, and avoid eating some types of seafood. This includes seafood that is raw, partially cooked, or that which tends to be high in mercury concentration. Fish with high mercury include tilefish, shark, swordfish, and king mackerel.

If seafood is good for our health, then why are there recommended limits to how much we should eat? Seafood, like other foods that we eat, can be exposed to contamination through the natural environment, pollutants, oil and chemical spills, and processing and handling procedures. The U.S.

CONTACTS

The Sea Grant Oil Spill Science Outreach Team works together regionally to research and share oil spill-related topics.

Larissa Graham — Based in Mobile, Alabama, with the Mississippi-Alabama Sea Grant Consortium, Larissa has outreach experience with Sea Grant, the National Estuary Program and the National Estuarine Research Reserves. Her degrees and interest are in fisheries, environmental science, and human health. She works primarily on the environmental effects of the oil spill on humans and ecosystems. Email: larissa.graham@auburn.edu



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Chris Hale — Based in Corpus Christi, Texas, with the Texas Sea Grant College Program, Chris has an interdisciplinary background in marine science, fisheries, restoration, and human dimensions. She previously served as a Sea Grant extension agent in the U.S. Virgin Islands. She works primarily on the environmental effects of the oil spill on ecosystems. Email: chris.hale@tamu.edu

Emily Maung-Douglass, Ph.D. — Based in Baton Rouge, Louisiana, with the Louisiana Sea Grant College Program, Emily is trained in ecology, chemistry, and ecotoxicology. Her work has included studies of the impacts of environmental stressors on aquatic animals. She works on the chemical evolution of petroleum and dispersants and the interactions with ecosystems. Email: edouglass@lsu.edu



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Monica Wilson, Ph.D. — Based in St. Petersburg, Florida, with UF/IFAS Florida Sea Grant Extension, Monica has used her physical oceanography background to model circulation and flushing of coastal systems in the region and the impacts of tropical storms on these systems. She focuses on the distribution, dispersion, and dilution of petroleum under the action of physical ocean processes and storms. Email: monicawilson447@ufl.edu

Steve Sempier, Ph.D. — Based in Ocean Springs, Mississippi, with the Mississippi-Alabama Sea Grant Consortium, Steve has worked on several Gulf-wide issues, including developing and updating the Gulf of Mexico Research Plan and implementing a Gulf of Mexico hydrological restoration program through a partnership with the NOAA Restoration Center. He coordinates the overall outreach effort. Email: stephen.sempier@usm.edu



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Tara Skelton — Based in Ocean Springs, Mississippi, with the Mississippi-Alabama Sea Grant Consortium, Tara has served as a science communicator for the Gulf of Mexico Research Initiative and the Consortium for oil spill exposure pathways in Coastal River-Dominated Ecosystems (CONCORDE). She supports the oil spill specialists in the development of outreach products and presentations. Email: tara.skelton@usm.edu

Learn more about this effort at gulfseagrants.org/oilspilloutreach.

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